THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR.

I. CORINTHIANS.

THE

BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR:

OR,

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

REV. JOSEPH S. EXELL, M.A.

I. CORINTHIANS.

VOL. I.

London:
JAMES NISBET & CO., BERNERS STREET, W.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

I. CORINTH.—1. *Its early history*:—Corinth was famous in every age of Greek history. In the stories which have come down from the so-called heroic times it is mentioned in connection with Œdipus and with Jason. Homer speaks of "wealthy Corinth." Thucydides tells us that the Corinthians were early distinguished for naval architecture and enterprise, for commerce and for wealth. Strabo speaks of the dynasty of the Bacchiadæ who ruled in Corinth and made profit by its merchandise for 200 years; and of Cypselus, who overthrew them in B.C. 655, whose wealth was attested by a large statue of beaten gold presented by him to the temple at Olympia. Under his son Periander, Corinth was the most prosperous of the commercial cities of Greece. For this Strabo accounts by the preference of the traders between Asia and Italy to carry their goods across the Isthmus rather than risk the great perils of sailing round the Peloponnese; and by the position of the Isthmus as the only route for merchandise between the peninsula and the mainland of Greece. The Corinthians thus commanded two streams of traffic, on both which they were able to impose toll: and their city was the best residence for the merchants who conducted the traffic. Strabo mentions also the Isthmian Festivals as a source of profit by bringing strangers to the city. As a proof, and means of increase, of the wealth of Corinth, he speaks of the temple of Aphrodité, which was served by a thousand sacred courtesans. This is sad proof that in Corinth abundance of material good had produced its frequent result of self-indulgence and gross sin. Strabo says that Corinth was also the chief home of painting and sculpture. We notice, however, that the wealth of Corinth, so conducive to the development of art, did little for intellectual development. Among the many great writers of ancient Greece no Corinthian is found. (*Prof. Beet.*) 2. *In the time of Paul*:—Corinth was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, and the residence of the Roman pro-consul. In the time of the apostle it was, in fact, the metropolis of Greece, as Athens was its university. The old city was destroyed (B.C. 146) by the consul Mummius so completely that only a few temples and columns survived. It was in this conflagration that a mass of gold, silver, and bronze was melted, and ran together, accidentally forming the famous metallic compound—"Corinthian brass," which the ancients valued above pure gold. About a century after Julius Cæsar, noting the importance of the site both as a commercial port and a military position, built a new town on the ruins of the old, and peopled it with Italians, most of whom were freed-men. The city rapidly increased. The descendants of the Greek merchants and traders who, at the destruction of the ancient city, had fled to Delos and the neighbouring coasts, came back to their ancestral home; and many Jews flocked eagerly to a city where there was much business to be done, and from which Jerusalem was easily reached. Still, the Italians were the strongest, the ruling class. From this fact arose one chief characteristic of the place. It was Roman not Greek, democratic not aristocratic, in its habits, and held in itself the vices as well as the

virtues of turbulent democracy. This fact tells on St. Paul's letters. It was only in a democratic city such as Corinth that those meetings could have taken place in which every member of the Church exercised his gifts in a brawling unmannerly way, and without heeding rules of order and courtesy; it was only in such a community that the parties could have been formed which divided the Church—a community in which a crude sense of equality and independence led men first to jostle together confusedly, and then to combine in adverse factions. Another fact throws light on the Epistles. Corinth was also a commercial port. Its site was perhaps the finest in the ancient world. It stood on the Isthmus which connected North with South Greece, on the narrow tongue of land which divides the Ægæan and Ionian seas. The most prominent feature of the Isthmus was the "Acrocorinthus"—a stern, jagged, abrupt cone of rock which suddenly sweeps up to some two thousand feet above the level of the sea, and throws its long shadow half way down the Isthmus. Corinth stood on the northern base of this lofty formidable rock, on a small table-land of no great elevation, and spread downward and sideward, throwing out great roads which extended to the sea on either side of the Isthmus. These roads terminated each in a port—Cenchreæ on the Ægæan Sea, and Lechæum on the Ionian Sea; the latter for the Italian, and the former for the Oriental commerce. The Isthmus between these two ports was only about three miles broad, and the light small ships of antiquity were often drawn across this narrow sandy space, and so transported from sea to sea. In the apostle's time, the Emperor Nero made an unsuccessful attempt to cut a canal across, and thus facilitate the passage. In this happy situation Corinth soon rose to be one of the richest and greatest emporiums of the Roman Empire; all the traffic between North and South Greece passing along the Isthmus it commanded, and most of the seaborne traffic between Europe and Asia passing across it. From this fact arose another peculiarity of Corinth. Its aristocracy, its leading men, were not men of birth, but men of wealth; not manufacturers even, but merchants. They had not the settled dignity which ancient and honourable lineage ought to give, nor the trained intelligence and quick invention which fit the manufacturer for success. Mere commerce is apt to sink into routine. It produces nothing, but simply shifts productions from one place to another. Those who pursue this vocation often come to look at all things merely with an eye to their market price, to worship Mammon instead of God, to value profit above honour, and to account as of little worth the mental power, or moral virtue, or spiritual hope, which weighs nothing when put into their scales. And such men were many of the Corinthian merchants. Besides this worship of wealth, there were also the usual demoralising influences of a seaport. Men of all lands, of all faiths, of all morals and of none, met and jostled on the quays and in the streets of Corinth. Withdrawn for the time even from the restraints which the influences of home would set to them, they gave loose to their passions. Corinth became a synonym for vice. Licentiousness was dignified into worship; the temples, no less than the streets, swarmed with courtesans, more than a thousand of whom served as priestesses in a single temple devoted to the goddess Aphrodité. The stately but unhappy city became a hotbed of evil, in which every noxious weed, indigenous or transplanted, grew and throve; luxury and sensuality were stimulated by the gambling spirit of commerce, till Corinth became a proverb of corruption. (*S. Cox, D.D.*) Population at this time probably about 400,000. Society of high culture, but in morals lax, even gross. Four classes of inhabitants—Jews, Italian freedmen, Greeks, and a motley population from the cities of the Levant. 1. Throughout the Roman province of Achaïa "communities of scattered Israelites" had settled: these were mercantile guilds or firms. How did the Corinthian Jew receive the glad tidings of the Messiah from the lips of St. Paul? His heart hardened against the miracles of our Lord, he was still less impressed by the apostolic miracles: these carried no conviction to him whatsoever; he demanded signs from heaven (1 Cor. i. 22); he reiterated with a new application the Jewish cry of scorn at the foot of the Cross, "If He be the (ascended) Christ, let Him now come down"—"*He*, the crucified Malefactor, a Messiah meet for our theocracy!" At such Hebrew sceptics the apostle in Corinth was compelled (Acts xviii. 6) to "shake out the folds of his cloak." Converts among the Jews were few. Thus the first Epistle speaks to a church in which the Gentile element is much greater than the Jewish; not so other Pauline Epistles. 2. Ἔποικοι or *settlers* of the Julian colony were Italian descendants of the *first* founders from Cæsar's army, and had been now established in Corinth 103 years. They were termed *Corinthienses*. Most of

them were freedmen. 3. The *Greek* inhabitants of Achaïa were marked by intellectual restlessness and a feverish hankering after novelties. To this was added a ruinous egoism, which three centuries before had prevented Aratus from confederating disintegrated Hellas. Their egoism was as fuel ready laid for the torch of sectarianism. The more cultured of them also had a strong bent for subtle dialectic, which hindered them from seeing "the forest for trees." A nicely adjusted scheme of philosphy charmed and dazzled: they had no eyes for aught beyond. How then did the Hellenic student of Aristotle or of Philo receive the preaching of St. Paul? His gaze fixed upon a fleeting wisdom that had no bearing upon man's eternal welfare, he could not see the true wisdom for the false. When the moral logic of the Cross (chap. i. 18) was set before him, Where is the scheme, he loftily asked, in which this theory of the Cross can be inserted, as a part in the whole? It stands alone, a sun without a system, a thread without its woof: it is foolishness. 4. The *mixed* population of Corinth were merchants and sailors from Rome, from Macedonia, from Asia Minor, from Syria and Egypt, traders from the towns of Achaïa, with the usual admixture of handicraftsmen and slaves always found in such a society; to such the simplicity of the apostle's teaching would be welcome. (*Canon Evans.*)

II. PAUL AT CORINTH.—In the course of his second missionary journey St. Paul passed from Athens to Corinth, and to the wealthy and luxurious inhabitants the visit must have seemed of the slightest importance: a solitary Eastern traveller, he would be at once lost in the constant ebb and flow of strangers crossing each other at the Isthmus. But by the apostle himself his visit was regarded as of supreme moment. At the time of his arrival there was a larger number of Jews in the city than usual, many of those who had been lately banished from Rome by the decree of Claudius (Acts xvi. 9, 10) having taken refuge at Corinth. Among these were Aquila and Priscilla. In their house, always hospitably open to strangers (Rom. xvi. 5; 1 Cor. xvi. 19), Paul found a home, attaching himself to them because they were of the same craft with him. His first thought in this new city was to earn his bread and secure his independence by honest toil (2 Cor. xi. 9). Once fairly settled, we may suppose that he began to look about him. On the narrow neck of land which stretched between the two seas he would mark the level plain and broken gullies clothed with the stunted pine, from whose branches of emerald green were woven the garlands for the conquerors in the Isthmian Games, which he contrasts with the unfading "incorruptible crown" of the Christian combatant. In the eastern declivities of the Acrocorinthus he would observe the "stadium," along which the runners raced with a speed and energy which St. Paul bids his converts imitate in the Christian race. On the outskirts of the city his eye would rest on the spacious amphitheatre, in which victims were thrown to the wild beasts, or gladiators fought to the death; and from which he probably drew his figures when he told his Corinthian converts how he had "fought with beasts at Ephesus," and how, when pressed above measure with hardships and indignities, it seemed to him that he was "set forth as the last in the file of combatants appointed to death"—a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. About the city he would mark the temples and columns with their Corinthian capitals, which alone had survived the conflagration that destroyed the former city, and works of art wrought in that Corinthian brass into which gold and silver and bronze had melted and run; and hence, no doubt, he drew that magnificent illustration in chap. iii., in which he warns us that we build upon the one sure foundation, not "wood, hay, and stubble," but "gold, silver, and costly marbles," that so when "the day that is to be revealed in fire prove every man's work" our work may "abide," just as the precious metals and costly marbles of Corinth remained when all meaner edifices of wood and thatch had been swept away. Within the city, no doubt, he would also take note of the luxury and mammonism shown in the streets and markets, of the schools and gymnasia in which the Corinthians contracted their admiration for mere gifts of intellect and speech, and of those wicked temples in which licentious indulgences were hallowed by forms of worship. From Acts xviii. we learn that on the Sabbath he was wont, when first he arrived in Corinth, to go up to the synagogue, and reason and persuade both with Jews and proselytes, apparently speaking at first only as a Jew to Jews, about the "mercy promised to their forefathers," and the "oath sworn to Abraham." But soon Timotheus and Silas follow him from Macedonia, and bring so good a report of the converts he has left there, that Paul is "pressed," *i.e.*, "straitened" in spirit. He

cannot any longer speak simply as a Jew. He testifies to his astonished hearers that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ of God. They break out into invective and blasphemy; and Paul stands up in the synagogue and shakes its dust from his robes, declaring that, since they will not hear him, he will henceforth "go to the Gentiles." He had not far to go. Contiguous to the synagogue was the house of Justus, a proselyte, in which the apostle continued to preach to as many as would come to hear. Here his labours were greatly blessed. The household of Stephanas were his first-fruits in Achaia. Gaius, with whom Paul found a home on his next visit to the city, was another of his converts. Aquila and Priscilla too, with whom he now lived and worked, seem to have received his gospel. But of all his early converts, none appears to have been more warmly welcomed than Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, whom, on his profession of faith, Paul baptized with his own hands, as indeed, contrary to his usual practice, he had also baptized Gaius and the family of Stephanas. The congregation rapidly grew (Acts xviii. 8), and among this mixed and growing audience Paul "sat," after the manner of the Rabbis, and taught with unabated fervour "the Cross of Christ." Speaking not with enticing rhetorical words, but as one who heartily believed in the simple gospel facts, he won an easy victory over the outworn creeds of Paganism and Hebraism. Some of his converts were, we know, men of culture and wealth; but there were "not many mighty, not many noble, not many wise," but mainly slaves and artisans. It would seem that while Paul was busy in his work, Gallio, the new pro-consul, arrived at Corinth. The Jews, anxious, if possible, to profit by a change in the administration, and encouraged, perhaps, by the compliant and gracious character of the pro-consul, accused Paul before him as a disturber of the religious faith and peace of the city. They seem to have hoped that Paul would be given up to them; and had Gallio been a governor of the stamp of Pilate, or Festus, or Felix, their hope would probably have been fulfilled. Happily he was a man of a nobler cast; and no sooner had he understood that the question before him was simply a question of "words and names" and the technicalities of the Hebrew faith, than, without permitting Paul to reply to the accusation, he drove Sosthenes and his abettors from the judgment-seat. This was a decision which carried great consequences with it. The whole city was on the alert to see what the new pro-consul would do, and to gather some hints of the direction in which his sympathies would run. The Greeks interpret the decision as adverse to the Jews; they deliver Paul from the hands of his enemies; they rush upon Sosthenes and beat him, probably with the lictors' rods, before the pro-consular chair. And "Gallio cared for none of these things." Why should he? He is there to administer the justice of the State, not to control or patronise religion. How critical the occasion was we may infer from the fact that on all previous occasions Paul had left the cities in which the Jews persecuted him; and that to keep him at Corinth God sent him a vision (Acts xviii. 9, 10). It was only because God cheered and strengthened him that Paul remained at Corinth, risking all the enmity of the Jews in order that he might gather much people of that wicked city into the pure fold of Christ. (*S. Cox, D.D.*)

III. Corinthian Church Life.—1. *The bright side:*—It is Sabbath evening, but of course the heathen city knows of no Sabbath. The day's work at the busy sea-port is over, and the streets are thronged with gay revellers intent on a night of pleasure, for it is the wickedest city of that wicked ancient world. Hundreds of merchants and sailors from foreign parts are lounging about. The gay young Roman, who has come across to this Paris for a bout of dissipation, drives his light chariot through the streets If it is near the time of the annual games, there are groups of boxers, runners, charioteers, and wrestlers, surrounded by their admirers and discussing their chances of winning the coveted crowns. In the warm genial climate old and young are out of doors enjoying the evening hour, whilst the sun, going down over the Adriatic, is casting its golden light upon the palaces and temples of the wealthy city. Meantime the little company of Christians has been gathering from all directions to their place of worship; for it is the hour of their stated assembly. The place of meeting itself does not rise very clearly before our view. But at all events it is no gorgeous temple like those by which it is surrounded; it has not even the pretensions of the neighbouring synagogue. It may be a large room in a private house or the wareroom of some Christian merchant cleared for the occasion. Glance round the benches and look at the faces. You at once discern one marked distinction among them: some have the peculiar facial contour

of the Jew, while the rest are Gentiles of various nationalities; and the latter are the majority. But look closer still and you notice another distinction: some wear the ring which denotes that they are free, while others are slaves; and the latter preponderate. Here and there among the Gentile members there is one with the regular features of the born Greek, perhaps shaded with the pale thoughtfulness of the philosopher or distinguished with the self-confidence of wealth; but not many great, not many mighty, not many noble are there; the majority belong to what in this pretentious city would be reckoned the foolish, the weak, the base, and despised things of this world; they are slaves, whose ancestors did not breathe the pellucid air of Greece, but roamed in savage hordes on the banks of the Danube or the Don. But observe one thing besides on all the faces present—the terrible traces of their past life. In a modern Christian congregation one sees in the faces on every hand that peculiar cast of feature which Christian nurture, inherited through many centuries, has produced; and it is only here and there that a face may be seen in whose lines the tale is written of debauchery or crime. But in this Corinthian congregation these awful hieroglyphics are everywhere. "Know ye not," Paul writes to them, "that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you." Look at that tall, sallow-faced Greek; he has wallowed in the mire of Circe's swine-pens. Look at that low-browed Scythian slave; he has been a pickpocket and a jail-bird. Look at that thin-nosed, sharp-eyed Jew; he has been a Shylock, cutting his pound of flesh from the gilded youth of Corinth. Yet there has been a great change. Another story besides the tale of sin is written on these countenances. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." Listen, they are singing; it is the fortieth Psalm: "He took me from the fearful pit and from the miry clay." What pathos they throw into the words, what joy overspreads their faces! They know themselves to be monuments of free grace and dying love. But suppose them now all gathered. There was this difference between their services and ours, that instead of one man conducting them, all were at liberty to contribute their part. There may have been a leader or chairman; but one member might read a portion of Scripture, another offer prayer, a third deliver an address, a fourth raise a hymn, and so on. Nor does there seem to have been any fixed order in which the different parts of the service occurred; any member might rise and lead away the company into praise or prayer or meditation, as he felt prompted. This peculiarity was due to another great difference between them and us. The members were endowed with very extraordinary gifts. Some of them had the power of working miracles, such as the healing of the sick. Others possessed a strange gift called the gift of tongues. It is not quite clear what it was; but it seems to have been a kind of tranced utterance, in which the speaker poured out an impassioned rhapsody by which his religious feeling received both expression and exaltation. Some of those who possessed this gift were not able to tell others the meaning of what they were saying, while others had this additional power; and there were those who, though not speaking with tongues themselves, were able to interpret what the inspired speakers were saying. Then, again, there were members who possessed the gift of prophecy—a gift of impassioned eloquence, whose effects were sometimes marvellous: when an unbeliever entered the assembly and listened to the prophets, he was seized with uncontrollable emotion, the sins of his past life rose up before him, and, falling on his face, he confessed that God was among them of a truth. Other members exercised gifts more like those we are ourselves acquainted with, such as the gift of teaching or the gift of management. After the services just described were over, the members sat down together to a love-feast, which was wound up with the breaking of bread in the Lord's Supper; and then, after a fraternal kiss, they departed to their homes. It was a memorable scene, radiant with brotherly love and alive with outbreaking spiritual power. As the Christians wended their way homewards through the careless groups of the heathen city, they were conscious of having experienced that which eye had not seen nor ear heard. (*J. Stalker, D.D.*)

2. *The dark side and its lessons*:—The picture presented in this Epistle is by no means an ideal of excellence. Indeed, it dispels rudely a pleasant dream that the early Christians were a pattern of purity and love. Transported to their midst we find not love and order and maturity, but spiritual childishness, a universal spirit of faction, blind self-conceit, resolute opposition to the great and loving apostle,

and gross sin. Yet these imperfect Christians Paul recognises as brethren in Christ, justified and sanctified, the living temple of God, and a living letter evidently written by Christ with the Spirit of God through the agency of Paul, and therefore to him a source of thankfulness to God. This warns us not to treat as worthless imperfect forms of Christianity; and not to shut out men, and still less churches, from the family of God because of imperfections or inconsistencies. Human nature is a strange mixture. Churches with bad men in their chief places have often contained true followers of Christ. And underlying much that is unchristlike there has often been genuine though infantile Christian life. There are both tares among the wheat and among many tares wheat which will be garnered in the eternal harvest. This picture of an early Church dissipates fears for the churches of to-day. Possibly Paul trembled when he thought how soon these children in the faith would be left orphans in a wicked and stormy world. Certainly, had we stood by his side and seen the feebleness of the soldiers of the Cross and the divisions in their camp, and thought that to them alone must soon be committed the royal banner and all the interests of the kingdom of God on earth, we should have feared that the Church itself would not long survive the departure of its founders. But the feeble Christianity of that day overspread the Roman Empire, overthrew the gods of Greece, and became the religion of the civilised world. In view of this triumph we cannot fear, as some seem to do, that the Christianity of our day will be ruined by the imperfections and disorders prevalent here or there. For underneath weakness, or even disease, in the body of Christ there breathes immortal life. (*Prof. Beet.*)

IV. THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.—1. *Its date and occasion:*—The apostle's sojourn at Ephesus is drawing to a close. Easter is approaching (58 A.D.), and he expects to stay in the Asiatic capital until Pentecost (chaps. v. 8; xvi. 8, 9). After Pentecost he proposes travelling to Macedonia, then coming on to Corinth and spending the ensuing winter there (chap. xvi. 1–9), after that setting out to Jerusalem. Meanwhile he has sent Timothy in his place with Erastus (chap. iv. 17; Acts xix. 22). But it was possible he might be hindered or delayed (chap. xvi. 10); and so indeed it turned out. For in the Second Epistle, which Paul writes from Macedonia with Timothy by his side (chap. i. 1), not a word is said of Timothy's mission (contrast with this 1 Thess. iii. 6–8); St. Paul's mind is full of Titus' report of the state of affairs at Corinth (chaps. ii. 13; vii. 5–16). Clearly it was Titus who actually went to Corinth (chap. iv. 17), to report to him on the condition of the Church and the effect of the Epistle, and to expedite the collection for Jerusalem (2 Cor. ix. 2; 1 Cor. xvi. 1-6; *cf.* Rom. xv. 25–29; Acts xxiv. 17; Gal. ii. 10; vi. 7–10). We are told in 2 Cor. viii. 6 that Titus took a special interest in this work of charity, arising perhaps from the fact that he had been with Paul at Jerusalem some years before (Gal. ii. 1). Previous to the despatch of the First Epistle there had been a good deal of communication between St. Paul and Corinth. From 2 Cor. xii. 14 and xiii. 1, 2 ("This third time I am coming"), we infer that he had himself visited the Corinthian Church not very long ago, when he was grieved at the conduct of its members (2 Cor. xii. 20, 21). It is possible that we have a hint of the time of this visit in 2 Cor. ix. 2, where the words "a year ago," perhaps indicate the summer or autumn of 57 as the date of his excursion from Ephesus. He took no judicial action against the offenders at the time, contenting himself with hearing "the word of those that were puffed up" (chap. iv. 19), and warning them of the punishment that would ensue if on his return in the next spring he found them unrepentant (2 Cor. xiii. 2). This forbearance some of his opponents put down to weakness on his part—an impression that he fears may be aggravated by the present delay in his coming, and which in both Epistles he earnestly strives to remove (chap. iv. 18–21; 2 Cor. i. 17—ii. 1), promising his defiers, who asked for "a proof of Christ speaking in him" (2 Cor. xiii. 2, 3), that their wish would shortly be gratified. Not only had St. Paul been in Corinth before, but had also written to the Church, probably in consequence of his visit (chap. v. 9). It is conjectured that we have, after all, a paragraph of the earlier lost letter in 2 Cor. vi. 14—vii. 1, that has somehow slipped into this place. This passage very much interrupts the connection of thought where we find it in 2 Corinthians, and it is well suited to the purpose of the missing letter. The Corinthians received this, but had not as yet acted upon it. The doubt raised as to its meaning supplied a reason for delay. In explaining this by letter to the apostle they addressed to him at the same time a number of inquiries, with which

he deals consecutively in chaps. vii.—xii. Three esteemed members of the Corinthian Church, Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus, came to Ephesus, seemingly as a deputation, bringing with them the above letter, and wishful to assure the anxious apostle as to the feeling of the Corinthians towards him (chap. xvi, 17, 18). Unfortunately, about the same time he heard from another source, "by those of the house of Chloe" (chap. i. 11), tidings which revived his worst fears. The strifes he had witnessed with so much sorrow had broken out still more violently; indeed, they threatened to bring about the speedy disruption of the Church. Amid the general rivalry and confusion four separate factions were distinguished. There were the Judaists—destined to play an important part in the later development of affairs—who said, "I am of Cephas." The Apollos party boasted themselves men of culture and philosophic breadth; they missed in the apostle's discourse the "excellency of speech and of wisdom" with which Apollos had gratified them (chap. ii. 1; 2 Cor. xi. 6). Nor did Paul lack vigorous asserters of his superiority, men devoted to evangelic faith and freedom, whose championship, however, was maintained with a party spirit highly distasteful to him. There was even a Christian party, as jealous and disputatious as the rest, who set themselves above their brethren in claiming to be the true followers of Jesus, disparaging all other names and all other earthly authority in the pride of saying, "I am of Christ" (ver. 12). Amongst the cases of immorality that had occurred in this Church (2 Cor. xii. 21), there was one of an especially infamous nature, respecting which St. Paul has now received information that leaves no room for doubt as to the facts (chap. v. 1). He demands indignantly a prompt and summary judgment of the case, so that before the approaching passover the Church may be purged of the profligate's defiling presence (chap. v. 3–13). This case of discipline was a crucial matter. Had the Corinthians refused obedience the apostle would feel that he had lost all authority over them, and that his work at Corinth was ruined. Looking at matters in this light we can understand the conflicting emotions under which the apostle wrote this letter, and the intense anxiety with which he awaited its result (2 Cor. ii. 4, 12, 13, and vii. 5–9). When the danger was over he allowed expression to these feelings of distress. In the First Epistle he bears himself with perfect self-control, with the calm and firm courage of the pilot at the height of the storm. Chap. v. was, in effect, Paul's ultimatum to Corinth. (*Prof. Findlay.*) 2. *Its genuineness*:—(1) It is found in all Greek MSS. of Paul's Epistles, and in the Latin, Syriac, Egyptian, Gothic, Armenian, and Ethiopic versions. (2) It is quoted by the following Fathers: Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Irenæus, Polycarp, and Clement of Rome. We find, therefore, that it was well known and accepted both by friends and foes before A.D. 200 in places so far apart as Carthage, Egypt, and Gaul; and that it was referred to by three writers born before A.D. 100, and was appealed to within the lifetime probably of some who had seen the apostle in a public letter from the Church at Rome to that at Corinth as having been written to the latter Church by Paul. (3) Its contents are such as no forger would dare to write; and such as would certainly prevent its acceptance by the Church at Corinth except on evidence which forbad all doubt. It abounds in severest condemnation of irregularities, vice, and heresy, which no contemporary forger would dare to record in a letter for which he sought acceptance as written by Paul; nor would any Church accept, without careful scrutiny, so public a monument of its degradation. (4) Our study of the Epistle will assure us that it came from a man of vast mental power, of intense earnestness, and of the highest moral grandeur. Now the contents are such as must be either genuine or written with an intent to deceive. Can we conceive a man able to write such a letter perpetrating a forgery in order to hide his own name in oblivion? Nay, more; no man could do it. For the tone of reality throughout these Epistles is too clear to be simulated. The living picture here presented can be no other than a genuine reflection of actual life. And that it is such, will be strongly confirmed by our comparison of the Acts. So abundant and unquestionable is this various evidence that in all ages it has been accepted as genuine, both by those who share and those who trample under foot the earnest faith of the great apostle. (*Prof. Beet.*) 3. *Its composition*:—It was written, with the exception of the last few lines, by an amanuensis; not in Paul's name alone, but in that of Sosthenes also—whether the successor of Crispus, as president of the Corinthian synagogue (Acts xviii. 17), or another of the same name cannot be determined. There is Paul himself, now about sixty years of age, and bearing in the pallor and feebleness of his frame traces (Gal. vi. 17; 2 Cor. xi. 27; iv. 10) of his constant and

recent hardships; his eyes at times streaming with grief and indignation (2 Cor. ii. 4): the scribe catching the words from his lips and recording them on the scroll of parchment or papyrus (2 John 12; 2 Tim. iv. 13) which lay before him. Possibly Sosthenes was himself the scribe; and if so, we may conceive him not only transcribing, but bearing his part in the Epistle, at times with signs of acquiescence and approbation, at times, it may be, interposing to remind the apostle of some forgotten fact, as of the baptism of the household of Stephanas (chap. i. 16), or of some possible misapprehension of what he had dictated. (*Dean Stanley.*)

4. *Its importance:*—(1) Paul's relation to the Church in Corinth was in some respects peculiar. He was not only its founder, but he continued in the closest relation to it. It excited his solicitude, called for the wisest management, tried his patience and forbearance, rewarded him at times by signal evidence of affection and obedience, and filled him with hopes of its extended and healthful influence. His love for that Church was therefore of special intensity. It was analogous to that of a father for a promising son beset with temptations, whose character combined great excellences with great defects. The Epistles to the Corinthians, therefore, reveal to us more of the personal character of the apostle than any of his other letters. They show him to us as a man, as a pastor, as a counsellor, as in conflict not only with heretics, but with personal enemies. They reveal his wisdom, his zeal, his forbearance, his liberality of principle and practice in all matters of indifference, his strictness in all matters of right and wrong, his humility, and perhaps, above all, his unwearied activity and wonderful endurance. (2) These Epistles show more clearly than any other portion of the New Testament Christianity in conflict with heathenism. We see what method Paul adopted in founding the Church in the midst of a refined and corrupt people; how he answered questions of conscience arising out of the relations of Christians to the heathen around them. The cases may never occur again, but the principles involved in their decision are of perpetual obligation, and serve as lights to the Church in all ages. Principles relating to Church discipline, to social relations and intercourse, to public worship, the nature of the Church, and of the sacraments, are here unfolded, not in an abstract form, so much as in their application. These Epistles, therefore, in reference to all practical measures in the establishment of the Church among the heathen, and in its conduct in Christian lands, are among the most important portions of the Word of God. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*)

5. *Its style, tone, and contents:*—(1) Style and tone. In chap. i. a quiet and dignified assertion of his own apostolic authority, which had been called in question by the Hebraizing party, followed by a courteous salutation, leads to a brief exordium, which is kindly in tone, and winning even. Then the sore subject of partisanship is introduced easily and without obtrusiveness: "I am assured by Chloe's friends that there are contentions among you." After this the style and tone kindle into a fiery vehemence: "What? has the Christ been made a *share?* The Christ reduced from a whole to a part? Was then *Paul* crucified for you? was Apollos? was Cephas? Say not that." This fiery vehemence rolls on through the first chapter in an emphatic terseness that brings out to the reader's view bright elevations only, leaving dark the connecting depressions. One aim of a commentary is to throw light, if possible, on the sunken depressions. Again, when he comes to deal with human philosophy, St. Paul speaks out boldly, even contemptuously and in scathing antithesis more than once: "the world's wise are God's fools, and the world's fools are God's wise." Nor can we wonder at this, for it is from the serene summits of his own "superabundant revelations" in the philosophy of Christianity (for he insists that the Cross of Christ is the nucleus and centre of a profound philosophy of Redemption, planned in heaven prior to Creation itself), it is from this lofty level of a transcendental knowledge that the apostle looks down with pity and with a holy scorn upon men's intellectual methods and scientific labours to solve life's riddle. Hence with pious contempt he thunders down upon the sophist and the Rabbi, upon the sapient Greek and the stolid Jew, "Where is *wiseman?* where is *scribe?* Has not God proved the world's wisdom *futile? silly?* reduced to an absurdity all its irrelevant philosophies?" No compromise here. Or what can be more incisive than the sharp contrasts blended with a polished irony in chap. i. 27, 28? "A foolish thing of God is wiser than all mankind! A weak thing of God is stronger than all mankind!" Or again, the world's simpletons, the world's nonentities, the world's weaklings and baselings (*i.e.*, elements deemed such by the world) are the *chosen* things, the very elements of God's selection for the kingdom, while the scientists and the potentates and the

entities (as St. Paul calls the somebodies) are often, not always, just what God's selective wisdom in its march through the world looks at, and passes by and leaves behind. These cosmic eminences are generally among the *rejectanei*. Another conspicuous feature of this Epistle is the Pauline irony: certain passages ring with indignant sarcasm. (2) Contents. Three trustworthy members of the Corinthian Church came to Ephesus bearing a letter from the Pauline and largest party, begging a solution of divers questions on marriage, on the veiling of women in assemblies, on sacrificial feasts, on spiritual gifts. The apostle, who had been informed of the disorders and divisions in the mother Church, replies to these questions seriatim. He also rebukes their contentious spirit, their acquiescence in a gross case of immorality unpunished, their appealing to heathen tribunals, their irregularities in the manner of celebrating the Eucharist and the Love-feasts, the denial by some of the resurrection itself. (*Canon Evans.*) 6. *Its relation to the gospel history*, as evidencing its truth in connection with the other Epistles. Note—(I) The allusions to the sayings of Christ. There are only two occasions on which our Lord's authority is directly quoted—chaps. vii. 10; ix. 4. Evidently referring in the one case to Matt. v. 32; Mark x. 11; Luke xvi. 18; and in the other to Luke x. 4, 7; Matt. x. 9, 10. To these we may add chap. xiv. 37, which, like Acts xx. 35, is lost. Four other passages, from their likeness of expression, may seem to have been derived from our Lord's teaching—chap. iv. 2, *cf.* Luke vi. 28; chap. vi. 2, *cf.* Luke xxii. 30; chap. vii. 35, *cf.* Luke x. 39, 40; chap. xiii. 2, *cf.* Matt. xvii. 20. But note, first, that their want of exact agreement implies that at the time the Gospels were not in existence. Secondly, that this discrepancy of form, combined with an unquestionable likeness of spirit, agrees with discrepancies of a similar kind in the gospels themselves; and when contrasted with the total dissimilarity of such isolated sayings as are ascribed to Christ by Irenæus, show that the atmosphere, so to speak, of the gospel history extended beyond the limits of its existing records, and that within that atmosphere the apostle was included. Thirdly, the manner in which the apostle refers to these sayings proves the undisputed claim which they have already established, not only in his own mind, but in that of the whole Church. He quotes the sentence of Christ as that from which there was to be no appeal (chap. vii. 10). Already the Lord's words had become the law of the Christian society. (2) The references to the particular acts of the life of Christ. To the earlier events the references are few. First, those to the Nativity (Rom. i. 3; Gal. iv. 4) illustrate the stress laid by the evangelists on the lineage of David (Luke ii. 23; Matt. i. 1); on the announcement of His birth (Luke ii. 4; Matt. i. 23), and on the ritual observances which immediately followed (Luke ii. 21–24). Secondly, there is no detailed allusion to the ministry or miracles of Christ. To the general manner, however, of our Lord's mode of life there is one strong testimony which agrees perfectly with the fact and the spirit of the gospel narratives (2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 7). Thirdly, it is in the closing scenes of our Lord's life that the apostle's allusions centre. His "gospel" began with the sufferings of Christ (chap. xv. 3), and the main subject of his preaching in Corinth and Galatia was the Cross (chap. i. 17, 18; Gal. iii. 1). The distinct allusions to His sufferings are few but precise (Heb. v. 7; 1 Tim. vi. 13). But the most definite and exact agreement is that which in chap. xi. 23–26 contains the earliest written account of the Lord's Supper, and which but for the confusions of the Corinthian Church would have remained unrecorded. The resurrection, like the death of Christ, is the subject of numerous allusions. In chap. xv. 4–7 we have the account of five appearances after the resurrection besides the one to himself, the general character of which remarkably opens with that of the gospel narratives. Some of the instances given are identical in both; but the appearance to James, agreeing as it does with the rejected gospel to the Hebrews, indicates an independent source for the apostle's statement. The appearance to Peter is also to be noticed especially, as an example of an incident to which allusion is made in Luke xxiv. 34, which here only receives its explanation. Paul's mention of the appearance to the five hundred exemplifies that he, writing nearer the time, makes a fuller statement than is to be found in the later accounts—the reverse of what is usually supposed to take place in fictitious narratives. The final result of the comparison thus shows that thirty years after the event, there must have existed a belief in the gospel story of the resurrection much as we have it now. As regards the ascension, in the early Epistles, as in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John, all reference to it is omitted, as though it were a mere accompaniment of the resurrection. But in the later Epistles, as in

Luke and Acts, it is prominently brought forward (Eph. i. 20, ii. 6, iv. 8; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Heb. x. 20, iv. 14, ix. 24). The coincidence may be ascribed to the fact that the ascension (as in Acts i. 9–11) was regarded rather as part of the life of the Church (of which the later Epistles treat) than of Christ Himself. It is to be noted that these detailed references agree mostly with the Gospel of Luke, which points to the conclusion that the author of that Gospel was the companion of Paul. (3) The allusions to the character of Christ. First, His greatness (chap. i. 30 viii. 6, xv. 45; 2 Cor. v. 10, 19, &c. &c.). We are so familiar with the sound of these words that we rarely think of their vastness, complexity, and freshness as employed in their first application to an actual individual man. Yet the image of Christ in the Gospels will be by all confessed to approach more nearly to Paul's description than any other appearance in humanh istory. Secondly, His wisdom (chap. i. 30, *cf.* Col. ii. 3; Eph. i. 17). This is not the attribute which a zealous convert would necessarily think of applying to the founder of his religion. It is so applied by the apostle, and we see from the Gospels that his application of it cannot be questioned. Thirdly, His truth (Rom. ix. 1; Eph. iv. 21; 2 Cor. i. 20). The apostle's words are a faithful echo of John viii. 32, xiv. 6, xviii. 37, and of Christ's "Verily, verily." Fourthly, His freedom. The apostle urges on his converts the freedom of the doctrine he preached and its contrast to the narrowness and concealment of the Jewish law, and tells them that they must attain this freedom through "the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 1; iv. 10). We turn to the Gospels and find in their representation of Christ this very freedom—the sacrifice of the letter to the spirit, and the encouragement of openness and sincerity. Fifthly, His toleration (Rom. xv. 1, 3; 1 Cor. x. 32, 33; xi. 1). We cannot overlook our Lord's constant though not universal acquiescence in the forms of the Mosaic law, and His condescension to human weakness and narrowness which runs through the whole texture of the gospel story. Sixthly, His gentleness (2 Cor. x. 1). Seventhly, His love. Chap. xiii. is a portrait of Christ and of no other. (*Dean Stanley.*) 7. *Its relation to philosophy, criticism, and theology*:—The Epistle to a remarkable degree combines modern questions and ancient methods. It touches on several of the points around which the battle of Christianity in our day is fought—the person of Christ, the supernatural element in the Church and in the Christian character, miracles, casuistry, and the resurrection. But the apostle's statements on these and kindred topics are not conceived in the modern spirit. They are not tentative and deductive, but idealistic. He has fundamental ideas, which he, like Christ, does not attempt to prove. It is only when he raises a superstructure of truths on this foundation that discussion begins. If the reader rejects the assumptions as mystical unreason, the apostle's entire doctrinal system must be unintelligible to him, except as the allegorical part of practical exhortation. We have no safe ground, it is true, for the inference that Paul formulated a purely philosophical system which might be applied to the solution of all religious problems as they arose. But a thoughtful reader of his Epistles will have no difficulty to discover the bent of his mind, even when it acts most freely. He is ever seeking the one in the many; and when he has found it, the unifying principles assumes in his eyes an objectiveness of character and becomes a real cosmical factor. His search for unity was partly the half-conscious yearning of a profound intellect that remained to the end more or less a stranger to the conflict of the later Greek schools, partly it embodied the spirit of the age, which felt the reaction against scepticism and faced the ever recurring question of dualism from the side of religion. Such a philosophy, however latent, could not fail to give birth to a very pronounced theology. In that theology a conspicuous place would be assigned to such ideas as lend themselves to the gathering of many particulars under general principles. The apostle's system of religious thought lay at the

farthest distance from empiricism and individualism. The principle that no thought can be admitted except on the express warrant of consciousness is modern. The source of Paul's ideas is revelation—an outward revelation of certain essential facts, and an inward revelation of the principles involved in them to the spiritual man. Those facts and principles centre in Christ. The Christ of Paul is at once the historical Jesus and the risen Lord in heaven. His fundamental philosophical assumptions would be accredited to his mind by their spiritual influence, their practical use, their consistency with his moral convictions, and their readiness to fit into the revelations which he believed himself to have received of God concerning the person of Christ and the meaning and power of His life, death, and resurrection. Plato's ideas "dwell in heaven." If they were on earth they would be individual and therefore imperfect. Similarly in Paul's teaching the Christ lives a heavenly life. He is spiritual, supernatural, absolute. What is of the earth is earthy, and what is of the flesh is flesh. By regarding the second Adam, not as a mere Adam or earthly man, but as a quickening Spirit and as the second Man from heaven, the apostle finds place for the identification of Christ with the ideally and absolutely good. We admit that to the Greek conception that religion is the criterion of truth, we must add the Hebrew conception of religion involving a moral law, the consciousness of sin, and the felt necessity of an atonement. The spiritual man is before all things a saved man. The Christ of heaven is the crucified Saviour. The gospel calls on men to repent and believe. But it is precisely in the union of a salvation through an atonement and salvation unto spirituality that the peculiar greatness of St. Paul's representation of Christianity lies. What corresponds most nearly in his teaching to the modern conception of consciousness as test of truth is faith; for it combines trust in God's mercy and a realisation of Christ as a perfect ideal. Faith is both the cry of the terror-stricken sinner for pity and the eye of the spiritual man that can look at the sun without blinking; and it is the one and the other because it unites the soul to Christ, who is at once the Saviour and the example. (*Principal Edwards.*)

The works of the late Reverend C. H. Spurgeon are used in the preparation of this volume by permission of Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster.

THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR.

I. CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTER I.

VERS. 1–9. Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God.—*The salutation* :—I. THE CHARACTER OF PAUL. 1. There were two things the apostle knew confidently. (1) That he was "not meet to be called an apostle." The same humility should mark us. Our humility, however, must not weaken faith or enfeeble energy. For—(2) Paul was an apostle. We are not "meet" to be saved, but we should never doubt our salvation when the Word of God assures us. 2. The strength and nobleness of Paul's character was based on the confidence that he was "called of God" to be and to do the work of an apostle. A little thing will not make us lose heart in our work if we believe we are "called of God." II. THE CHARACTER OF THE CORINTHIANS. 1. They also were "called of God" "to be saints"—*i.e.*, separated to God. They were not self-called, to be and to do what they liked. They were called of God to be like God, and to do His will; to be separated from their former selves. 2. They had been called out of a society—(1) Where the Greeks sought for "wisdom" and the Jews for "signs." (2) That was morally corrupt. 3. The character given them by God should inspire them with jealous care against—(1) The admission into the Church of the elements of Corinthian society. (2) Religious bigotry and intolerance—the spirit of the Jew. They were but a part of the Church. III. THE BENEDICTION. Grace is essentially an element of "peace." Its great dispensation was heralded in by "peace on earth." "Sinai" and "peace" were not known; but "Calvary" and "peace" are one. They who build on anything but "grace" will not know "peace." The Church, too, will be characterised by "peace" in the measure of the "grace" in the heart of its members. The peace-breaker is never a man "full of grace." (*The Study.*) *The salutation* :—I. THE DESIGNATION OF THE WRITERS. 1. An apostle means "one sent," a missionary to teach the truth committed to him; and the authority of this apostolic mission St. Paul substantiates in ver. 1, for it was questioned. In the firm conviction of his call by the will of God lay all his power. No man felt more strongly his own insignificance, but more deeply did he feel that he was God's messenger. Imagine that conception dawning on him in the midst of his despondency, and his joyful boldness against the slander of his enemies, and the doubtfulness of his friends is natural. This should be our strength. Called to be a politician, a tradesman, a physician. Why should not each and all of us feel that? But we get rid of it by saying that God called the apostles, but does not speak to us. But observe the modesty of the apostolic claim. He did not wish that his people should receive his truth because he, the apostle, had said it, but because it was truth. 2. St. Paul's joining with himself "brother" Sosthenes is another proof of his desire to avoid lording it over God's heritage. If Sosthenes be he of Acts xviii., what a conqueror St. Paul, or rather Christianity, had become. Like the apostle, Sosthenes now built up the faith which once he destroyed. II. THE PERSONS ADDRESSED. 1. "The Church," which, according to the derivation of the word, means the House of God. It is that body of men in whom the Spirit of God dwells, and who exist on earth for the purpose of exhibiting the Divine life, to penetrate and purify the world. It has an existence continuous throughout the

ages, not on the principles of hereditary succession or of human election, but on the principle of spiritual similarity of character, just as the seed of Abraham are the inheritors of his faith. 2. There is, however, a Church visible and invisible; the latter consists of those spiritual persons who fulfil the notion of the ideal Church; the former embraces within it all who profess Christianity, whether they be proper or improper members of its body. Of the invisible Church St. Paul speaks as "called to be saints," "temples of the Holy Ghost." Of the visible as "carnal, and walking as men," and when he reproves their errors Christ too speaks of the same in the parables of the draw-net and the tares. To illustrate the abstract conception of a river is that of a stream of pure water, but the actual river is the Rhine or the Thames, muddy and discoloured. So of the Church. Abstractedly and invisibly it is a kingdom of God in which no evil is; in the concrete, and actually, it is the Church of Corinth, Rome, or England, tainted with impurity; and yet just as the muddied Rhone is really the Rhone, and not mud and Rhone, so there are not two churches, the Church of Corinth and the false church within it, but one visible Church in which the invisible lies concealed (*cf.* the parable of the Vine). 3. But beyond the limits of the visible is there no true Church? Are Plato, Socrates, Marcus Antoninus, and such as they, to be reckoned by us as lost? Surely not. The Church exists for the purpose of educating souls for heaven; but goodness is goodness, find it where we may. A vineyard exists for the purpose of nurturing vines, but he would be a strange vine-dresser who denied the reality of grapes because they had ripened under a less genial soil, and beyond the precincts of the vineyard. 4. The visible Church of which the Church of Corinth formed a part existed to exhibit what humanity should be to represent the Life Divine in—(1) Self-devotion. They were "sanctified in Jesus Christ." When ecclesiastical dignity makes godliness a means of gain, or when priestcraft exercises lordship over God's heritage, then it is falsifying its mission. (2) Sanctity. The Corinthian converts came out of a factious and extremely corrupt society, and carried into the Church the savour of their old life, for the wine-skin will long retain the flavour of the wine. We find immorality existing, old philosophy colouring Christianity, the insolence of wealth at the Lord's Supper, and spiritual gifts exhibited for ostentation. Such was the Church of Corinth, the Early Church so boasted of by some! Nevertheless all are "called to be saints," and their mission is to put down all evil. (3) Universality: "With all who, in every place," &c. The Corinthian Church was only a part of the Church universal as a river is of the sea. Paul would not permit it to think of itself as more spiritual or as possessing higher dignity than the Church at Jerusalem or Thessalonica. There is no centre of unity but Christ. We boast of our advantages over Dissenters and Romanists. Whereas the same God and the same Christ is "theirs and ours." (4) Unity. Christ was the Saviour of all, and His Spirit bound all together into a living and invisible unity. Each in their several ways contributed to fill up the same building on the same Foundation; each in their various ways were distinct members of Christ's body, performing different offices, yet knit into one under the same Head; and the very variety produced a more perfect and abiding unity. III. THE BENEDICTION: "Grace and peace," &c. The heathen commenced their letters with the salutation, "Health!" There is a life of the flesh, and there is a life of the spirit—a truer, more real, and higher life, and above and beyond all things the apostle wished them this. He wished them neither "health" nor "happiness," but "grace and peace," &c. And now comes the question, What is the use of this benediction? How could grace and peace be given as a blessing to those who rejected grace, and not believing felt no peace? Its validity depended on its reception by the hearts to whom it was addressed. If they received it they became in fact what they had been by right all along. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *The apostolic salutations*:—The praise here bestowed, though not greater than that with which other Epistles are opened, is remarkable as being addressed to a Church which is thought deserving of severe censures. But it is to be observed—1. That the praise there bestowed on faith and holiness is here almost confined to gifts such as knowledge and wisdom, which were obviously not incompatible with the moral degradation into which some of the members of the Church had fallen. And it is in accordance with the apostle's method to seize, in the first instance, on some point of sympathy and congratulation, not merely from a prudential policy, but from natural courtesy and generosity. 2. That this apostolic practice is an exemplification of the general rule, according to which Scripture presents strongly the ideal of the whole without describing the defects and sins of the parts. The visible society of Christians was to the apostles,

in spite of its many imperfections, the representation of Messiah's kingdom. And then, although the Christian congregation in each city or country was distinct from the heathen community in which it was situated, it was, as it were, the Christian representative of that community. A Christian of Corinth or Ephesus might travel backwards and forwards from one to the other; but however great were the disorders of the one or the excellences of the other, there was no call upon him to exchange communions unless he actually ceased to reside in Corinth or Ephesus. The supposed duty of gaining proselytes from Christian communities different from our own, and the consequent division of Churches by any other than their local and national designations, are ideas alien from the apostolic age. "Spartam nactus es; hanc exorna," was a maxim of apostolical, no less than of Grecian wisdom. No Church of later ages has presented a more striking example of corruption or laxity than was exhibited at Corinth, yet the apostle does not call on his converts to desert their city or their community; and he himself steadily fixes his view on the better and the redeeming side. (*Dean Stanley.*) *The Church in Corinth*:—I. THE WRITER—"Paul, an Apostle," &c. 1. An apostle is one sent, as Christ was sent by the Father (1 John xvii. 18). It was therefore an office no one could take to himself, nor was it promotion from previous service. This explains one of Paul's most prominent characteristics: the combination of humility and authority. He is "not worthy to be called an apostle," yet he never hesitates to assert his claim to be listened to as the ambassador of Christ. And this is for us all the source of humility and confidence. It is altogether a new strength with which a man is inspired when he knows that God calls him to do this or that. 2. What share in the letter Sosthenes had we cannot say. He may have written it, and he may have suggested a point here and there. Paul did not stay to inquire whether Sosthenes was qualified to be the author of a canonical book; but knowing the authoritative position he had held among the Jews of Corinth, he naturally conjoins his name with his own. II. THE PERSONS TO WHOM THIS LETTER IS ADDRESSED (ver. 2). 1. With them are joined "all that in every place," &c. And therefore we may gather that Paul would have defined the Church as those who "call upon the name of Jesus Christ." This implies trust in Him, and acknowledgment of Him as supreme Lord. It is this which brings men together as a Christian Church. 2. But at once we are confronted with the difficulty that many persons who call upon the name of the Lord do so with no conviction of their need, and with no real dependence upon Christ or allegiance to Him. Hence the distinction between the Church visible, which consists of all who nominally belong to the Christian community, and the Church invisible. Where the visible Church is its members can be counted, its property estimated, its history written. But of the invisible Church no man can fully write the history, or name the members, or appraise its properties, gifts, and services. 3. From the earliest times it has been said that the true Church must be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. That is true if the Church invisible be meant. But it is not true of the Church visible. Paul here gives us four notes which must always be found in the true Church. (1) It is composed of consecrated people. The word "sanctify" means that which is set apart to holy uses. The New Testament word for Church, *ecclesia*, a society "called out," shows that it exists not for common purposes, but to witness for God and Christ and to maintain before men the ideal life realised in Christ. (2) Its members are called to be "saints." This Church was in danger of forgetting this. One of its members had been guilty of immorality; and of him Paul says, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." Even with sinners of a less flagrant sort, no communion was to be held. No doubt there is risk and difficulty in administering this law. The graver hidden sin may be overlooked, the more obvious transgression be punished. But the duty of the Church to maintain its sanctity is undeniable, and those whose function it is to watch over the purity of the Church would be saved from all doubtful action were the individual members alive to the necessity of holy living. (3) It is to be found not in one country or age, in this or that Church, whether it assume the title of "Catholic" or national, but is composed of "all that in every place," &c. No visible Church can claim to be catholic on the ground of its being co-extensive with Christendom. Catholicity is not a matter of more or less; it cannot be determined by a majority. No Church which does not claim to contain the whole of Christ's people without exception can claim to be catholic. (4) The Lord of all the Churches is one Lord; in this allegiance they centre, and by it are held together in a true unity. Plainly this note can belong only to the Church invisible. It is doubtful whether a visible unity is desirable. Considering what

human nature is and how liable men are to be imposed upon by what is large, it is probably quite as conducive to the spiritual well-being of the Church that she is broken up into parts. Outward divisions would sink into insignificance, and be no more bewailed than the division of an army into regiments, were there the real unity which springs from true allegiance to the common Lord and zeal for the common cause rather than for the interests of our own particular Church. And Christian people are beginning to see how much more important are those points on which the whole Church is agreed than those which split the Church into sects. 4. Paul, with his usual courtesy and tact, begins with a hearty acknowledgment of the distinctive excellences of the Corinthian Church (vers. 4–6). (1) Paul was one of those large-natured men who rejoice more in the prosperity of others than in any private good fortune. Paul's joy was to see the testimony he had borne to Christ's goodness and power confirmed by the new energies and capacities in those who believed his testimony. The gifts of the Corinthian Christians made it manifest that the Divine presence and power proclaimed by Paul were real. And it is the new life of believers now which most strongly confirms the testimony regarding the risen Christ. (2) It is somewhat ominous that the incorruptible honesty of Paul can only acknowledge their possession of "gifts," not of those fine Christian graces which distinguished others. But the grace of God must always adjust itself to the nature of the recipient. The Greek nature was lacking in seriousness and moral robustness; but for many centuries it had been trained to excel in intellectual and oratorical displays. These natural gifts were quickened and directed by grace. Each race has its own contribution to make to complete the full-grown Christian manhood. (*a*) Paul thanked God for their gift of utterance. Perhaps had he lived now he might have had a word to say in praise of silence. There is more than a risk nowadays that talk takes the place of thought and action. But this utterance was a great gift. In no other language could Christian ideas have found such adequate and beautiful expression. And in this Paul saw promise of a rapid and effective propagation of the gospel. Legitimately may we hope for the Church when she so apprehends her own wealth in Christ as to be stirred to invite all the world to share with her. (*b*) But utterance is well backed by knowledge. Often has the determination to satisfy the intellect with Christian truth been reprehended as idle and even wicked. The faith which accepted testimony was a gift of God, but so also was the knowledge which sought to recommend the contents of this testimony to the human mind. (3) But however rich in endowments the Corinthians must be made to feel that no endowment can dispense with the necessity of conflict with sin. Richly endowed men are often most exposed to temptation, and feel more keenly than others the real hazard of human life. Paul therefore assigns as the reason of his assurance that they will be blameless in the day of Christ, that "God is faithful," &c. God calls us with a purpose in view, and is faithful to that purpose. He calls us to the fellowship of Christ that we may learn of Him and become suitable agents to carry out the whole will of Christ. (*M. Dods, D.D.*) *The call of God* is—1. The ground of ministerial authority. 2. The motive to ministerial usefulness. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The authority of the Christian minister*:—He is—1. The messenger of Christ. 2. Divinely called. 3. Set apart by the will of God as indicated by His Providence. (*Ibid.*) **And Sosthenes our brother.**—*Sosthenes a brother*:—I. WHO WAS SOSTHENES? 1. After Paul began work at Corinth, Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, was converted; and that Paul considered his a notable case is proved by the fact that he personally baptized him. But as Paul was compelled to leave the synagogue, it is probable that Crispus would also have to leave; and the fact that Sosthenes is afterwards mentioned as chief ruler implies that Crispus was deposed. Paul continued his lectures next door to the synagogue, and its success would naturally enrage Sosthenes, who was doubtless the head of the conspiracy which led Paul before Gallio. We know the result. The Jews had risen in insurrection; it was now the turn of the Greeks, who made Sosthenes the special object of their attack. 2. That the Sosthenes of the text is the same as he of Acts xviii. seems likely. (1) It is probable that if converted he would leave Corinth. His conversion would create deeper resentment than that of Crispus, for he had been not only chief ruler of the synagogue, but the persecutor of the new religion. (2) If Crispus had to leave Corinth he would naturally take a deep interest in the Church there, as we do in the home of our first birth and of our second. (3) Paul would surely regard Sosthenes with special interest. He had himself been a bitter persecutor. And if he had to flee from Corinth it is natural that he should have clung to Paul and

Paul to him. (4) Paul would pray and strive for his conversion. After his acquittal Paul "tarried yet a good while" at Corinth, and would deeply regret the onslaught on Sosthenes, some of whose assaulters, if not Corinthians, were doubtless attached to Paul, which would lead to an expression of regret on the part of the apostle. And who can tell what such an apology would lead to? Perhaps Paul would, during the interview, refer to his own conversion, and lead his listener to see in it a reflection of his own case. And then, Paul would see in Sosthenes one who was so like what he had been. (5) Unless this Sosthenes is he of Acts xviii. it is difficult to understand why Paul should have here introduced his name, which is not found elsewhere; but if the two are the same nothing is more natural. II. THE LESSONS. 1. How wonderful in its operations is the grace of God! Here is a man the very last one would expect to become a Christian. 2. Do not be hopeless over any case. Sosthenes was in office, and officials are always difficult to move, and the indignities he suffered would exasperate him against Christianity. 3. Cherish a forgiving spirit. How fully Paul forgave his enemy and admitted him into his friendship. 4. Cultivate kindly feelings towards the Christian friends with whom we have been or are associated. The first Christians Sosthenes knew were at Corinth. At first he hated them, but afterwards he loved them as he had never loved friends before; but the brotherliness was on both sides. (*A. Scott.*) **To the Church of God.**—The term, ἐκκλησία (church), formed of the two words "out of" and "to call," denotes in ordinary Greek language an assembly of citizens called out of their dwellings by an official summons (*cf.* Acts. xix. 41). Applied to the religious domain in the New Testament, the word preserves essentially the same meaning. Here, too, there is a summoner—God, who calls sinners to salvation by the preaching of the gospel (Gal. i. 6). There are the summoned—sinners, called to faith thenceforth to form the new society of which Christ is the Head. The complement "of God" indicates at once Him who has summoned the assembly, and Him to whom it belongs. The term, "the Church of God," thus corresponds to the Old Testament phrase, "the congregation of the Lord"; but there is this difference, that the latter was recruited by way of filiation, while in the new covenant the Church is formed and recruited by the personal adherence of faith. (*Prof. Godet.*) *Threefold sanctification* (Jude 1, text, and 1 Pet. i. 2):—Mark the union of the three Divine Persons in all their gracious acts. How unwise all those who make preferences in the Persons of the Trinity. In their love, and in the actions which flow from it, they are one. Specially is this in the case of sanctification. This being the case, what value God must set upon holiness! God could as soon cease to be as cease to be holy, and sooner renounce the sovereignty of the world than tolerate anything unholy. Sanctification means—I. SETTING APART—the taking of something which might legitimately have been put to ordinary uses for God's service alone. **1.** *E.g.*, in Exod. xiii. 2 God claimed the firstborn of men and cattle. The tribe of Levi was set apart to be the representatives of the firstborn. In Gen. ii. 3, God set apart for His own service what had been an ordinary portion of time before. So Lev. xxvii. 14 was meant as a direction to devout Jews, who intended that the produce of the field or the occupation of the house should be wholly given to God. So in Exod. xxix. 44 we read that God said, "I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar." To the same effect are the sanctification of the altar, instruments, and vessels (Numb. vii. 1), the setting apart of Eleazer to keep the ark (1 Sam. vii. 1), and the establishment of cities of refuge (Josh. xx. 7). This Old Testament use of the word explains John x. 26. Immaculately conceived and preserved from all stain of evil, Christ needed no sanctifying work within Him. All that is here intended is that He was set apart (John xvii. 19). You understand now the text in Jude. God the Father has specially set apart His people. 2. What suggestive and solemn thoughts are here. (1) If we are sanctified by God we ought never to be used for any purpose but for Him. Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price. "But must we not work and earn our own bread?" Yes! but still as "serving the Lord." If any man say, "I have an occupation in which I cannot serve the Lord," leave it, you have no right in it; but there is no lawful calling in which you will not be able to say, "I do all to the glory of God." The Christian is no more a common man than was the altar a common place. It is as great a sacrilege for Christians to live to the world as it would have been for the Jews to use the holy fire for their own kitchen. (2) It was a crime which brought destruction upon Babylon when Belshazzar had brought forth "the cups of the Lord, the goodly spoil of the temple at Jerusalem." Just as the sacred vessel touched the

sacrilegious lip, a hand was seen mysteriously writing out his doom. Oh, take heed, ye that profess to be sanctified by the blood of the covenant, that you reckon it not to be an unholy thing. See to it that ye make not your bodies which ye profess to be set apart to God's service, slaves of sin. If you and I are tempted to sin, we must reply, "No, let another man do that, but I cannot; I am God's man." When Antiochus Epiphanes offered a sow on the altar, his awful death might have been easily foretold. Oh! how many there are who make a high profession, who have offered unclean flesh upon the altars of God; have made religion a stalking-horse to their own emolument. II. That the thing set apart for holy uses IS TO BE REGARDED, TREATED, AND DECLARED HOLY. 1. *E.g.*, in Isa. viii. 13, it is said, "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts, Himself." Now the Lord does not need to be set apart for holy uses, nor to be purified, for He is holiness itself. When Nadab and Abihu (Lev. x.) put strange fire on the altar, and the fire of the Lord consumed them, the reason was—"I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me"; by which He meant that He would be treated as a most Holy Being with whom such liberties were not to be taken (see also Numb. x. 12, and "hallowed be Thy name" in the Lord's Prayer). 2. Have we not some light here concerning our second text—"Sanctified in Christ Jesus"? In Christ Jesus the saints are regarded by God as being holy, and treated as such, *i.e.*, are justified. A holy God cannot have dealings with unholy men; but He views us, not in ourselves, but in our federal Head, the Second Adam. We may boldly enter into the Holiest, where no unholy thing may come, because God views us as holy in Christ Jesus. We now come to—III. ACTUALLY TO PURIFY OR MAKE HOLY. 1. In Exod. xix. 10–12 sanctification consisted in certain outward deeds by which they were put into a cleanly state and their souls were brought into reverential awe. In Josh. iii., when Israel were about to pass the Jordan, they were to prepare themselves to be beholders of a scene so august. Men in the old times were sprinkled with blood, and thus sanctified from defilement and considered to be pure in the sight of God. This is the sense in which we view our third text, "Sanctification through the Spirit," the sense in which it is generally understood. 2. Sanctification begins in regeneration, and is carried on in two ways—by mortification, whereby the lusts of the flesh are subdued, and vivification, by which the life which God has put within us is made to spring up into everlasting life. This is carried on every day in what we call perseverance, and it comes to perfection in "glory." Now this work, though we commonly speak of it as being the work of the Spirit, is quite as much the work of Christ. There are two agents: one is the worker who works this sanctification effectually—that is the Spirit; and the other, the agent, the efficacious means by which the Spirit works this sanctification is—Jesus Christ and His most precious blood. There is a garment which needs to be washed. Here is a person to wash it, and there is a bath in which it is to be washed—the Person is the Holy Spirit, but the bath is the precious blood of Christ. 3. The Spirit of God as the Author of sanctification employs a visible agent. "Sanctify them through Thy truth. Thy Word is truth." How important then that the truth should be preached. 4. In another sense we are sanctified through Christ Jesus, because it is His blood and the water which flowed from His side in which the Spirit washes our heart from the defilement and propensity of sin (Eph. v. 25). There is no being sanctified by the law; the Spirit does not use legal precepts to sanctify us. No; just as when Marah's waters were bitter, Moses had a tree cast in, and they were sweet, so the Spirit of God, finding our natures bitter, takes the tree of Calvary, casts it into the stream, and everything is made pure. He finds us lepers, and to make us clean He dips the hyssop of faith in the precious blood, and sprinkles it upon us and we are clean. The blood of Christ not merely makes satisfaction for sin, but works the death of sin. The blood appears before God and He is well pleased; it falls on us—lusts wither, and old corruptions feel the death-stroke. 5. Just as the Spirit only works through the truth, so the blood of Christ only works through faith. Our faith lays hold on the atonement, sees Jesus suffering on the tree, and says, "I vow revenge against the sins which nailed Him there"; and thus His precious blood works in us a detestation of all sin. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Three notes of the Church*:—I. IT IS GOD'S—but to distinguish it from the heathen *ἐκκλησίαι*—a name never used in profane Greek to denote a religious assembly—but to distinguish it from the *κόσμος*, which is the antagonist of the kingdom and out of which the Church is called. Though the name *ecclesia* was borrowed from the clubs or associations of the time, the apostle discovers in it a Christian idea—that of separation from the world. To say that the Church is

an *ecclesia* is to say it is God's. II. As a result of its being an *ecclesia*, the Church is SANCTIFIED (*cf.* John xvii. 16–19). The primary meaning is consecration. The Christian enters into the place hitherto occupied by the Jewish Church. But consecration in its Christian form resolves itself into holiness. Christ takes possession of every morality and raises it into spirituality. All goodness becomes a religion, binding the soul to God. "In" means that believers are not only sanctified "through the offering of Christ" (Heb. x. 10), but also continue holy in virtue of union with Christ (*cf.* Rom. xv. 16). III. It consists of men "CALLED TO BE SAINTS." They are saints by reason of a Divine call from without as well as of a Divine operation from within (*cf.* Rom. i. 6; Lev. xxiii. 2). The notion of saintship is in Scripture inseparable from that of being reckoned, of being allotted a place by God. (*Principal Edwards.*) **Grace be unto you, and peace.**—*Grace and peace:*—Grace is favour, and peace its fruits. The former includes all that is comprehended in the love of God as exercised towards sinners; and the latter all the benefits which flow from that love. All good, therefore, whether providential or spiritual, whether temporal or eternal, is comprehended in these terms—justification, adoption, and sanctification, with all the benefits which either accompany or flow from them. These infinite blessings suppose an infinite source; and as they are sought no less from Christ than from God the Father, Christ must be a Divine person. It is to be remarked that God is called our Father, and Christ our Lord. God as God has not only created us, but renewed and adopted us. God in Christ has redeemed us. He is our owner and sovereign, to whom our allegiance is immediately due; who reigns in and rules over us, defending us from all His and our enemies. This is the peculiar form which piety assumes under the gospel. All Christians regard God as their Father and Christ as their Lord. His person they love, His voice they obey, and in His protection they trust. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *The peace of the Christian:*—Trust God and thy soul shall no longer be like "the sea that cannot rest," full of turbulent wishes, full of passionate desires that come to nothing, full of endless moanings, like the homeless ocean that is ever working, and never flings up any product of its work but foam and broken weeds; but thine heart shall become still, like some land-locked lake, where no winds or tempests ruffle, and on its calm surface there shall be mirrored the clear shining of the unclouded blue, and the perpetual light of the sun that never goes down. *No peace without Christ:*—The vessel in which we are passing over the sea of life is always driven by contrary winds till the Lord embarks. (*J. Pulsford.*) *Divine blessings:*—Observe—I. THE BLESSING WE ANNOUNCE. 1. Grace and peace. 2. Needed by all. 3. Offered to all. II. THEIR SOURCE. 1. God. 2. Our Father. 3. Through Christ. 4. Hence the supply is inexhaustible. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Vers. 4–13. **I thank my God . . . for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.**—*Apostolic thanksgiving* for—I. THE GRACE THEY HAD RECEIVED. 1. Freely given. 2. Richly supplied. 3. Amply confirmed. II. THE HOPE THEY ANTICIPATED. They waited confidently for—1. The coming of Christ. 2. Their final justification. 3. Everlasting fellowship with Him. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Apostolic congratulation and warning:*—I. THE APOSTOLIC CONGRATULATION. "I thank my God," &c. 1. In the heart of St. Paul, the unselfishness of Christianity had turned this world into a perpetual feast. If we want to know what his life was, turn to 2 Cor. xi.; yet it was filled with the blessedness which arises from the abilities to enjoy the blessings of others as though they were our own. Personally we get very little in this world; and if we are to mourn that we never had a whole kid to ourselves "to make merry with," life will become desolate indeed. Only by saying, "It is meet we should rejoice and be glad" with our brethren, can life be a blessing. Thus the apostle, in all his weariness and persecutions, was nevertheless always rejoicing with his Churches. 2. Here he rejoices over three gifts to the Corinthians —(1) That of utterance. To Paul a blessing was nothing unless it could be imparted to others. Knowing a truth is one thing, being able to express it is another, and to dare to express it another. "Utterance" implies both power and courage. A truth hidden is unproductive. And therefore the power of utterance becomes, by the grace of God, a faculty divine. (2) But there may be utterance without knowledge. St. Paul desired utterance in order to speak out something in him. With many persons utterance is only verbiage. Let us seek, not merely to have utterance, but to have something worthy of uttering. Be sure you speak that you do know, and nothing else. (3) The attitude of expectation (ver. 7), as though that were the best gift of all. (*a*) We are to look for a Church of the future—not of the

past, nor of the present. The coming of Christ includes the perfect state of human society, and here—Christ coming to us, not our going to Him. And we are to be looking forward to this; not busying ourselves in dreams about, and mournings after, the past, nor complacently praising the present, but thankful to God for what we have, feeling that the past was necessary, and, still dissatisfied with ourselves, hoping something better yet, both for God's Church and world. (*b*) It implies a humble expecting state; not dogmatising, not dreading, but simply waiting. The kingdom of God is within us; but the kingdom of God developed will be as the lightning, sudden and universal. 3. Note the ground of hope for the continuance and successful issue of those blessings. Not on any stability of human goodness, but the character of God (ver. 9). Had not Saul once had the Spirit? Had not Judas once had gifts? Who, then, could say that the Corinthians might not make shipwreck of their faith? The apostle answers this, not by counting on their faithfulness to God, but on God's faithfulness to them. Of course, this doctrine may be misused. We may rest upon it too much, and so become unwatchful and supine; but, nevertheless, it is a most precious truth, and without it I cannot understand how any man dares go forth to his work in the morning, or at evening lay his head on his pillow to sleep. II. THE APOSTLE'S WARNING AND REPROOF. 1. Parties had arisen in Corinth. (1) That which called itself by the name of Paul. Now the teaching of this apostle differed from that of the others in the prominence which it gave to certain truths—justification by faith, the salvability of the Gentiles, and Christian liberty. Some of the Corinthians exaggerated all this, and said, "This is the truth and nothing else": accordingly they made the doctrine of justification by faith an excuse for licentiousness, and the doctrine of Christian liberty a cloak of maliciousness. (2) That which named itself after Apollos, the difference between whom and Paul seems to be not so much a difference of views as in the mode of stating those views; the eloquence of St. Paul was rough and burning, that of Apollos was more refined and polished. (3) That called by the name of Cephas, between whom and Paul there was this difference—that whereas the Spirit of God had detached Paul from Judaism by a sudden shock, in the heart of Peter Christianity had been slowly developed; he had known Jesus first as the Son of Man, and afterwards as the Son of God. It was long before he realised God's purpose of love to the Gentiles. Therefore all the Jewish converts preferred to follow him. (4) That calling itself by the name of Christ, who doubtless prided themselves on their spirituality and inward light, and looked down with contempt on those who professed to follow the opinion of any human teacher. Perhaps they ignored apostolic teaching altogether, and proclaimed the doctrine of direct communion with God without the aid of ministry or ordinances. 2. The guilt of these partisans did not lie in holding views differing from each other; the guilt of schism is when each party, instead of expressing fully its own truth, denies that others are in the truth at all. Nothing eats out the heart and life of religion more than party spirit. Christianity is love; party spirit is the death of love. Christianity is union amidst variety of views; party spirit is disunion. In these days of party spirit, be it urged solemnly on our hearts that we "love one another." Accuracy of view is worth little in comparison with warmth of heart. It is easy to love such as agree with us. Let us learn to love those who differ from us. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Exemplary gratitude and precious confidence*—two blessed states of mind:—I. EXEMPLARY GRATITUDE. "I thank my God always on your behalf." The gratitude here was—1. Unselfish. "On your behalf." It is right and well to praise God for what He has done for us, but it is a nobler thing to praise Him for what He has done for others. No man rightly appreciates a blessing who does not desire others to participate in it. The sublimity of a landscape is more than doubly enjoyed when one or more stand by your side to share your admiration. 2. For spiritual good. "For the grace of God." (1) That grace which "enriched in all utterance and in all knowledge"—two splendid gifts where they are inspired by the "grace of God" and properly related. "Utterance" apart from "knowledge" is worthless and pernicious, volubilities of vice, garrulousness of social evils. "Knowledge" is of no value to others, unless it has effective "utterance." Knowledge with a powerful oratory will move the world; it has shivered dynasties, converted millions, and created churches. (2) That grace which confirmed in their experience the testimony of Christ. What higher gift than this—a personal realisation of Christianity? (3) That grace which inspired them with a practical hope of the appearance of Christ. 3. An habitual state of mind. "I thank God always." It

was not an occasional sentiment. It was a settled attitude of heart. II. PRECIOUS CONFIDENCE. 1. In Christ perfecting character. "Who shall also confirm you unto the end." So perfecting it that it shall be "blameless." All moral imperfections removed. 2. In His appearing again. The day when He will appear is the day of days for humanity. 3. In His granting them companionship. "Unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ the Lord." "Where I am there ye shall be also." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The grace and gifts of God*:—Paul uses here two expressions, elsewhere placed in the same close connection (see Rom. xii. 6; 1 Pet. iv. 10), "grace" (χάρις) and "gift"—not δῶρον or its cognate words (which might include every natural blessing common to heathen and Christian), but χάρισμα, the spiritual blessing connected with and flowing from God's "grace." Note that—I. BOTH ARE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION. 1. True, "grace" is mentioned in the Old Testament, and God is proclaimed to be "gracious," but this rarely. It is in the New Testament that we have complete revelation of this, and first have the frequent phrase "the grace of God." 2. And this because "grace . . . came by Jesus Christ" (John i. 17; Titus ii. 11). So in the text. God's fullest, freest favour to a sinful world, made possible by the sacrifice of Christ, made manifest by His life and ministry, and made over to His disciples as an abiding possession in the outpouring of the Spirit. 3. The "gifts" of God are thus—(1) The heritage of the Christian Church, which is the special sphere of the Holy Spirit's operations (2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 22). (2) Distributed to believers by Him as being God (chap. xii. 4, 11). (3) The outcome of the Divine grace of our Christian calling (Rom. xii. 6), and argue the possession of that grace (1 Pet. iv. 10). II. BOTH ARE TO BE USED BY US. 1. "Grace" looks chiefly to the side of personal sanctification. St. Paul beseeches his converts not to "receive the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. vi. 1), shows how he himself had been changed from a chief of sinners "by the grace of God" (chap. xv. 10), and thanks God that they had been partakers of the same blessing (text and chap. vi. 11). 2. "Gifts" look chiefly to the side of Church edification. They are to be used for others (1 Pet. iv. 10). Some have more, and some less; some have one, and some others. In our text St. Paul mentions two, "utterance" (or perhaps the expounding of "doctrine"—λόγος) and "knowledge" of spiritual things. In chap. xii. he shows how this Church was "enriched" by an abundance (see vers. 8–10, 28). 3. As every true-hearted Christian has received both grace and some spiritual gift or gifts, we should be careful to use both aright. (1) To profit by all "means of grace." (2) To essay some work in the Church. 4. The grace and gifts of God may be neglected or misused. Illustrate by the parable of the ten pounds for "grace," and of the ten talents for "gifts." III. BOTH POINT FORWARD TO THE END SET BEFORE US. 1. Sanctification is in order to that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xii. 14); to that being "like Him," that we may "see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2). 2. Christian work is not an end, but the means to an end, even preparedness for the second coming of Christ. 3. This second advent—and not death—is the one great end set forth in the New Testament as the goal of the Christian's hopes and efforts. So our text. Conclusion: Let this subject lead to—1. Thankfulness for the grace of God manifest in the progress of His work amongst us. 2. Humility in the recognition of our spiritual gifts as of His grace alone. 3. Earnestness in the fulfilling our obligation of "ministering the same one to another." 4. Singleness of purpose in looking towards the end of God's work in us and by us—the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (*T. H. Barnett.*) *The blessings which the gospel*—I. IMPARTS—1. An enlightened mind. 2. A waiting spirit. II. SECURES—1. The continued preservation of believers. 2. Their ultimate acceptance. Application: 1. Be thankful if you are partakers of this grace. 2. Be careful to walk worthy of it. 3. Remember in whom is all your strength. (*C. Simeon, M.A.*) *Christian excellence*:—Paul here brings this before us as—I. A FACT OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE. II. A PRODUCT OF DIVINE INFLUENCE. III. A SUBJECT OF THANKFULNESS TO GOD. (*J. Willcox.*) *Our Lord Jesus Christ is*—I. THE CHANNEL OF DIVINE GRACE. If we are "called to be saints," "partakers of the heavenly calling," it is all in and through "the grace given by Jesus Christ" (ver. 4). II. THE SOURCE OF ALL SPIRITUAL GIFTS. "Enriched by Him in all utterance and in all knowledge" (ver. 5); "So that ye come behind in no gift" (ver. 7); "Who shall also confirm you unto the end" (ver. 8); "That ye be unreprovable" (R.V.). Thus: Gifts of—1. Preaching. 2. Hearing. 3. Miracles (chap. xii. 4). 4. Perseverance. 5. Holiness—Are all traced to Him as the Author. III. THE SUBJECT OF APOSTOLIC PREACHING. "The testimony of Christ" means the witness given

concerning Christ. Christ is the Alpha and Omega of all true preaching. Christ in all His work and offices, especially "Christ as crucified." IV. THE OBJECT OF CHRISTIAN EXPECTATION (vers. 7, 8). We look for Him in faith, and hope, and love. His coming will be a revealing of His glory, and of our judgment. May we be "unreprovable" in His sight. (*Clerical World.*) **That in everything ye are enriched by Him**.—*Spiritual riches by Christ*:—I. MAN POOR BY NATURE (Rev. iii. 17). Lost his birthright—his inheritance. 1. Poor in time. If not enriched, poor in eternity. 2. "Poor" in utterance, because poor in knowledge. His language impious, foolish, idle, &c. 3. "Poor," though possessing earthly wealth. "Carry nothing out." 4. "Poor," because without Him, "without whom nothing is strong." II. MAN ENRICHED BY GRACE (Rev. iii. 18). Birthright restored. Inheritance secured. "If children, then heirs." 1. "Rich" in utterance—"all utterance"—because rich in "all knowledge." Holy, loving, grateful words. Prayer and praise. 2. "Rich," though possessing little of this world's wealth. "Having nothing, yet," &c. 3. "Rich," because "in Christ," "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." "Unsearchable riches." Enriched by Him. All of Christ, "who for our sakes became poor that we . . . might be made rich." (*J. Cornford.*) *The enriching power of God*:—"In everything"—in your (1) physical, (2) intellectual, (3) emotional, (4) spiritual natures. All nature shows this affluence of God. We are enriched in all our relations—at home, in society, &c. "In Him." This can be said of no one else than God. Presidents and kings may help us to justice. Millionaires, railroad magnates, and bankers have the power to enrich us temporally. Only of God can it be said that in everything ye are enriched by Him. In what ways are we enriched? 1. The best way to secure true honours is to make our lives conform to Christian principles. 2. The ideas of inspiration will more largely and more permanently enrich the intellect than draughts drawn from other reservoirs of wisdom. All others are receiving reservoirs: the Bible is a fountain source. 3. The man whose business is conducted on a Christian basis will most certainly be rich in the best sense of the word. No one is rich who is not rich in contentment and in good works. 4. We are enabled in God to believe in and assert our immortality. 5. In Him we have a wealth of spirituality which is ever-increasing. It is unaffected by the grave. Lack we any good thing, we ask and receive. All things are ours. If such to us is the enriching power of God on earth, how much more enriching will that power be in the world to come! (*N. Schenk, D.D.*) *Enriched by Christ*:—1. Christ has enriched the world's intellectual life. Range of human thought immense, but finite. Grandeur of world's art and literature evidences the high, capacious powers of man. Christ has touched and refined the world's art and literature. Ancient literature, except Jewish sacred writings, Pagan, a mass of mingled glory and shame. Christ's purifying influence. To-day the world's art and literature are Christian. 2. Christ has enriched the world's moral life. Fatal weakness of human moralists. Lacked authority. Christ spake with authority. His teachings not opinions, but living rule of life and conduct. Christ's teachings have changed the world's moral life. Most important. (1) The Fatherhood of God. New meaning given to Old Testament simile, "Like as a father," &c. (2) The brotherhood of man. Strong and wise to help the weak and ignorant. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (3) Necessity of moral change to fit men for the kingdom of heaven. (4) Life and immortality brought to light. Christ alone speaks here with authority. "In My Father's house are many mansions." 3. Christ has enriched the world's social life. Truths which enrich the world's thought and moral life bound to tell upon its social life. Living power in true and noble thoughts to leaven character. Truth subjective in its influence upon the mind; objective in character and influence upon others. Christian thought can mould a nation's life. (1) Human life made sacred. (2) By the elevation of woman. (*Methodist Times.*) *Life enriched through Christ*:—If you will to be His disciple, He will enrich your life, He will purge it of its pollution, He will conquer your lusts, He will enlighten your mind, He will deepen in you all that is generous and rich and brotherly and true and just. He will make your life worth having—yea, increasingly worth having—as you gain in experience of His power and His love, even to the end. He will touch your sufferings and your labours with the glory of His sympathy; He will deepen your hopes for yourselves and others with the security of an eternal prospect. At the last He will purify and perfect and welcome you. Only do not make the fatal mistake of imagining that your life is Christian anyhow, or that it can be Christian by any other process than by your

deliberate and courageous acceptance of the law of Christ, because you desire to be His disciple. (*Chas. Gore, M.A.*) *The power of utterance*:—There is another power which each man should cultivate according to his ability, but which is very much neglected in the mass of the people, and that is the power of utterance. A man was not made to shut up his mind in itself, but to give it voice and to exchange it for other minds. Speech is one of our grand distinctions from the brute. Our power over others lies not so much in the amount of thought within us as in the power of bringing it out. A man of more than ordinary intellectual vigour may, for want of expression, be a cipher, without significance, in society; and not only does a man influence others, but he greatly aids his own intellect by giving distinct and forcible utterance to his thoughts. We understand ourselves better, our conceptions grow clearer, by the very effort to make them clear to another. Our social rank, too, depends a good deal on our power of utterance. To have intercourse with respectable people we must speak their language. (*W. E. Channing, D.D.*) *Utterance and knowledge*:—The two special gifts of the Corinthians consisted partly in the elevation and consecration of their national characteristics. Speech occupies no less prominent a place in the New Testament than it did among the Greeks. It has for its object to bear witness for Christ, and is a "gift" of God for which the apostle gives thanks. Christianity broke on the world as a new revelation, which, by being told and echoed on all sides, is powerful to regenerate men. This is the origin and life of preaching; for, as Pascal says, "The saints have never been silent." (*Principal Edwards.*) **Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.**—*Bearing witness to the truth*:—Note—I. THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS. When He was brought before Pilate the interrogatory was, What was His mission? The response was that He had a kingdom, not of this world, and consequently He must be a King. His was the kingdom of truth; and the weapons of His warfare were not carnal, but spiritual. He came into the world that He might bear witness to the truth. The Pharisees charged Him with witnessing for Himself. The response was not a denial of the facts, but a reaffirmation that He should be the light of the world and bear witness to the truth. When John, in his exile, began to see the revelations of God, he declared that Jesus was the faithful Witness: that He was the Prince of the kings of the earth. Whether, therefore, we view Him in prophecy or in history, or in the revelation which He made of Himself to His servants, we see that His mission was to be that of Witness. II. JESUS HAVING GIVEN HIS EVIDENCE FOR TRUTH, IT NOW REMAINS FOR EVERY BELIEVER TO CONFIRM THAT WITNESS TO THE WORLD IN HIS LIFE BY WORDS AND DEEDS. The world does not believe in the Son of God. The Pharisees told Him that His witness was not true. He, on the other hand, when He had laid claim to being the witness for the truth, speaking as never man spake, working with the mighty power of God, turns round upon His followers, and says unto them, "Ye shall be My witnesses." The idea here evidently is that Jesus, having once deposed, they must stand forth to confirm Him before the world. He is, so to speak, the main witness in court. The effort is to break Him down when He claims to be the King of the truth. His word has been spoken, and now His people are rendering their evidence; it is passing silently to the jury, and the verdict is rapidly being made up, either for or against the Son of God. Men must receive Him. This they will do when they see His disciples corroborating in their lives the witness He made for the truth. This corroborating witness of the Church is borne in these ways: we do for God, or we bear for Him, or we suffer for Him. The world pays a special tribute to Christian ethics when it says, Your creed is a good one, but your life is not up to it. We may print religious literature and scatter it over the land, but the world will not read books—it is too busy, too restless, too eager; but it will read you, and it will receive or reject the claims of the religion of Christ in proportion as it finds in everyday life the record which believers are there making, the witness they are giving. (*R. K. Smoot, D.D.*)

Vers. 7, 8. **So that ye come behind in no gift.**—*Gift*:—This word plays a large part in this Epistle. As the form of the Greek indicates, it denotes in general every concrete product in which grace is embodied. The various powers, which so often in St. Paul's writings bear the name of χαρίσματα, are certainly the effects of the supernatural life due to faith in Christ; but they fit in, notwithstanding, to pre-existing natural aptitudes in individuals and peoples. The Holy Spirit does not substitute Himself for the human soul; He sanctifies it and consecrates its innate talents to the service of the work of salvation. By this new direction He

purifies them and exalts them, and enables them to reach their perfect development. This was what had taken place at Corinth, and it was thus especially that the apostolic testimony had been divinely confirmed in the Church. We see how Paul still carefully avoids (as in ver. 5) speaking of the moral fruits of the gospel, for this was the very respect in which there was a grave deficiency at Corinth. (*Prof. Godet.*) *Gifts and graces*:—Gifts show what a man has; graces, what he is. *Gifts and prayer*:—In mixing operations, the full and empty carriages or vessels being connected together, those which have been emptied are from time to time raised up the ascent by the descending of those that have been filled. In this way let the descent of God's mercies and the gifts bestowed out of His fulness raise your empty vessels to receive again and again from His inexhaustible treasury all that you need. (*R. Bickersteth.*) **Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**—*Waiting for the coming of the Lord*:—I. THE OBJECT OF EXPECTATION TO ALL TRUE BELIEVERS. "The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." It should rather have been rendered, the discovery or manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ. The primary idea is that of stripping off a garment, rolling away a curtain, or removing a screen; and under whichever of these aspects we contemplate the image depicted by the apostle, it will come home with equal power to our own consciousness of frailty, our own liability to death. Practically, that moment will be to us the manifestation of Christ as Judge, which shall strip off this garment of mortality, roll away the dark curtain of the grave, and remove the screen which divides us from the invisible world. The believer does not, like one conscious of unacknowledged and unrepented sin, start back from judgment with apprehension and alarm. It is not a Judge who will be manifested to his spiritual view, arrayed in lightnings and attended by ministers of wrath—it is not such a Judge, but our Lord Jesus Christ: yea, he can even say, with all the confiding appropriation of the Apostle Paul, "Christ Jesus, my Lord, the excellency of whose knowledge is life eternal, and in whom I desire to be found, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." II. THE MODE OF SO PREPARING FOR THE COMING OR MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST JESUS, THAT IT SHALL BE, NOT THE APPREHENSION OF IMPENDING EVIL, BUT THE EXPECTANCY OF CERTAIN AND ENDURING GOOD. The apostle speaks of God "confirming these Corinthians unto the end." Confirming them, you will ask, in what? The reference is to the fourth verse, in which St. Paul speaks, first, of the producing cause, in which alone preparation had commenced or could commence, even the "grace which had been given through Jesus Christ"; and afterwards of the effect which had been produced thereby—"that they were enriched in all utterance and in all knowledge"; in which utterance, being the declaration of a good confession—and in which knowledge, being that which is to life eternal—he desires that through the same grace, and by the same power, they may be confirmed. III. THE CONSEQUENCE OF BEING THUS PREPARED BY GRACE AND CONFIRMED OF GOD UNTO THE END: viz., that we shall be found blameless in the day of Jesus Christ. This word "blameless" is strictly a forensic term, applicable to the trial of the soul in the high court of heaven, and by God, the Judge of all. Whatever may be the discoveries of the last day, or to whomsoever made, of one thing we are certain, beyond all fear of a contingency, "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." (*T. Dale, M.A.*) *Waiting*:—1. We are all doing this in one way or another. Some watchful and faithful at our post, in the midst of a wicked world, like the sentry who died on guard in sinful Pompeii; some in slothful forgetfulness, like the foolish virgins; others in abject fear, like condemned criminals who wait the coming of the executioner; many, I trust, with patience, and hope, and peace. 2. Waiting is very hard work, far harder than doing. Waiting too for uncertainties, and better times which may never come; "hoping against hope," with that "hope deferred which maketh the heart sick," is one of the hardest of the tasks which we have to do. Waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ is also hard work, because of the sin which is in us and around us, but it is not hopeless or doubtful. "In due time we shall reap if we faint not." 3. How may we best wait for this? 4. Though we are waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus, He is in a sense always with us. 5. We must wait for our Lord's coming with our armour girded on and in the front of the battle. (*H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.*) *The coming of Christ*:—When we expect any one we turn our eyes that way, as the wife looks towards the sea when she expects her husband's return. Surely, then, if we look for Christ to come we shall keep our eyes heavenward, and our minds occupied with the country from which He cometh. *Christ's second coming*:—We are not

afraid to go alone on a journey to a strange place when we are sure that a friend will meet us at the end of the journey. The husband in a distant city telegraphs to his wife to come to him, and he will be at the station to receive her. *Faith and preparation as to the second coming of Christ*:—The coming of Christ literally refers to His appearing at the last day, but in its substantial meaning, and as to all its practical effects, it may be considered as equivalent to our death, because there not only is our future condition determined, but we enter into that scene in which His award shall fix us when He pronounces our final sentence. Let us, then, consider what is implied in the Christian's waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I. A FIRM CONVICTION THAT CHRIST WILL COME. In any other state of mind the term "waiting" would be inapplicable. And, indeed, the second coming of Christ forms a part of the deliberate and cherished creed of every true disciple. It is not a mere speculation indulged in because it is agreeable; a conjecture suggested by appearances, and adhered to as being probable and useful; the result of a process of reasoning, liable to errors and doubts; it is a point of settled belief, which the Christian maintains because it is founded on the testimony of Him who is equally omniscient and true. It is the subject of a Divine prediction, of a Divine promise, of a Divine assurance; and therefore we cannot withhold our full assent to it without impeaching the absolute perfection of that absolutely perfect Being by whom it has been attested. And remember that it is not set down merely as one of a multitude of events which will happen, but as a constituent portion of that scheme which the Son of God undertook to execute as the Redeemer of sinful men. Christ was "once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them who look for Him Christ will appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." II. THAT THIS EVENT IS THE SUBJECT OF HABITUAL THOUGHT AND CONTEMPLATION. How, indeed, can it be otherwise, seeing it is so true and so important in His regard? Were it a merely probable circumstance, a fact of little interest, or nothing more than a dry abstract truth, the mind of the Christian could not entertain it with much cordiality, or look forward to the period of its being realised with any intensity of feeling. But how differently must he be affected towards it, when he considers its indubitable certainty—the touching concerns which it involves—the various attractions which it presents in its every aspect—and the bearing which it has on all that he now is, and all that he is to be for ever! III. A DILIGENT AND FAITHFUL PREPARATION FOR IT. Unless we had this preparation, we could not with any propriety be said to wait for Christ's coming, because, if unprepared for His coming, it would be an event to be feared and deprecated. Christ will come for two purposes: to reward His people and to punish His enemies. But if we are among the number of His enemies, then, when He comes, we must suffer the condemnation which He has threatened against all those who have refused or neglected to become what He required them to be. Those who wait for His coming, and are prepared for that event, are—1. Believers. Relying on Christ in the exercise of a true faith, we may wait for His coming, because His merit, appropriated by that faith, has cancelled our guilt, the prevalence of which would have made His coming terrible, and has obtained for us a title to the celestial kingdom, which we never could have entered through any doings or deservings of our own. 2. Saints—holy persons. When Christ comes it is to conduct His people to their reward. But how can He take us into His Father's house, if our principles and dispositions and habits are all in irreconcilable hostility to the exercises and enjoyments of that blessed abode? Nothing that defileth can enter into the New Jerusalem. IV. A DECIDED AND ARDENT DESIRE FOR IT. The feeling is dictated by all our present experience, and by all our future prospects. There are evils from which that event alone can emancipate us, and there are enjoyments to which that event alone can introduce us. And if it be a right thing to wish for deliverance from the one, and for the attainment of the other, then it is right to wish for the second advent of Christ, because that is identified with both advantages. 1. Here you are subject to disease—to its pain, and its languishing, and its mortal issue. But when your Saviour comes He will put upon you the crown of life, and you shall neither sicken, nor suffer, nor die any more. 2. Here your reputation may be wounded from ignorance, envy, prejudice, or malevolence. But when your Saviour comes He will place you among those whom God hath justified, and whom no man can condemn—in whose society calumny cannot reach you, and reproach cannot hurt you. 3. Here you may have to struggle with the numerous ills and hardships of poverty. But when your Saviour comes you shall have no wants which He will not supply with inexhaustible abundance. 4. Here your

cherished friends may betray you when you are most confiding, and those who were dear to you as your own soul may be torn from your embrace by the relentless hand of death. But when your Saviour comes He will wind up this scene of trial, and will take you where ingratitude and treachery and dissolution shall be unknown. 5. Here you have the plague of sin to trouble and torment you. But when your Saviour comes He will place you where you shall be beyond the reach of temptation, and beyond the fear and the capacity of transgressing. 6. Here your eye and your heart are often pained by the sight of abounding iniquity. But when your Saviour comes He will conduct you into a region as pure as it is happy. 7. Here your best services and highest attainments are mixed with much imperfection and weakness. But when your Saviour comes He will make you "perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." 8. Here all your enjoyments, however exquisite, multiplied, and prolonged, are but mingled at the best, and soon over. But when your Saviour comes He will impart to you a happiness immortal as the souls that are to enjoy it—as the uncreated source from which it is to flow. 9. Here it is a trial to your patience that the Cross of Christ should be such a rock of offence, and that He who bore its agony and its shame should be despised and rejected of men. But when your Saviour comes His enemies will be destroyed, the numberless trophies of His humiliation and His blood will be assembled to honour Him, and all the hosts of heaven will unite with all the redeemed from the earth, to ascribe to Him the blessing, and dominion, which He had so richly won. V. THE EXERCISE OF PATIENCE AND RESIGNATION. Submission to the Divine arrangements is a necessary part of the Christian character, and particularly in this regard. You should wait for Christ's second coming with patience, because—1. The period of that coming is fixed by God's appointment. It is a part of the plan which He has formed for your salvation. It originates in the same mercy which prompted Him to give up His Son to suffering and to death for you. And does not every view of the Divine perfections constrain you to acquiesce in all that has been fixed as to the second coming, as well as in all that took place with regard to the first coming of Christ? 2. It is conducive to your own improvement and advantage. The present is a scene of preparation for the future. Every temptation that you successfully resist; every obligation that you faithfully fulfil; every trial to which you patiently submit; every step that you advance in the career of godliness and virtue; every victory that you achieve over the devil, the world, and the flesh, by that faith and patience which characterise the saints of God upon earth, will put a loftier note in your song of praise, and add another gem to your crown of righteousness and glory in heaven. Seeing, then, that your continual stay here is conducive to your everlasting benefit, let not your souls be cast down, and let not their desires for deliverance overstep the limits of devout resignation to the will of Him who has arranged your lot in this world with a view to your destiny beyond it, and whose redeeming mercy will lead Him to make all things work together for your good. 3. If is for the advantage of your brethren and fellow men. This was one of Paul's motives, when amidst his longings to depart and to be with Christ, he was still contented to remain where the great Head of the Church had ordained him to labour. "Nevertheless," said he, "to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." (*A. Thomson, D.D.*) *The uncertainty of Christ's coming*:—This blending of light and obscurity—I. LEAVES US IN A STATE MORE SUITABLE AND MORE PROFITABLE THAN EITHER ABSOLUTE IGNORANCE OR PERFECT KNOWLEDGE. 1. It awakens feelings which the former would fail to excite, and which—2. The latter would quench as they arose. II. IT IS SPECIALLY ADAPTED TO KEEP ALIVE EXPECTATION, BY BRINGING EMPHATICALLY BEFORE US THE PERPETUAL POSSIBILITY OF AN IMMEDIATE MANIFESTATION. It keeps us in a state of—1. Lively hope; 2. Watchfulness; 3. Humility; 4. Fidelity; 5. Earnest inquiry after truth; 6. Reverence and dread. (*W. A. Butler, M.A.*) *The revelation of Jesus Christ*:—This "revelation" would do two things—I. "CONFIRM THEM UNTO THE END" (ver. 8). "All is well that ends well." The "end" of the Christian will confirm the wisdom of his choosing such an "end." Hence "the end of a thing is better than the beginning." The world calls him a "fool"; the day of Christ will "confirm" his wisdom. The world calls him ignoble; the day of Christ will "confirm" his pretensions to greatness and glory. The world calls him poor; the "day of Christ" will "confirm" his claims to an "inheritance incorruptible," &c. We are now "confirming the testimony of Christ," and proving Him true (ver. 6). In "that day" Christ will confirm our testimony, and prove us true. It will be the manifestation of the sons of God. II. MAKE THEM BLAMELESS. Then all imperfections will end. Sin's damp

mists will no longer rise to obscure the moral heavens. Lessons: 1. Encouragement to the faithful worker. 2. Confidence. Do circumstances look discouraging in your labours of love? Do long-looked-for wants tarry? Do the desired clouds refuse to break in blessings on the parched heart? Have faith. The blessing will come, though it tarry, "for God is faithful," &c. (ver. 9). He will keep His promises, &c. 3. Stimulus. "The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ" will be a revelation of unrecognised or undeveloped "gifts." Therefore "come behind in no gift," &c. When that day dawns, the grand confirmation service will be held—"confirming" the good and the bad alike. (*The Study.*) **Who shall also confirm you unto the end.**—*The Christian's strength*:—The writings of St. Paul contain frequent assurances to the converts of the continuance and increase of God's blessing and the grace of Christ, and of strength to support them under their trials, to carry them through their difficulties, and to make them "more than conquerors through Him who loved them" (Rom. viii. 37; Phil. i. 6; Rom. viii. 31, 32, 38, 39; 1 Cor. i. 4, &c.). In what sense, and with what necessary restrictions, are such promises as these always to be understood? It is manifest, both from the reason of things and from Holy Writ, that some spiritual blessings are so entirely the work of God, that, when considered in themselves, it is impossible that man can contribute to them, or bear any part in their completion. Thus, forgiveness of sins; adoption into God's family; a resurrection from the dead; and the gift of eternal life; though they suppose due preparations in man, repentance, faith, hope, charity, fixed purposes of obedience, and patient continuance in well-doing are in themselves the absolute gifts of God, simple in their nature, and, as far as we can perceive, admitting of no addition nor decrease. But there are other blessings or endowments, implying increase and variety, in the advancement of which man must bear his part, and work with God. Such are those graces which qualify the human soul for pardon, and peace, and everlasting glory; which are the rudiments or first principles of the heavenly character. For these set out, for the most part, from small and often imperceptible beginnings, and are strengthened and ripened into habits by exercise and godly discipline. When, therefore, St. Paul assures the converts that God will "confirm them unto the end, that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ," he does not comfort them with an assurance of support, divorced from all conditions and contingencies; nor does he lead us to believe that there are any particular persons whom God will at all events endow with an unfailing perseverance. Since, therefore, faith is spoken of in Scripture sometimes as God's gift, sometimes as man's duty, it is manifest that the gift and the duty mutually imply each other. On the one hand, our faith can neither begin nor continue, nor be perfected, without God's grace and blessing. On the other hand, we have no ground for supposing that He will "confirm our faith until the end," unless we endeavour to "hold fast our own faith," to improve it by acts of piety and obedience, and to abound in it more and more. Man is, of himself, strongly inclined to evil: he has a sinful nature stirring within him: his passions are continually provoking him to transgress the restraints of conscience and reason, and the laws revealed to him by his God. God, therefore, who well knows his indisposition to bear up against the power of corruption, mercifully promises to take him in hand, to discipline his imagination and affections (Ezek. xxxvi. 26; Deut. xxx. 6). But though God thus promises to circumcise the hearts of His people, and to subdue them to His own purposes, in other passages of Holy Writ He calls upon them to circumcise their own hearts, and to master and mortify themselves (Deut. x. 16; Jer. iv. 4; Eph. iv. 22; Col. iii. 5, 6). But in order to complete the Christian character, man stands in need of continual improvement in righteousness and true holiness, the daily renewal of his mind, and confirmed habits of piety and obedience. But since, when unassisted, he has no power in himself to help himself, and is, at the best, a mere beginner in the trade of virtue, God has graciously promised to renew and to supply him with spiritual sufficiency (Ezek. xi. 19, 20, xxxvi. 26, 27). Yet these promises of grace and spiritual succour are accompanied with earnest exhortations to the performance of our duty, and pressing calls upon us to do that for ourselves which God has, in some sort, engaged to do for us (Ezek. xviii. 31; Eph. iv. 23, 24). Hence it follows that God's promises of help to perfect our inner man, require diligence and exertion on our part; that our prayers for renewal will bring no blessing with them, if we do not endeavour to renew the spirit of our own minds; and that it is worse than idle to presume that God will not leave nor forsake us, if we shrink from our duty, and leave and forsake ourselves (Eph. v. 1; Col. iii. 14, 15). I shall lay down a few practical lessons which the consideration of this subject

naturally suggests. 1. You should make it your business to study the whole of God's Word, and, as far as you are able, to compare and combine its contents; and you must not accustom yourselves to dwell on the particular parts of it to the exclusion of other portions which require an equal degree of consideration and deference. 2. You will learn from those statements of the scriptural doctrine which have been laid before you, the folly and presumption of relying on God's goodness, and the grace and promises of Christ, without the exercise, on your own part, of religious labour and spiritual industry. 3. Whatever measure of religious industry you may exert, whatever progress you may make in the improvement of your souls and the reformation of your hearts and habits, still remember that you owe everything to God; that you are yourselves inclined to evil, and that it is your boundeu duty to refer back all holy desires, good counsels, and just works to the Author and Giver of all goodness. *(Bp. Bethel.)* *Confirming grace*:—I. WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE?—Confirmation. 1. In faith, holiness, love. 2. Unto the end. II. HOW IS IT EFFECTED? 1. By Christ. 2. Through the means of grace. III. WHY IS IT SO NECESSARY? 1. That ye may be blameless. 2. In the day of Christ. *(J. Lyth, D.D.)* *Firm to the end*:—Steadfastness is one of the most important characteristics of a Christian. What are love, self-denial, patience, and faith without it? It is not the best regiment which makes the most headlong charge, but which can stand firm. The Spartans were forbidden by their laws to flee. In the Pass of Thermopylæ stands a monument to Leonidas and his followers, bearing this inscription—"Go, stranger, and tell at Lacedæmon that we died here in obedience to our laws." What we want, as soldiers of Christ, is not so much zeal, or enthusiasm, or outward profession, as firmness to the end, steadfastness to die, if need be, for the laws of our God. We find plenty of zealous professors, but after a time the fire dies out into dead ashes; they have no staying power. Note—1. SOME OF THE DANGERS OF THE CHURCH NOW. 1. The restless spirit of the age. This is the result of various causes. (1) The spread of education. Men are taught to cultivate their heads at the price of their hearts. (2) The growth of cheap literature. The fact is, some of us in these days are getting too clever. We have got a few drops of learning, and we fancy that we can pour the whole ocean of knowledge into our poor little bottle. True education makes us humble, because it shows us our ignorance. What are the doubters and the unbelievers going to give you in exchange for what they rob you of? They can take away the Saviour, and only leave you your sins. They may scoff you out of believing in the resurrection. But can they laugh you out of believing in death? 2. A constant desire for something new, and, if possible, sensational. And, above all, these people want a religion made easy. They have no objection to being saved provided that the process is quick and cheap. They turn away from the thought of self-denial, &c.; they must be made good all at once. Beware of this mushroom religion; the best fruit is not that which ripens most quickly, and the best Christian certainly does not come to maturity all in a moment. The Persian fable tells us how a gourd wound itself round a lofty palm-tree, and in a few weeks climbed to its very top. The gourd asked the palm-tree its age, and the tree answered, "An hundred years." Then the gourd answered boastingly that it had grown as tall as the palm in fewer days than the tree could count years. "True," answered the palm-tree, "every summer has a gourd climbed round me, as proud as thou art, and as short-lived as thou wilt be." 3. This is a specially busy age. Every walk of life is crowded, and competition is most keen. Now there is great danger in all this to a man's spiritual life, if he has not God with him in his work. He will become selfish and unscrupulous. II. THE MEANS BY WHICH CHRIST WILL CONFIRM YOU UNTO THE END. *(H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.)* **Blameless in the day of . . . Christ.**—*Unimpeached*:—"So as to be unimpeached in the day of our Lord"; for when the saints stand before the tribunal of Christ, they will not indeed be found to have been free from sin in their earthly life, but having persevered in the faith and in good works will find themselves under the wing and shelter of God's righteousness, safe from all impeachment. "Unimpeached" of whom? Probably of the "accuser of the brethren," the adversary Satan. But being found holy in Christ and blameless to God, "who shall then lay an impeachment against God's elect? It is God that justifieth" (Col. i. 22, 23). *(Canon Evans.)* *Eternal blamelessness*:—I. JUDICIAL. The word used here is the judicial one. A Christian is one against whom there is not only no condemnation, but no accusation. He is a sinner, yet no man, nor angel, nor devil, may accuse him, or mention his guilt to God. II. PRIESTLY. I might call it sacrificial. The word used in such places as Eph. i. 4 is the same as that in 1 Pet. i. 19, "the Lamb

without blemish, and without spot." This unblemishedness has special reference to our fitness for worship and service. III. PERSONAL (Phil. ii. 15; 1 Thess. iii. 13). We are forgiven and delivered from wrath that we may be personally holy; holy in heart and life; saved from sin, conformed to Christ. Holiness is to be everywhere in and about the man. If, then, you call yourself a Christian, consider how much is expected from you. Consider—1. Your names. They are "saint," "Christian," "redeemed from among men," "follower of the Lamb." Do not these call you to blamelessness? 2. Your designations. You are the lights of the world, the salt of the earth; pilgrims, strangers, virgins, cross-bearers, kings and priests; a temple, a habitation of God. 3. Your calling. You are called to glory, honour, and immortality. 4. Your hopes. 5. Your companionships. They are all heavenly and pure. Old friendships are severed, and new ones formed. If you are Christians, then, be consistent. Be Christians out and out; Christians every hour, in every part, and in every matter. Beware of half-hearted discipleship. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*)

Ver. 9. **God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son.** —*The faithfulness of God:*—On this eternal, self-existent fidelity we can repose with safety. I. IT IS WELL THAT WE HAVE SOMETHING SURE, FOR TALK AS WE WILL OF THE FIDELITY OF MAN AND WOMAN, THERE IS MUCH TO SAY ALSO OF THEIR INFIDELITY. 1. Who can say—in friendship, in love—what a week, a month, a year may not bring forth? In the very strength of human affection lies its frailty. And it is in hours when this is realised, when we seem to toss upon a shifting sea in sailing over human love, that we turn to the everlasting firmness of God's fidelity. 2. But even more than in others do we recognise this faithlessness in ourselves. How often are we only faithful because we are ashamed to be otherwise, and how often have we betrayed that which was given us to keep? We look into our own hearts and know how slight and fluttering, how changeable we have often been, how we even enjoyed our change. What wonder, then, if we turn from the weakness of our own fidelity to seek a centre for it and a power of it in the unalterable strength of the faithfulness of God, and cry, "Faithful Master of fidelity, enter into my life and make it all fidelity." II. What answer does God give us to that? Not that we should at first expect. WE HAVE FLED FROM MAN TO GOD, GOD SENDS US BACK TO MAN. If a man find not fidelity in his brother whom he hath seen, how can he find fidelity in God whom he hath not seen? We have been looking on the unfaithfulness we have found in man. Nothing can be worse for us. He bids us search for faithfulness, and we shall find it. 1. In the hearts of those that love us. And the moment our whole position is thus changed, and we look on a new side of facts, we remember all the uncomplaining patience of long love that mother and father, wife and sister, have bestowed on us. We recollect that there are friends who have never failed us, to doubt whom would be a crime. 2. With this new light we look within our own hearts, and we are conscious that we have been true to many. Surprised, we ask ourselves, What is this faithfulness in the midst of unfaithfulness, this stability in human nature that accompanies instability? Oh! it is what we searched for, it is what we fled away from man to find. It is the fidelity of God Himself that moves and lives within His children. The kingdom of God is among you. III. HAVING LEARNT THAT LESSON, WE LEARN FROM IT—1. To love and honour men much more. We are not so ready to impute unfaithfulness, and we are kinder and more gracious, and being so, we find that men and women are more faithful to us, for we have lost the evil and unpleasant qualities which made people tire of our love. By believing in faithfulness we make it grow. Then our power of creating faithfulness has a reflex action on our own faithfulness. That which we cause to grow in others, grows by that very effort in ourselves. 2. An ideal of God's fidelity. The beauty of human fidelity forces us to aspire to a more beautiful fidelity, the real leads us onwards to the ideal. IV. Still an ideal remains always somewhat in the vague. But to our wonderful comfort THE FIDELITY OF GOD IS REALISED IN HUMANITY, IN CHRIST, THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN. "He who hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He who hath seen the human faithfulness of Christ hath seen the Divine faithfulness of God. 1. His faithfulness was faithfulness to duty. At twelve years of age it was clearly conceived. "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" For eighteen years He brooded on His duty, and at thirty it was accepted, and never let go. The imperative of His later saying, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day," was said with the same fervour as it had been said by the joyful enthusiasm of the boy; and when the supreme hour of life came He could say, "It is finished." What? His Father's

business! 2. That is the outward aspect of Christ's faithfulness to duty; its inner aspect was Eternal Truth. He had a few clear, dominant conceptions on which His whole life was built. To these ideas—such as the universal Fatherhood of God, the union of the Divine and human, the existence of a spiritual kingdom, and the necessity of man being a believer in these things, and being made at one with God through Him—Christ's whole inner life was faithful. He could say, with absolute truthfulness, feeling that His whole inner life had been faithful to them throughout: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth." This was Christ's fidelity, the image of God's. V. BUT WHAT DUTY CAN GOD BE SAID TO HAVE TO WHICH HE IS FAITHFUL? There can be no duty imposed on Him from without, else there were another greater than Himself. But there can be an imperative within His own nature which is to Him that which duty was to Christ and to us. 1. With regard to us, that duty is the duty of a Father to His children. By that imperative of Fatherhood He can never cease to care for us, watch over us, educate us, and finally perfect us. 2. That is the outward form. But the central idea of which it is the form, and to which in His own inner life He is for ever faithful, is this: "I am the eternal spiritual All. I give Myself forth in all that thinks, and loves, and acts, and is." That being such, it is inconceivable that He should ever be unfaithful to His thought, for that thought is His own realisation of Himself, and were He unfaithful to it, God were unfaithful to God, which is absurd. To this idea, then, and to all the duties it brings with it, God is absolutely faithful; He cannot be otherwise. "I am," He says, "because I am." Conclusion: That is our security. We have arrived at the conception of it through Christ, through our own humanity taken up into and filled with divinity. And once we have grasped it, it transfigures life and gives us a rock to stand on amid the shifting sands of our own feeling, amid the wavering of human faithfulness. The foundation of God standeth sure. (*Stopford A. Brooke, M.A.*) *The faithfulness of God*:—I. RESULTS FROM, OR STANDS CONNECTED WITH, ALL HIS OTHER PERFECTIONS. 1. His power (Psa. cxlvi. 6). This enables Him, without the possibility of failure, to accomplish all His promises and threatenings. Honest men may be prevented keeping their word by unexpected difficulties; but the designs of the Almighty cannot be frustrated (Matt. xix. 26; Gen. xviii. 14; Rom. iv. 20, 21; 2 Tim. i. 12). 2. His holiness; without it, indeed, He could not be holy (Psa. xcii. 15; Titus i. 2; Heb. vi. 18; Numb. xxiii. 19). Well might the Psalmist say, "God hath spoken in His holiness: I will rejoice" (Psa. lx. 6), for the holiness of God is a pledge of His faithfulness. 3. His unchangeableness. Angels have changed, and become devils; man is changed, and become a rebel; but God changes not (Mal. iii. 6). Men frequently change their minds, sometimes from good to evil, at other times from evil to good; their second thoughts are best: but God's thoughts can neither be improved nor depraved (James i. 17). The promises and vows of men (like Jephthah's and Herod's) are sometimes unlawful or incautiously made, so that "there may be more honour in the breach than in the observance of them." Not so the engagements of Heaven (Job xxiii. 13, 14). 4. His wisdom. Among men, the non-performance of promises is frequently occasioned by circumstances which human prudence could not foresee; and therefore good men should not make promises hastily, and never without reference to St. James's caution (James iv. 15). But no provisions are necessary when God makes a promise. No difficulties, no disappointments, can occur to Him; His instruments are always at hand, and shall all subserve His holy designs. 5. His mercy, love, and goodness (Psa. cxxxviii. 2). His love inclines Him to make the promise, and His veracity induces Him to fulfil it. II. OUR CONFIDENCE IN IT IS CONFIRMED by the following facts. 1. The promises are made in and to Christ, as the Head of His Church; and faithfulness to Him, as well as to us, insures their fulfilment (2 Cor. i. 20; Titus i. 2; Eph i. 6). 2. God has confirmed His promise by an oath (Gen. xxii. 16; Heb. vi. 13, 17, 18). 3. The experience of the people of God in all ages. (1) The first promise (Gen. iii. 15) has been fulfilled (1 John iii. 8; Gal. iv. 5). Remember that there is nothing like distance of time in the mind of God between the promise and the fulfilment (2 Pet. iii. 8), and hence some events are spoken of in the prophets as present, or even as past, which are yet to come. (2) Was the universal flood threatened, and Noah with his family to be secured? The event corresponded with the threatening, though one hundred and twenty years intervened. (3) Was Abraham, when one hundred, and childless, to have a vast posterity? Every Jew we see is a witness that the promise has been fulfilled. (4) So with the deliverance of Israel, &c. Conclusion: 1. Learn the unreasonableness and sinfulness of

unbelief (1 John v. 10). 2. Let God be honoured in His faithfulness by a suitable confidence in it. 3. Let us, in our humble measure, try to imitate God in this His glorious attribute (Eph. v. 1). (*G. Burder.*) *Faithful is He that calleth you* :—Consider—I. How God deals with you, in so calling you as to unite you to His Son. Faithfully throughout. He is faithful—1. In discovering to you your case. 2. In commending to you His Son. 3. In presenting Christ to you, in free gift, as yours. 4. In not repenting of His call. II. The end of this calling. You are united to His Son, and to such an effect as to have all things in common. 1. Common interests. The interests which Christ has as—(1) God's ally, are identical with those of the Father. (2) His Son, are identical with ours. 2. A common character. 3. A common history. With respect to—(1) A birth. (2) A baptism. (3) A work. (4) A cross. (5) A crown. (*R. Candlish, D.D.*) *The special call and the unfailing result* :—I. Your calling. 1. Its Divine origin. The text says, "God called you"—does not your experience prove the same? We thought that we had had no other call than that which came through our Bibles, good books, &c. But did we not read the same books years before? but they never touched a chord in our hearts; therefore we conclude that that time it must have been the finger of God. We had been called scores of times before, but we always turned a deaf ear. But when this particular call came, we threw down our sword and said, "Great God, I yield!" 2. Its graciousness. What was there in you to suggest a motive why God should call you? Some of you were drunkards, profane, injurious. John Bradford, when he saw a cartful of men going off to Tyburn to be hanged, said, "There goes John Bradford but for the grace of God." A good Scotchman called to see Rowland Hill, and without saying a word, sat still for some five minutes, looking into his face. At last Rowland asked him what engaged his attention. Said he, "I was looking at the lines of your face." "Well, what do you make out of 'em?" "Why," said he, "that if the graee of God hadn't been in you, you would have been the biggest rascal living." 3. The privileges it brings. (1) Pardon. (2) Righteousness. (3) Sonship. (4) Heaven. II. To what end did God call you? That you might have fellowship with Christ. Now the word "koinonia" is not to be interpreted here as a society, but as the result of society; *i.e.*, fellowship lies in mutual and identical interests. A man and his wife have fellowship with each other, in that which is common to both and enjoyed in communion accordingly. Now when we were called to Christ we became one with Him, so that everything Christ had became ours. This was the act of faith. Now we have fellowship to Christ. 1. In His loves. He loves saints, sinners, the world, and pants to see it transformed into the garden of the Lord. What He loves we love, and what He hates we abhor. 2. In His desires. He desires to see multitudes saved, the glory of God, that the saints may be with Him where He is—we desire the same. 3. In His sufferings. We do not die a bloody death; yet many have done so, and there are millions ready to do so. But when He is reproached we have learned to bear His reproach too. Some few drops of His cup we drink, and it has been given to some more than to others to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for His body's sake, which is the Church." 4. In His joys. Is He happy? We are happy to think Christ is happy. 5. In His riches. If He has riches in pardoning, supporting, instructing, illuminating, sanctifying, preserving, or perfecting Christians, they are all ours. Is His blood precious, His righteousness complete, His merits sweet? They are mine. Has He power in intercession, has He wisdom, righteousness—has He anything? It is mine. 6. In His glory. There is not a crown He wears but we have part of it; nay, there is not a gem that sparkles in His crowns but it sparkles for us as well as for Him. For us the golden streets, the chariot, the crowding angels; the shout of "Hallelujah! for Thou wast slain," &c., the second advent with all its splendours, universal reign of Christ, the day of judgment. III. All this leads us to perceive our security. Saints must be saved—1. Because God has called them. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance," Because—2. God has called them into fellowship with Christ, and that fellowship, if God be faithful, must be complete. You have shared His sufferings, His faithfulness secures the rest. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The fellowship of God's Son* :—1. The apostle writes as a peacemaker. Party strife had weakened spiritual life, and a weakened spiritual life had been fruitful in other evils. St. Paul would remedy all evil and restore harmony. He finds his potent spell in the Name which is above every name, and recalls Corinthian Christians to the consideration of the common Saviour, and their one hope which is by Him and in Him. Christ Jesus is all to each and to every one of them. Thus it is that throughout these opening verses this name occurs

again and again. 2. Divine fellowship is often spoken of in the Scriptures. In the New Testament it is naturally most familiar, for there God has come nearest to man, and therefore man may come nigh unto Him. This is the gospel message that, "made nigh by the blood of Christ" there is, for all, "boldness to enter into the holiest." "No one cometh unto the Father but by Me." Between God and men there is but the one Mediator. Fellowship with God must needs be first of all the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ. 3. But what is this high privilege? Ordinarily the term suggests the interchange of sympathy and thought, or association in acts of Christian worship and participation in common joys and sorrows. The word itself has a meaning which, in its application to ordinary affairs, is very definite and clear. The sons of Zebedee are twice spoken of as "partners" of Simon. Without any violence, therefore, we may read: "The partnership of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (*cf.* Heb. iii. 14). In this busy life, partnerships are common; but never in human commerce did men look upon one like this. Suppose a firm utterly and hopelessly ruined. A wealthy man asks to be admitted as partner. As honest men, the bankrupts must needs protest that the offerer knows not what he is doing. Then comes the reply that all is known, that wealth is available more than sufficient to meet all the need, and that practical wisdom also whereby the ruin may be reconstructed on a safe and enduring basis. Yet this, and more than all this, is in the gospel. A ruined race may scan the present, or peer as they will into the dark future. Sin hath wrought shame and death. Yet now, in the midst of the utter wreck, there stands One who offers much, as He offers life—who giveth all, as He gives Himself. This is true for each and for all, without respect of persons, and without limitation of gift. 4. What has this communion brought to the Saviour Himself? The answer is soon given. He took upon Himself our nature, "the likeness of sinful flesh." He shared to the utmost its weakness, weariness, pain, and death. One burden He shared not; for Himself hath borne it all. "By Himself" He "purged our sins." Beyond this He had nothing. Joy became His, "the joy that was set before Him," that of presenting "faultless before the presence of His glory" the redeemed sons of men. Glory has been given to Him, but it is the glory of "power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life." And these things He hath "received of the Father," and not from mankind. 5. But let us turn to the other side, the relation of man to this fellowship. In the commercial world, partnerships are not all alike. Modern society, under the pressure of altered circumstances, has invented the contrivance of "limited liability." But in olden times when any man entered a firm he took in with him all that he possessed. Thenceforth none of the things which he had could, in presence of the common need, be called his own. From such a partnership the young ruler recoiled: "Sell that thou hast," &c. Into such a partnership the early Christians gladly entered, for they "had all things common." Into such a partnership are we called—one of unlimited liability. Entire consecration is the first requirement. "Ye are not your own." "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Christ will have all, or nothing. On this essential condition, the partnership is open to every man. He came "to call sinners to repentance," and, when sinners come, they are accepted just as they are. No man may bring less than his all to the fellowship of Christ; but no man can bring more. So the trembling servant comes with his burden of conscious liability. His all is a debt of ten thousand talents; but the Saviour admits him to the partnership. The poor wasteful and wasted wanderer comes, with rags and shame as his only contribution, but he meets with no denial. Penitent, needy soul! Lay thy gift thyself, whatever thou hast been, whatever thou art—lay it all upon the altar. It is His will, it is His command; therefore, for once, obey. The gift is accepted, for He hath promised. For "God is faithful, by whom" thou hast been called unto this fellowship. 6. Once admitted, "all things are yours." In earthly partnerships, though there may be unlimited liability, there is only a limited supply. It cannot be that every partner shall have power to draw as he may upon the common resources. The banking account is strictly guarded; and the available funds are doled out to each and to all, not according to need, but according to legal claim. For sinful men, all this is blessedly otherwise. The treasury of grace is the fulness of God. There is "enough for all, enough for each, enough for evermore!" "But all He hath for mine I claim." 7. If, now, we would learn something of the wealth which we share with and in Christ Jesus, we may read His own words (John xvii. 22, 23). The glory of Christ is the possession of His people. That glory consists in what He is, and what He has; the riches of life and the gifts of love. (*G. W. Olver, B.A.*)

Fellowship with Christ :—I. OUR DISTINCTIVE POSITION AS CHRISTIANS IS THAT WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD'S SON. Men are often marked out from others by the particular fraternity, corporation, or firm to which they belong. We as Christians are members of the firm of the Son of God; for the word here means co-partnership. 1. The grounds of this fellowship are—(1) The Divine acceptance of Christ's work. (2) The consequent Divine grant to Christ of all the power and gifts of salvation for the benefit of all who should become co-partners with Himself. 2. Its terms or conditions—entire self-surrender. Faith receives Christ "as He is presented in the gospel," *i.e.*, in all His relations. To Christ as a Saviour trust is reliance, as a Teacher trust is teachableness, as a Ruler it is obedience, as a Leader following, as a King homage, as a Man sympathy, as God worship. Let there be no mistake here. Many put their trust in Christ as a Saviour, but not as a King; as man, not as God. They will take all He has to give, but give nothing in return, or if anything their money, but not themselves. But Christ seeks not yours, but you. He requires not large capital, knowledge, skill, art, &c., although He will receive them when offered; what He does require is your whole affection and unlimited trust. 3. Its prospects. Our position is that of partners—in spiritual life, brotherhood and service; but not on equal terms. We take nothing into the concern but weakness and poverty. Without Him we can do nothing, but with Him we shall jointly realise God's ideal of humanity. Military or commercial companies have often proposed to themselves the conquest of the world; this society has the same object, and will achieve it, only in a nobler sense. II. GOD HAS CALLED US INTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SON. In the invitations of the gospel God is calling men to become co-partners with Christ; but mere invitation does not come up to the full meaning of the term, and our hearts must say what that full meaning is. The heart makes God the author of its whole salvation. "By the grace of God I am what I am." That grace makes all the difference between a stranger to and a partner with Christ. III. EVERYTHING MUST DEPEND ON THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD. This fellowship from first to last is His creation; on Him it depends to render it a failure or a success. 1. Therefore our confidence rests immediately on God. In worldly affairs men usually contemplate success through natural laws and material properties. Farmers trust to the virtues of the seed, &c., merchants to the winds and waves, warriors to the spirit of their troops; but even in such cases a devout spirit will recognise the presence of God in all secondary causes, and make Him at least the basis of its hope. But in this great co-partnership we have no interventions to distract our faith. We go right to God at once. 2. We rest upon the most Godlike thing in God—His faithfulness, which supports the universe. Our fellowship with Christ is thus placed beyond the possibility of failure in God. No storm can shatter our bark, no blight destroy our harvests, for God is faithful. And what a stimulus to endeavour we have in this! Because God is so faithful to me I will be faithful to Him. Consequently the fellowship of Christ becomes to us the one permanent interest in this uncertain world. There is no possibility of bankruptcy; we cannot be outbidden or undersold; for ours is the capital of God's unsearchable riches. His name is pledged to every acceptance in which our safety is involved, and so long as His throne shall stand our safety and glory is assured. (*Prof. J. M. Charlton.*)

The Divine call, and its design :—I. THE CALL comprehends all the purposes, decrees, providences, and means of salvation. II. THE DESIGN of this call of God is, that all who obey it may for ever have "fellowship" or communion with His Son our Saviour. Communion signifies joint participation in anything, good or bad. Here all is good. God calls the believer—1. To communion with His Son, in His miraculous formation in the womb. The Spirit creates believers anew "in Christ Jesus unto good works." 2. In His purity from sin. The Spirit keeps our new nature from sin. 3. In growth in grace. The Spirit brings "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." 4. In fitness for every duty. The Spirit anointed Him, and He anoints the believer. 5. In working miracles. The Spirit enables the believer to conquer Satan, sin, the world, death, and hell. 6. In comfort. The Spirit comforted Him, and He comforts real believers. 7. In death. 8. In the state of the dead. The Spirit preserved His holy body that it saw no corruption. The Spirit will keep the bodies of believers "still united to Christ, till the resurrection." 9. In the resurrection. The Spirit raised Him up; and the same Spirit will raise up the believer. 10. In glory. The Spirit glorified our Lord; and He will also glorify the true believer. (*Jas. Kidd, D.D.*) *Sonship and fellowship* :—Let us consider this fellowship or partnership with Christ in the following aspects:—1. PARTNERSHIP WITH HIM IN WHAT HE WAS. He was crucified, He died, was buried, rose

again. In all these we have part. II. PARTNERSHIP WITH HIM IN WHAT HE IS. He has not only risen, but He has ascended. We share His present dignity; for we are said to be seated with Him in heavenly places, and are treated by God as such. We share His offices; we are prophets, priests, and kings; heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ Jesus. III. PARTNERSHIP WITH HIM IN WHAT HE SHALL BE. Much of His glory is yet in reserve; for now we see not yet all things put under Him. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*)

Vers. 10–16. **Now I beseech you . . . that ye speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you.**—*The apostolical exhortation to unity*:—I. WHAT IT INCLUDES—unity. 1. In confession. 2. In spirit. 3. In object. II. HOW IT IS ENFORCED—by the name of Christ, implying—1. His will. 2. His authority. 3. His claims on our love and obedience. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Unity of sentiment*:—1. THE REASONS WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD THINK ALIKE UPON RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS. 1. God has given them an infallible rule of faith. His Word contains a complete system of Divine truth. That being the case, there is a plain propriety in His requiring them to believe that it is a complete system, and also to believe all the particular truths which compose the system. 2. That rule of faith is sufficiently plain and intelligible to every capacity. All who are capable of knowing that they are the creatures of God are equally capable of knowing what He has required them to believe concerning Himself, their own character, their present situation, and their future state. II. THE OBJECTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN URGED AGAINST THIS UNPALATABLE DOCTRINE. 1. The great and visible diversity in the intellectual powers and external circumstances of Christians. But unity of sentiment does not require equality of knowledge. As one star differs from another star, so angels will differ from saints, and saints from each other in glory. But their difference in knowledge will not create any diversity of opinions respecting the same subjects. Saints will agree with angels so far as their knowledge extends; but so far as it fails, they will wait for further light. 2. The wide difference in the education of Christians. But since they have the Word of God in their hands, it is in their power to bring their own opinions and those of their instructors to an infallible standard, and to decide for themselves what they ought to believe or to disbelieve. 3. The right of private judgment. It is readily granted that every Christian has a right to collect evidence, and after that, to judge according to the evidence. But he has no right to examine and judge under the influence of prejudice, and form his opinion contrary to reason and Scripture. 4. That in Rom. xiv. the apostle allows Christians to differ in their religious sentiments, and only exhorts them to view their difference with a candid and charitable eye. But this only applies to the Mosaic rites, which were things indifferent, and which might be observed or neglected under a sense of duty. But he reminds them that they must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, where their opinions as well as actions would be either approved or condemned. III. THE TRUTHS WHICH NATURALLY FLOW FROM THE SUBJECT. If God does require Christians to believe alike upon religious subjects, then—1. It is not a matter of indifference what religious sentiments they embrace. 2. They have contracted a great deal of guilt from age to age by embracing and propagating error. 3. Christians who are united in the belief of the truth have a right to blame those who think differently from them upon religious subjects. 4. There appears to be no propriety in attempting to unite them in affection, without uniting them in sentiment. 5. It seriously concerns all who acknowledge the truth and divinity of the gospel to use every proper method to become entirely united in sentiment. (1) For this purpose, therefore, let them freely and candidly examine the various points in which they mutually differ. (2) There are various considerations which urge Christians to cultivate a sentimental union among themselves. (*a*) It will directly tend to unite them in affection. We find that those who agree in art or science commonly feel a mutual attachment arising from their concurrence in opinion. And a unity of faith never fails to produce a mutual esteem and affection among Christians. (*b*) The sure word of prophecy predicts the future peace and harmony of the Church as resulting from the knowledge of the truth. (*c*) By uniting in sentiment, Christians will remove one of the strongest prejudices of unbelievers against the Bible. (*d*) They will strengthen and animate one another in promoting the cause of Christ. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *Divisions in the Church*:—Hardly five years had lapsed since Paul had first preached the gospel at Corinth, when he is constrained to write to his converts, now in the language of fatherly entreaty, now in the language of the sharpest rebuke,

and that though he can still give thanks to God with unfeigned gratitude for the growth of their faith in Christ. What then is the fault which causes him such keen anxiety? It is not heresy, it is not apostasy, it is not open separation from the Church of Christ: it is a matter which we might be inclined to regard as far less momentous than any of these: it is the growth and spread of party spirit within their body. They are degrading the names of the apostles into watchwords of divisions. Christ is divided! indignantly exclaims St. Paul. You are rending His body asunder, you are severing the members which cannot exist in isolation. The harmonious combination of manifold parts, all subservient to one end and united by one Head; this is the essential idea of the physical body. The same law holds in the mystical body of Christ. Disregard the Divine order, and the result can only be death. This division into parties is no venial offence, no pardonable enthusiasm for the teachers whose names you thus dishonour: it is the ruin of the unity for which Christ prayed, "That they all may be one." It is a work of the flesh: the outcome of the evil propensities of your unrenewed nature. I. WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF PARTY DIVISIONS? 1. The ultimate cause lies, I believe, in a radical misapprehension of the nature of truth. God's truth is infinite. Man's mind is finite. It is in the nature of things impossible that we with our limited capacities should comprehend the whole of truth. All that we can do is to grasp some fragments, here a little and there a little: truth indeed sufficient for our personal necessities, if we seek aright in faith and patience, but immeasurably falling short of the reality. Our views of truth are therefore partial, disjointed; and it is inevitable that men with minds differently trained should apprehend different parts and different aspects of the truth. This variety is not of itself an evil. Far from it. Such different views are complementary, not antagonistic. As God's truth was revealed to man "in many parts and in many fashions," so only in "many parts and in many fashions" can it be grasped and interpreted by man. Only as the ages roll on, and each generation contributes its share towards the final result, are we slowly learning the grandeur of the gospel. Differences are not to be ignored or dissembled, but frankly acknowledged: "combination in diversity," it has been said, is the characteristic feature of the Church of Christ, and it must be the characteristic feature of every organisation which truly represents that Church. "Combination in diversity" is a characteristic feature of Holy Scripture. It needs the records of four Evangelists to give a true portraiture of the Son of Man in His earthly ministry. We are not to regard one as more faithful than another, not to take any one as in itself complete, but to find in the harmony of all the true delineation of that perfection which we can only realise by contemplating it in its several parts. St. Paul and St. James, St. Peter and St. John, each offer to us different aspects of the truth; one is the apostle of faith, another of works; one of hope, another of love; but if they have each some special grace or duty upon which they insist, it is not to the neglect or exclusion of other graces and duties: nor are we to pit them one against the other. 2. Thus we see that various schools of thought are necessary for the full representation of truth. They supply, moreover, "that antagonism of influences which is the only real security for continued progress." But schools of thought are painfully liable to degenerate into parties. We naturally and rightly concentrate our attention upon that fragment of truth which we have realised for ourselves to be true and precious: gradually we grow to think that this is the whole of truth. We divide the swelling river of truth into a thousand paltry runlets, and each cries, Come drink at my stream, for it, and it alone, is pure and uncontaminated. Well for us, then, if the water of life is not evaporated and lost amid the sands of the barren desert of strife. 3. For the next step is easy. We affirm that because others see not with our eyes, they are enveloped in the mists of dangerous error; resistance to their tenets becomes a duty, and in the fierceness of controversy charity is forgotten, and the party contentions of the Christian Church become a spectacle that provokes the scornful laugh of devils and moves our angelic watchers to tears. The absence of humility, the strength of self-will, the spirit that desires victory rather than truth, all contribute to the direful result, and the imperfection of our knowledge is perverted by our sinful folly into the source of incalculable mischief to ourselves and those around us. 4. Especially in days of revival of religious life is there danger of party contentions. Conviction is intense, enthusiasm unbounded, old truths are resuscitated, new truths apprehended, and each individual cherishes his own discovery, and proclaims it as the one vital element of truth to the exclusion of others in reality no less important. 5. The use of party phraseology, too, tends to accentuate the difference between various schools of

thought. "By this means over and above all the real differences of opinion which exist, a fresh cause of separation is introduced among those who would perhaps be found, if their respective statements were candidly explained, to have in these tenets no real ground for disunion." 6. Extremes beget extremes: if one set of men form themselves into an exclusive party, with narrow views and aims, the almost certain consequence is that those who are of the opposite way of thinking will form a party to resist them. But it is a faithless expedient. "Through strife, and not by strife, the Church of God has passed upon her way." II. WHAT ARE THE EVILS ARISING FROM PARTY DIVISIONS? 1. Party spirit causes the decay of spiritual life: for love is the breath of life, and where love is not, life must wither and die. But how can the gentle breezes of love co-exist with the fierce burning blasts of the sirocco of controversy? As each party circle moreover ceases to hold communion with its neighbours, and feeds more exclusively upon its own limited truths, there is peril that even these will grow to be lifeless, and become petrified into hard unmeaning formulas. Not loss of knowledge and narrowness of sympathy alone, but even death, may be the consequence of isolation. 2. Party spirit is a grievous hindrance to the growth of God's kingdom. This it is which breeds distrust between the clergy and the laity, and opens that gap which we are sometimes told is daily widening. When shall we learn that the kingdom of God does not consist in a phraseology, but in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"? 3. Party spirit is a waste of strength. 4. Party divisions are a stumbling-block to weak believers. What are we to think when we see men whose personal characters are equally estimable denouncing one another with unmitigated bitterness? 5. Party divisions are a laughing-stock to unbelievers. "See how these Christians love one another," is the scornful taunt. And thus we lose that testimony of an united Church which was the ideal contemplated by our Lord. III. WHAT ARE THE REMEDIES FOR PARTY DIVISIONS? 1. The fundamental bond of religious unity is this: "Ye are Christ's." Not primarily in outward organisation, however valuable, not in creeds, however necessary, but in living union with our Head. 2. Another remedy is to be found in the frank recognition that in the Church of Christ variety is not only not wrong, but natural and necessary; because the views of any one individual or group of individuals can be at best but partial embodiments of the whole truth. When we maintain that our partial view is the complete and only true one, it is as if the dwellers in the valleys round some mighty mountain, a Mont Blanc or a Matterhorn, should meet and compare their ideas of its size and form: and because these ideas do not tally, and the outlines of its slopes and peaks and precipices are differently described by each, should forthwith deny the identity of the object of their argument; or impeach the veracity of their neighbours, and part with angry and embittered feelings. 3. A candid and patient examination of the views of those who differ from us will do much to moderate party spirit. Men of undeniable honesty, conscientiousness, zeal, holiness, differ from us. Why is this? They cannot be entirely in the wrong. No holy life is based entirely upon false premises. No system rests altogether upon a lie. 4. Once more, a remedy for divisions is to be found in practical co-operation wherever possible. 5. If controversy should unfortunately be unavoidable, as it may be on some occasions, and for some individuals, we must take heed that it is conducted with calm sobriety, temperate reason, and with the desire of truth, not success. But it is a perilous resource: far healthier for us if we can abstain from entangling ourselves in it. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee." (*A. F. Kirkpatrick, M.A.*) *Division in the Church contrary to the spirit of Christ*:—Because —I. CONTRARY TO THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST. Christ here by His servant—1. Exhorts to unity in (1) Confession; (2) Spirit; (3) Judgment. 2. Condemns all disunion. II. INCOMPATIBLE WITH OUR OBLIGATIONS TO CHRIST. Divisions—1. Arise from sinful attachment to persons, interests, or opinions. 2. Divide the body of Christ. 3. Transfer the honour due to Him to another. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Like-minded*:—An eminent preacher says: "I was walking some weeks ago in a beautiful grove, the trees were distant apart, and the trunks were straight and rugged. But as they ascended higher the branches came closer together, and still higher the twigs and branches interlaced. I said to myself, our Churches resemble these trees; the trunks near the earth stand stiffly and rudely apart; the more nearly toward heaven they ascend, the closer and closer they come together, until they form one beautiful canopy, under which men enjoy both shelter and happiness. Then I thought of that beautiful prayer of the Saviour, 'That they all may be one.' Those who have the Spirit of Christ, who go about always doing good, will be like-

minded." *Divisions, how to heal:*—When so much had been done at Marburg to effect an agreement between Luther and the Helvetians, Zwingle and his friends, he magnanimously resolved that they should not make larger grants for peace, nor carry away the honour of being more desirous of union than he. He suggested that both "the interested parties" should "cherish more and more a truly Christian charity for one another," and earnestly implore the Lord by His Spirit to confirm them in "the sound doctrine." (*W. Baxendale.*) *The evil and danger of schism:*—The Church of Corinth was now lying bleeding of her wounds, given her not by enemies, but by her own children. The apostle applies himself to the curing of this rent and broken Church in this most pathetic exhortation to unity. Note—I. THE COMPELLATION, "Brethren." 1. A kindly compellation, whereby he endeavours to insinuate himself into their affections; for it is hard for faithful ministers to get people's affections kept where once divisions enter. 2. An argument for unity: he minds them that they are brethren; and it is a shameful thing for brethren to fall out by the ears (Gen. xiii. 8, xlv. 24). II. THE OBSECRATION, "I beseech you, by the name," &c. Paul turns a petitioner for the Church's peace, and begs of them, as he did of the jailor (Acts xvi. 28), that they would do themselves no harm, but lay by the sword of contention; and that it might have the more weight, he interposeth the name of Christ. It is as much as if he had said—1. As ye have any regard to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, who hath so often enjoined unity and brotherly love to His followers, beware of divisions. 2. As ye love the Lord Jesus, as ye tender His honour and glory, let there be no divisions among you; for the name of Christ sadly suffers by your contentions. III. THE MATTER OF HIS EXHORTATION. 1. He exhorts them to unity of principles, "that ye all speak the same thing"; for now some were crying one thing, some another, like that confused multitude (Acts xxi. 34), till some of them came at length to deny the resurrection (chap. xv.). 2. He dehorts them from schisms, which properly signifies a cutting in a solid body, as in the cleaving of wood. Thus the one Church of Corinth was rent into divers factions, some following one, some following another; therefore says the apostle, "Is Christ divided?" Where will you get a Christ to head your different and divided party? Through these divisions, it would seem, from chap. xi. 33, they had separate communions, they would not tarry for one another. The apostle also taxeth their divisions as carnal (chap. iii. 3), where the word "divisions" properly signifies separate standing, where one party stand upon one side, and another party on another side—such dissension, wherein one separate one from another. 3. He exhorts them to amend what was amiss already among them in that matter, to be perfectly joined together, in opposition to their contentions and divisions. The word in the original is very emphatic, and signifies—(1) To restore disjointed members into their proper places again (Gal. vi. 1). It is a metaphor from chirurgeons setting members or joints again. 2. To establish in the state to which a person or thing is restored; and so it denotes a firm union betwixt the members of that Church as a body, and withal he adds here the bonds of this union, the same mind, that is, the same heart, will, and affections, as the word mind is taken (Rom. vii. 25), and the same judgment or opinion anent matters; if the last cannot be got, yet the first may. IV. FROM THE WORDS WE DRAW THESE FOLLOWING DOCTRINES: 1. That schism is an evil incident to the Churches while in this world. 2. That professors ought to beware of it, as they tender the authority and honour of our Lord Jesus Christ. 3. Where schism enters into a Church, there will be great heats, people contradicting one another in matters of religion. 4. That however hard it be, yet it is possible to get a rent Church healed. 5. That it is the duty of all Church members to endeavour the unity of the Church, and the cure of schisms; and particularly, it is the duty of disjointed members to take their own places in the body again. 6. That schisms, as they are grievous to all the sons of peace, so they are in a special manner heavy and afflicting to faithful ministers of the gospel of peace. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) **It hath been declared . . . by them which are of the house of Chloe that there are contentions among you.**—*Contentions in the Church:*—I. HOW THEY ARISE. Out of undue attachments to persons or opinions. II. HOW THEY SHOULD BE REPRESSED. 1. Not by seeking the triumph of one party over the other, or by the absolute sacrifice of private opinion. 2. But by exalting these points in which all agree, and cultivating one mind and spirit. III. WHY THEY SHOULD BE REPRESSED—for the sake of Christ. 1. His body is one and undivided. 2. He was crucified for us. 3. We are baptized into His name. 4. None other has any claim upon us. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The factions:*—I.

THERE WERE FOUR PARTIES IN THE CHURCH AT CORINTH. 1. Those who held by Paul himself. They owed to him their salvation; and having experienced the efficacy of his gospel, they thought that there was no other efficacious mode of presenting Christ to men. So probably they fell into the mistake of all mere partisans, and became more Pauline than Paul, and were in danger of becoming more Pauline than Christian. 2. Those who were grouped round Apollos, who watered what Paul had planted. He fitted the gospel into their previous knowledge, and showed them its relations to other faiths, and opened up its ethical wealth and bearing on life. His teaching was not opposed to Paul's, but supplementary of it; and chap. xvi. 12 shows that there was no jealousy between the two men. 3. Those who gloried in the name of Cephas, the apostle of the circumcision, whose name was used in opposition to Paul's as representing the original group of apostles who adhered to the Jewish law. Extreme Judaizers would find in this party a fruitful soil. 4. That which named itself "of Christ." From 2 Cor. x. 7–xii. 18, it would appear that this party was led by men who prided themselves on their Hebrew descent (chap. xi. 22), and on having learned their Christianity from Christ Himself (chap. x. 7). They claimed to be apostles of Christ (chap. xi. 13) and "ministers of righteousness" (chap. xi. 15); but as they taught "another Jesus," "another spirit," "another gospel" (chap. xi. 4), Paul does not hesitate to denounce them as false apostles. II. THE APOSTLE HEARS OF THESE PARTIES WITH DISMAY. What, then, would he think of the state of the Church now? There was as yet in Corinth no outward disruption; and indeed Paul does not seem to contemplate as possible that the members of the one body of Christ should refuse to worship their common Lord in fellowship with one another. 1. The evils attaching to such a condition of things may no doubt be unduly magnified; but the mischief done by disunion should not be ignored. The Church was intended to be the grand uniter of the race; but instead of this, the Church has alienated friends; and men who will do business and dine together, will not worship together. Had the kingdom of Christ been visibly one, it would have been without a rival in the world. But instead of this the strength of the Church has been frittered away in civil strife. The world looks on and laughs while it sees the Church divided over petty differences while it ought to be assailing vice, ungodliness, and ignorance. And yet schism is thought no sin. 2. Now that the Church is broken into pieces, the first step towards unity is to recognise that there may be real union without unity of external organisation. The human race is one; but this unity admits of numberless diversities. So the Church may be truly one in the sense intended by our Lord, one in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace, though there continue to be various divisions and sects. As amidst all diversities of government and customs it is the duty of States to maintain their common brotherhood and abstain from tyranny and war, so it is the duty of Churches, however separate in form of government, to maintain and exhibit their unity. 3. There may be real union without unity in creed. This unity is desirable; and Paul entreats his readers to be of one mind. (1) True, the Church has gained much by difference of opinion. Were all men to be agreed there might be a danger of truth becoming lifeless for want of the stimulus, and doctrine has been ascertained and developed in answer to error. (2) But as a visitation of cholera may result in cleanliness, but no one desires that cholera may come; and as opposition in Parliament is an acknowledged service to the country, yet each party desires that its sentiments become universal; so, too, notwithstanding every good result which may flow from diversity of opinion regarding Divine truth, agreement is what all should aim at. (3) But what truths are to be made terms of communion? The answer is, the Church of Christ is formed of those who are trusting to Him as the power of God unto salvation. He is in communion with all who thus trust Him, whether their knowledge be great or small; and we cannot refuse to communicate with those with whom He is in communion. No doctrinal error, therefore, which does not subvert personal faith in Christ should be allowed to separate Churches. Paul was contemplating Christ, and not a creed, as the centre of the Church's unity, when he exclaimed, "Is Christ divided?" In all Christians and all Churches the one Christ is the life of each. And it is monstrous that those who are virtually united to one Person and quickened by one Spirit should in no way recognise their unity. It is with something akin to horror that Paul goes on to ask, "Was Paul crucified for you?" He implies that only on the death of Christ can the Church be founded. Take away that and the personal connection of the believer with the crucified Redeemer, and you take away the Church. III. From this casual expression of Paul we see HIS HABITUAL ATTITUDE

TOWARDS CHRIST. 1. He was never slow to affirm the indebtedness of the young Christian Churches to himself: he was their father, but he was not their saviour. Not for one moment did he suppose that he could occupy towards men the position Christ occupied. Between his work and Christ's an impassable gulf was fixed. And that which gave Christ this special place and claim was His crucifixion. Paul does not say, Was Paul your teacher in religion, and did he lead your thoughts to God? did Paul by his life show you the beauty of self-sacrifice and holiness? but "Was Paul crucified for you?" 2. It was not, however, the mere fact of His dying which gave Christ this place, and which claims the regard and trust of all men. Paul had really given his life for men; but Paul knew that in Christ's death there was a significance his own could never have. It was not only human but Divine self-sacrifice that was there manifested. Through this death sinners find a way back to God and assurance of salvation. 3. This unique work, then—what have we made of it? Paul found his true life and his true self in it. It filled his mind, his heart, his life. This man, formed on the noblest and largest type, found room in Christ alone for the fullest development and exercise of his powers. Is it not plain that if we neglect the connection with Christ which Paul found so fruitful we are doing ourselves the greatest injustice, and preferring a narrow prison-house to liberty and life? (*M. Dods, D.D.*)

The apostle's view of party spirit:—Paul denounces it as a sin in itself irrespective of the right or wrong opinions connected with it; and the true safeguard against it is the recollection of the great bond of fellowship with Christ which all have in common. "Christianus mihi nomen est," said an ancient bishop in answer to some such distinction; "Catholicus cognomen." 1. The first duty of the apostle was to lose himself entirely in the cause he preached. The most important details or forms were so insignificant in comparison that Paul spoke of them as though he had no concern with them. How often in later ages have the means and institutions of the Church taken the place of the end! Antiquity, novelty, a phrase, a ceremony, a vestment, each has in turn overbalanced the one main object for which, confessedly, all lower objects are inculcated. To all these cases the apostle's answer applies, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." 2. The sin of the Corinthians consisted not in the mere adoption of eminent names, but in the party spirit which attaches more importance to them than to the great cause which all good men have in common. Even the sacred name of Christ may thus be desecrated; and as the apostle rebukes those who said, "I am of Christ," no less than those who said "I am of Paul," &c., so our Lord refused to take the title of "good" (Luke xviii. 19), and "baptized not, but His disciples" (John iv. 2). If the holiest Name can thus be made a party watchword, if Christianity itself can thus be turned to the purposes of a faction, much more may any of its subordinate manifestations. The character of our Lord is distinguished from all others by the fact that it rises far above any local or temporary influences, and also that it has, for the most part, escaped, even in thought, from any association with them. So the character of the apostle, although in a lower measure, vindicates itself in this passage from any identification with the party which called itself after his name; and is a true example of the possibility of performing a great work, and labouring earnestly for great truths, without losing sight of the common ground of Christianity, or becoming the centre of a factious and worldly spirit. 3. It is by catching a glimpse of the wild dissentions which raged around the apostolic writings that we can best appreciate the unity and response of those writings themselves: it is by seeing how completely the dissentions have been obliterated, that we can best understand how marked was the difference between their results and those of analogous divisions in other history. We know how the names of Plato and Aristotle, of Francis and Dominic, of Luther and Calvin, have continued as the rallying point of rival schools; but the schools of Paul and Apollos and Cephas, which once waged so bitter a warfare against each other, were extinguished almost before ecclesiastical history had begun. Partly this arose from the nature of the case. The apostles could not have become founders of systems, even if they would. Their power was not their own, but another's. "What had they that they had not received?" If once they claimed an independent authority their authority was gone. Great philosophers, conquerors, heresiarchs leave their names even in spite of themselves. But such the apostles could not be without ceasing to be what they were; and the total extinction of the parties which were called after them is in fact a testimony to the Divinity of their mission. And it is difficult not to believe that in the great work of reconciliation of which the outward volume of the Sacred Canon is the chief monument, they

were themselves not merely passive instruments, but active agents; that a lesson is still to be derived from the record they have left of their own resistance to the claims of the factions which vainly endeavoured to divide what God had joined together. (*Dean Stanley.*) *Sects and parties*:—I. THEIR MANIFOLD VARIETY occasioned—1. By the peculiarities of human nature in general. 2. National differences. 3. Personal differences. 4. Attachment to individuals, as in the text. II. THEIR UNITY still possible, there should be—1. One language, one mind. 2. One judgment on fundamental principle. 3. Especially one faith in the crucified Jesus. 4. And one baptism into His name. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The dissensions of the early Church*:—I. HOW THEY ORIGINATED. 1. In the disputes of the Jewish and Gentile Christians. 2. Hence one was of Peter and another of Paul—those of Christ and of Apollos appear to have been modifications of these. II. WHO WERE THE PROMOTERS OF THEM? 1. Not Paul or Peter, &c. 2. Not the peaceably disposed, or those who loved Christ above all things. 3. But—(1) Some who unduly idolised the human in religion. (2) Ignorant persons, who had zeal without knowledge (Rom. x. 2). (4) Contentious persons, who would have their own way (Phil. i. 16). III. WHAT WAS THE EFFECT? 1. Christ was divided. 2. His claims forgotten. 3. Some human idol exalted in His place. (*Ibid.*) **Every one of you saith, I am of Paul . . . and I of Christ.**—*The factious affecting one pastor above another*:—We may, and must, give a Benjamin's portion of respect to those who excel in age, pains, parts, and piety; but the lavishing by wholesale all honour on one, and scarce retailing out any respect to the other, is what Paul reproves. I. THE MISCHIEFS THAT ARISE FROM THIS PRACTICE. 1. Dissention betwixt ministers. As the Grecians (Acts vi. 1) murmured against the Hebrews, so ministers feel aggrieved that people pass them by unregarded. Perchance the matter may fly so high as it did betwixt Moses and Aaron (Numb. xii. 2). It will anger not only Saul, a mere carnal man, but even those that have degrees of grace to say, "He hath converted his thousands, but such an one his ten thousands." 2. Dissension amongst people. Like the women that pleaded before Solomon (1 Kings iii. 22), they contend "The living minister is mine; he that hath spirit and activity: but the dead minister is thine: he cometh not to the quick, he toucheth not the conscience." "Nay," saith the other, "my minister is the living minister, and thine is the dead one. Thy pastor is full of the fire, of ill tempered and undiscreet zeal; 'but the Lord was not in the fire': whilst my minister is like to a 'still voice'; staunching the bleeding-hearted penitent, and dropping the oil of the gospel into the wounded conscience." 3. Rejoicing to wicked men, to whose ears our discords are the sweetest harmony. Let not the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot fall out, whilst the Canaanites are yet in the land. 4. Great dishonour to God Himself. Here is such looking on the ambassador that there is no notice taken of the king. II. TO PREVENT THESE MISCHIEFS, BOTH PASTORS AND PEOPLE MUST LEND THEIR HELPING HANDS. 1. I begin with the pastors. (1) Those who have the thickest audiences. (*a*) Let them not pride themselves with the bubble of popular applause, often as carelessly gotten as undeservedly lost. Have we not seen those who have preferred lungs before brains, and sounding of a voice before soundness of matter? Let princes count the credit of their kingdoms to consist in the multitude of their subjects: far be it from a preacher to glory when his congregation swells by the consumption of the audience of his neighbour. (*b*) Let them discourage immoderate admiration. When St. John would have worshipped the angel, "See thou do it not," saith he: "worship God." Know thou who lovest to glut thyself with people's applause, it shall prove at the last pricks in thy eyes and thorns in thy side—because sacrilegiously thou hast robbed God of His honour. (*c*) Let them labour also to ingratiate every deserving pastor with his own congregation. It was the boon Saul begged of Samuel, "Honour me before my people." And surely it is but reason we should seek to grace the shepherd in the presence of his flock. (2) I come now to neglected ministers, whilst others, perchance less deserving, are more frequented. Never fret thyself, if others be preferred before thee. They have their time; they are crescents in their waxing, full seas in their flowing: envy not at their prosperity. Thy turn of honour may come next. One told a Grecian statist who had excellently deserved of his city, that the city had chosen four-and-twenty officers, and yet left him out. "I am glad," said he, "the city affords twenty-four abler than myself." And let us practise St. Paul's precept, "by honour and dishonour, by good report and disreport," and say with David, "Lord, here I am; do with Thy servant as Thou pleasest." 2. By this time, methinks, I hear the people saying, as the soldiers to John Baptist, "But what shall we do?" (1) Ever preserve a reverent

esteem of the minister whom God hath placed over thee. For, if a sparrow lighteth not on the ground without God's especial providence, surely no minister is bestowed in any parish without a more peculiar disposing; and surely their own pastor is best acquainted with their diseases, and therefore best knoweth to apply spiritual physic thereunto. And as God's Word hath a general blessing on every place, so more particularly is it blessed to parishioners from the mouth of their lawful minister. Let not therefore the stranger, who makes a feast of set purpose to entertain new guests, be preferred before thy own minister, who keeps a constant table, feeding his own family. Wherefore let all the Ephesians confine themselves to their Timothy; Cretians to their Titus; every congregation to their proper pastor. As for those whose necessary occasions do command their absence from their flocks, let them see to it that they provide worthy substitutes. (2) Let them not make odious comparisons betwixt ministers of eminent parts. It is said of both Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii. 5) and Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 25) that there were none like them. The Holy Spirit prefers neither for better, but concludes both for best; and so amongst ministers, when each differs from others, all may be excellent in their kinds. As, in comparing several handsome persons, one surpasseth for beauty of face; a second, for a well-proportioned body; a third, for comeliness of carriage: so may it be betwixt several pastors. One's excellency may consist in the unsnarling of a known controversy; another, in plain expounding of Scripture; one, the best Boanerges; another, the best Barnabas: our judgments may be best informed by one, our affections moved by a second, our lives reformed by a third. Grant some in parts far inferior to others: was not Abishai a worthy captain, though he attained not to the honour of the first three? And may not many be serviceable in the Church, though not in the first rank? (3) Entertain this for a certain truth, that the efficacy of God's Word depends not on the parts of the minister, but on God's blessing, on His ordinance. (*T. Fuller, D.D.*) *Sects and parties*:—I. HOW FAR ARE THEY RIGHT? As far as they—1. Stand upon the common foundations of Christ. 2. Busy themselves to save souls and not to make proselytes. 3. Esteem, love, and help each other. 4. Exhibit a holy emulation in exalting Christ. II. WHEN ARE THEY WRONG? 1. When they exalt party names and differences above Christ. 2. When they are slavishly attached to their party, and make it the great object of their zeal. 3. When they note and despise others and exclude them from their fellowship. 4. When they seek to glorify their party above all others. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Is Christ divided?** or "*Is the Christ made a share?*"—Is He not a whole, but only a part co-ordinate with three others? Is He no longer the complete circle around which is assembled in its oneness the Corinthian Church, regarding Him from all sides as the One Saviour? but is He reduced to a single quadrant of that circle, the other quadrants being Paul, Apollos, and Cephas? If this be true the startling inference is that Christ, being a Saviour to His own, the other three leaders are subordinate saviours, each to his own adherents; and so I ask you, while I shrink from the thought (such is the force of the Greek), was Paul (to take as an instance the first named of the three heads) crucified for you? Or were ye baptized? &c. And yet this is the conclusion, absurd as it is monstrous, nay, blasphemous, to which you are drifting on the waves of party opinions and professions. Wherefore I beseech you, by that Name which is above every name, the Name of Him who is our Lord, who is the Christ, the one Saviour of all, that divisions die among you, and that union and harmony revive in the pure atmosphere of sameness of view and purpose, leading to sameness of confession. Another translation slightly diverging from the above, but finally converging with it in the same logical connexion is this—"*Apportioned is Christ?*" Assigned as a portion is He? The word "portion" here denotes relation rather to its own claimant or appropriator than to other co-ordinate parts. The claimant of Christ as its own portion exclusively is in this instance, of course, the last-named party of Christ. If this be the more correct rendering, an underlink of connection between "Apportioned is Christ?" and "Was Paul crucified for you?" must be mentally supplied; an intermediate flash of thought so obvious that time would have been wasted in wording it. This silent link is expressed by the clause in italics: if the Christ, the one Saviour, has become the heritage of one party, *what is to become of the salvation of the other three?* "Was Paul crucified for you," &c. (*Canon Evans.*) *Is Christ divided in*—1. His person. 2. His offices. 3. His salvation. 4. His Church. (*W. W. Wythe.*) *The differences among Christians no objection to Christianity*:—I. HOW IT IS THAT MEN COME TO DIFFER IN MORALS AND RELIGION. Almost every action, character, or doctrine, on which we are called upon to make up an opinion, is more or less

complex; that is to say, has more than one side or aspect. It does not follow that one is true, and the other false: both may be true; that is, faithful representations of the same reality, only under different aspects. I am not aware of a single vicious action which was ever held as right, unless, in the circumstances, it really had a good or plausible side, on which alone, from some cause, it was contemplated, the whole action being judged by this one side. The same account is also to be given of the origin of most of our differences in religious doctrine when sincerely entertained. Take, for instance, what is perhaps the most fundamental difference of all, the different opinions which have prevailed respecting human nature. Who does not know that man actually appears under all these various aspects?—sometimes but little lower than the angels, and sometimes but little better than a fiend. Hence the most extreme and contradictory views on this subject are so far well founded as this, that they are faithful representations of real phases of human nature, the error consisting not in misconceiving some single phase, but in judging our whole nature by that alone. And so it follows, that what we call errors are not so much false as partial views of the reality. II. Such being the origin and nature of most religious differences, it will next be in order to inquire ON WHAT GROUNDS THEY CAN BE REGARDED AS A REASON OR OCCASION FOR SCEPTICAL, CYNICAL, OR DESPONDING THOUGHTS. In the first place, do they afford us any reason or pretext for denying the trustworthiness or competency of the human faculties? Certainly not. Could we be induced to regard the object under precisely the same lights and aspects, we should doubtless see it alike; and better still, could we be induced to regard the object under all lights and aspects, we should doubtless not only see it alike, but see it as it is. Accordingly, the differences among Christians are not to be construed into evidence of the incompetency of the human faculties in themselves considered, but only of their partial application. When we begin our inquiries respecting any subject, we must begin, of course, by looking at it on one side: our views must be partial at first; but it does not follow that they must always continue so. What, indeed, is progress in any inquiry but the gradual enlargement of our views? And hence the acknowledged fact, that thought and study, and a more generous culture, tend to dissolve differences and bring men together. To those, therefore, who think to find arguments for scepticism or despair in the divisions of Christians, and who are ready to pronounce the partial views which prevail as worthless, and mutually destructive of each other, the answer is plain. First, even the most partial of these views are worth a great deal; for they are partial views of an all-important truth, and as such contain much that is enduring and eternal. Again, as the error of these views grows mainly out of their being partial, it is one which must be expected to pertain to the first stages of every inquiry, but gradually disappear as the inquiry goes on. Finally, though the time may never come on earth when the multitude of partial views will be lost in a single all-comprehensive view, still this knowing "in part," and the trials and responsibilities which pertain to such a condition, may be essential to the discipline which is to fit us for that world, where "that which is in part shall be done away." Admitting all this, however, I ask, then, what there is in controversy—I do not say to condemn, for, considering how they are often conducted, there is enough in them, Heaven knows, to condemn, but to excuse in lookers-on either indifference or unbelief? Certainly of themselves they do not argue indifference or unbelief, but the contrary. An age of controversy is pre-eminently an age of faith; a man is not likely to dispute earnestly unless he believes in something, and attaches importance to it. Besides, how is it in other things? Name, if you can, a single interesting subject of inquiry which has not given occasion to controversy. The world is as much divided and estranged on scientific and political and philanthropic questions as on religious questions. But do men hence infer that there is no such thing as truth in any of these matters, or that we have no faculties to discover it? God forbid! Obviously, therefore, it cannot be controversy, as such, that is objected to in this connection, but something peculiar to religious controversy. First, it is said that controversy is well enough where it really has the effect to help forward the truth, or to diffuse and establish it; but in religion it does neither, leaving every question just where it found it. I reply, that even if this were so, it would not be to the purpose: it would follow, indeed, that controversy is of no use in religion, and ought to be avoided; but it would not follow that religion itself is of no use, or that controversy has made it of less use or less certain. But the whole statement is erroneous. Who has yet to learn the invaluable services of discussion and controversy in settling the laws of evidence on which the genuineness and authenticity of the

Sacred Books depend, and the laws of interpretation by which their import is determined? To discussion and controversy we also owe it, that the Christian doctrines generally have been unfolded, cleared up, and re-stated. Again, religious controversy is objected to because of its asperities and spirit of denunciation, which on such a subject are peculiarly odious, creating in some minds an invincible disgust for religion itself. That religious controversy, even among Christians, sometimes assumes the character here given to it, I confess; but it is easy to see that it is not because Christians are Christians, but because Christians are men, having the weaknesses and imperfections of men. Once more. A vague notion exists, I believe, in some minds that the honour of God is somehow compromised by the disgraceful altercations to which Christianity has given birth. The fact that He does not interfere to suppress them creates a feeling of uneasiness and distrust, as if the revelation were not in reality from Him. Such persons would do well to remember that God gives us truth, as He gives us everything else, not to our acceptance, but to our acquisition. Even the truths of revelation are expected to do us as much good by exercising our fairness of mind, and our love of truth, in the acceptance and interpretation of His Word, as by the light they give. To the question, then, Which among the various partial and discordant views you are to adopt, this is my answer—Adopt your own; hold fast your own. Allowing others to have their views, be faithful and just to your own view; endeavouring, of course, to enlarge it from day to day, but adhering to it, meanwhile, and reverencing it, as one view at least of truth, and of that side of truth which is turned towards you, and which, therefore, you must be presumed to be most concerned to know. Above all, remember that, though we are divided, Christ is not. (*J. Walker, D.D.*) **Was Paul crucified for you?**—*Was Paul crucified?*—I. THE OCCASION OF THIS QUESTION—the divided state of the Church at Corinth. Mark the peculiar ground of contention (ver. 12). Paul was the founder of the Church; and some of the older members might naturally feel peculiarly attached to him. Apollos succeeded Paul—a man of more finished eloquence; and some, who joined the Church under his ministry, might, as naturally, become attached to him. Peter was especially the apostle to the Jews, and the Jewish converts would prefer him. Others affected to disparage all, and said, "We are of Christ." Surely it was a most unhappy state of things to make one preacher clash with another, and to appear to make any of them clash with Christ. So Paul says, "Is there a separate Saviour for each of the four parties? for that is what you seem to mean"; then adds, "Was Paul crucified for you?" II. THE TRUTH INVOLVED IN THE QUESTION. 1. Some one had been crucified for them. That was a fact which none of their divisions could pretend to deny. But who was this crucified One? Was it Paul? No! It was the Master, not the servant. And Christ was crucified for us! He had no guilt of His own to suffer for. The poor thief at His side made this acknowledgment, and prophecy had explained it 700 years before—"He was wounded for our transgressions," &c. 2. And this was the most memorable fact in His history. To talk about the blood of Christ offends certain people's taste, and is out of keeping with their theology. But what is the theology of the Bible? The tabernacle and the temple *ran* with blood; for "without shedding of blood there was no remission of sin." So in the New Testament we read that our Lord "took the cup," and said, "This is My blood," &c. And Peter reminded his fellow-believers, "Ye were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ," and John wrote, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." And the reason of all this is clearly given. Sin is a thing which a just and holy Ruler of the universe cannot pass by. It must be punished—if not in us, in another in our stead. And the grand message of the gospel is, that God has laid on Christ the iniquity of us all—so that "in Him we have redemption through His blood," &c. Now if this be so, the most memorable thing in the history of Christ is—that He "was crucified for us!" 3. Such clearly is Paul's teaching. Talk too much of the blood of Christ? (chap. ii. 2). The theme distasteful and offensive? (Gal. vi. 14; *cf.* 1 Cor. 18, 23). III. THE FORCE OF THE QUESTION. What claim have *I* upon you compared with that of Christ? Notice the delicacy of the apostle's mind. He might have asked the same with regard to Peter or Apollos. 1. Paul had some claim upon them, for it was he who first brought the gospel to them. And what Corinthian believer but was bound to bless the apostle's name? And don't you sometimes bless it, English believer? Have you not felt that the Apostle Paul has been one of your best friends? 2. But now I hear him saying, "Don't talk of me—talk of my Master. What claims have I upon you compared with His? It was not I that was your

Substitute—I needed a substitute as much as you. You Corinthians talk of me and of Apollos as useful preachers. Who are we but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man. 'We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord,'" &c. And so you Englishmen talk of me as one whom you are bound to revere and love. But look up immensely higher! up, where angels bow before a Lamb as it had been slain! There's your best Friend! Give Him your deepest reverence, your warmest love! "Was Paul crucified for you?" 3. The text is suitable, by way of warning, to these days when the tendency is to mingle Christ up with other famous teachers. And doubtless each of them has taught the world what had previously been forgotten. But can any Christian put them on a level with our Lord? I shudder at the thought! "Is Christ divided?" Is there one Saviour for the Chinese, and another for the Indian, and another for the Arab? Was Confucius crucified for sinners?—or Buddha?—or Mahommed? Nay, brethren! Stand fast in the faith. "There is none other name," &c. "Other foundation can no man lay." (*F. Tucker, B.A.*) *Jesus the only Saviour of men*:—This question was intended to startle Paul's readers. They had been split up into separate groups, designated by names representing ideas which ought never to be separated, viz., Christian freedom, Christian philosophy, Church authority and organisation, and personal devotion to Christ. But these Greeks carried their old mental habits into the Church. For ages they had identified each shade of opinion in philosophy with the name of an individual teacher. It was natural for them to look at Christianity as an addition to the world's thought, which admitted of being treated as other systems. Moreover, religion is differently apprehended and presented by different minds. The one Truth which Peter and Paul and Apollos preached was presented in different forms. The fault of the Corinthians lay in treating a difference in the way of presenting truth as if it were a difference in truth itself. To them Paul, &c., were the teachers of distinct religions. Nay, more, the holiest Name of all was bandied about among the names of His messengers. Hence the pain which finds vent in the question, "Was Paul crucified for you?" This question—I. SUGGESTS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DEBT WHICH CHRISTIANS OWE TO CHRIST AND THAT WHICH THEY OWE TO THE MOST FAVOURED OF HIS SERVANTS. 1. It was no slight debt which the Corinthians owed to the apostle—their conversion, their Church, their knowledge about subjects of the highest interest to man; his nature, God's nature and relations, and the eternal future. It was a debt which could never be repaid. But the apostle suggests its utter relative insignificance by his question, "Was Paul crucified for you?" 2. Not that St. Paul had taught the Corinthians the faith of Christ without suffering (1 Thess. ii. 2; Acts xviii. 5, 6, 12–17). But all such sufferings had differed in kind from that which was glanced at by the question, "Was Paul crucified for you?" 3. His relation to Christ was altogether unlike that which existed between pupils and their Master, *e.g.*, between Plato and Socrates. To St. Paul Christ was not merely the author of Christianity, but its subject and its substance. St. Paul was not indeed crucified; he was beheaded some years later, as a martyr for Christ. But excepting the testimony which he thus bore to the truth he preached, his death was without results to the world. He was beheaded for no one. And had he been crucified at Corinth, the sin of no single Corinthian would have been washed away by his blood. Do, teach, or suffer what he might, he was but a disciple. II. TELLS US WHAT IT WAS IN THE WORK OF CHRIST WHICH HAD THE FIRST CLAIM ON THE GRATITUDE OF CHRISTIANS. 1. Not His miracles. They were designed, no doubt, to make faith in His Divine mission natural and easy. They were more frequently works of mercy than of power. They were acted parables. But others also have worked miracles. And the miracles of Christ have not touched the heart of the world more than His words. 2. Not His teaching. Certainly no human speech will ever say more to the conscience than did the Sermon on the Mount, or more to the heart than did the discourse in the supper-room. Yet He Himself implies that what He did would have greater claims on man than what He said. 3. Nor His triumph over death at His resurrection. Certainly that was the supreme certificate of His Divine mission. But the claim of the Resurrection upon our gratitude is so great, because it is intimately bound up with the tragedy which had preceded it. 4. But His Cross (vers. 23, 24; chap. ii. 2; Gal. vi. 14), on which He reminds us of our utter misery and helplessness until we are aided by His redeeming might (John xv. 13; 1 Pet. ii. 24; 2 Cor. v. 21; Rev. i. 5; Rom. iii. 25; Eph. i. 7; 2 Cor. v. 18–20; Heb. ii. 17). To expand, connect, explain, justify these aspects of His atoning death is no doubt a labour of vast proportions. But in

their simple form they meet every child who reads the New Testament, and they explain the hold of Christ crucified on the Christian heart. And we understand the pathos and the strength of the appeal, "Was Paul crucified for you?" III. ENABLES US TO MEASURE THE TRUE WORTH OF EFFORTS FOR IMPROVING THE CONDITION OF MANKIND. 1. We may well thank God that He has put it into so many hearts to support institutions and enterprises so rich in their practical benevolence. But when it is hinted that efforts of this kind satisfy all the needs of man, we are obliged to hesitate. The needs of the soul are at least as real as those of the body. The pain of the conscience is at least as torturing as that of the nerves. The invisible world is not less to be provided for than the world of sense and time. We are sometimes almost pressed, in view of the exaggerated claims of a secular philanthropy, to ask whether this or that benevolent person was crucified for the poor or the suffering. 2. In like manner, when Renan tells that we should all be much better if we would give increased time and thought to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, we naturally listen. That Marcus Aurelius was marked by eminent excellences must be frankly granted. But literary infidelity has done this man a wrong by the very excesses of his panegyric. For we cannot but ask whether his characteristic virtue was more than a social luxury; whether it had the slightest effect upon the degraded multitudes who lived close to his palace; whether it prevented him selecting as his colleague a worthless trifler, or from bequeathing his responsibilities to a profligate buffoon; whether it even suggested a scruple respecting his cruel persecutions of Christians. These are questions which history may be left to answer. And her judgment would make another question only more grotesque than profane—"Was Marcus Aurelius crucified for you?" 3. Yes; only One ever was crucified out of love to sinners, and with a will and power to save them. The faith which St. Paul preached protects society against dangers which are inseparable from human progress at certain stages. For this faith in Christ crucified addresses itself to each of those poles of society, which, when left to the ordinary selfish impulses of human nature, tend to become antagonistic. To the wealthy and the noble the figure of the crucified Saviour is a perpetual preacher of self-sacrifice for the sake of the poor and needy; and to the poor it is no less a perpetual lesson of the beauty, the majesty of entire resignation. Thus does the truth which is at the very heart of the Christian creed contribute most powerfully to the coherence and well-being of society; and we live in days when society is not able to dispense with its assistance. (*Canon Liddon.*) **I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius.**—*Paul's modesty*:—This is a beautiful trait of Paul's character. Most preachers delight to take a prominent part in the public reception of their converts. But Paul saw the danger of this, as tending to exalt the preacher in men's eyes. He therefore purposely (ver. 15) and systematically placed himself on such occasions in the background (*cf.* Acts x. 48). This he could well afford to do because of the greater honour, given to him, of preaching the gospel and thus leading men to Christ. He wished men to think, not of the successful preacher, but of Him whose professed servants the baptized ones were. How different was the aim of those who wrote Paul's name on the banner of their party! Paul thanks God for his own conduct. For every good action is prompted by God, and enriches the actor. (*Prof. Beet.*) *Christian baptism* contains two things: something on the part of God, and something on the part of man. On God's part it is an authoritative revelation of His paternity: on man's part it is an acceptance of God's covenant. In chap. x. 1, 2 St. Paul expresses the meaning of baptism as symbolising discipleship. When the Israelites passed through the Red Sea they cut themselves off for ever from Egypt, so that, figuratively speaking, in that immersion they were baptized unto Moses, for thereby they declared themselves his followers, and left all to go with him. And so, just as the soldier who receives the bounty money is thereby pledged to serve his sovereign, so he who has passed through the baptismal waters is pledged to fight under the Redeemer's banner against sin, the world, and the devil. And so Paul argues thus: To whom were ye then baptized? To whom did you pledge yourselves in discipleship? If to Christ, why do ye name yourselves by the name of Paul? If all were baptized into that one Name, how is it that a few only have adopted it as their own? Upon this we make two remarks. I. THE VALUE AND BLESSEDNESS OF THE SACRAMENTS. 1. They are authoritative signs and symbols. There is very much contained in this idea; *e.g.*, in some parts of the country it is the custom to give and receive a ring in token of betrothal; but that is very different from the marriage-ring. It is neither authoritative, nor has it the sanction of the

Church. It would have been perfectly possible for man to have invented another symbol of the truth conveyed in baptism, and then it would not have been authoritative, and consequently it would have been weak and useless. 2. They serve as the epitomes of Christian truth. Antinomianism had crept into the Roman Church. Paul meets this by an appeal to baptism (Rom. vi. 1–4). And again, in reference to the Lord's Supper, in the Church of Corinth that sacrament had become a feast of gluttony and a signal of division. This error he endeavours to correct by reference to the institution of the Supper itself: "The bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the body of Christ?" The single loaf, broken into many fragments, contains within it the symbolical truth, that the Church of Christ is one. Here, in the text, St. Paul makes the same appeal: he appeals to baptism against sectarianism, and so long as we retain it, it is an everlasting protest against every one who breaks the unity of the Church. II. THE PECULIAR MEANING OF THE SACRAMENT. There are those who believe and teach that men are born into the world children of the devil, and who hold that the instrument for their conversion into God's children is baptism; and believe that there is given to the ministers of the Church the power of conveying in that sacrament the Holy Spirit, who effects this wondrous change. If a minister really believes he has this power, then it is only with fear and trembling that he should approach the font. But if this view be true, then the apostle thanked God that he had not regenerated any, that he had not conveyed the Spirit of God to any one but Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanas. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*)

Vers. 17–31. **For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.**—*Paul's preaching*:—I. IT EXALTED THE CROSS OF CHRIST AS THE CENTRAL ELEMENT OF THE GOSPEL. The apostle does not teach that truths associated with the details of Christian belief and living are not proper themes for the pulpit; nor that ritualistic observances are of no importance; nor that he considered as naught the human wisdom seen both in logic and skill; what he meant was that the gospel as the means of salvation revealed by God was everywhere the burden of his message. Neither church observances nor creeds, nor man's philosophy can become a substitute for this essential truth. II. IT MADE THE AGENCY OF GOD ESSENTIAL IN CAUSING THE CROSS OF CHRIST TO HAVE SAVING POWER. 1. Paul gives the reason of man its proper place in the apprehension of the truth, and the truth so apprehended its proper place as connected with regeneration; but he never teaches that the truth alone, however fully understood, will secure salvation. Being saved is not an intellectual process only, even though the sacrifice of Christ be the truth considered. Only when made the power of God through the attending influence of the Holy Ghost does it save. 2. Paul's preaching insisted that this Divine agency can render the weak—(1) Able to appropriate the gospel in its saving power. The pride of high station and marked ability would not avail, but the humility of confessed unworthiness and dependence upon him who would attract God's favour and incline its possessor to accept the Saviour He has provided. Hence, the poor, the ignorant, the wicked, the child, will find no barriers around the Cross when they turn toward it for help. (2) Useful in throwing over opposition and causing the gospel to triumph (ver. 27, &c.). III. IT DECLARED THAT THE RESULT OF THE GOSPEL'S PROPER PRESENTATION MUST BE THAT GOD, AND NOT MEN, WILL HAVE ALL THE GLORY (vers. 29, 31). Conclusion: Paul's preaching declares—1. That true salvation is the penitent and trustful acceptance of the crucified Christ. 2. That true religion is loyalty to God. (*J. Eells, D.D.*) *The true work of the preacher*:—Paul sought to teach that there were different functions which belonged to the officers of the Church. Some were to "serve tables," some to administer the ordinances. He did not cast contempt on the ordinances, but declared that he had a special work appointed him. I. THE OFFICE OF THE PREACHER AROSE WITH THE SAVIOUR. There were instructors previously. The prophets were much more teachers than predictors. The Rabbis when Christ was upon earth were teachers. Christ's method of teaching was utterly different. Outwardly it was the same—He went from place to place, He taught sitting, &c.; but the interior contents of His teaching were very different. Christ spake "with authority"; so does every man who speaks from the roots and fundamental elements of truth. II. PREACHING IS TEACHING IN A VITALISING WAY ETHICAL TRUTHS—truths which ally men to God and to each other. They must be taught so as to breathe the life of Him who teaches. They must carry personal power. III. IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT THAT THIS FUNCTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH HAS CEASED EVEN IN LIBERALLY EDUCATED AND CULTIVATED SECTIONS OF SOCIETY. Let us look

closely and ask, Is the function of the preacher temporary? Will it ever pass away? There is one element belonging distinctively to the preacher which will for ever give him a place and function which can never change: the bringing of the truth home to men in a living form. In the light of this observe the genius and the sphere of preaching—1. From this sphere are excluded largely the higher forms of theological speculation, for it is not possible to bring these home to men in a living way. His distinctive business is to deal with those truths which he can take into his consciousness, and, having given to these a personal expression from himself, send them forth living truths. His proper sphere is ethical truth. That which men most need to know is how to love God and man perfectly. This is his whole duty. To teach this duty is the sphere of the preacher. 2. This includes every condition of mankind. 3. From this it appears that no man is a true preacher whose chief business is the organisation of worship, the conduct of Church affairs, or mere pastoral administration. The true preacher is the utterer of truth. 4. Then as no man can represent in himself every form of the human mind, or have a full conception of all truth, the preacher must necessarily be a partialist. The robin sings as a robin, bluebirds as bluebirds. One man has large power of imagination, another overflowing emotion, &c. All are fragmentary preachers. No man was ever built large enough to preach the whole of God. 5. Pride, vanity, and unspiritual life will effectually prevent the preacher becoming personally, experimentally, a presentation of the truth to the people. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Preaching*:—I. IT HAS BEEN ORDERED BY DIVINE WISDOM THAT THE GOSPEL SHOULD, as much as possible, AVAIL ITSELF OF THE ORDINARY CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION and influence in spreading through the world. II. THE SECRET OF THE POWER OF PREACHING. 1. It conveys far better than any other vehicle the affirmation of the whole man—his whole nature, his whole experience—to the matter which he desires to communicate. 2. It brings into play all the affinities, sympathies, and affections of the being, and is therefore a most powerful instrument in arriving at the truth. 3. So much is true of all preaching. But in the preaching of the gospel there is a source of special power—the principle of representation—the power and right to speak to men in the name of God. (*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*) *Paul's preaching*:—1. Observe, Paul does not say "we preach Christ" as if the declaration of the personal dignity of the God-man were all. Neither does he emphasise the "crucified" as if the setting off of the death of Jesus as that of a martyr and for an example were enough. But he combines the two. The dignity of the Christ was needed to give efficacy to the sacrifice on the Cross; and the sacrifice on the Cross was required to complete the work of the Christ. 2. In the prosecution of his work Paul met with three classes, each of which treated his message in a peculiar fashion. The Jew and the Greek, without trying the gospel on themselves, rejected it—the one for its lack of power and the other for its lack of wisdom; but the third class, acting on the only true philosophical principle of proving the matter by personal experiment, found in it both the power of God and the wisdom of God. Nowadays it is sturdily insisted on that nothing shall be received save that which rests on the basis of observation and experiment, but that is all the gospel asks; and here we see that those who reject it are those who refuse to put it to the test. Which of the two classes is the more scientific? The Baconian philosophers should not hesitate as to the reply. Christ crucified is—I. "THE POWER OF GOD." 1. Yes, but this power is not physical like the might of an army; nor material, like that which is connected with a development of matter; nor mechanical, as derived from any sort of mechanism, but dynamical, as exerted by spirit upon spirit. It is "power unto salvation." It is not therefore to be tested by material gauges, as one measures the pressure on a steam-boiler, or estimates the horse-power of an engine. We are to look for its operation in the human heart. Its trophies are in character, and its results are in life. (1) Take it in the case of an individual, and the transformation wrought on such men as Paul, and Augustine, and John Newton, may well illustrate its reality and efficacy. (2) Take it in the case of communities, and Christianity has either implanted or stimulated regard for the personality of the weakest and the poorest; respect for women; the absolute duty of each member of the fortunate classes to raise the unfortunate; humanity to the child, the prisoner, the stranger, the needy, and even the brute; unceasing opposition to all forms of cruelty; the duty of personal purity; the sacredness of marriage; the necessity of temperance. 2. But are we quite sure that it is "the power of God"? Yes, for there are only two spiritual powers in the world—that of evil and that of good. Very evidently, therefore, a result like that of the conversion of

a man, and the revolution of society, from evil to good, must be traced up to God. Man cannot do it for himself, for as water cannot rise above its level, so the soul cannot change its nature by its own efforts. And what one man cannot do for himself, the aggregate of men cannot do for the race. They had four thousand years given to them in which to make the experiment, and here (ver. 21) is the result. II. "THE WISDOM OF GOD." 1. Wisdom is manifested in the choice of such means as are best adapted to the production of the end. The problem to be solved in the salvation of men is, "How shall a sinner be forgiven without weakening the sanctions of morality and giving encouragement to evil?" Now the race vainly wrestled with that for four millenniums; but the despair of humanity is the opportunity of God, for in "Christ crucified" we are shown "a just God and a Saviour." 2. Wisdom is seen in the securing of different ends by one and the same means. So salvation is not merely forgiveness; it is also regeneration and growth in holiness. Its highest result is character, and the renovation of that is produced by the Holy Ghost. Now the dispensation of the Holy Spirit would have been impossible save for the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross; while, again, the love of Christ, as manifested in His sacrifice on the Cross, is the great means used by the Spirit for the regeneration and sanctification of the believer. Conclusion: From all this four inferences follow. If Christ crucified is the power of God unto salvation, then—1. Any sinner may be saved through faith in Him. 2. There is no other way of salvation. 3. When men are saved through this means the whole glory of their salvation is due to God. 4. If we would see such results from our preaching as those which followed Paul's, we must preach the same gospel, "Christ crucified." This is the gospel for our age, because it is the gospel for all the ages. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *The gospel as preached by Paul*:—I. THERE IS A GOSPEL TO BE PREACHED. Amid all the diversities of doctrine and ritual there are some things which must be found in all Christian preaching: that Christ alone can save men; that He can save any man and all men; that He saves men completely and for ever. No man can be said to preach the gospel who does not make these thoughts central and controlling. He may preach very important and helpful truth; but until he makes Christ the ground, the motive, and the end of his teaching, he is not a preacher of the gospel. The gospel is good news. It is not the publication of the moral law. It is not telling men what they ought to be and do. The ministry of Christ was not needed to teach that lesson. Conscience proclaims it, and universal experience confirms it. It is not equivalent to the affirmation of the eternal and universal Fatherhood of the Holy One. It implies this, but it is more. That consoling thought is imbedded in the Old Testament. Paul affirmed more than that. In his preaching the person of Christ assumes central and permanent prominence. In Him the law of God is fulfilled and honoured. In Him the love of God leaps from the heavens to the earth, links itself with the burden and guilt of humanity, challenges the powers of darkness and the might of death, achieving a practical and eternal victory. Fear rules paganism, hope smiles in the Old Testament, assurance is the ringing keynote of the gospel. So much for the contents of the gospel. It is crowded into this sentence: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." II. But DOES THE WORLD NEED SUCH A MESSAGE? Can we not get along fairly well without it? That is the very question which Paul discussed in Rom. i. What does the world need? Righteousness. That secured and the millennium would be there. But the one thing most needed is the thing most difficult to create and promote. It cannot be said that there has been any lack of earnest attempts. Confucius, Sakya-Muni, Zoroaster, and Socrates, tried to supply the want. But the multitudes were deaf to their appeal; and Rome at the zenith of her culture was but a "veneered brutality." And mightily endowed as Judaism was it failed to achieve even its own reformation. The men who boasted in the law trampled upon it every day. A mightier hand than that of Socrates, or of Moses, was needed to save the world. A more than human hand, though nerved by an inspired heart, must smite the ranks of evil. III. But granting that the world needs just the help which the gospel declares has been brought to it. "WILL EVEN THIS SECURE THE DESIRED RESULT?" To this we can only answer, first, if it does not then God is clearly and hopelessly defeated, for a greater than Christ cannot come to the rescue; and second, if Christ be what the gospel affirms Him to be, the triumph of righteousness is a foregone conclusion. Hence the tone of victory in the New Testament is always in the present tense. "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." This is our highest assurance. It receives impressive confirmation in the historical triumphs

of Christianity. Its moral conquest of the civilisations of Rome and Greece are unquestioned. Its restraining and reorganising energy during the Middle Ages is freely admitted. Its profound and salutary influence upon modern life is beyond cavil; but there is a more direct and living proof of its power. Hundreds among you can bear testimony to the grace of salvation in Jesus Christ. What the gospel has done for you it can do for all. (*A. J. F. Behrends, D.D.*) *The gospel neither ritual nor philosophy*:—I. A LARGE CLASS OF MINDS LIKE TO MAKE A SUPERSTITION OUT OF THEIR RELIGION. Mere words addressed to the understanding and the heart appear too feeble, too immaterial. They long to be set in *rapport* with the superhuman in some realistic way. Establish some "sign." Paul, generalising from what he saw before his eyes, calls this demand of human nature Jewish; but it is common everywhere. It has penetrated every religion from the days of the Chaldeans downwards. One after another Judaism, Buddhism, Parseeism, Mohammedanism, Christianity, have succumbed to this demand for material signs. Each of them has degenerated into a system of ceremonial and stooped to pander to the sensuous taste of its devotees. II. THERE IS IN MAN A TENDENCY, not so widespread, but nobler than the vulgar bent to superstition—AFTER INTELLECTUAL SATISFACTION AND AN EXHAUSTIVE KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH. 1. No sooner had Christianity appeared than this appetite seized upon it, questioned it, thought to find in it what it had failed to find elsewhere. Generalising, again, Paul termed this the Greek habit of mind. "The Greek," he says, "searches after philosophy"; but it is as little exclusively Greek as the bias to superstition is exclusively Jewish. In our day it is no less profound, unsuitable, or eager than it ever was. Men claim that it shall be as systematic, exhaustive, and demonstrable as a science; that it shall help to answer the unanswered problems of existence; that it shall abjure all pretensions to be supernatural; that every one of its facts be found explicable on natural grounds; and that its boasted virtue to save shall prove as intelligible as the action of any other truth upon human minds. 2. Follow out this conception of Christianity to its issues, and what have you? Not a genuine revelation from heaven; not the advent of a Divine power to save; but simply some very beautiful and elevating truths, discerned first by a certain Jew of Palestine and by him added to the world's treasure-house of thought, yet competing with many discoveries of more modern times. Is it not to some such appraisement of the gospel that a great deal of modern discussion among the learned is tending? Nay, is there not a way of preaching and defending the gospel—such a way as Paul avoided in speculative Corinth—which actually invites men to rate its value as low as this among the rival systems of human wisdom? 3. Against such a misconception of the essence of the gospel, what is St. Paul's protest? It is true, he seems to say, the gospel is a rational word, and not a magical rite. It is spoken truth, and it acts, like truth, through the misunderstandings of men. But, for all that, it is not a philosophy. With abstract truth it has little to do; but it proclaims Jesus the Messiah, and proclaims Him as crucified for the sins of men. Its real character is this—it is a testimony from God which we are not called upon to discuss so much as to credit. It is in this, accordingly, that its power lies. For power it unquestionably possesses. Only not the mere power of wisdom, but the quiet personal power of the Speaker's authority and the Speaker's love. Speculate about this and it may seem in your sagacious eyes folly. But cease to criticise and be humble enough to believe it, to surrender yourself to Him who speaks; then it will prove itself to be Divinely wise and strong in your experience. It will work in you as no human wisdom works; it will save you as no intellectual system saves. 4. On this side also I think a faithful Church needs just now to speak out in clear tones. It is not the first time in the history of our faith that the gospel has been like to lose its characteristic spirit by evaporation. Treat it as you treat an ordinary system of thought, and you end (as Paul feared to end) by making the Cross of Christ "of none effect." You miss its very essence as a gospel. For what makes it to be a gospel? Just this, that it is God's own record of His peculiar way of having mercy upon sinners. It is a plain, practical, personal appeal from our reconciling Father to each wandered soul among us; or it is nothing. (*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*) *The foolishness of preaching*:—As Paul repudiates the idea that he had given any countenance to the founding of a Pauline party, it occurs to him that some may say, True enough, he did not baptize; but his preaching may more effectually have won partisans than even baptizing them into his own name could have done. And so Paul goes on to show that his preaching was not that of a demagogue or party-leader, but was a bare statement of fact, garnished by absolutely nothing which could divert attention from

the fact either to the speaker or to his style. Paul explains to the Corinthians—I. THE STYLE OF PREACHING HE HAD ADOPTED WHILE WITH THEM. 1. His time in Corinth, he assures them, had been spent, not in propagating a system of truth which might have been identified with his name, but in presenting the Cross of Christ. In approaching them he had necessarily weighed in his own mind the comparative merits of various modes of presenting the gospel, and he well knew that a new philosophy clothed in elegant language was likely to secure a number of disciples. And it was quite in Paul's power to present the gospel as a philosophy; but he "determined not to know anything among them save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." 2. Paul then deliberately trusted to the bare statement of facts and not to any theory about these facts. In preaching to audiences with whom the facts are familiar, it is perfectly justifiable to draw inferences from them and to theorise about them. Paul himself spoke "wisdom among them that were perfect." But what is to be noted is that for doing the work proper to the gospel, for making men Christians, it is not theory or explanation, but fact, that is effective. It is the presentation of Christ as He is presented in the Gospels which stands in the first rank of efficiency as a means of evangelising the world. The actor does not instruct his audience how they should be affected by the play; he so presents the scene that they instinctively smile or find their eyes fill. Those onlookers at the crucifixion who beat their breasts were not told that they should feel compunction; it was enough that they saw the Crucified. So it is always; it is the direct vision of the Cross, and not anything which is said about it, which is most effective in producing penitence and faith. 3. The very fact that it was a Person, not a system of philosophy, that Paul proclaimed was sufficient proof that he was not anxious to become the founder of a school or the head of a party. And that which permanently distinguishes Christianity from all philosophies is that it presents to men, not a system of truth to be understood, but a Person to be relied upon. Christianity is for all men and not for the select, highly educated few; and it depends therefore not on exceptional ability to see truth, but on the universal human emotions of love and trust. II. WHY HE HAD ADOPTED THIS STYLE. 1. Because God had changed His method (ver. 21). (1) Even the wisest of the Greeks had attained only to inadequate and indefinite views of God. To pass even from Plato to the Gospel of John is to pass from darkness to light. Plato philosophises, and a few souls seem for a moment to see things more clearly; Peter preaches, and three thousand souls spring to life. (2) That which, in point of fact, has made God known is the Cross of Christ. No doubt it must have seemed mere lunacy to summon the seeker after God away from the high speculations of Plato to a human form gibbeted on a malefactor's cross. None knew better than Paul the infamy attaching to that cursed death, but he knew also its power (vers. 22–24). As proof that God was in their midst the Jews required a demonstration of physical power. Even at the last it would have satisfied them had Christ stepped down from the Cross. The Cross seemed to them a confession of weakness, and was a stumbling-block they could not get over. And yet in it was the whole power of God for the salvation of the world. For the power of God that is required to draw men to Himself is not power to alter the course of rivers or change the site of mountains, but power to sympathise, to sacrifice self, to give all for the needs of His creatures. It is this love of God that overpowers men and makes it impossible for them to resist Him. 2. Paul appeals to the elements of which the Church was actually composed. (1) It is plain, he says, that it is not by anything generally esteemed among men that you hold your place in the Church (ver. 26). It is not men who by their wisdom find out God and by their nobility of character commend themselves to Him; but it is God who calls men, and the very absence of wisdom and possessions makes men readier to listen to His call (vers. 27–29). It is all God's doing now; it is "of Him are ye in Christ Jesus." Human wisdom had its opportunity and accomplished little; God now by the foolishness of the Cross lifts the despised, &c., to a far higher position than the wise and noble can attain by their might and their wisdom. (2) Paul thus justifies this method by its results. The Cross may seem a most unlikely weapon with which to accomplish great things, but it is God who uses it, and that makes the difference. Hence the emphasis throughout this passage on the agency of God. But for this reason also all ground of boasting is removed from those who are within the Christian Church. (3) In Paul's day this argument from the general poverty and insignificance of the members of the Christian Church was readily drawn. Things are changed now; and the Church is filled with the wise, the powerful, the noble. But Paul's main proposition remains: whoever is in Christ Jesus is so, not through

any wisdom or power of his own, but because God has chosen and called him. And the practical result remains. Let the Christian, while he rejoices in his position, be humble. 3. Paul avers that had he used "enticing words of man's wisdom" the hearers might have been unduly influenced by the mere guise in which the gospel was presented and too little influenced by the essence of it. He feared to adorn the simple tale lest the attention of his audience might be diverted from the substance of his message. He was resolved that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Here again things have changed since Paul's day. The assailants of Christianity have put it on its defence, and its apologists have been compelled to show that it is in harmony with the soundest philosophy. It was inevitable that this should be done; but Paul considered that the only sound and trustworthy faith was produced by direct personal contact with the Cross. And this remains for ever true. (*M. Dods, D.D.*) *The true minister of Christ*:—I. HIS COMMISSION. II. HIS PARAMOUNT WORK. 1. Not to baptize, much less busy himself with a thousand other things. 2. But to preach the gospel. III. HIS PRESCRIBED METHODS. 1. Not with wisdom of words. 2. But simply, plainly, pointedly. IV. HIS MOTIVE. 1. That nothing might hinder. 2. But everything promote the effect of the Cross of Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The aim of the ministry*:—In a village church in one of the Tyrolese valleys, we saw upon the pulpit an outstretched arm, carved in wood, the hand of which held forth a cross. We noted the emblem as full of instruction as to what all true ministry should be, and must be—a holding forth of the Cross of Christ to the multitude as the only trust of sinners. Jesus Christ must be set forth evidently crucified among them. Lord, make this the aim and habit of all our ministers. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect.**—*The Cross of Christ of none effect*:—I. "THE CROSS OF CHRIST" IS AN INSTRUMENT INTENDED AND ADAPTED TO PRODUCE A CERTAIN "EFFECT." So far as man had to do with it it was intended to abase a prophet whom many honoured, to kill as a malefactor a Man whose great fault was that He had no fault at all. So far as God had to do with it, it was intended to be a Divine force. The Cross of Christ is to be a Divine force with an "effect" retrospective, aspective, and prospective. 1. The Cross fulfilled the first promise; it was the "good thing" of which the sacrifices were a shadow; it was the event toward which the course of all events had tended. 2. The Cross cast a long, deep shadow upon the Holy Land; its peculiar people; its priesthood, temple, and ritual; a night-of-death shadow to cover a time of change in which old things would pass away and all things become new. 3. The Cross shed light into the darkness of the world, and indicated those stirrings of the Divine mercy which terminated in the proclamation of salvation to the world. As matter of history, since the Cross of Christ has begun to take effect, it has caused religious systems hoary with age, and rooted by ten thousand fibres in the hearts of the people to be laid aside as worn-out garments. It has spread civilisation over many nations; it has been a key to unlock the treasures of all useful knowledge; it has elevated art, widened commerce, removed the fetters from the slave; it has founded hospitals and schools, checked the harsh government of rulers, quelled the anarchy of subjects, restored woman to her primitive position, imparted peace and joy to the home, exalted nations, and is now both the light and leaven of the world. The Cross of Christ alone saves. II. PAUL SPEAKS OF THE CROSS BEING "MADE OF NONE EFFECT." 1. To make the sun of none effect would send our world back to chaos, but this ruin would be—2. Small compared with negativing the Cross of Christ. And Paul tells us that if he had exhibited the Cross with "wisdom of words," it would have been powerless in his hands. He cannot mean intelligible and acceptable words; for without such the Cross could not be manifested at all. By "wisdom of words" is meant the artifices of rhetoric, &c. If the Cross were a jewel to be hoarded and hid I would make its bed in wool; but as it is a gem to be used let me see it as it is. If the Cross were an inferior gem I might add to its worth and beauty by the setting; but as its value is beyond price, let its surroundings be as simple as possible. The question is not, however, one of taste, but of utility. Shall we mingle with our daily bread that which will deprive us of its nutritive effect? 3. The Cross is made of none effect when—(1) It is made identical with the crucifix, as though the Cross were nothing more than His crucifixion. The crucifix to the vulgar eye puts exclusively forward the bodily sufferings of Christ, and its effect is to bring us into sympathy with them. This is the effect of painting, poetry, and music, when employed upon the same subject. But the Cross of Christ is not an example of suffering merely, but the "Lamb of God taking away the sins of the world." 2.

False doctrine and speculation concerning it are taught. The effect of the Atonement is in itself, not in its philosophy. And if the attempt at explanation fail, and the philosophy be false, I exhibit a cross framed by my own vain imagination. Then, what have I done? I have led men from living waters to the appearance of a fountain in shining sand. (3) It is exhibited without a personal recognition of its claims. That which you say about it will not be believed unless it appears important and true, and it cannot appear real and momentous except as exhibited in faith. Faith begets faith. (4) Its requirements are multiplied and complicated. It saith, "Come to Me"; "Look to Me"; "Believe in Me." If we surround it with a long and difficult creed; if we clothe it with an elaborate ritual; if we plant it in the shrine of a particular ecclesiastical polity, and require men to come to it, by these we make it of none effect. (5) There is lack of faith in its power. It is impotent in the hand of an unbeliever. Our faith does not affect the value and efficacy of the Cross in the eye of God; but it does in the eye of man. (6) When it is used for objects foreign to itself. Ecclesiastics have used it to satisfy their ungodly ambition; political rulers as an engine of government; private individuals as a spy in a camp uses the password, and prejudice has been raised against it. Conclusion: 1. What is the effect of the Cross of Christ upon yourselves? (1) Child of Christian parents, you have been directed to it ever since your eyes opened to see. Other things have had effect. The scenes of your early life; the books you have read; the companions with whom you associated, &c. And what has been the effect of the Cross of Christ? It has repelled you or attracted you. Repelled you! The magnet of the eternal mercy repelled you! (2) Pupil of a Christian school! (3) Hearer of Christian preaching and possessor of Holy Scripture, unless you are saved by it you will be damned by it. Christian brethren, what is its daily effect upon your hearts and lives? Are you crucified with Christ? Is its effect to captivate your heart; to command your energies; to sanctify your life? 2. What is the effect of the Cross in your hands? We more than fear that Christians and Churches of Christ have done much to make the Cross of Christ of none effect. (*S. Martin.*) *The world's greatest blessing and its greatest evil*:—I. THE GREATEST BLESSING IN THE WORLD—"the Cross of Christ." By "the Cross of Christ" the apostle did not mean of course the timber on which Christ was crucified, or any imitation of that in wood, &c. He uses the word as a symbol, as we use the words Crown, Court, Bench, &c. He meant the eternal principles of which the Cross of Christ was at once the effect, the evidence, and the expression—*i.e.*, all that we mean by the gospel. And this is the greatest blessing in the world to-day. Look at it—1. As a revealer. All true theological doctrine and ethical science come to us through the Cross. It is the moral light of the world. 2. As an educator. The Cross is to the human soul what the vernal sunbeam is to the seed; it penetrates, warms, quickens, and brings all its latent powers out to perfection. 3. As a deliverer. The Cross bears a pen to cancel the sentence, a balm to heal the wound, a weapon to break the fettering chain. Such, and infinitely more, is the Cross. What would human life be without it? A voyage without a compass, chart, or star. II. THE GREATEST EVIL IN THE WORLD. Making this Cross of "none effect," *i.e.*, so far as its grand mission is concerned. Some effect it must have; it will deepen the damnation where it does not save. "We are unto God a sweet savour," &c. This tremendous evil is—1. Painfully manifest. Intellectually, socially, politically, it has confessedly done wonders for mankind; but morally, how little! How little genuine holiness, disinterested philanthropy, self-sacrificing devotion to truth and God, Christliness of life! 2. Easily explained. The apostle indicates one way, viz., by "wisdom of words," *i.e.*, gorgeous rhetoric. The Church has done it by—(1) Its theologies. In its name it has propounded dogmas that have clashed with reason and outraged conscience. (2) Its polity. It has sanctioned wars, established hierarchies, which have fattened on the ignorance and poverty of the people. (3) Its spirit. The spirit of the Cross is self-sacrificing love, the spirit of the Church has been to a great extent that of selfishness, greed, ambition, and oppression. Malrepresentation of Christ by the Church is the instrument that has made the Cross of "none effect." 3. Terribly criminal. It is wonderful that man has the power thus to pervert Divine institutions and blessings; but such power he has. He forges metals into weapons for murder, he turns breadcorn into liquids to damn the reason and the souls of men. A greater crime you cannot conceive. Were you to turn all bread into poison, make the flowing rivers pestiferous, quench the light of the sun, mantle the stars in sackcloth, you would not penetrate an evil half so enormous as that of making the Cross of Christ of "none effect." Conclusion: 1. What is

the spiritual influence of the Cross on us? Has it crucified unto us the world? 2. What are we doing with the Cross? Are we abusing it or rightly employing it? (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The Cross neutralised by theories about it*:—The force of κενὸς (*cf.* chap. xv. 14; Rom. iv. 14) may be conveyed by the words "empty of content, unreal, not having objective existence, consisting only of opinions, sentiment speculation." The Cross of Christ is a real cause in the moral order of things. To substitute a system of notions, however true and ennobling, for the fact of Christ's death, is like confounding the theory of gravitation with gravitation itself. (*Principal Edwards.*) *The preaching which the apostle condemns as ineffective*:—I. SCHOLASTIC PREACHING, which—1. Aims only at the intellect, not at the heart. 2. Gives no satisfaction on the main point—religion. 3. Deals with philosophical speculations which injure rather than edify. II. RHETORICAL PREACHING. 1. Which proceeds not from a zeal for the truth, but from a desire to please. 2. This unworthy mode of dealing with Divine truth robs the Cross of its effect, because it diverts the attention from the truth to the speaker and distracts the heart—because it excites a craving for merely intellectual gratification—because the impression produced is referred to the ability of the preacher and not to the truth itself. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Ver. 18. **For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.**—*The preaching of the Cross*:—I. ITS CHARACTER. 1. Simple in its facts. 2. Humiliating in its doctrines. 3. Startling in its announcements. II. THE RESULT. 1. Foolishness to them that perish. 2. The power of God unto them that are saved. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The word of the Cross*:—In ver. 17 Paul had renounced the "wisdom of words." It is clear, therefore, that there is an eloquence which would deprive the gospel of its due effect. This "wisdom of words"—1. Veils the truth which ought to be set forth in the clearest possible manner. 2. Explains the gospel away. It is possible to refine a doctrine till the very soul of it is gone. Under pretence of winning the cultured intellects of the age, it has gradually landed us in a denial of those first principles for which the martyrs died. 3. Is frequently used with the intent of making the gospel appear more beautiful. They would paint the rose and enamel the lily, add whiteness to the snow and brightness to the sun. With their wretched candles they would help us to see the stars. To adorn the Cross is to dishonour it. One of the old masters found that certain vases which he had depicted upon the sacramental table attracted more notice than the Lord Himself, and therefore he struck them out at once: let us do the same whenever anything of ours withdraws the mind from Jesus. 4. Is employed to augment the power of the gospel. Paul says it makes it of none effect (see chap. ii. 4, 5). Having cleared our way of the wisdom of words, we now come to the word of wisdom. I. "THE WORD OF THE CROSS" (R. V.). This is exactly what the gospel is. From which I gather that the Cross—1. Has one uniform teaching. There are not two gospels any more than there are two Gods: there are not two atonements any more than there are two Saviours (chap. iii. 11; Gal. i. 8, 9). 2. Is one word in contradistinction from many other words which are constantly being uttered. Christ's voice from the Cross is, "Look unto Me and be ye saved"; but another voice cries aloud, "This do and thou shalt live." The doctrine of salvation by works, or feelings, is not the word of the Cross. Much less is the word of ceremonialism and priestcraft. 3. Should be allowed to speak for itself. It cries, let us hear this word of the Cross, for in effect my text says, "Let the Cross speak for itself." (1) God must be just. The Cross thunders more terribly than Sinai against sin. If God smites the perfect One who bears our sin, how will He smite the guilty one who rejects His love? (2) God loves men, and delights in mercy. God commendeth His love to us, &c. (3) The one sacrifice is accepted and the atonement is complete. "God was in Christ," &c. (4) Come and welcome! "Whosoever will," &c. II. THE WORD OF ITS DESPISERS. 1. They call the doctrine of the atonement "foolishness." (1) "Because," say they, "see how the common people take it up. Why, the very children are able to believe it." But are the well-known facts of nature foolishness because they are open to all? Is it quite certain that all the wisdom in the world dwells with the superfine gentlemen who sneer at everything and take in a Review? I wish that their culture had taught them modesty. (2) Because this doctrine of the Cross is not the offspring of reason, but the gift of revelation. All the thinkers of the ages continued to think, but they never invented a plan of salvation. As a thought it originated with the Infinite Mind, and could

have originated nowhere else. It is God telling men something which they could not else have known, and this suits not the profound thinkers, who must needs excogitate everything. (3) Because anything which proves a man to be a fool will at once strike men as being very foolish. Our conscience is dull, and therefore we retaliate upon those who tell us unpleasant truth. (4) Because it treats on subjects for which we have no care. If I were able to show how to make unlimited profit, all the world would listen; but when the sermon is only about the Word of God, and eternity, and the soul, and the blood of Jesus—most people turn on their heel. They call the gospel foolishness because they look after the main chance, and care more for the body than for the soul. (5) Because they regard all the truths with which it deals as insignificant trifles. 2. These gentlemen—(1) Are not qualified to form a judgment upon the subject. A blind man is no judge of colours, a deaf man of sound, and a man who has never been quickened into spiritual life of spiritual things. (2) Are proofs of their own folly and of the sad results of unbelief. Paul says that such men are perishing. What a calamity! Men who are not living to God are missing the end of their being, and like deserted houses are falling into ruin. Yonder is a tree: aronnd its trunk the ivy has twisted itself, grasping it like a huge python, and crushing it in its folds. Multitudes have about them sins and errors that are eating out their life—they are perishing. Those that believe not in Jesus are drifting towards an immortality of misery; and yet while they perish, they condemn the means of rescue. Fancy drowning mariners mocking at the lifeboat! Imagine a diseased man ridiculing the only remedy! III. THE WORD OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE. What do they say of the Cross? They call it power, the power of God. 1. The phenomenon of conversion is a fact. Men and women are totally changed, and the whole manner of their life is altered. The word of the Cross has delivered us from—(1) The love of sin: no sin is now our master. We fall into sin, but we mourn over it, and hate the sin, and hate ourselves for committing it. (2) From the dread which once held us in bondage, and made us tremble before our Father and our Friend. But now we love Him and delight in Him. (3) From the power of Satan. (4) From self and from the world, and from all things that would enthral us. We are saved. We feel that heaven is born within us—born by the word of the Cross through the Spirit. 2. The power with which God created and sustains the world is no greater than the power with which He made us new men in Christ, and by which He sustains His people under trial; and even the raising of the dead will be no greater display of it than the raising of dead souls out of their spiritual graves. Conclusion: Believe in the power of the Cross for the conversion of those around you. Do not say of any man that he cannot be saved. The blood of Jesus is omnipotent. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Two classes of gospel hearers*:—I. THE ONE IS PERISHING, THE OTHER IS BEING SAVED. The perishing and the saving are gradual. 1. There is a class gradually losing sensibility—contracting fresh guilt, &c. They are not damned at once. 2. There is a class gradually being saved. Salvation in its fullest extent is not an instantaneous thing, as some suppose. II. TO THE ONE CLASS THE GOSPEL IS FOOLISHNESS, TO THE OTHER THE POWER OF GOD. 1. It is foolishness to them that are perishing, because it has no meaning, no reality. 2. It is a Divine power to them that are being saved. Enlightening, renovating, purifying, ennobling. The power of God stands in contrast with mere human philosophy and eloquence. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The dispensation of the gospel and its effects*:—I. ITS THEME—the Cross. II. ITS DISPENSATION—by preaching. III. ITS RECEPTION—1. To them that believe not, both the subject and the means are foolishness, because they humble human pride, discountenance merit, oppose the wisdom of this world. 2. To them that believe it is the power of God in the conscience, the heart, the life. IV. THE ISSUE—those perish—these are saved. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The gospel the power of God*:—I. BY THE "PREACHING OF THE CROSS" WE UNDERSTAND THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL. There are two circumstances which may have led to the use of this name. 1. The apostle did not so preach the gospel as to conceal the Cross. This has sometimes been done. The Roman Catholic missionaries that went out to the East held back the fact that the great Saviour had died in ignominy upon the Cross, and told their hearers only of those facts concerning Him which had a glorious appearance, such as His resurrection and ascension. And the first disciples may have sympathised in such a feeling. The Cross tended to attach dishonour to Christ and to His gospel. But the apostles did not do so; they told the whole story. 2. The crucifixion supplied, and was the whole origin of, the great topics which their preaching of the gospel contained. It would have been nothing for Paul to have preached the

resurrection, &c., if he had not preached His death. These facts have no evangelical glory or meaning if you separate them from the Cross. Take away the Cross, and you take away the very life and soul of the gospel itself. II. THIS GOSPEL IS PERVERTED. 1. By those who say that it derives its power not so much from the death of Christ, but mainly from His life. Now I do not mean to depreciate the life of Christ, which was superlatively grand and striking in all respects. But the presenting to the world of a life of virtue will not in any degree be influential in its regeneration, and as for presenting an aspect of the benignity of God this is infinitely exceeded in the death of Christ. What Paul preached was not Christ's life, but Christ's death. 2. By those who say that the death of Christ has an influence, but that it is not an atonement. What is it then? It is a "way of speaking"! To this I would say—(1) If God tells us about an atonement, and there really is none, that is not truth. (2) Unless the Atonement be a fact it cannot be a power. III. THE GOSPEL IS A POWER IN THAT IT PRESENTS A SET OF TOPICS AND CONSIDERATIONS INTENDED TO WORK UPON MEN'S HEARTS AND CONSCIENCES. If the atoning death of Christ be a fact—1. What a fact must sin itself be! He is God making a vast provision by the humiliating death of His own Son for the expiation of the sin of the world. What a proof it is of the lost state of man! 2. What a fact is God's justice! The sinner says, "Well, I have sinned, but God is merciful." Well, now, come again with me to the Cross. See a dying Saviour; there is God's vengeance against man's representative. 3. How great the love of God to a rebellious world. See to what an expense He has gone to save you. 4. What a fact is the foundation of a sinner's hope. None need despair; whosoever believeth in Him shall be saved. 5. What a fact is a believer's obligation to devotedness and love. If we have been bought at such a price, we are no more our own, but our Purchaser's. 6. What a fact is the guarantee of a believer's faith! "He that spared not His own Son," &c. Conclusion: 1. How wonderful it is that God should be pleased thus to deal with men! 2. What a thought it is for ungodly men that there is a Divine power in the gospel, and that in it God puts forth all His powers of persuasion. 3. And it is for us to remember that the gospel is a power for all the exigencies of the Christian life. (*J. H. Hinton, M.A.*) *Salvation and destruction continuous processes*:—A slight variation of rendering, which will be found in the Revised Version, brings out the true meaning of these words. Instead of reading "them that perish" and "us which are saved," we ought to read "them that are perishing," and "us which are being saved." That is to say, the apostle represents the two contrasted conditions, not so much as fixed states, either present or future, but rather as processes which are going on, and are manifestly, in the present, incomplete. That opens some very solemn and practical considerations. Then I may further note that this antithesis includes the whole of the persons to whom the gospel is preached. In one or other of these two classes they all stand. Further, we have to observe that the consideration which determines the class to which men belong is the attitude which they respectively take to the preaching of the Cross. I. I desire, first, to look at THE TWO CONTRASTED CONDITIONS, "perishing" and "being saved." We shall best understand the force of the darker of these two terms if we first ask what is the force of the brighter and more radiant. If we understand what the apostle means by "saving" and "salvation," we shall understand, also, what he means by "perishing." If, then, we turn for a moment to Scripture analogy and teaching, we find that well-worn word "salvation" starts from a double metaphorical meaning. It is used for both being healed or being made safe. In the one sense it is often employed in the gospel narratives of our Lord's miracles. It involves the metaphor of a sick man and his cure; in the other it involves the metaphor of a man in peril and his deliverance and security. The sickness of soul and the perils that threaten life flow from the central fact of sin. And salvation consists, negatively, in the sweeping away of all these, whether the sin itself, or the fatal facility with which we yield to it, or the desolation and perversion which it brings into all the faculties and susceptibilities or the perversion of relation to God, and the consequent evils, here and hereafter, which throng around the evil-doer. The sick man is healed, and the man in peril is set in safety. But, besides that, there is a great deal more. The cure is incomplete till the full tide of health follows convalescence. When God saves He does not only bar up the iron gate through which the hosts of evil rush out upon the defenceless soul, but He flings wide the golden gate through which the glad troops of blessings and of graces flock around the delivered spirit, and enrich it with all joys and with all beauties. So the positive side of salvation is the investiture of the saved man with

throbbing health through all his veins, and the strength that comes from a Divine life. It is the bestowal upon the delivered man of everything that he needs for blessedness and for duty. This, then, being the one side, what about the other? If salvation be the cure of the sickness, perishing is the fatal end of the unchecked disease. If salvation be the deliverance from the outstretched claws of the harpy evils that crowd about the trembling soul, then perishing is the fixing of their poisoned talons into their prey, and their rending of it into fragments. II. Now note, secondly, THE PROGRESSIVENESS OF BOTH MEMBERS OF THE ALTERNATIVE. All states of heart or mind tend to increase, by the very fact of continuance. Look, then, at this thought of the process by which these two conditions become more and more confirmed and complete. Salvation is a progressive thing. In the New Testament we have that great idea looked at from three points of view. Sometimes it is spoken of as having been accomplished in the past in the case of every believing soul—"Ye have been saved" is said more than once. Sometimes it is spoken of as being accomplished in the present—"Ye are saved" is said more than once. And sometimes it is relegated to the future—"Now is your salvation nearer than when ye believed," and the like. But there are a number of New Testament passages which coincide with this text in regarding salvation as, not the work of any one moment, but as a continuous operation running through life. As, for instance, "The Lord added to the Church daily those that were being saved." By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are being sanctified. So the process of being saved is going on as long as a Christian man lives in this world. Ah! that notion of a progressive salvation, at work in all true Christians, has all but faded away out of the beliefs, as it has all but disappeared from the experience, of hosts of you that call yourselves Christ's followers, and are not a bit further on than you were ten years ago; are no more healed of your corruptions (perhaps less, for relapses are dangerous) than you were then. Growing Christians—may I venture to say?—are not the majority of professing Christians. And, on the other side, as certainly, there is progressive deterioration and approximation to disintegration and ruin. I am sure that there are people in this place this morning who were far better, and far happier, when they were poor and young, and could still thrill with generous emotion and tremble at the Word of God, than they are to-day. Now, notice, the apostle treats these two classes as covering the whole ground of the hearers of the Word, and as alternatives. If not in the one class, we are in the other. If you are not more saved, you are less saved. Further, note what a light such considerations as these, that salvation and perishing are vital processes—"going on all the time"—throw upon the future. Clearly the two processes are incomplete here. You get the direction of the line, but not its natural termination. And thus a heaven and a hell are demanded by the phenomena of growing goodness and of growing badness which we see round about us. III. And now, lastly, notice THE DETERMINING ATTITUDE TO THE CROSS WHICH SETTLES THE CLASS TO WHICH WE BELONG. So there are two thoughts suggested which sound as if they were illogically combined, but which yet are both true. It is true that men perish, or are saved, because the Cross is to them respectively "foolishness," or "the power of God." And the other thing is true, that the Cross is to them "foolishness," or "the power of God," because respectively they are perishing or being saved. That is not putting the cart before the horse, but both aspects of the truth are true. If you see nothing in Jesus Christ, and His death for us all, except "foolishness," something unfit to do you any good, and unnecessary to be taken into account in your lives, that is the condemnation of your eyes, and not of the thing you look at. If a man, gazing on the sun at twelve o'clock on a June day, says to me, "It is not bright," the only thing I have to say to him is, "Friend, you had better go to an oculist." And if to us the Cross is "foolishness," it is because already a process of "perishing" has gone so far that it has attacked our capacity of recognising the wisdom and love of God when we see it. But, on the other hand, if we clasp that Cross in simple trust, we find that it is the power which saves us out of all sins, sorrows, and dangers, and "shall save us," at last, "into His heavenly kingdom." That message leaves no man exactly as it found him. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The gospel not a wisdom*:—This the apostle demonstrates—1. By the irrational character of the central fact of the gospel (vers. 18–25). 2. By the mode of gaining members to, and the composition of the Church (vers. 26–31). 3. By the attitude taken in the midst of them by the preacher of the gospel. (*Prof. Godet, D.D.*) *The triumph of the gospel over the wisdom of this world*:—Look at—I. THE MEANS—the simple preaching of the Cross—which—1. Is

foolishness to the wise. 2. Yet triumphs over human wisdom. 3. Effects what the wisdom of this world has failed to do. 4. And in spite of the opposition of the Jew and the philosophy of the Greek demonstrates Christ the wisdom and the power of God. II. THE AGENTS—"not many wise, not many noble are called." 1. God has chosen the most unlikely instrumentalities. 2. And made them successful through Christ. 3. That no flesh might glory in His presence. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The divinity of the gospel is demonstrated*—I. IN THEM THAT PERISH—they deem it foolish—yet it confounds their wisdom—succeeds where it has failed. II. IN THEM THAT ARE SAVED—because it conquers their opposition—and becomes in them the power of God and the wisdom of God. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 19–21. **For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise.**—*True wisdom:*—The discovery of what is true, and the practice of that which is good, are the two most important objects of philosophy. (*Voltaire.*) *Human wisdom:*—I. ITS CHARACTER. 1. Presumptuous in its attempts. 2. Proud in its assumptions. 3. Unsatisfactory in its conclusions. II. ITS DESTRUCTION—effected—1. By time. 2. By revelation. 3. By the Divine Spirit. 4. By the appearing of Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The vanity of the wisdom of this world:*—I. GOD PUTS IT TO SHAME. 1. It often blunders in its theories. 2. Always in relation to Divine things. 3. Generally leads to practical error. II. IT HAS UTTERLY FAILED TO REGENERATE THE WORLD. Instead of mending it it has made worse—witness the philosophy of the Greeks and the "age of reason." III. IT IS FULLY EXPOSED BY CHRISTIANITY, which—1. Succeeds where it fails. 2. Triumphs over it. 3. Will ultimately destroy it. (*Ibid.*) *The gospel ministry—its superiority over human methods:*—We have here—I. THE INFERENCE DRAWN FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE GOSPEL UPON THOSE WHO HAD RECEIVED IT. 1. It had accomplished that which the wisdom of the world had failed to do (vers. 20, 21). The wise, the scribe, the disputer, include respectively the thinker, the writer, and the speaker. Thought and its two mediums of expression were the great agents in the world's education, and had succeeded in creating a literature which remains unparalleled. But what had they done towards the regeneration of mankind? Nothing. "Where is the wise?" &c. In the world of philosophy, of poetry, of art, I can see their work; but in the realm of the spiritual they have left the world as they found it. God turns the tables upon those boastful wise ones. They call His plan "foolishness," but its effectiveness proves the folly to be with them. And Christianity is not alone in its frustration of the predictions of the wise. When Fulton constructed a steamship to cross the Atlantic they cried, "There goes Fulton's Folly." Subsequent history has, however, proved them to be the fools, and Fulton the wise man. So when Christianity was starting on its grand voyage, laden with salvation to a sin-afflicted world, the wise called it "foolishness." But how strangely has history proved their own infatuated folly. 2. This glorious result the gospel achieved whilst disregarding men's preconceived notions and prejudices (vers. 22–24). The Jews and the Greeks had their own theories of what ought to be the character of any religious message that might be addressed to them. The Jew, from the standpoint of his expectation of an all-conquering political Messiah, heralded by supernatural marvels, looked for a sign. The Greek, from his standpoint of intellectual culture, sought for wisdom. Of these, however, the apostle took no cognisance, but interpreting correctly the spirit of Christianity, boldly preached "Christ crucified." There is something sublimely unique and grand in this attitude. Other religions seek to accommodate themselves to the thoughts and ways of those whom they seek to win. II. But notwithstanding its bold defiance of cherished preferences, THE GOSPEL, BEING THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD, supplied in their highest form the very things which its rejectors desiderated. 1. It was the "power," *i.e.*, the miracle "of God" corresponding with the "sign" which the Jews sought. The ordinary operations of nature, though the expressions of His power, yet are never called the "power of God." But the gospel is such a transcendent revelation of God's love, such an extraordinary interruption of the ordinary course of dealing with sin, that it may well be called a miracle; and its moral effects upon those who come within the scope of its influence are so wonderful, as to render it a moral miracle far beyond any physical miracle. 2. It is "the wisdom of God." Wisdom to the Greek meant learning and knowledge, but mostly only ingenuity in the use of dialectics. But that which is deserving of the name is "the use of the best means for attaining the best ends." And the Cross proposes the best end within the entire scope of Divine benevolence to conceive of deliverance from sin, and forms the best means for attaining it. III. THE GOSPEL EXERTED

SUCH POWER ON THE CONSCIENCES OF MEN BECAUSE IT WAS DIVINE. If it be foolishness, still it is the foolishness of God; and the foolishness of God must be wiser than men. If it be weakness, still it is the weakness of God; and the weakness of God must be stronger than men. Thus is the success of the gospel assured by the simple fact of its relation to God. IV. THE THOUGHTS FORMING THE BURDEN OF THE ARGUMENT. 1. The comparative value of the Cross and human culture in the moral regeneration of men. The apostle shows that it is not a question of degree of efficacy, but of absolute failure in the one case, and of transcendent success in the other. Culture has its mission, and a most important one in its own proper sphere. But the human heart, with its sin and guilt, has needs which the highest culture cannot meet in the remotest degree. The moral history of those communities that have attained to the highest degree of cultivation testifies most unmistakably to this. The only remedy for sin is Christ crucified. The faith of some still is, that "the sweetness of light," of intellectual discipline and refinement, will dissipate the gross moral darkness in which men lie. A little of any of the salts of sodium introduced into the flame of a gas lamp gives that flame the power of imparting to every coloured object a greenish yellow tint; but any black in that object remains still black. The sodium flame has no power of affecting this sombre hue. Just so is it with education in relation to sin. 2. The simple method of preaching as against the rhetorical. The apostle sets against the "wisdom of words," so esteemed by the Corinthians, his own customary "plainness of speech." He seems peculiarly apprehensive lest anything should stand between the truth and the conscience it is intended to influence. The more the mind is charmed by the style of the message, the less likely it is that the conscience will be pricked by its truth. Religion is so much a thing of the heart, that its truths come into the soul much more through spiritual insight and quickened sympathy than by logical processes. At one of the Westminster Industrial Exhibitions a workman exhibited two beautiful metal violins. The highest prize, however, was not awarded to him, for the reason that the instrument made of such material did not realise the purpose of a violin. The superior metal looked pretty, but the coarser material gave forth by far the sweeter sound. So high scholarly attainments may produce sermons, but they will, like the metal violin, fail in their purpose, while the discourses of the less polished preacher give forth music, often more capable of touching the heart. The cultured genius of Milton produced "Paradise Lost," but the uncultured mother-wit of Bunyan produced "The Pilgrim's Progress." The refined acumen of Butler produced the "Analysis," but it was the untutored fervour of Whitefield aroused the heart of England from its spiritual torpor. (*J. A. Parry.*) **Where is the wise? where is the scribe?**—Where! 1. What have they not attempted? 2. What have they not promised? 3. What have they achieved? 4. How are they brought to nought? (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Philosophy and the gospel*:—The "wise" refers specially to the sages of Greece. They were called at first "wise men," and afterwards assumed a more modest title, "lovers of wisdom," "philosophers." The "scribe" refers to the learned among the Jews. The appeal of the text, therefore, is to the wisdom or the philosophy of the world, including that of the Greek or Jew. Here we have philosophy—I. CHALLENGED BY THE GOSPEL. The apostle here challenges the wise men of the world to accomplish the end which the gospel had in view. That end was the impartation to men of the saving knowledge of God. Where, unaided, had it ever succeeded in accomplishing this? Who amongst the wise will come forward to give one single instance. II. CONFOUNDED BY THE GOSPEL. "Hath not God made foolish?" &c. 1. By doing what philosophy could not. "The world by wisdom knew not God." Though the pages of nature lay open to the eye, with God's signature in every line, man failed to discover Him (see Rom. i.). 2. By doing, by the simplest instrumentality, what philosophy could not do. The proclamation of the history of Jesus of Nazareth, and that by a few simple men regarded as the off-scouring of all things, did the work. Hath not God in this way "made foolish the wisdom of this world?" III. SUPERSEDED BY THE GOSPEL. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The preaching is not foolish in itself, only in the estimation of the would-be wise men. The great want of men is salvation—the restoration of the soul to the knowledge, the likeness, the fellowship of God. This want philosophy cannot supply, but the gospel does. It has done so, it is doing so, and it will continue to do so. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The coronation of nescience*:—Our vaunted knowledge largely consists of shrewd guesses concerning surface appearances. The last result of culture is the coronation of nescience. Its proudest achievement is

fixing the limits of thought. The most sinewy brain cannot scale those adamantine barriers that convert reason's highway into a "no thoroughfare." (*Dr. Howard Duffield.*) *The failure of worldly philosophy*:—Lessing, after toiling at the task of establishing a morality which should be independent of revelation, confesses his failure in this plaintive cry: "If any one can convince me that Christianity is true he will confer on me the greatest benefit that one can offer to another." *Insufficiency of philosophy*:—Philosophy, in the night of Paganism, was like the firefly of the tropics making itself visible, but not irradiating the darkness. But Christianity, revealing the sun of righteousness, sheds more than the full sunlight of those tropics on all that we need to see, whether for time or eternity. (*Coleridge.*) *Christ the wisdom of God*:—Justin Martyr wanders in search of the highest wisdom, the knowledge of God. He tries a stoic, who tells him his search is in vain. He turns to a second philosopher, whose mercenary tone quenches any hope of assistance from him. He appeals to a third, who requires the preliminary knowledge of music, astronomy, and geometry. Just think of a soul thirsting after God and pardon and peace being told, You cannot enter the palace and have access to the fountain until you have mastered music, astronomy, and geometry. What a weary climb for most! what a sheer inaccessible precipice for many of us! In his helplessness he applies to a follower of Plato, under whose guidance he does begin to cherish some hope that the road leading to the desired summit may some day be struck. But in a memorable hour, when earnestly groping after the path, he is met by a nameless old man, who discourses to him about Jesus the Christ. Without any more ado, he is at the end of his quest. "Straightway," says Justin, "a flame was kindled in my soul." *Pride, the antagonist of the gospel of Christ*:—I. IN THE MEETING OF ST. PAUL AND THE OLD HEATHENDOM AT CORINTH THERE WAS EVERYTHING TO STIR EACH TO THE VERY INMOST OF ITS DEPTHS. 1. Every element of society here burst, as the whirlwind breaks on the giant of the forest, upon his whole intellectual, moral, and spiritual nature. In no city of the ancient paganism was the spirit of the world stronger. The grand families of the Bacchiadæ, and even the descendants of the later dynasties of Cypselus and Periander, with their humanising ancestral recollections, had all perished by the sword of Mummius. A century later the discerning eye of Julius Cæsar fixed on Corinth as the site of a colony; and it grew up marked by the unelastic hardness of the old soldier, and the elated baseness of the children of slaves. But, planted where it was, it could not but grow rich and prosperous. New Corinth gathered to itself the traders of the world, who multiplied at once its wickedness and its wealth. Many causes combined to promote the demoralisation of such a society. The wholesome lessons of ordinary labour were untaught within it. The barren soil of the Isthmus discouraged agriculture. Manufacture it had none. Trade, stained deeply by all the pollutions of heathendom, was everything in Corinth. Men met there to grow rich by all means, or to spend their acquired wealth in the most unrestrained sensuality. Religion amongst other powers ministered to their exaltation and amusement. The disputers of this world would speculate on Egyptian mysteries, mock at Jewish superstitions, trifle with Greek mythology, and be learned in Roman auguries. Each man took to himself his share of this distinction, and so believing himself wise, he in very deed became a fool. Into such a society the apostle cast himself with the doctrine of the Cross of Christ. 2. If the meeting moved to its lowest deep his mighty spirit, not less disturbing was it to every existing element of Corinthian society: not greater—if the sinewy arm of their fancied progenitor had cast one of their own hills into the blue waves which slept around their isthmus—not greater would have been the tumult of those riven waves, than was the shock to the moral stagnation of their sensual life by the casting in amongst them of the marvellous doctrine which the apostle preached. We may mark its effects in the brief record of the Acts, and yet more in the two Epistles. In them we may trace the intense sharpness of the gospel conflict with the schismatic habits bred of a fierce democracy, with the gross sensuality of heathen voluptuaries, with the speculating temper of a false and unreal philosophy, with the cold scorn of abundant wealth which shut the rich and noble out of the heavenly election. II. BUT WE MAY DISCERN THROUGHOUT THE CONFLICT AS THE FOUNDATION AND PROTECTING BARRIER OF ALL OTHER FORMS OF EVIL, A SELF-ELATING PRIDE. 1. With this the apostle not darkly connects an outbreak within the new community of more than Gentile licentiousness; whilst everywhere outside the Church he speaks of it as the most insurmountable hindrance to the reception of the truth. "Where?"—looking round upon the gathered company with the saddened gaze of that discerning eye—he asks,

"is the wise?" &c. Not one, he intimates, has listened to the gospel call. 2. It is not difficult to see why he thus treated this spirit of pride as his master antagonist. It was not merely because he ever remembered the guilty consequences of his own Jewish haughtiness, or because every circumstance of his own conversion was ever before his eyes; but it was pre-eminently a thorough insight into man's nature, and of the relations to it of the gospel which he preached. 3. For that nature does, indeed, bear its witness to the absolute need of humility as a prerequisite to all true learning. He who would learn the common truths of a business or an art, must, if that learning is to be successful, submit to take this posture of humility. As the truths to be mastered become more difficult of discovery, the need of humility increases. Upon almost every matter, some bias, preconception, assumption, troubles the course of discovery; and it needs a great humility of spirit to lay these down, and follow patiently the unlooked-for course. Yet without doing so progress is almost impossible. The history of philosophical discovery strikingly illustrates all this. Of old, man had gazed into the mystery of nature round him, and sought to impose upon it as laws the guesses of his own, often impatient, intellect. He came to it an unhumbled reasoner, and he learned nothing from it. Science was not, until man consented humbly to abandon theories, to be content to accumulate facts, and to let those facts teach him by degrees their often darkly intimated lesson. One of the greatest advancers of physiological knowledge in this land has been known to make ten thousand dissections whilst, setting experiment after experiment aside without gaining the clue he wanted, he followed fact after fact with humble conscientiousness, until at last the revelation which he longed for gladdened his heart. The greatest English discoverer of mathematical science records that he differed from others only in the greater largeness of his patience. Beyond, moreover, the humility of the mere waiting there must be humility in seeing old prepossessions swept away. No physician over forty, when Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood, ever received the new-found truth. The sacrifice of old opinions was too severe a trial of the humility of the learner. 4. But if in these comparatively cold and colourless inquiries humility must prepare the learner's mind, how vastly greater must be the need of it to him who would receive in their simplicity the secrets of moral and spiritual truth; for against these are arrayed not merely foregone intellectual conclusions, and the impatience which the spirit feels at their removal, and its weary shrinking from the labour of a troublesome and passionless inquiry, but also the restless and impetuous forces of the appetites and particular affections which resent the imposition of a new law of restraint, which is absolutely inconsistent with their habitual or uncontradicted enjoyments. Then the gospel required of men, who proudly deemed themselves the traditional possessors of that wonderful mythology which genius, art, language, scenery, and climate had conspired to make so beautiful, to cast it all aside; to receive, from what they deemed dull Jewish hands, a teaching which trampled on all these wonderful creations of the natural imagination; which, moreover, was not only exclusive, but unspeakably real; which claimed the whole man, his body and mind, his soul and spirit; which was not to be speculated on or disputed about, but was to be lived; which revealed to him such depths of corruption, guilt, and helplessness within himself, that he was altogether hopeless of pardon, unless the Eternal Son had died for him; and powerless for any good, unless the Blessed Spirit breathed into him the breath of a new life. Surely, then, we may see why in rich, self-exalted, trading, sensual Corinth, the preaching of that blessed gospel, in which was all the power of God, must have been "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." III. THE APPLICATION OF ALL THIS TO OURSELVES IS A MOST DIRECT ONE. We, too, must be converted and become as little children, or we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven; and there is much within us and around us leading us to resist the call. The trial is indeed largely various to men of different tempers, but to every one it is real, urgent, inevitable. To one the humiliation lies in the receiving simply the dogmas of the faith as the truth of God, instead of treating them as intellectual playthings, and so dissolving their reality in the fleeting colours of passing speculations, or developing from some supposed internal consciousness their supplements, or corrections, or substitutes. To another the trial is the curbing the appetites of the body and the particular affections of the mind by the law of the new kingdom. To another it is the yielding up the life to the one will of God. To another the receiving in its simplicity the atonement wrought for us by our Master's death, and craving meekly for the inpouring of His Spirit. To another it is the being led along, as

the apostle speaks, with such lowly things as outward rules and institutions, whether it be of the Church or the particular society into which God's providence has cast us. How real is this trial, how inevitable are its issues! Conclusion: 1. Seek from God a special gift of His regenerating Spirit, a special sign of predestination unto life. 2. Set ever before your eyes the pattern of our Lord's humility. If the pathway be hard, His steps have trodden it. 3. Keep watch over thine heart with diligence and wisdom. Beware of the many wiles of the proud deceiving spirit. Seek to be, not to seem humble. No pride is deadlier in its working than the pride of being humble. (*Bp. S. Wilberforce.*) **Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?**—*The folly of atheism*:—1. The wisdom of the world and the foolishness of the Cross are represented as rivals engaged in the regeneration of the race. By the "wisdom of this world" is meant all speculations begotten of antipathy to the conception of God, and intended to supersede its authority, including the labours and the spirit of those who do not like to retain God in their knowledge. Now, in this account of the wisdom of the world we cannot include science, or its discoveries, or literature. The most exalted work of God with which we are acquainted is the human mind. Even in partial eclipse, it is about the brightest of the known creations—and when the Scriptures refer to it it is always in language of respect. It is not intellectual labour honestly pursued, nor the discoveries and conduct which are the prizes of its success, that provoke the denunciations of Scripture. It is the mind that insists upon teaching everybody, but will not condescend to be taught by anybody. It is the mind that pursues as its chief end the distinctions, the worship of inferior minds, and allows itself to be flattered into delusions of greatness and authority until it acknowledges no other God but its own conceit. Now, the Bible has no mercy on men of this class; and for the very plain reason: in every age these men are the enemies of faith; and, whether they allow it or not, they are equally the enemies of morality. They are exposed in every book of the Scriptures. 2. And now let me ask, What is the pre-eminent virtue according to our adversaries, of learning and speculation? The votaries of these powers profess, while they have their accomplishments in refining taste and furnishing elegant occupation for leisure hours, that their chief mission is to raise the standard of life—to encourage its struggles against vice, and indolence, and want; to refine and multiply its fiery motions; to increase personal worth, and fit the entire community for great things. I agree with that. But here I differ from them. The wisdom which would make the human mind, thus cultivated, the ultimate authority on all moral questions, and make the training of the human faculties the source of moral power—has been stultified by God because it has universally failed. In endeavouring to cure the sickness of humanity the wisdom of man has not touched the roots of the disease. It has salved the surface, but never probed the wound. 3. If man were a mere animal we might look for a type of the family which has been formed under the most favourable conditions, and try to spread those conditions abroad. But man is not an animal. I grant that where climate is kind, and territorial selection happy, the tribe becomes a people, and the people a mighty nation. But I deny that this progress necessarily means the distinctive greatness of man. If I look at the Pyramids of Egypt, or the Colosseum at Rome, I see an impressive image of greatness. But, then, greatness itself is really the ascendency of moral intelligence—intelligence that grows righteousness. The wisdom of the world in its higher moods confesses this. But where is the people amongst whom the wisdom of the world has grown to righteousness? I confess that anything more sickly than the history of civilisation—as it is called—I cannot imagine. I visited Italy not long ago and I studied in its noble and pathetic remains the wisdom of Rome. In that city the man who wrote my text spent two years of his life. He was a man of taste, and he saw its beautiful palaces, its exquisite provision for the artificial productions of luxury, its triumphal arches, its amphitheatres, and he read its literature and saw its great men; and this was his opinion of its philosophy, and his analysis of it. "Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit," &c., and the deeds that philosophy dared not rebuke, and was utterly helpless to arrest, are darkly shadowed forth in another verse, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, for it is a shame to speak of those things that are done of them in secret." He writes with a large and grateful appreciation of good wherever he may find it. He says, "Whatsoever things are true," &c. Oh! ponder the moral condition of Rome when Paul was there—there, where the accomplishments of men—where the wisdom of the world in every department in which that wisdom is concerned—had exhausted its resources, morality was not to be

found (see Rom. i.). 4. At all costs the folly, the wickedness of the atheistic spirit must be made flagrant. And they were made flagrant. The atheistic spirit in the interests of humanity has been from the beginning a universal and an unqualified failure. It has done nothing for humanity; it has left behind it nothing but disaster. It has befooled the worshipper, betrayed the legislator, ruined the people, and but for the fact that God has put a testimony into your very mind to controvert this atheism—a testimony which sceptical habits long continued cannot subdue, which the most violent lusts cannot intimidate, a testimony confirmed by nature around us, and by the striking providence of God—but for that, I believe that the race would have perished outright. The man who impugns my verdict is bound to point out, if he can, in the vast wilderness upon which atheism has been working all these ages past—to point out one single acre reclaimed from the desert and made to blossom like the rose. 5. The apostle cries out with pardonable triumph, "Where is the wise?" And we may take up the parable, and ask where are they? Where are the problems which they say they have made their own? I will tell you. (1) The problem of the degeneracy of the race and how to arrest it. I wish them well over that. (2) The problem of bringing back the departed manhood of the savage tribes. Let them do their best with that. (3) The problem of invigorating and cleansing the nations of the earth—the stagnant nations of China and India—the problem of providing an adequate supply of knowledge, sympathy, and heart to meet the necessities of the race. These are their problems. They are a long time sitting down before them. Where are the wise to-day? They ought to be in the field if they are sincere. But they do not like the field. They are at home, writing, disputing, criticising! They were doing it in Paul's day: they are doing it to-day. It is their vocation! 6. What is the doctrine of the Cross doing to-day? Changing the world. I was thinking the other day whether I could find out one single force acting for the benefit of the human race that had not its origin from the Cross. I cannot find one. Who discovered the interior world of Africa? Missionaries. Who solved the problem of preaching liberty to the women of India? Missionaries and their wives. Who first brought into modern geography the hidden lands and rivers of China—unsealed for inspection the scholarship and opened for the enrichment of commerce the greatest empire of the East? Missionaries. Who first dared the cannibal regions, and converted wolves into a nation? Missionaries. To come nearer home. Who are those in Europe who are now lifting up their voices against war, that horrible perversion of the intellect and of the soul of man? Who are devoting their means and influence against vice in the high places and low, and against the infliction of wrong upon the defenceless? Who are those whose example of righteousness and purity and gentleness conforms with their own spirit the legislation of governments and the sentiments of society? The followers of the Nazarene. (*E. E. Jenkins, LL.D.*)

Ver. 21. **For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God.**—*Wisdom and salvation*:—I. PAUL MEANT THAT MEN HAD TRIED TO KNOW GOD IN HIS WISDOM, NOT IN HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, NOT IN HIS LOVE, AND HAD FAILED. 1. The wisdom of God is revealed in the universe, in man and in history—revealed but hidden. Wise men have endeavoured to construct a philosophy of the universe, and to reach God by reaching His thought as it underlies the universal order. They have not succeeded. In our times the endeavour to master the laws of Nature has achieved a brilliant success; but this is science, not philosophy. Philosophy attempts to discover what lies behind and above all the laws. It asks whence and where the universe came, and is not satisfied with learning its present structure or its history. It attempts to reduce all things to unity—to determine the relation of man to all things, to verify the certainty of the real value of human knowledge, and to discover the truth about destiny. If it had been successful it would have reached the thought of God, and so, in a measure, God Himself. 2. But Paul declares that in this great adventure human wisdom had failed; God, in His wisdom, remained unknown to the wisest. The task of philosophy had proved to be beyond human strength. School after school had risen in Greece, and the supreme question remained unsolved. There was a feeling of exhaustion, and there was a last desperate attempt to reach the object by means of transcendent speculation, ascetic mortification and ecstasy. But Neo-Platonism failed, and ancient philosophy sank in complete exhaustion. 3. The Corinthians, many of them, were seeking God in the old way; and when Paul came, they expected him to satisfy their desire for wisdom and explain everything. When he spoke of Christ, and of His death as a

propitiation, they passed at once with a certain impatience from the fact, and wanted some new and deeper speculation about sin, some discussion about the nature of eternal life; some account of the reason why the death of Christ should be connected with these great things. Paul refused to listen to their demands. God had not given him a philosophy to make known to men of intellectual activity, but a series of facts within the reach of the least intelligent. They said, Let us know the philosophy of your message. No, said Paul, for you I have only the fact. You say it explains nothing, and that it is a foolish thing. Granted; but seeing that the world, in its wisdom, knew not God in His wisdom—III. IT WAS GOD'S GOOD PLEASURE THROUGH THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE PREACHING TO SAVE THEM THAT BELIEVED. Paul does not mean to say that it pleases God to save men by foolish preaching. There is nothing to save men in intellectual feebleness and folly. This Epistle on the very next page says, "We speak wisdom among the perfect." When a man has received the Divine life, and that life has reached a certain maturity, he is capable of moving into regions of thought even sublimer than those which are familiar to the loftiest philosophy, and in the light of the Spirit of God the thought of God becomes known to him. But at first, while he is dealing with those who have not yet received Christ, Paul will not theorise or philosophise. It is not the theory that holds the planets in their orbits, but the force which the theory attempts to explain. And if that force ceased to act you might have the most perfect understanding of the theory, but you would all fly off into space. Here are the facts—this is Paul's position—resting on the testimony of the apostles; facts which have witnessed their own reality to millions of hearts. The Eternal Son of God became man, died for the sins of men, rose again, and has not forsaken the world that He came to save. How do we know? Why, age after age men have spoken to Him and He has answered; they have brought to Him the burden of guilt, and at the touch of His hand the burden has gone. Weak, in the presence of duty, they have appealed to Him for strength and have become strong. That was the foolishness of Paul's preaching, and this has proved to age after age wiser than all the wisdom of man, for through this men have actually found God, and through this they have actually been able to translate the will of God into life and conduct. The Incarnation is the basis of a philosophy of the universe, the death of Christ for sin contains a philosophy of human nature; and of the Divine order of the moral universe, the resurrection of Christ contributes new elements to the philosophy of human life. Yes; on these great facts a majestic philosophy may rest; but between the facts and our philosophy there is a difference as wide as between all other facts and our theories about them; and if you must be persuaded to receive the facts by the theories that are constructed in relation to them, your faith, to use Paul's words, will stand in the wisdom of man, and not in the power of God. We must begin with the facts and pass to the philosophy. (*R. W. Dale, D.D.*) *The insufficiency of worldly wisdom*:—In this verse we have two general parts especially considerable of us. First, the world's misimprovement and neglect of the opportunities of knowledge, which sometimes were afforded unto them. Secondly, the supply of this neglect by a new kind of dispensation to them. The former we have in these words, "the world by wisdom knew not God"; the latter we have in these: "After that . . . it pleased God by the foolishness," &c. We begin first of all with the former. First, the wisdom of God. What is the meaning of this? The wisdom of God is variously taken in Scripture. First, it is taken for an essential attribute of God (Job xii. 13; Prov. viii. 14). But this is not that wisdom which is meant here in this place. Secondly, the wisdom of God is sometimes taken for Christ Himself, who is the wisdom of the Father: thus here in this very text (ver. 24), "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Thirdly, the wisdom of God is taken for that wisdom which is in us, participative, and by derivation from God. Thus the wisdom of Solomon is called the wisdom of God (1 Kings iii. 28). To Joseph it is said, "The Spirit of God was in him" in regard of his wisdom (Gen. xli. 38, 39); and Daniel, it is said of him that he was a man "in whom the Spirit of the holy gods, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him" (Dan. v. 11). Fourthly, the wisdom of God is sometimes taken for the Scripture and Word of God, as Luke xi. 49. Fifthly, the wisdom of God is taken more restrainedly for the doctrine of the gospel, and the great mysteries which are contained in that (1 Cor. ii. 7; Eph. iii. 10). Lastly, the wisdom of God is taken for the creation of the world; that wisdom which does shine forth in the creature, and the works of God in that respect. And so it is particularly to be understood here in this place. When it is said that "the world

knew not God in the wisdom of God," the meaning is this, that they did not so improve that advantage for the knowledge of God by the creation, as indeed it became them to do so. This work of the creation is fitly called the wisdom of God, because the wisdom of God does therein very much appear to all such persons as will take notice of it (Rom. i. 20; Psa. civ. 24). The second is, what is meant by the world. And surely here, as in the first term, was understood the world for the frame of it, so also in this second term is understood the world for the inhabitants of it. That world which is opposed to the Church, these are the world which the apostle Paul points here unto in sundry respects. 1. Because they are most of the world in regard of their number. 2. Most in the world in regard of their interest. 3. Most in regard of their affections. The third is, what is meant by wisdom, "the world by wisdom"; surely that is the wisdom of the world, as the other was the wisdom of God. Well, but what now do ye call that here in this place? We may reduce it to two branches, either first of all, the wisdom of parts and natural wit and sagacity; or secondly, the wisdom of study and industry, learning and philosophy; their wisdom which consisted in knowledge of natural things. First, they knew Him confusedly, but not distinctly; they knew Him in the general, but not in reference to the right person. Secondly, they knew God imperfectly, and according to some weak and slender apprehensions which they had of Him in their minds, but they knew Him not in the latitude of those excellences which are to be found in Him. Thirdly, they knew God notionally, and in the speculation; they had some apprehensions of Him in their understanding. But they did not know Him practically and in the effects, so as this knowledge had any influence upon their hearts for the ordering of their lives and conversations. Fourthly, they knew God essentially, as considered in His own nature, but they knew Him not dispensatively and representatively, as exhibited in Christ. I come now in the next place to the proposition itself thus explained as it lies in the text, that "in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God," which affords us this observation, as the moral of all, that the greatest wits of the world having no more but the common light of nature, are oftentimes exceedingly to seek in the spiritual and saving knowledge of God. And I shall endeavour to make it good by a threefold consideration, and that founded upon the words of the text. First, the insufficiency of the medium, and that is the glory of God shining forth in the creatures, which is here called the wisdom of God. This of itself is insufficient to the producing of such a kind of knowledge as this is. There is not the least spire of grass, but it presents a god to our thoughts, much more the whole body of the creation. This does exhibit God a great deal more fully. But yet God as He is laid open in the gospel, and as He is made known in the preaching of the Word, this the creature does not show, nor is able to do it. Secondly, from the weakness of the faculty, the world by wisdom knew not God; that is, by its own wisdom, and that wisdom which is within the compass of itself, so it knew Him not. The wisdom of the world is insufficient alone of itself to bring any people to the saving knowledge of God: this is clear out of sundry places of Scripture (Matt. xvi. 17). So that we see how men may much abound in worldly wisdom, and yet fall short of evangelical knowledge. First, because this mystery of the gospel is a thing which is merely dependent upon the will and counsel of God Himself. Again it is said to be hid in God (Eph. iii. 9), that is, in the secret of His own purpose and eternal counsel. Secondly, as it is hid in God, so it is also hid by God; and that of purpose, oftentimes, from those which are otherwise the wisest men in the world (Matt. xi. 25). Thirdly, the world by the strength of natural wisdom is not able to know God in Christ, in regard of the disproportion betwixt the faculty and the object, the knowledge of Christ being of a far different and contrary nature and condition hereunto. We know that no faculty can act beyond its own sphere, nor reach an object which is above itself. As bodily eyes cannot see spiritual substances, no more can wit and natural sagacity be able to reach the knowledge of God in Christ, which is an object transcendent unto it. The improvement of this point to ourselves is not (as some would make it to be) from hence to cast a reproach and disparagement upon wit and human learning. There is a threefold disparagement especially which we do justly cast upon human learning and the wisdom of the world. First, comparative and exclusive, we do disparage it and diminish from it so. Human learning, if we compare it with Divine, and worldly wisdom with the wisdom from above; here it is as good as nothing (Phil. iii. 8). Secondly, we do disparage human wisdom, as a ground or argument of pride and boasting and carnal confidence. Thirdly, and more

principally to our present purpose, we do disparage human wisdom in reference to such an effect as this, which is to bring those that have it to the saving knowledge of God in Christ. Here the wisdom of the world is too weak, and of small or no effect; it cannot do this. Go to now, let us see then in what sense we do disparage this wisdom of the world; namely, as in another case we seem likewise to disparage good works; this is not simply considered in themselves, but in order to justification and merit. The third is, from the perverseness of the subjects; namely, those persons in which this wisdom was, they did not do their duty to this purpose as they should, and from hence it comes to pass oftentimes that they are as they are. The world by wisdom might have known Him more than they did, if they had given themselves to it. But there was a manifold obstruction upon them, which is a great hindrance hereunto. At first, their non-attendancy, that they did not heed nor apply their minds to these things. A scholar that looks off his book will never learn his letters, let them be written or printed before him in never so fair and elegant a character. Secondly, it proceeds from idleness and want of taking some pains with ourselves to dive into these things. A scholar must not only read but study, that will improve in any knowledge. A third obstruction to this knowledge is pride and scornfulness of spirit, because men think themselves too good to be taught or learn anything. Well, to close up all now with a brief word of application, let us consider what does result from these truths for our own use. And first let us here take notice of the corrupt nature which is in man, to be abased and humbled for it. Secondly, seeing the world by wisdom knew not God, let us then labour to find somewhat more in us than worldly wisdom. Thirdly, let those who know God and have this worldly wisdom, see what cause they have to bless God and to acknowledge His goodness to them. And again, for those who desire this wisdom, let them learn hence to veil and cover the other, and lay it down in order to the other, where it makes any opposition and resistance. Yet to conclude, let me add one thing more, and that is this, that though human wit does not give grace of itself, yet it does sometimes forward the means of grace, and accordingly is to be improved by us; as the star occasionally led the wise men to Christ. Again, though parts make us not good at first, yet when we are good they are good helps to make us better and more useful in the exercise of piety; and so likewise are we conscionably to use them. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *Philosophy and the gospel*:—I. THE FAILURE OF PHILOSOPHY. 1. Exhibited in ignorance of God. 2. Occasioned by wisdom. 3. The conformity with the wisdom of God. II. THE SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL. Though the scorn of man it is—1. The salvation of believers. 2. The pleasure of God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *God's plan of salvation a remedy for man's ignorance*:—To each man his highest welfare is entrusted as a most solemn charge. The question is, By what method can he obtain salvation? To know what his duties are, he must be acquainted with his Ruler. A true knowledge of God is therefore indispensable. Let us consider the assertions of the text. I. A TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD NOT REACHED BY MAN'S WISDOM. Consider—1. The admissions of the wisest men of old. The lament of Plato was that it was so hard to discover the Father of the universe, and he never seems to have reached the conception of God as a self-conscious, living, personal Being. Socrates deemed it the greatest happiness to know the will of the gods; but how this knowledge was to be obtained he could not say; perhaps by a resort to divination. 2. The low morality of heathenism at its brightest periods. Vices tolerated which now are reprobated. The mythologies are disgraceful. All this shows practical ignorance of God. 3. The assertions of modern philosophy—that it has dislodged theology from its lofty pedestal, and made it only a curious speculation. The world by wisdom now knows not God, nor seems likely to. It refuses the appointed organ of knowledge, and resembles a man attempting to learn the meaning of sounds by the eye instead of the ear. II. GOD'S REMEDY FOR MAN'S IGNORANCE IS FOOLISHNESS IN THE EYES OF THE WORLD. The remedy is "preaching," including the thing preached and the act of preaching. This preaching is to the wisdom of man foolishness, for—1. It simply states facts, not theories and reasonings. The apostles came simply to "bear witness" to Christ. 2. It states facts likely to excite contempt. The Jew didn't want a suffering Messiah; the Greek could not understand a crucified God. 3. It makes salvation depend on faith, not on wisdom. "To save them that believe." III. THE CONSPICUOUS MANIFESTATION AFFORDED OF THE WISDOM OF GOD. Wisdom is discoverable—1. In the whole plan, in that man was first taught his weakness. A wise teacher lets his pupil flounder a little that he may learn a lesson of humility.

So the centuries before Christ are a standing rebuke to man, reminding him of his impotence. Hence no flesh can "glory in the presence of God." The saint cannot, for all he knows was taught him; the preacher cannot, since the "treasure" does not depend on the "earthen vessel" for its value; the facts he has to deliver are successful not from his eloquence, or thought, or exposition. 2. In the plan of proclamation, in that it enables all Christians to be preachers. He has only to testify what he has seen, tasted, and felt. 3. In making salvation depend on faith, in that it makes salvation possible to all. (*S. R. Aldridge, B.A.*) *God's interposition for the world*:—I. ITS CONDITION—ignorant of God, consequently—1. Alienated. 2. Guilty. 3. Depraved. 4. Miserable. II. ITS HELPLESSNESS—unalleviated by—1. Philosophy. 2. Art. 3. Legislation. 4. Religious systems—infidelity. III. ITS RELIEF—by the foolishness of preaching—exemplified in—1. The preacher. 2. The subject. 3. The condition. 4. The result. (*J. Burnet.*) *God's procedure with the world*:—I. HIS WISDOM. 1. In delaying the revelation of the gospel. 2. In affording man ample opportunity to test the insufficiency of reason. 3. And by his worldly wisdom to work out his own misery. II. HIS PLEASURE. 1. In the discovery of His mercy. 2. In its free dispensation by the foolishness of preaching—to all that believe. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The world's need and God's remedy*:—I. THE STATE OF THE THEN HEATHEN WORLD. 1. It "knew not God." It was in no barbarous age that the apostle bore this testimony; but in the evening of the Augustan age, when man's intellect had been developed to the utmost. It was not on the Arab's tent, nor the Indian's wigwam, that these words were inscribed; but it was on the polished marbles of Athens and on the proud walls of imperial Rome. And not only was it of that particular age he spoke; but he seems to look back to the very earliest ages, "After that," &c. After four thousand years had rolled by, looking back to the place where science was born and cradled, to Egypt with its reptile gods, to Babylon where science was nourished and cherished, and whither the Grecian sages went to light their lamps. 2. It was in a perishing condition. Men would not have needed to be saved if they were not lost. II. THE METHOD OF RELIEF WHICH GOD PROVIDED. "It pleased God." Here is something in which the Lord delighted. And what was it that "pleased God"? It was that which man despised. Beware how you say a word against preaching, and extol or depreciate it in favour of sacraments. But what is this preaching? Heralding, the calling of the rebel to submission, the exhibition of the lawful Sovereign, the proclamation of mercy from the "King of kings," &c. And what is the substance of this preaching? Christ, in all the glories of His person; in all the sufficiency of His offices, and in all the riches of His grace. But this is not all. There is a peculiar character in this preaching, by the foolishness of preaching the apostle means its simplicity. It is possible so to preach Christ and His gospel as to strip it of its power. Conceal it in the tangled web of human sophistry; garnish it with the flowers of human eloquence; obscure it with the dusky mantle of antiquity; dress it up in the gorgeous dish; and what do you? You destroy its hidden power. You may attract the eye of man from the precious pearl to the gorgeous setting of it; and what do you then? It is "an uncertain sound" which the trumpet gives, and none will "prepare them for the battle." It is only plain, affectionate, scriptural declarations of God's truth, unreserved, full, free, from the heart, and in the power and demonstration of the Spirit, that can save them that believe. III. THE RESULT OF THE APPLICATION OF THIS REMEDY. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save—whom? all the world? every creature? No; "them that believe." The effect of early evangelising efforts at best what is it? "And it came to pass, that some believed, and some believed not." It was nearly three centuries before the civilised world became Christian. But in all cases preaching did "save them that believed"; and there is the important truth to fix the mind upon. Look at the converts; whether they were in Jewry, or in Corinth, or in Athens; wherever it might be the effect which followed the preaching of the gospel was the same. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God," &c. Lions became lambs; licentious men pure; impious men became pious. These were the effects which uniformly followed in them that believed. (*Dean Close.*) *Divine wisdom displayed in the gospel*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IS A SUPERNATURAL SCIENCE. "The world by wisdom knew not God." Genuine religion is a subject of pure revelation, and cannot be discovered by human reason, in its most perfect state. It is a spiritual science, and can only be comprehended by faith, and realised through the operations of the Holy Ghost (2 Cor. ii. 14). II. THE GOSPEL IS A FULL DEVELOPMENT OF THE METHOD OF SALVATION. "It pleased God

by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Thus, the gospel is not only a revelation of the scheme of salvation, but also an instrument of its accomplishment in the believer (Rom. i. 16). III. THE GOSPEL IS A GLORIOUS DISPLAY OF INFINITE WISDOM. "In the wisdom of God," &c. The Divine Being always acts according to infinite wisdom and eternal truth. In the dispensation of grace, the Lord has proposed the best possible ends, and accomplishes them by the best possible means. It is not only a display of the wisdom of God, but is the medium of all Christian knowledge. IV. THE GOSPEL IS A CLEAR MANIFESTATION OF DIVINE BENEVOLENCE AND LOVE. "It pleased God," &c. V. THE GOSPEL ENJOINS FAITH AS AN ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE OF SALVATION. "It pleased God to save them that believe." (*Sketches of Sermons.*) *Sense, reason, and faith*:—Here we have three kinds of evidence referred to—the sign looked for by the Jews; the philosophy sought after by the Greeks; and the wisdom and power of God. This leads to observations on—I. THE DOMAIN OF SENSE. The present age is one in which sense knowledge is unduly exalted. This arises partly from the vast advancement of physical science, and partly from the development of commerce which leaves small time or inclination for the study of spiritual things. 1. But sense knowledge is—(1) Exceedingly limited. We know very little indeed from direct experience; information for the most part is based upon testimony. Even in science the great mass have neither time, means, nor capacity to conduct experiments, and thus to verify the theories they so boldly advocate. We must always believe much more than we can know. (2) Often deceptive. The state of our minds always gives colouring to eternal things. We see in nature just what we bring to nature the capacity for seeing. The same scenery produces very different effects upon different minds, and upon the same mind at different times. (3) Never extends beyond the surface of things. Behind the domain of our experience there lies a whole world of things which we can never cognize with any organ of sense. 2. Christianity is based upon as much sense knowledge as will suffice to prove its truth. Christ's resurrection is the greatest fact in history; and at the first its appeal was made directly to the senses. To us it is a matter of testimony; but the testimony is irresistible. If, like the Jew, therefore, we would demand a sign, it is forthcoming. II. THE PROVINCE OF REASON. 1. This province is also very limited. A correct process of ratiocination by no means ensures the accuracy of the conclusion arrived at, for the premises may be incorrect. Butler has well remarked, that "the unsatisfactory nature of the evidence, with which we are obliged to take up in the daily course of life, is scarcely to be expressed." Reason, of herself, is incompetent to inform man of some of the most important facts which appear to lie completely in her own domain. She cannot describe the essence either of matter or of mind. The freedom of the will she has proved herself utterly incompetent to deal with. Reason is by no means perfect in her own domain, for—(1) The knowledge on which the process is based is often too limited. (2) The instruments that are employed are very defective. 2. Man is not left to the guidance of reason alone. Impulse, enthusiasm, feeling, passion, love, and faith are independent of reason, and often lead to higher results. 3. Christianity is supported by reason as far as their powers coincide. The evidences of the Divine authority of Christ's religion are conclusive if judged of by reason. Those, therefore, who seek after philosophy, like the Greeks, can find it here. 4. Many Christian truths are higher than reason, but not opposed to it. Christianity leads into a region where reason cannot follow. There are mysteries in religion, as there are also in nature. Man is surrounded by mystery, and is himself the greatest mystery of all. And mystery deepens as knowledge increases. III. THE REGION OF FAITH. This belongs peculiarly to religion. Here we can discuss the conscience, the soul, and man's relation to God. Reason might discover the existence of Deity, but it could never tell us of His relationship to man. Modern science puts God, when it admits Him, at the end of the universe. Revelation places Him at the beginning. Scientific men do not hesitate again to proclaim the unknown God, thus taking us back two thousand years in history. There is a tendency in this age to decry faith, yet society could not exist a week without it. Christ is described as—1. The wisdom of God. Everything seen in His light is clear. By Him we read the riddle of the universe. The purpose of God in creation is seen in Him, and nowhere else. 2. The power of God. His influence on the ages is greater than that of all other systems combined. And He alone can save the soul. 3. Christ is the "wisdom of God and the power of God" only to those who believe. They become one with Him, and receive out of the fulness of

His grace. (*G. Sexton, LL.D.*) **It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.**—*The foolishness of preaching*:—God's "folly" is the highest wisdom; man's highest "wisdom" is but folly. The foolishness of preaching is here contrasted with the wisdom of human teaching. I. WHEREIN DOES THE "FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING" CONSIST? 1. God chooses and uses the simplest means to save men, which human philosophers would have scorned. It is the proclamation of a message. God's plan is, first of all, to tell men the good news of a free, full salvation. After they have believed and accepted the gift of God, they are to be taught more fully the whole range of Christ's commands. But, at the beginning, it is only pointing to the Lamb of God, and crying, Behold! 2. God takes the most humble and unlettered believers as His heralds. 3. God makes no heavy demands on the souls to whom the gospel comes. It is only "Hear, believe, confess." Salvation is thus put within reach of all—even the feeblest mind and greatest sinner (Rom. x.). II. IN EMPLOYING THIS METHOD—1. God discarded the aid of all human wisdom in saving men: "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" Not a feature of His redemptive plan was borrowed from the philosophies of men. The utter failure of human philosophy is one of the marked facts of history. It culminated in Pantheism, Atheism, Materialism, Rationalism, Agnosticism, or in a refined selfishness, like Stoicism and Epicureanism. God not only discarded, but contradicted, the teachings of man's philosophy. (1) He presented Divine thoughts far above the thoughts of man; mysteries above comprehension, though not above apprehension; things too high and lofty for human wisdom to grasp, and which the natural man could not receive. (2) He dared to present paradoxes, apparent contradictions, irreconcilable by man's philosophy, such as the union of two natures in one person in the God-man; the union of three persons in one God; the doctrines of Divine sovereignty and human free-agency, an unchangeable God and yet prevailing prayer, &c. (3) The whole philosophy of redemption, of sin and its desert, the law and its demands, salvation by vicarious suffering, &c., is above the reason of man to devise, or even explore. Into it even the angels desire to look. 2. God discarded all human merit. The gospel not only humbles the proud intellect, but the prouder heart. A free salvation is the "offence of the Cross." III. IN ALL THIS THE WISDOM OF GOD APPEARS. For—1. God makes it possible for all sinners to be saved. Whoever can sin can understand salvation. All philosophies were addressed to an elect few: witness Plato's few disciples, and Pythagoras, with his exoteric and esoteric schools. 2. God makes possible for all believers to be preachers of the gospel and winners of souls. 3. God abolishes invidious distinctions between sinners and believers. All are on a level, as guilty, condemned, and helpless; all on a level, as saved by grace without works. 4. God presents a faith so grandly superior to all human teaching that there is no risk of confounding it with man's philosophy, or mistaking it for a human invention. 5. God reserves to Himself all the glory. Man has no ground for boasting or self-complacency, &c. 6. God teaches men implicit submission and obedience. (*A. T. Pierson, D.D.*) *The wisdom of God by preaching*:—First, the order of working, "After that," &c. Secondly, the affection to the work, "It pleased God." Thirdly, the means by which the work is wrought, "the foolishness of preaching"; and fourthly, the work or design itself, "To save them that believe." We begin with the first, viz., the order of working, "After that," where we must note that this word "after," it carries a double force and emphasis with it, either first of all as a restraining word; "after," that is, not before: or secondly, as a resolving word, "after," *i.e.*, to be sure then. First, take it in the restraining sense. First, that so by this means He might the more fully and palpably convince the world of their neglect; let them first alone and see what they will do of their own accord, and then come in upon their miscarriage. Secondly, that He might the more discover the insufficiency of mere natural and carnal wisdom, which did not yet reach to the knowledge of God. Thirdly, that He might gain to Himself the greater glory. He that does anything after another which misses, he has from hence so much the more honour to himself; especially if he that misses be one that pretends to any great matters, as here it was. The second is the affection to the work, "It pleased God." And this again carries a twofold intimation in it. First, it is a word of freedom and spontaneity, it pleased God, that is, He did it of His own accord and inclination, being not moved thereunto by anything out of Himself. Secondly, it is a word of delight and complacency, "it pleased God," that is, it was very acceptable to Him; He took a

great deal of pleasure and contentment and satisfaction in the doing of it, as in nothing more. The third is the means by which the work is wrought, and that is here expressed to us to be by the foolishness of preaching. Where again there are two particulars considerable of us. First, the means itself considered in its own nature, and that is preaching, by preaching to save believers. Secondly, the qualification of this means as the denomination which is put upon it, and that is mean and contemptible. It is here called the foolishness of preaching. We will begin first of all with the second, to wit, the means in its denomination, the foolishness of preaching. Not as it is, indeed, but as it is rather in men's apprehension. Now there is a double account which may be given hereof unto us. First, occasionally from others in regard of their carriage: for truly as many men order the business, it is the foolishness of preaching indeed; there are some kind of persons in the world which have a great deal to answer to God for the offence which they give in this respect, and the scandal and ill report which they bring upon God's own ordinance by their unworthy managing of it. But then again secondly, there is an occasion given to think preaching foolishness from too much niceness and affectation. When we shall make preaching a mere business of wit, and a thing to tickle the fancy, an airy and empty discourse, carried with some high-flown language, but never touching or coming near the heart, nor uttering anything which may be profitable to the soul. Secondly, originally from themselves in regard of their own perverse reasonings. And here there are sundry things which they falsely reason upon. At first, they think meanly of preaching, from the nature and condition of the instruments which are employed and improved in it; poor, frail, and weak men like themselves. If an angel might be the dispenser of it, then it may be they would have some high thoughts of it. Secondly, in regard of the matter of it, and the subject which it is conversant about. And that is, Christ crucified, this is the foolishness of preaching, that is not only the ordinance, but the doctrine; and not only the preaching, but the thing preached about. And so not only in the narrative, but in the hortatory part of it; when it persuades men to deny themselves, to cross their sweetest lusts. Thirdly, in regard of the manner of it, and way of proceeding in it. That it comes not so much with reason and demonstration, as rather simple propositions. Fourth, from defect mingled with pride. And so much of that first, viz., the denomination of the ordinance, as it is here styled, the foolishness of preaching. The second is the means and ordinance itself simply considered, and that is preaching; this is the means of working salvation; God saves believers by preaching. First, by preaching He makes them believers; and then being believers, He bestows salvation upon them. This is the order and method that God uses. That poor and mean ordinance which the world thinks so scornfully of, and counts no better than foolishness; yet it has this excellency that it is a means to bring men to heaven; and God is pleased to use it to this purpose. If it be foolishness, it is a saving foolishness, and that's a great deal better than a destructive wisdom. For the better handling of this present point, there are two particulars which may here profitably be considered by us. For the first, what preaching is: it is not merely to speak somewhat of religion, to make a rambling and roving discourse, and nothing to the purpose. But preaching is a ministerial and authoritative improvement of the truths and doctrines of the Scriptures, to the good and benefit of men's souls, and the procurement of their eternal salvation. The showing men of their misery by nature, and the benefit which they may have by Christ, with the appurtenances thereunto, this in a word is preaching. Now further, for the efficacy of this ordinance, and whence it comes to be thus powerful, this is merely from the ordinance of God. As it is His institution who has ordained and appointed it to be so. "It pleased Him," there is an account of the business indeed. Alas! preaching considered in itself is a poor and empty voice, and were able to do no great matter at all. It is not the gifts of the preacher, it is not the nature of the argument, it is not the strength of the matter, it is not the sweetness of the expression, it is none of all these things in themselves which makes preaching so powerful a conveyance; no, but the ordinance of God which has appointed to work by these means, and the Spirit of God who is pleased to concur with it in working. The improvement of this point to ourselves for application may be twofold. First, as it concerns ministers, there is a very good item for them to quicken us and encourage us in our work, and the conscionable discharge of it without fainting and giving out. Again, let us also hence learn so much the more faithfully to discharge, and make that our chief end in undertaking it, which was God's chief end in ordaining it. Secondly, here is somewhat

also for the people, and that is so much the more carefully to attend upon this ordinance of preaching, and to take heed of the despising of it as a weak and foolish thing; they which despise preaching, they do in effect despise believing. And further let this teach us with what affections to come to the ordinances, the preaching and hearing of the Word, namely, as those which expect and desire salvation from it as the end whereunto it is intended. Let us not come to a sermon as to a prize, or a mere trial of wits. Now the fourth is the work or design itself which we have in the last words—"To save them that believe." Where among many other things which might be profitably observed by us concerning salvation, in the nature of it, and the causes of it, and the means of it, and the like, I shall at this time only fasten upon that which is here especially presented unto us, and that is the subjects of it—believers. And here there are two things again which this restraint does extend itself to. First, here is a restraint of the benefit of preaching to faith. And secondly, here is a restraint of the benefit of salvation to faith. There are none which have benefit by preaching any further than they believe; and there are none which do partake of salvation, but those only which do believe neither. And for saving faith has it here attributed to itself. First, as the radical and fundamental grace, and that which puts a life and vigour into all the rest. Secondly, faith has it attributed to it, because it is that whereby we please God (Heb. vi. 6). Thirdly, it is faith which lays hold upon Christ, who is the Author of eternal salvation (Gal. ii. 20). Fourthly, it is faith which gives most glory to God (Rom. iv. 20; 2 Thess. i. 10). Fifthly, faith is that which does most conquer temptations, and subdue all the enemies of our salvation (Ephes. vi. 16). Lastly, faith is said to save as the condition which God requires and will have in them which shall be saved; and this were enough, though nothing else, to give account of it. In all these respects is salvation attributed hereunto. But what is this faith which we speak of all this while, and wherein does it consist? Sure it is not a mere assent to the truth revealed; though that be somewhat which belongs thereunto, yet this is not all. But saving faith is quieting faith too: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God" (Rom. v.). For the rise of faith, it comes by preaching, and is suitable to the doctrine of the Word. Those who contemn the ordinance, they have none of the grace. For the fruits of it, it works by love. 1. It makes us afraid to displease God. 2. It makes us courageous for God. 3. It makes us love the children of God. 4. It quite changes and alters our converse from evil to good. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *The foolishness and excellence of preaching*:—God frequently employs instrumentality in the accomplishment of His purposes so inadequate, as to make it manifest that the excellency of the power is of Himself. It was before the blast of rams' horns that the walls of Jericho fell down, &c.; and it is by the foolishness of preaching that souls are saved. Note—I. THE APPARENT FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING. 1. How inadequate is the means itself to accomplish much! How little has human eloquence been able in other fields to achieve? True; once an orator's audience, wrought up by his invective, exclaimed, "Let us march against our foe!" But that effect soon passed away. And in the ordinary intercourse of mankind; look at the effect of mere persuasion, when it comes in collision with men's passions, interests, and tastes. 2. But the inadequacy of the instrumentality will be still more apparent when we remember that the first preachers of the gospel were not highly gifted, and had no advantage of rank, or influence. They were unlettered fishermen, who had no excellency of speech; and taking the mass of ministers in all ages, how few have had any pretensions to transcendant powers of persuasion! 3. But if we pass on to regard the grand theme of preaching the foolishness of preaching will be still more obvious. The Cross of Christ has ever been to the Jew a stumbling-block and to the Greek foolishness. 4. And yet more will the foolishness of preaching strike us if we regard how contrary to the natural bias is that effect at which preaching aims. It aims at getting men to "deny themselves," to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts; to live for eternity and not for time. II. ITS REAL WISDOM AND EXCELLENCY. 1. It is an ordinance of Almighty God. Judaism was propagated by ceremonies and types; false religions have usually been propagated by the sword; but it is the pre-eminent peculiarity of the religion of Jesus, that by the simple appeal of truth to the conscience and the heart, it has its potency and its triumph. Omniscience could only devise, and infinite grace must have prompted the best of all machinery. 2. It is the ministration of the Spirit of God. We are under the dispensation of the Spirit, and the Spirit communicates Himself mainly and most frequently through preaching. 3. The theme at which the Jews stumbled, and which the

Greeks esteemed foolishness is to them that are called "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." 4. It is attended with great and gracious results. Why are we not gathered, as our forefathers were, under the oak-tree, to go through our dark orgies of impiety and blood? Why have we the arts, and sciences, and literature, and all that marks out a civilised people? These are the external triumphs of Christianity. But they are nothing compared with its internal, its everlasting triumphs. What multitudes has it made to pass from death to life, from darkness to light, from the bondage of Satan, to the glorious liberty of the Son of God. Conclusion: If, on the one hand, preaching appears so foolish, and, on the other, it is so wise and powerful—1. Do not fall into the false notion of the day, that education is to be the grand regenerator of mankind. 2. How faulty must many of you be when you go to hear the preaching of the Word much as the world goes to the theatre; when you go to hear the words of man instead of the Word of God. 3. How much does it behove the Christians of this country to multiply that machinery which is God's great ordinance, to promote that righteousness which exalteth a nation. (*Canon Stowell.*) *The preaching of the gospel*:—The chief means by which the blessings of this revelation have been communicated to mankind, is the preaching of the Word—a means of instruction which, in the time of St. Paul, was in a great measure new to the world. It had been employed, indeed, in the Jewish synagogue, at the reading of the law and the prophets; but that employment of it was very limited, both in respect of the subjects which it embraced, and of the persons to whom it was addressed: and throughout the whole extent of the heathen nations, the practice was altogether unknown. In Greece, by far the most celebrated of these nations for learning and refinement, there were magnificent temples, in which many splendid ceremonies were observed in honour of the gods, and a variety of officers consecrated to the services of devotion; but there was no institution like that of preaching, for explaining to the people the principles of their religious system. Hence, when the apostles of Christ went forth preaching the kingdom of God, and unfolding clearly its doctrines and its objects, their plan of conduct excited surprise. By the Greeks in particular it was derided as foolishness—as a scheme of reformation unskilfully devised, and on account of the simplicity and weakness of those who engaged in it, incapable of answering any valuable end. I. The preaching of the gospel has contributed in a remarkable degree TO IMPROVE THE INTELLECTUAL CAPACITIES OF HUMAN NATURE, AND TO DISSEMINATE, THROUGH A WIDER SPHERE, THE PRINCIPLES OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE. It threw into the circulation of human thought a new stock of most interesting principles—principles well established themselves, fruitful in important consequences, and fitted to exercise all the higher faculties of the understanding. It trained a numerous order of men, and forced them, by the very nature of their employment, to cultivate their intellectual talents, to cherish habits of regular thought, and to study the most effectual method of elucidating and confirming the doctrines which they taught. This order of men it mingled with the mass of the people, and placed them in a situation, where their example and instructions could not fail to draw forth and improve the reasoning powers of their hearers. This institution furnishes, besides—II. A RICH INEXHAUSTIBLE TREASURE OF CONSOLATION TO EVERY INDIVIDUAL WHO EMPLOYS IT WITH PROPER DISPOSITIONS. Numerous are the evils to which we are subjected in the course of our earthly pilgrimage. In the sanctuary of God we see the plan of Providence unveiled, and, through the ministry of the Word, discover order and beauty rising from the darkness. The train of thought which is there presented to us, and rendered habitual by its frequent recurrence, has a direct and powerful tendency to calm the agitations of a troubled heart, and to re-establish our confidence in God. We there learn that God is good to all; that, through Christ, He is reconcilable even to the guilty; that His government of the universe is free from defect; that the apparent disorder around us is essential to the nature of our probationary state, and productive of good; that even afflictions are frequently messengers of His love. But the doctrines which the preaching of the gospel preserves, and diffuses through all orders of the people, tend not only to enlighten the understandings of men and to alleviate the ills of life. They are also—III. POWERFUL MEANS OF OUR MORAL IMPROVEMENT. The system of duty which the gospel contains is most perfect in itself, and most wisely adapted to the exigencies of human nature. It reaches to the thoughts and intents of the heart; it prescribes with a minuteness and accuracy which leaves no room for misconception, the conduct proper for all the situations in which we may be called to act; and it enforces its precepts by

motives the most awful and the most interesting which can operate on the mind. (*Jas. Finlayson, D.D.*)

Vers. 22-24. **For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.** —*Christianity viewed in three aspects*:—I. As associated with a great fact. "Christ crucified." This may be looked at—1. Historically. As an historical fact it is the most—(1) Famous. (2) Influential. (3) Best authenticated. 2. Theologically—(1) It unfolds the Divine, and is a mighty expression of God's idea, government, and heart. 3. Morally. It is fraught with suggestion the most—(1) Quickening. (2) Elevating. (3) Sanctifying. II. As associated with popular opinion. It had not sufficient of the gorgeous philosophical ritualism for the speculative and pedantic Greek, nor sufficient of the gorgeous religious ritualism for the sensuous and bigoted Jew. And now to millions it is nothing. To the sceptic it is a fable; to the formalist a creed or a ceremony. III. As associated with Christian consciousness. "But unto them that are called," &c. The Christian sees the highest wisdom in a system which, in saving a sinner—1. Manifests the righteousness of an insulted sovereign. 2. Augments the influence of moral government. 3. Maintains intact all the principles of moral freedom. 4. Develops, strengthens, and perfects all the powers of the soul. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Jew, Greek, and Christian*:—The Christian of to-day can but ill-understand the Christian of the year 50. Perhaps if he did, he might feel much more as did the Greek or the Jew, than as did the Christian. 1. Think of Paul in Corinth. (1) The city was full of Jews, base sometimes, and poor, doing meanest work; rich sometimes, and able to play as it profited him most. (2) There, too, was the Greek, argumentative in his very commerce, and beating out all questions connected with the principles and profits of trade. (3) There, too, was the Roman, thinking the world had been made to be conquered, and he the conqueror of the world. (4) And Paul preached, and the Jew hated and despised; the Greek smiled in his large disdain; the Roman tolerated in his proud indifference; and you might have seen him some evening stealing along the quay, the mean-looking little Hebrew, who still could not be conquered, but resolved that his gospel should conquer men, finding entrance by a main stair to a meaner upper room, where the slave set free for an hour by his master, or the wharfinger escaping from loading and unloading his ship, or the porter seeking relief from his weary burden by day, met with their small offerings to hear the preacher, great, in spite of his meanness, in dignity and in power. Had Peter gone to Corinth, Peter would have preached and hardly known, and less cared, how people thought and what they felt; but the keen, creative spirit of Paul could insert itself into the brain of the Roman, and look through his eyes; into the intellect of the Greek, and judge with his cynicism; into the imagination of the Hebrew, and feel with his heart, dream with his fancy. 2. Here you have the reminiscence of the older time, and that reminiscence comes out in three series of antitheses. (1) There are three typical persons—the Jew, the Greek, the Christian. (2) The three typical persons have three characteristic quests. The Jew requires a sign, the Greek wisdom, the Christian preaches Christ. (3) There are three typical attitudes of the one subject. Christ is to the Jew a stumbling-block, to the Greek foolishness, to the Christian the power and the wisdom of God. What the Jew demanded was a vision of power; what the Greek sought was a source of wisdom; what the Christian found was power and wisdom in one. Look, then, at these three persons, with their characteristic quests and attitudes. They are old, they are new; they belong to nineteen centuries distant, they live to-day. I. The Jew. Illustrious was his ancestry, and he could feel that he was in the face of people that were of yesterday and of earth, while he was of eternity and of God. His founder was Abraham, friend of God, greatest of faithful men; his lawgiver was Moses, author of a law straight come from God. The literature of Greece and Rome was of the earth; his was a book God made. Nay, they worshipped idols; he worshipped the one Creator. And so, proud man was the Jew, proudest for this reason—he owned God rather than God owned him. He so owned God, that he determined the very terms on which God was to be held and known by other men. And so he said, when he stood before the new gospel, "Show me a sign": but by the very terms no miracle was possible. The Jew said, "I am God's great work; a greater than I is not in the world: I am the sign; show me a greater." 2. Ah, Jew! if thou hadst been able to see the Christ, thou hadst seen a greater. Think of Him; child He is of thine own proud race, yet lowly in heart, giving rest unto the soul. Thou hast cause

for pride, O Jew! yet greater still for humiliation. Out of thy loins He sprung; yet for Him thou only hadst the Cross. See how He "broke His birth's invidious bar"; see how, breaking it, He became no local, narrow Jew, but Son of Man, yet Son of God. See how, through Him, God became the new Being for man—Father. He stands manifest God, witness to this—that man's sin is God's sorrow, man's saving God's suffering. From millions the cry has risen for the Father. Out of heaven the Father stoops to seek the sons. Here, through His Son, he comes to create a great family of God, and a Greek and Jew become brothers; Roman forgets empire and Hindoo colour; negro loses slavery, male ceases to be man, female ceases to be woman—all become one in Christ. Miracle ye claim and seek, O Jew! to you a miracle I bring! II. THE GREEK. 1. He, too, had his illustrious ancestry. He made this great discovery: freedom, manhood through freedom. Read the inscriptions of Assyrian kings that tell you how they vanquished empires, but tell you not of the armies they lost and the armies they destroyed without pity or regret. Read the records of Egyptian monuments, and they will tell how a great king, to preserve his very dust, builds a mighty pyramid, throwing thousands of men away in the building of it. The Greek, in creating a free state, created the very idea of manhood. Man free is man reasonable, ordered, a social, joyous, complete life. He, too, discovered for all time art and beauty. Take those colossal figures standing by the Nile—cold, impassive; take those great Assyrian monarchs—massive, insensible to pity, sensible only of power; or look at the Hindoo, with his god—many-headed, many-armed, many-breasted, hideous symbol of a race without beauty; take the Greek discovering the human form is Divine. Can you tell how much the good man owes to the race that discovered beauty in men? Look at poetry. Pithy speech for deepest emotion. Think, too, what philosophy means—the passion for the true, the search for the good. We owe that to the Greek; but when you spoke to him of Christ, he turned away and said, "Where is the wisdom? He is a barbarian, and uses speech that cannot with grace or truth be called language. Think of Him, too, as your later artist pictured Him, crowned with thorns. We love the gracious and we love the great; we love not this." 2. But, O Greek! hast thou thought of the meaning of that Christ? You love freedom—you made it; but see how you bind man still in passion that makes him a very slave. This Christ can take the man bound in the bondage of sin, make him a free man who loves the law of God and loves to obey it, and make him a citizen of an eternal kingdom. You made art; but think of the beauty that is in Christ—how radiant the goodness that makes Him alone "the altogether lovely." He creates the rarer art of holy being, of holy living. You think your poetry is great; but, see, He has made all time, all the universe—nay, the very eternity itself, poetical. Has He not filled every life that is lived with poetic meaning, by bringing Deity into humanity, by lifting humanity into Deity. And is it thy wisdom, O Greek! that thou lovest? See, then, in this Christ is the great mystery of being—God that made the world, the end to which God made it, the means by which He is to reach His end, the glorious method by which the scattered and multitudinous creatures who have estranged themselves from Him may yet, through holy concord, and beautiful love, and perfect devotion, be brought into a saved society in Him. O Greek! in Him are all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge; in Him thou hast all things. III. THE CHRISTIAN. It is said, "If thou wouldst know a poet, go and live in the poet's land." So, if you would know Christ, make your appeal to Christian experience. Two things are in Him—power, casual, creative; wisdom, adaptive, constructive. Christ brings to the re-making of men power that can take the lost and re-make it until it becomes the holiest; wisdom to take what He has re-made, and shape, develop, guide it, until its early promise becomes richest performance. There is power in Christ, for He is able to save to the uttermost; there is wisdom in Christ, for Christ can sanctify what He has saved. Now you are face to face with the evil and the need of men; what other way can you cure it? You may call to your aid philosophy. Philosophy will make a select and cultured class, scornful of the multitude, and growing cynical through the sense of its own pre-eminence. Call in social theory, that argues that new conditions must be created that men may be made happy and perfect. You may invoke the Act of Parliament; and yet all these together fail to do that which Christ has achieved. (*A. M. Fairbairn, D.D.*) *Offensiveness of the gospel to human pride*:—1. It comes in the form of preaching, and offers its blessings only to faith. 2. It describes the crucified Jesus as the power and wisdom of God. 3. It pronounces all this, which seems to men to be folly and weakness,

to be wiser and stronger than all the wisdom and power of the world. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The causes of the rejection of the gospel*:—I. THE JEWISH CRAVING FOR —1. The ostentatious. 2. The miraculous. II. THE GENTILE LOVE FOR—1. The intellectual. 2. The æsthetic. III. IN BOTH THE PRIDE that will not submit to the simplicity of faith. (*Ibid.*) *The gospel and its opponents*:—Observe—I. THE GREAT HINDRANCES OF THE GOSPEL IN APOSTOLIC TIMES. 1. Jewish prejudice. 2. Gentile philosophy. II. THESE ARE GENERAL TYPES OF HUMAN ERROR—*e.g.*, Pharisaism and Sadduceeism; Epicureanism and Stoicism; Ritualism and Rationalism; self-righteousness and self-conceit. III. THEIR UTTER INCOMPATIBILITY WITH THE GOSPEL. 1. The gospel requires humility; these are the offspring of pride. 2. The gospel insists on faith. These demand demonstration. (*Ibid.*) *How the gospel triumphed*:—I. ITS THEME. Christ crucified. His Divinity, sacrifice, offices, redeeming power, universal government. II. ITS DIFFICULTIES. 1. Jewish prejudice. 2. Gentile wisdom. III. ITS TRIUMPHS IN THEM WHICH ARE CALLED. 1. Christ the power of God—(1) Surmounting difficulties. (2) Providing means—His Atonement, Word, Spirit. (3) Determining conditions. (4) Counteracting human depravity. (5) Choosing instruments. (6) Exposing error and sin. 2. Christ the power of God in—(1) The Incarnation. (2) The application of the gospel. (3) Its successes. (4) Its results. (*Ibid.*) *The Jews require a sign, the Greeks seek wisdom*:—In this verse the apostle illustrates and confirms that expression which had passed from him in the verse before, concerning the foolishness of preaching. First, in the demand of the Jews; and secondly in the pursuit of the Gentiles. The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. First, we will speak of them jointly, as they agree in one notion, and then severally in what is proper to each. First, jointly, where we must know thus much, the demand of the Jews, "The Jews require a sign." Here was an error in both, as concerning their receiving the gospel of Christ: whence we may observe in general then, first this: that the corruption of nature does act and improve itself differently in different ranks and conditions of persons. Here are Jews and Gentiles both, people of a several temper and frame, yet both of them have their censure; the one in the requiring of a sign, and the other in the seeking after wisdom; both of them in a several kind of nature had their weaknesses and failings. This various working of corruption according to the subject wherein it is, may be variously accounted unto us as proceeding from various causes. As first, sometimes from the difference of age and constitution of body: there are some sins which are more proper to one age and temper, and others which are more proper to another. Again, secondly, sometimes it proceeds from a difference of assault and temptation; as there are several tempers and constitutions in regard of men themselves, so there are several drawing out of these constitutions in regard of Satan's improving of them. Thirdly, it proceeds from a difference of employment and education, and particular calling, wherein men are set. First, that we should not from hence at any time be secure and presumptuous in ourselves from our freedom from any particular sin or infirmity whatsoever; though thou art not guilty of such a sin, yet it may be thou mayest be guilty of another, which in its kind may be as bad. Again, secondly, observe this: that all men by nature have some quarrel or exception or other against the Word of God, and some pretence to put it off from them. "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom"; neither of them were every way right, and so as they should be. This is that which has always been in all ages and times of the Church. Thirdly, observe in general this: that it is a great matter for the entertainment of any ministry what people have been formerly used and accustomed unto; that has commonly a great sway with them. For see here in this present Scripture how it was now with these two sorts of people, the Jews and the Gentiles. The Jews, they had been used to signs heretofore under Moses and the prophets, and therefore nothing would serve their turn now but signs still. And the Gentiles, they had been used to their philosophy and rhetoric. This shows us what cause we have therefore, as to be careful of what principles we admit at any time of ourselves, so to bless God that He has any time in His providence heretofore so well ordered it to us. I come now to them more distinctly in particular, to look upon them in their several propositions, to wit, the demand of the Jews by itself, and the pursuit of the Gentiles again by itself. First, for the demand of the Jews—"The Jews require a sign." This the apostle speaks of as some kind of weakness and viciousness in them: and so indeed it was, as may appear in these particulars. First, it does denote unto us that sottishness and stupidity which was in them. A sign it is a

thing which is accommodated to the outward sense, and ordained for the teaching of those which are of low understandings, and which cannot attain to the spirituality of Divine mysteries; now thus it was here with these Jews. And this is the disposition of most men else by nature to be thus affected in themselves. Thus it was with the apostle Thomas at Christ's resurrection (John xx. 25). That the more carnal any people are, the more they are carried away after such matters, and do not rest themselves satisfied in that evidence which the Scripture holds out unto them; and it proceeds from hence, because they have not their senses exercised to discern of things that differ. Secondly, here was also their infidelity and unbelief, that is likewise implied in this, that they asked a sign. Signs, says the apostle Paul (1 Cor. xiv. 22) they are not for them that believe, but for them which believe not; and accordingly they have been still used (as we shall find) upon such occasions as these are, either to begin faith where it has been wanting, or to strengthen it where it has been weak; they are an argument of unbelief where they are given, but especially they are so where they are required. Whilst the Jews demand a sign, they show their infidelity indeed, that they are as yet in a state of unbelieving (John i. 11), "He came to His own, and His own received Him not." Thus it was with this people: and if we would know whence it came to be so, the apostle tells us, "Because the god of this world had blinded their eyes, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ should shine unto them" (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4). Well, let it teach us all for our particulars to take heed "lest there be in any of us an heart of unbelief to depart from the living God"; yea, let us take heed of admitting any scruples and doubts in the main points of Christianity; for if we begin once, we shall never have done. And that is the second evil in this demand of the Jews in asking for a sign, to wit, their infidelity. The third is their hypocrisy; there was a great deal of false-heartedness and double-dealing in this request of theirs; for why, they intended no such thing as to receive the truth. This is the manner of hypocrites to pretend an unsatisfiableness in the means when they do not relish the thing; when they favour not the conclusion, they call in question the argument. Fourthly, here was their insolency and unworthy behaviour in the laying of this demand; and that as expressing itself also in sundry particulars, which we may briefly take notice of. As first, here was their preposterousness and presumption, in that they would prescribe and limit God to a way of their own—they ask a sign. But here was the miscarriage in these Jews, that they would teach God, and set Him a rule, and point which they would determine Him unto; that when as He would have it done by preaching, they would have it done by miracle. And when the apostles brought them a sermon, they would needs have a sign. This is a sure rule—that in the things of God especially, as in all other things, we must be ruled by God Himself. To ask a sign was here a presumption. Again, as there may be a fault in asking one, so there may be a fault likewise in refusing one, when God offers one to us: observe that this was the miscarriage of Ahaz (Isa. vii. 11). But now where God sets up a sign, there they pull the sign, down. As for example now in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Here they throw the sign away. Thus those which are so much for signs at another time, as with the Jews themselves, to require them when themselves please; here, when God offers one to them, they will not have one. Secondly, here was their peremptoriness and importunity, they require a sign; that is, there is no remedy, but have one they must in all haste. If they had asked it modestly and soberly, though they had asked it, there might not perhaps have been so much in it: there have been those of the servants of God which have asked signs, and they have not been blamed for it; Gideon asked one and had it in his wet and dry fleece (Judg. vi. 37). Hezekiah, again, asked one (2 Kings xx. 8, 9). Thirdly, here was their malice and perverseness, "they require a sign," as if hitherto they had never had any. The Jews had signs of Christ exhibited unto them, both by Himself in His own particular Person, and likewise in His servants the apostles; they had wonders in heaven above, and they had signs in the earth beneath; as it is in Acts ii. 19, and in ver. 22 of the same chapter—"Ye men of Israel hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, wonders and signs which God did by Him in the midst of you," &c. And again (ver. 43), "Many wonders and signs were done by the apostles." And (Mark xvi. 20), "The Lord confirmed the Word by signs following." So we see then they wanted not signs, and yet as if they had been altogether destitute, they here require them; this was now an horrible perverseness and maliciousness in them, and a slighting both of the power and goodness of God Himself. The second is the inquiry or pursuit of the Gentiles, "The Greeks seek

after wisdom." By Greeks here we are to understand all other nations besides the Jews. Now the great learning and eloquence of the Greeks was occasionally and accidently through their corruption, not in the nature of the thing itself, a great hindrance to them for their embracing of the saving knowledge of Christ; they were so taken with the conceits and apprehensions of their own wit and excellent parts, that the preaching of the Cross it seemed no better than foolishness to them; they would believe nothing now in religion without an argument and a demonstration. In brief, there are two things especially which are here by this passage of the apostles prohibited to us. First, a restraining of the truths and doctrines of religion to the apprehensions of carnal reason, the wisdom of the flesh. This was the fault of these Greeks, and we are to take heed it be not ours. And the reason of it is this, because indeed religion is a mystery, and the things which are propounded in the gospel they are above the reach of human wit. Why but then must we lay aside all kind of reason in matters of religion? is Christianity an unreasonable business? and does the gospel deprive us of our wits and ordinary understandings? No, no such matter; religion it is not against reason but it is above it. The sum of all is this, that reason it may be improved in religion, but religion is not to be limited to reason; faith and right reasou do not cross, though indeed they do not always meet; nay, indeed, religion is upon the point the greatest reason and wisdom of all, because it is the reason aud wisdom of God Himself, who is the highest intelligence. And that is the first thing which was here taxed in these Greeks in the text, their seeking after wisdom, namely, the wisdom of the flesh, in restraining religion to reason, which is a thing here prohibited to us. The second is, the wisdom of words in adulterating the ordinance of preaching with the affectation of human eloquence; this is not to be done by us neither, either in preachers or hearers. This was another thing in these Greeks seeking after wisdom, they refused the doctrine of Christ, because it was not brought to them with the excellency of speech and human wisdom, which the Apostle Paul did of purpose decline, as he tells us (1 Cor. i. 17; ii. 1). For the right understanding of this point, that we may not be mistaken, we do not here prohibit all use of human learning or eloquence in reference to preaching; but—First, that this be not the chief business which is intended by us: we may use these things by the by, but this is not the main to be looked after by us, like children that more regard the cover of the book than they do that which is contained in it. Secondly, we must consider the nature of this eloquence and wisdom, what it is; there is a comeliness of expression suitable to the nature of the matter and argument which is spoken unto, which may very well become a preacher of the gospel; but strong lines and bombast is such as is very uncomely and improper. Thirdly, for the measure of doing it, it must be done very sparingly and moderately; I mean the mixture of wit and human learning in preaching; as sauce, but not as meat. Lastly, a regard is to be had to the nature of the auditory itself, which we have to deal withal, that they be such as are capable of it, and where it may serve as an advantage to the conveyance of the doctrine itself. With these and the like explications there may be a good use of human eloquence and speech; but otherwise in the excess and failing in the manner of it, it is very dangerous and inconvenient. And that especially, as first, it oftentimes takes off the efficacy of the ordinances and makes the Word of God of none effect. Secondly, besides this, it is that which is not so acceptable for the most part to a spiritual heart. Thirdly, God Himself does not commonly so work by them—"By the foolishness of preaching He saves them that believe." (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *The reasonableness of the gospel:*—Evil exists, is the result of sin, which is a want of affection for God, and its cure is by Christ crucified. God is limited in His mode of cure by the capacities and endowments of human nature. I. THE GOSPEL CANNOT BE A SYSTEM OF FORCE. It must be one of motive. II. LOVE CANNOT BE TRANSFERRED AT WILL FROM ONE OBJECT TO ANOTHER. God must become man to secure man's affection. III. HATE IN THE HUMAN HEART CAN ONLY BE CONQUERED AND OVERCOME BY MANIFESTED SELF-DENYING LOVE. God's first work is to teach men their sinfulness and need of salvation. Without faith it is impossible to please God. There is no other avenue to the human heart than that which God has tried. IV. THE DUTIES AND PROHIBITIONS OF THE GOSPEL ARE DEMANDED BY OUR NATURES. Social scientists admit this. Prayer, praise, worship, are as necessary to soul-growth as food, exercise, and rest for bodily powers. V. THE REWARDS AND PENALTIES OF THE GOSPEL ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATURE, with reason, with those principles upon which we act in daily life. This wisdom of God is perfectly adapted to man's wants, and meets man's necessities. (*Bp. Fellowes.*) **But we**

preach Christ crucified.—*An orthodox preacher*:—I. THE LEADING THEME OF PAUL'S MINISTRY. 1. The Person declared in his ministry. Christ, not the patriarchs, prophets, &c. Men of renown in history must not supplant Jesus. 2. The atonement proclaimed in his ministry. We have to speak to the masses—not science, philosophy, &c., but a crucified Lord. II. THE GREAT DIFFICULTIES IN PAUL'S MINISTRY. 1. The superstition of the Jews. They spurned the gospel because it appealed to their spiritual nature. They did not want a suffering Messiah. If we are seeking signs, we are superstitious. We are rejecting the tidings of "Christ crucified." 2. The scepticism of the Greeks. A crucified Christ appeared to them a fable. Many in spirit are still doing the same. III. THE DIVINE CHARACTER OF PAUL'S MINISTRY. 1. The universality of the gospel. The glorious gospel is for all mankind. 2. The powerfulness of the gospel. The death of the Cross is the greatest manifestation of the power of God. 3. The knowledge of the gospel. Christ displays God's highest wisdom. None can instruct us aright but Christ, and we shall never learn the wisdom of God unless we sit at the foot of the Cross. Conclusion: 1. There is no other way of salvation but what is revealed in the gospel of a crucified Saviour. 2. May we never be of the class who reject and despise God's method of redemption. 3. Between the conflict of power and wisdom, Christ is the living embodiment of the greatest force in the world. 4. We must believe the gospel before we can experience its saving influence. (*A. Buckley.*) *Our preaching*:—I. ITS GREAT SUBJECT. Christ crucified. We—1. Declare the nature of His death. 2. Exhibit its benefits. 3. Persuade men to seek an interest in it. II. ITS RECEPTION. 1. Some reject it with contempt. 2. Some receive it with respect and advantage. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *St. Paul's preaching at Corinth*:—I. WHAT ST. PAUL PREACHED. "Christ crucified"—*i.e.*, not so much the sufferings of Christ on the Cross as the doctrines connected with the Cross and all the benefits which are secured to us by it. He preached—1. The dignity of Him who suffered. 2. His humiliation. 3. His willingness. 4. The shamefulness of His death. 5. The intensity of His sufferings. His death was lingering, not sudden. He suffered from men, from devils, from God. II. SOME REASONS FOR HIS SO PREACHING. There were—1. Personal reasons. A dispensation was committed unto him. St. Paul preached thus because he was commanded. "Woe is unto me," &c. 2. Doctrinal reasons. He preached Christ crucified because by the Cross—(1) God's wrath is appeased. God was willing to be appeased; but God's justice could not be appeased except by the death of Christ. (2) God's law is silenced. For every breach of its commands the law thunders forth against us, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." But Christ has undergone all the curses of the broken law in our behalf. "He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "There is now no condemnation," &c. (3) Our guilt is removed. If God's law, which we have broken, has been satisfied by Christ, then must necessarily follow the removal of our guilt. (4) The devil's power is subdued. (5) Holiness is promoted. Dr. Chalmers tells us that, so long as he preached only moral duties, he saw no results of his labours. All the vehemence of his powerful oratory had not the weight of a feather in making the drunkard sober, and the unchaste man clean. But when he began to preach the atonement, he saw in rich abundance the precious fruits of holiness; and so John Berridge tells us that for six years he preached morality to his parishioners at Stapleford till there was hardly a moral man left in the parish; but when he was taught by God's Spirit to lift up Christ, the people came flocking to the sanctuary in deep concern about their souls. (6) Heaven is opened. Conclusion: We hence see the duty of ministers, viz., to walk in the steps of Paul. 1. He was emphatically a preacher. We, too, who are ministers, should aim to be preachers. Our Lord's commission ran, "Go ye into all the world and preach." "Christ sent me," says Paul, "not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Others, uninspired men, have said the same. Latimer said, "Take away preaching, take away salvation." St. Chrysostom affirms, "My whole priesthood is to teach and preach the gospel. This is my sacrifice." 2. But what are we to preach? Christ crucified. The Socinians preach Christ, but only as a bright example, not as a vacarious sacrifice. But we, like St. Paul, preach Christ crucified, because we know that this is the only preaching which God the Holy Ghost will honour. As Cecil says, "A philosopher may philosophise his hearers, but the preaching of Christ will alone convert them. Men may preach Christ ignorantly, blunderingly, absurdly, yet God will give that preaching efficacy, because He is determined to magnify His own ordinance." (*C. Clayton, M.A.*) *Apostolic preaching*:—I. ITS MATTER. The apostle opposes his theme, on the one

hand, to Judaising teachers, who taught converts that they must be circumcised, and keep the laws of Moses; and, on the other hand, to Gentile philosophers, who spent much time in eloquently haranguing on the beauty of virtue and the deformity of vice; but who, with all their arts of rhetoric, never could guide one soul to heaven. II. ITS MANNER. They exhibited the Cross of Christ—1. As the end of the law for righteousness. 2. As the only foundation of a secure hope of acceptance with God. 3. As the only legitimate object of a Christian's glory. 4. As the most powerful incentive to obedience. Conclusion: Let me ask—1. What think you of Christ? 2. What influence has the subject had on you? (*J. Hooper.*) *Apostolic preaching*:—I. ITS GRAND SUBJECT. The apostles set forth—1. The dignity of our Saviour's person as the true Messiah of God. 2. The perfection of His atonement. Having laid the foundation in His Divinity, this naturally followed. 3. The plenitude of His redemption. Christ died for all men, and we are therefore enabled to offer salvation to every man. This is a blessing which leads to all others. II. THE RECEPTION WHICH THIS DOCTRINE MET WITH. 1. "To the Jews it was a stumbling-block." 2. To the Greeks it was foolishness. 3. "Unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." These perfections are admirably discovered if we consider—(1) The method that God took to make known to the lapsed posterity of man His merciful designs. (2) The men whom God selected to carry the message of salvation to the world. (3) The easy terms which the Lord hath fixed upon in order to be benefited by the redemption. (4) The great effects which have been produced by this doctrine. (*E. Oakes.*) *Apostolic preaching: its theme and effects*:—I. THE GREAT THEME OF APOSTOLIC PREACHING. The crucifixion of our Lord was the great centre of their preaching, but its range was much wider. They preached Christ in—1. The Divinity of His person. 2. The perfection of His atonement. 3. The variety of His offices. 4. The blessings of His redemption. 5. The universality of His government. II. THE DIVERSITY OF THE EFFECTS WHICH ATTEND THE PUBLICATION OF THIS GOSPEL. 1. To the Jews it was a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; "to them that are called"—(1) The wisdom of God. This wisdom is displayed in—(*a*) The wonderful method by which the difficulties were removed which stood in the way of the restoration of fallen man. (*b*) The perfect adaptation of the means which it supplies for the attainment of human salvation. First, the sacrifice of Christ. Second, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. (*c*) Its direct tendency to counteract one of the most evident manifestations of human depravity—viz., pride. (*d*) In the selection of the instruments who were ordained to propagate it. (*e*) The period appointed for its proclamation. (*f*) The facility of those terms on which the benefits are conferred. (2) The power of God is displayed in—(*a*) The various acts by which the stupendous scheme was accomplished. (*b*) The Divine influence which attended the publication of this doctrine. (*c*) The triumphant progress which the gospel has made against every opposition. (*d*) Its influence on man's present and eternal destinies. (*J. Bowers.*) *Preaching Christ crucified*:—1. Preaching is an agency previously unknown, which Christianity has created for itself, and just as the gospel has been truly apprehended has it sought expression purely through this form. Rationalise it into a philosophy, and the pulpit becomes a tribune to lecture from; mistake it for a magical mystery, and the pulpit is deserted for the altar. But Christianity is neither "a wisdom" for "Greeks," nor "a sign" for "Jews"; it is a Divine message for which preaching must ever be the appropriate vehicle. 2. When we set our modern pulpit alongside that of apostolic men there is a pretty wide divergence. Theirs was simple, direct, historic; built itself up on a few facts which clung around a central Person. Ours is elaborate, discursive, theoretical. To some extent such difference is not only natural, but proper. For the apostles were missionary preachers, addressing men to whom everything was new. We who minister among a people moulded by the truths which we preach must traverse an ampler field and cannot decline to use what the Christian past has brought to illustrate or confirm the old message. In accessory helps the pulpit grows yearly richer; yet through this very embarrassing wealth, the preacher is in danger of being beguiled too far from his appointed work. I. THE GREAT PULPIT THEME. 1. The gospel offers itself as a plan of restoration; and opens with an event which lifts the scheme above parallel—the descent into our race of God Himself. At no other point does creation touch Divinity in such strange fellowship. 2. If we estimate the singular moment of this fact we shall not wonder to find the whole course both of nature and of providence looking towards it. (1) Thus there were laid in the constitution of

nature materials for that rich symbolism which in the light of Holy Scripture it is our business to read. When, *e.g.*, the light diffused through space received a home for us in the sun, there seems to have been present to the thought of God the ultimate gathering up of His omnipresent glory in Christ as the spiritual light of the world. And when, under laws of organic life in animal or plant, many parts were knit together and sustained in corporate action by a force undiscoverable, resident in one part, yet penetrating the whole, He meant to foreshadow the mysterious conjunction of believing souls into one, even Jesus, through the life-giving Spirit who proceedeth from Him. (2) So also with providence. Those strangely diverging lines which history traces have a reassembling point in the advent of Jesus Christ. To prepare the nations for it in the fulness of time, and to work out its fruits since, must be the key for the intricate movements of providence in all time. 3. If the Christian scheme of salvation through incarnate God is thus the world's centre of gravity, then its own centre of gravity is the Cross. Modern thought is strong because it recognises the Incarnation; but it is weak because it fails to see the necessary issue of the Advent in the Cross. The event of Golgotha came to complete and to explain the event of Bethlehem. Christ took our nature in order to redeem our souls; was born that He might die. Thus we reach the heart of Christianity. That is a nerveless gospel which glozes over the fact of atonement with vague phrases; that which ignores or denies it is another gospel altogether. 4. But on these facts what is the message which rests? Not merely that the man Jesus was actually the Son of God and become one of our own race; nor that He many centuries ago suffered generously, and for our sakes died; but that the God-Man, who did once at Jerusalem cancel guilt and win deliverance, is here, and able, therefore, to save all who trust Him. He has a pardon which He won as man, yet bestows as God. This acting Christ with His direct access to and contact with men, we must preach. We preach a Christ who, because He was crucified once, is dead no more; but is even now and always breathing power and life into human hearts; and from this central power of Christ to give the Holy Ghost as the fruit of His bitter tree, there branch spiritual works manifold as the miracles of His earthly ministry. II. THE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH OUGHT TO REGULATE ITS DELIVERY FROM EVERY PULPIT. Pentecost gave tongues to the disciples. That was the birthday of preaching. The new message brought new utterance; and times of religious awakening have been signalised by a fresh development of preaching gifts. So it was at the revival of the thirteenth century, of the fifteenth, of the eighteenth. What, then, is this novel voice which Christ's gospel has found for itself? 1. As to matter, nothing which is quite foreign can be admitted, and everything which is cognate has a right to be here only in so far as it can serve the preacher's main drift, and illustrate or commend his message. This is no rule of narrow exclusion; for there is hardly a department of human thought or knowledge out of connection with Jesus Christ. But the rule is of constant value nevertheless. What ponderous piles of sacred learning have sometimes buried the simple message! What wire-spun theological niceties have perplexed the hearer! The gospel has been more often discussed than preached. Nothing has any right to be in a sermon except because it contributes to the clearness and effect of the message about Christ. 2. As to the form of the message, it must be in the main declarative. If true to its nature it cannot be anything else. It admits, indeed, of embodiment in a creed; it has given to philosophy its richest, deepest principles; before it there goes out the only law of ethics: yet these are none of them the gospel. In its naked essence it is a salvation offered in the person of a Saviour. As such it is to be published. This declarative form implies two subordinate elements. We found wrapped up in the object of preaching two things, a person and a fact. Now these should give to preaching at once a historical and a personal complexion. That Christianity is rooted in the past, and had a birthplace which ties it to one spot of history. All that concerns the life of Christ, with its foreshadowings, its self-manifestations, and each recorded step which conducted to the achievement of redemption—must be prominent in the Christian pulpit. Yet the historical is to be blended with the personal element; and that ministry is best which leads straight to the living helping Saviour. (*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*) *Christ crucified*:—First, the apostle's carriage, as concerning the ordering of his ministry; and secondly, the apostle's doctrine, as concerning the nature of those points and truths which were delivered in it. First, for his carriage; this is very much hinted unto us in the adversative particle "but," where there are these things further considerable: first, his contrariety of spirit; we see plainly that

Paul and the rest of the apostles with him went a quite contrary way to that which was both required by Jews and Gentiles; the one required a sign, and the other sought after wisdom; but they accommodated neither, but instead they preach Christ crucified. What do we learn from hence? That it is the duty and wisdom of a minister to cross men's carnal humours; when people shall affect such kind of preaching as is unprofitable for them, especially to make them fail of their expectation. Physicians, when their patients are immoderate in thirsting after drink, keep it from them the rather. And the reason of it is this, because satisfying of such humours feeds them, and adds strength unto them. This then meets with all such whose carriage is quite contrary hereunto, who make not their hearers' necessities, but their affections, to be the rule of their teaching; and if there be any crotchet or humour more than other, which does prevail and abound in them, they will be sure to apply themselves to that in the course of their ministry. Secondly, we have here in this passage the apostle's humility and self-denial, in that he did here lay aside those things wherein he might otherwise have gloried and set out himself; he here denied his own wisdom, and learning, and eloquence, and such accomplishments as these are, that so he might the better advance the gospel of Christ. Paul had been caught up into paradise, and been made partaker of such admirable mysteries as were there revealed unto him, that he now should condescend to the preaching of such familiar points, and that after such a familiar manner, as he does here intimate unto us. This I say was a business which was very much to be taken notice of in him. "We preach Christ crucified." There was a great matter in that, for such poor creatures as we are. What does this now teach us but this much, that plain and familiar kind of teaching and laying down the mysteries of religion in an easy and perspicuous manner, is that which may well become the greatest and learnedest that are; it is no shame nor disparagement for any teacher. And truly why not, if indeed we consider all? for first, there is a great deal more of art and skill sometimes in it, than otherwise; to preach Christ crucified, and such fundamental truths of religion as these are, and in that manner as they ought to be preached, requires a great deal more of wisdom as belonging unto it than many other points besides, which it may be to some vain kind of minds seem far above them. It is an easier matter to preach fancies and notions, than it is to preach solid truths; it is an easier matter to preach in the enticing words of man's wisdom, than to preach in the powerful evidence and demonstration of the Spirit of God. Secondly, as there is more skill in it, so there is likewise more modesty, and less temptation and danger of miscarriage; the venting of strange speculations, and the preaching plausibly to men's humours and affections in this respect, is not without some hazard of pride and self-applause in those that shall do it. Thirdly, there is also profit and advantage hereby to our hearers, as concerning the good of their souls. Besides, if we speak of human learning and eloquence itself, we must know that this does not cross nor contradict plain kind of preaching. There may be a great deal of learning sometimes in a plain sermon, and in the opening of a plain truth in that sermon. Thirdly, here is his faithfulness and impartiality to either part in the indefiniteness of the subjects which this his doctrine extends unto, to Jew and Gentile both alike; he preaches Christ crucified to either, as a doctrine which might well fit them both. And in particular not only the Jews, which were a people of more low capacities, but likewise as well to the Greeks, which were a people of more raised apprehensions. And a minister does not wrong his hearers with such points whosoever they are. First, because they are such points which are indeed of a very deep reach in religion. Secondly, the wisest and learnedest that are, such points as these may very well become them, forasmuch as they are necessary points, and such as tend to salvation itself. If wise men will be saved they must be glad to hear of saving truths: there being but one way to salvation for them, and all others besides. Those who have the greatest skill in physic, they are glad to take the same potions for their health which others take. Thirdly, again, there is this besides considerable in it, that there is an infinite depth in these matters, which we can never sufficiently reach, or dive into, and those that knew never so much of them, yet they are still capable of knowing more. Besides, further, that we need affections even there where we need not information. This is a special ground for the preaching of plain truths to great wits, thereby to work upon their hearts, and to draw their love and affection to them. Let us not disdain the common doctrines of religion, nor think them too low for us; which as no man is too good to preach of, so no man is too good to hear, nor to have imparted and

communicated unto them. Fourthly, there is here one thing more in his practice, and that is this, namely, his wisdom and discretion in the course which he here took for the curing and removing of the distempers of these Jews and Gentiles in reference to preaching; and that is by the very exercise of preaching itself. They counted it the foolishness of preaching. Well, how does the apostle now go about to free them from this mistake? why, he does it no other way than indeed by preaching to them. And this there is good cause for: first, because a great occasion of people's prejudice against preaching is because indeed they are unacquainted with it. Secondly, because there is an authority in preaching, and an efficacy which goes along with it, which does command respect unto it. But so much of the first particular, viz., the apostle's carriage as concerning the ordering of his ministry, which we have seen in four several instances. The second is the apostle's doctrine for the points delivered by him, and that is Christ crucified. This was the string which the apostle here harped upon, and the lesson which he principally taught; from whence we may observe this much, that Christ crucified is the main object and matter of our preaching. But why Christ crucified, rather than Christ exhibited in some other consideration? why not rather Christ incarnate, forasmuch as that was the first news of Him? or why not Christ risen again, or Christ ascended, which was a great deal more glorious? Surely there is very good reason to be given for it: first, because he would give them the worst of Christ at first, that he might show he was not ashamed of Him, nor of that gospel which made Him known, but that hereby he might the better prepare them for other truths, and make them the welcomer to them. Christ's Cross is the first letter of all in a Christian's alphabet. God's beginnings with us are commonly most tedious. His conclusions and closings are for the most part very sweet and comfortable. Secondly, because Christ crucified, it is virtually and implicitly all the rest; for why was Christ incarnate? it was for this end that He might be crucified. Thirdly, this was that mystery which did most concern us for the good and benefit which comes by it; His death was that which pacified God's wrath, and paid the debt which was due for our sins. Lastly, Christ crucified, because this was that which these people had a particular hand in as instrumental hereunto; they had been active in the crucifying of Christ themselves. Therefore accordingly we shall find that this was the practice of the apostles in the whole course and way of their ministry. And so it is that which is the chief work of ours, it is the doctrine which is to be chiefly preached by us; and that upon these following considerations. First, as it is a doctrine of the greatest humiliation, it is an humbling and convincing doctrine. If we ask how this is done, I answer by an act of reflection and special consideration to this purpose, namely, as from hence taking notice of this grievous and odious nature of sin; those which make nothing of sin, they may here see what it is now, in the price which was paid for it, and the pain which was endured to expiate it in Christ crucified. This doctrine of Christ's Passion, it is thus in this way of proceeding a doctrine of humiliation, and therefore fittest to be urged in the course of our ministry. And that because this is a main part of our ministry, to humble men and convince them of sin. Secondly, this doctrine of Christ crucified, as it has cause to be the chief work of our ministry, forasmuch as it is an humbling doctrine; so it has cause likewise to be so too, because it is a comforting doctrine, and a doctrine of the greatest comfort that can be. First, as Christ's death keeps us from the wrath of God and purchases peace to us with God the Father; for that it does, as we may see in Col. i. 19, 20. Secondly, it obtains to us peace with angels, and all other creatures besides, whether in heaven or earth. Thirdly, it frees us from the power and dominion of sin. Fourthly, it frees us from the power and tyranny of Satan (Col. ii. 15). Fifthly, from bondage and thraldom to the ceremonial law, Christ crucified frees us from hence (Col. ii. 14). Sixthly, it frees us from the inordinate fears of death and final dissolution (1 Cor. xv. 55; Heb. ii. 14). Now this doctrine containing so much sweetness and comfortableness in it, what does from hence follow, but that accordingly it should be a principal part of our ministry to dispense it. Thirdly, as it is a doctrine of the richest and most abundant grace; for it contains in it the exceeding love of God towards mankind, and the height of His mercy towards us. In Christ crucified there is a combination of all the riches and mysteries of the gospel: it was His love to be incarnate, to be tempted, to be persecuted for us; yea, but His Passion it was the accomplishment and perfection of all the rest (John xv. 13). What is it then to preach Christ crucified? For answer hereunto, we must know thus much, that the meaning hereof is not this, that we should preach of no other

subject but only of the death of Christ; for there are many other points besides which it is necessary for a minister to speak of, and for a Christian likewise to hear of. First, for the matter of our preaching, that we are to preach this principally, and to make people sensible of this point more especially above any other, because the hinge of the gospel turns upon this point, and we are ministers of the gospel. Secondly, for the order of our preaching, to do all in reference to this; then we preach Christ crucified, not only when we discourse of this argument for the particular subject of it, but likewise when we preach of such points as are introductive and preparatory hereunto, or which are superstructed and founded hereupon. Thirdly, for the manner of our preaching, we then preach Christ crucified, when we preach Christ and the doctrine of Christ in a grave and sober fashion; this is clear by the opposition which the apostle Paul himself there sets (1 Cor. ii. 2), where he sets this preaching of Christ crucified as opposite to the excellency of human speech. (*Thomas Horton, D.D.*) *Preaching Christ*:—The expression means—I. To preach HIS DOCTRINES. If I say that Newton is taught in our universities, I mean his doctrines are taught; and to preach Christ crucified is to preach His doctrines (Acts xv. 21). For example, the world says, Resent an injury; Christ says, Forgive your enemies. If, therefore, we preach forgiveness, are we not thereby preaching Christ, even though no distinct mention may be made of His Divinity, or of the doctrine of the Atonement? The world says, Indulge your inclinations; Christ says, Be pure in the last recesses of your mind. He, then, who lives a pure life is teaching Christ, even though he may not on every occasion name Him. In the Sermon on the Mount, and in the Epistle of St. James, there is not one word respecting the Atonement; but if we work out the truths contained in them we preach Christ. II. Preaching TRUTH IN CONNECTION WITH A PERSON; it is not merely purity, but the Pure One; not merely goodness, but the Good One, that we worship. Observe the advantages of this mode of preaching. 1. It makes religion practical. 2. It gives us something to adore, for we can adore a person, but we cannot adore principles. III. Preaching SURRENDER TO THE WILL OF GOD. St. Paul would not preach Christ the conqueror, but Christ the crucified, Christ the humble. You may know a man when once you know what it is he worships. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Preaching Christ and preaching the times*:—Archbishop Leighton was once publicly reprimanded for not "preaching up the times." "Who," he asked, "does preach up the times?" It was answered that all the brethren did. "Then," he rejoined, "if all of you preach up the times, you may surely allow one poor brother to preach up Christ and eternity." (*Principal Edwards.*) *Christ crucified*:—We have here—I. A GOSPEL REJECTED. 1. By the Jew. A respectable man the Jew was in his day; all formal religion was concentrated in his person. To him the fact that Jesus was the carpenter of Nazareth was proof positive that He was not the Messiah. He how to the Nazarine! Accordingly, he turned a deaf ear to Paul. Farewell, old Jew. Alas! that Christ who was thy stumbling block shall be thy Judge. But I am going to find out the Jew here. You, too, have a religion which you love—so far as the outside goes. When I tell you that all your going to the house of God, your singing and praying, all pass for nothing if your heart is not right with God, the Cross becomes a stumbling block. Another specimen of the Jew is thoroughly orthodox; he thinks nothing of forms and ceremonies. Here, up in this dark attic of the head, his religion has taken up its abode; he has a best parlour down in his heart, but his religion never goes there. He has money in there, worldliness, self-love, pride; and accordingly when once you begin to strike home, and let him see what he is by nature, and what he must become by grace, the man cannot stand that. 2. By the Greek. He is a person of quite a different exterior to the Jew. He does not care for the forms of religion. He appreciates eloquence; He admires a smart saying; he likes to read the last new book; and to him the gospel is foolishness. He is thoroughly wise. Ask him anything, and he knows it. If you are a Mahomedan he will hear you very patiently. But if you talk to him of Christ, "Stop your cant," he says, "I don't want to hear anything about that." This Greek gentleman believes all philosophy except the true one; he studies all wisdom except the wisdom of God. Once when I saw him, he told me he did not believe in any religion at all; and that it was best to live as nature dictated. Another time he spoke well of all religions, and believed they were all right in their place; and that if a man were sincere, he would be all right at last. I told him I did not think so, and he said I was a bigot. Another time I discussed with him a little about faith. He said, "Right; that is true Protestant doctrine." But

presently I hinted something about free grace; but that was to him foolishness. Ah, wise man, thy wisdom will stand thee here, but what wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan? II. THE GOSPEL TRIUMPHANT. "Unto us who are called" &c. Yonder man rejects the gospel, despises grace, and laughs at it as a delusion. Here is another who laughed at it too; but God brought him to his knees. The Jew and the Greek shall never depopulate heaven. The choirs of glory shall not lose a single songster by all the opposition of Jews and Greeks. John Bunyan says, "The hen has two calls, the common cluck, which she gives hourly, and the special one which she means for her little chickens." So there is a general call to every man; the other is the children's call. You know how the bell sounds over the workshop to call the men to work—that is a general call. The father goes to the door and calls out, "John, it is dinner-time!"—that is the special call. The call which saves, is like that of Jesus, when He said, "Mary," and she said unto Him, "Rabboni"; when He said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" and "Zaccheus, come down." I cannot give the special call; God alone can give it, and I leave it with Him. III. THE GOSPEL ADMIRED; unto us who are called of God, it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God. This must be a matter of pure experience. If you are called of God this morning, you will know it. I do not understand how a man can be killed and then made alive again and not know it. 1. The gospel is to the true believer a thing of power. What is it that makes the young man devote himself as a missionary to the cause of God? What is it that constrains yonder minister, in the midst of the cholera, to stand by the bed of one who has that dire disease? And what emboldens that timid female to go through that den of thieves? It is the power of the gospel. But I behold another scene. A martyr is hurried to the stake; the flame is lighted up. What makes him stand unmoved in the flames? The power of the Cross. Behold another scene. There is no crowd there; it is a silent room. There is a poor pallet, and a young girl lying on it, her face blanched by consumption. Joan of Arc was not half so mighty as that girl. Hear her sing: "Jesus! lover of my soul," &c., as she shuts her eye on earth, and opens it in heaven. What enables her to die like that? The power of Jesus crucified. 2. To a believer the gospel is the perfection of wisdom, and if it appear not so to the ungodly, it is because of the perversion of their judgment. It has been the custom to talk of infidels as men of great intellect. But this is a mistake; for the gospel is the sum of wisdom; a treasure-house of truth. Our meditation upon it enlarges the mind. It confers wisdom on its students. A man who is a lover of the truth, as it is in Jesus, is in a right place to follow with advantage any other branch of science. Once when I read books, I put all my knowledge together in confusion; but ever since I put Christ in the centre, each science has revolved round it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ crucified*:—The Cross is the preacher's theme. In all ages and lands this theme of the apostle has lent to the preacher's voice the most thrilling tones, and to his spirit the deepest earnestness. Preaching is man's wisdom as well as God's. It is the simplest, wisest, most natural, and most effectual way of lodging our beliefs in the hearts and consciences of men. But among all preachers in all ages the preachers of the Cross stand pre-eminent. The Cross stirs the heart, chains the spirit, as no other theme in this universe can do. I. "THE JEWS REQUIRE A SIGN, AND THE GREEKS SEEK AFTER WISDOM." "Jews and Greeks." These are not names of the past. The world still divides itself thus in its moral aspects. 1. The Jews require a sign. Two thoughts were ever clashing in the Jewish mind. The earlier splendours of their national history, and their present bondage and shame. The restorer of the kingdom of Israel was the national description of the expected deliverer; but when they saw that the only empire Christ cared for was over the hearts and consciences of men—that there was no chance of a national restoration, they turned from Him. But He knew how little earth would be helped by the establishment of such a society as the Jews were dreaming of. There is many a man in a popular tumult who will throw up his cap and shout "Liberty!" whose notion of liberty is the grossest licentiousness or the sternest tyranny. And many a Jew would attend a triumphal progress, and rend the air with Hosannas, who, when he heard of an inward moral reformation as the first act of obedience, would change his cry to "Crucify Him!" I take the Jewish "seeking for a sign" as the representative of that seeking for an outward regeneration of society which has lived in the hearts of the men of this world in all ages. Socialism is its most modern manifestation. The hope that if society were rearranged, property redivided, and a fair start given to all, man would be blessed. "The difficulty lies not there," say the preachers of

the gospel: "your hearts need the cure, not your circumstances." The Jews "sought a sign," a hint even, that Jesus was anything like what their fancies pictured; and when He gave no sign but His shameful Cross, they shouted, "Better Cæsar than He." And the world is full of sign-seekers. Men looking for redemption, but misconceiving utterly its nature. French republics, New Jerusalems, all mean the same thing. Men expect that God will begin from without instead of from within. 2. The Greeks seek after wisdom. The Greeks represent those who try by searching to find out God. Greek intellect was hopelessly baffled in the search. Blank atheism was the result of it in all the philosophic schools. An altar to the unknown God kept up the memory of the effort in the mind of the populace; but every thinker on earth had been brought, in the absence of revelation, to the bewildered question of Pilate "What is truth?" Some said, "There is such a thing, but man can have no hope of finding it." Some said, "Tush! there is no such thing in the universe at all." That a tale of a crucified man in an obscure and dishonoured country should be what they had been fruitlessly seeking for ages was an insult to their understandings. In them was the same radical indisposition to accept a gospel which demanded an inward and spiritual change. It was only after long battles that intellect, with broken wing, fell bleeding on the bosom of revelation, and healed her wounds and renewed her life at the once hated symbol of the Cross. But intellect is essentially restless. In every age the battle is renewed, and has to be fought out with varying success. And in this age the wisdom-seekers are rampant, proclaiming that not from God, but from man must be asked the question, "What must I do?"—that our own nature, honestly treated, will supply all that is needful; that the Cross is an insult to the wisdom and benignity of the Father; that Jesus is the first of men—an admirable pattern, but that they dream who say, "He is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Far easier, far pleasanter to the eye is it, to seek after wisdom than to seek after holiness. II. WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED. Read Rom. iii. 21; v. 1–11; vi. 3–11; Phil. ii. 5–11; Heb. ii. 9–18, iv. 14–16; 1 Cor. xv. 45–57. In Christ crucified the following facts are set forth as the gospel—1. The love of the Father in the sacrifice of the Son. Philip had a much deeper meaning than he was perhaps conscious of when he said, "Show us the Father." None of the gods of heathendom contented heathendom, for they could not show the Father; they did not know what fatherhood meant; but those men had a mighty gospel who could say, "God so loved the world," &c. We tell you not what God ought to be or do, or may be expected to do, but what God has done. "Behold Christ Jesus and Him crucified!" There God unveils His character—reveals His heart. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Jew seeking after a sign, Greek groping after wisdom, turn hither—"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." Is this truth folly or wisdom? Is it weakness or power? Is life worth less to the man who knows that the Father loveth him, or is it worth more? And the world, is it better or worse for the belief that God loves it, and will, by love's sure purpose, redeem it to Himself? Get that belief into the heart of the world, your dream is fulfilled—your golden age is restored! 2. The redemption wrought by the work of the Son. The picture of humanity which God beholds is that of bondsmen, bound to an alien and usurping power. The evidence of this condition, it meets us everywhere. Sin had entered into the world, sin had mastered it; God entered into it to break the bonds of sin and restore the world to itself and to Him. Is it nothing that the preachers of this gospel should cry to souls hopeless of victory, Liberty! a man has conquered, a man has lived free from sin; a man whose spirit can so chain your spirit by its living attraction as to ensure to you the victory too? The public justice of the universe is satisfied, its law illustrated and magnified, and the sinner, conscience-stricken, but beginning to cherish the hope of restoration, is satisfied that a God of holiness, of justice, will still be honoured, while he, the guilty, is saved! Men laughed, and called it folly; but hell trembled, Satan cowered, for they understood the attraction of the Cross. Satan's Conqueror cried out, "It is finished," and committed to such hands as Paul's the standard of the Cross, who cried, "I preach Christ crucified," &c. 3. The glory won by the suffering and Cross of Jesus, which is to illumine heaven eternally (Phil. ii. 6–11). The sun is the centre of the world of nature; the Cross, of the world of spirit. But here is a strange contradiction. The sun is the most glorious object in creation, it fills all heaven with its splendour; but the Cross is to all men naturally an object of dread and aversion, and is associated with shame, agony, and death. But just as the

sun has for ages proved itself the centre of our world of nature, the Cross has proved itself the centre of the world of spirit, has chained the most mighty and onward spirits to its orbit (Rev. v. 6–10). Here, mark you, is the most splendid picture of heaven which is anywhere painted; yet this must mean that the Cross, far from fading from sight when the veil falls over earth's sad history, remains the object of interest, the centre of attraction through eternity. That this must be so will appear to us if we consider—1. The Cross must remain for ever the manifestation of the depth, the tenderness, the mightiness of the love of God. 2. While the Cross shall be to the saints for ever the bond of fellowship with their risen and glorified Lord, the Lord Himself, while He remembers the Cross as the instrument of His agony, beholds it as the fountain of glory and of bliss. (*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*) *Christ crucified*:—I. THE DOCTRINE. Christ crucified. 1. The light. 2. The hope. 3. The law of the world. II. ITS OFFENSIVENESS. 1. A stumbling block. 2. Foolishness. III. ITS TRIUMPHS—in them that believe. 1. The power of God. 2. The wisdom of God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christ crucified*:—It is a very strange conjunction of words—the Anointed of God crucified. Yet for this very purpose He was anointed, and our preaching is the preaching of "Christ," that is the glory of His Person; but it is "Christ crucified" that is in the ignominy and shame of His suffering. In dividing the text we will take each word. I. A WORD OF POSITION—"But." 1. It is not everybody that does this; others have other things to do. 2. The "but" seems to suggest opposition, viz., the contentions which prevailed at Corinth. What are we to do when we find people quarrelling? If we are wise we shall let them alone, and say through it all, "But we preach Christ crucified." I have known a Church divided into as many divisions as there were members, and there has come a warm-hearted Christian man who has just preached Christ crucified, and somehow before they knew it the members melted into one. 3. The "but" seems to me, however, to have reference to the very wise people to whom the Cross was foolishness. They were "abreast of the times," they "kept pace with progress," so they preached Christ so improved that it was no longer the gospel, but "another gospel." I like Paul's grand way of teaching the Gnostics, or the knowers; he joined the "know-nothings," for he says, "I determined not to know anything among you save Christ and Him crucified." "Let these Gnostics preach what they like, but we preach Christ crucified." 4. We know some brethren whose religion consists always in mending the religion of others. You may be preaching niceties of doctrine, of theories, of prophecy, &c., while what is wanted is the cure for the souls of men who are perishing for lack of knowledge, and the knowledge that they want is wrapped up in these two words, "Christ crucified." 5. And had Paul been here he would have made some remark about the superstitions of this age, for there be some that seem to think God is best honoured by buildings of gorgeous architecture, and by sumptuous services. Our friend has built a reredos, has decorated a holy table, has prepared the chancel, and thinks he has brought back mediæval Christianity; but we preach Christ crucified. II. A WORD OF PERSONALITY—"We." Why do we do it? Because—1. He saved us. We cannot help preaching this, because every day it is the rest and refuge, the joy and the delight of our souls. 2. He inspires us. We preach Christ crucified, because years ago He laid His hand upon us, and said, "Go, preach My gospel." 3. It seems the masterpiece of God. Heaven and earth are full of His majesty, and both in nature and providence we learn to adore the ever-present and eternal One. But in Immanuel, God with us, there is most of God. 4. We are fools, as the enemy says. (1) Any fool can say that which is uppermost; and truly, brethren, I am myself a great fool in that respect, for uppermost with me is Christ crucified. (2) Fools can always say what they are told. They are not great at invention. There are some that carry with them a touchstone, by which they judge inspiration itself—their inner consciousness, and the general tone of public opinion. Paul, of course, did not know much about that, because he was "crucified to the world," and the world to him, and he did not care much about public opinion. (3) Fools generally talk when they are wonder-struck, and we confess that we have been astounded at the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (4) Fools can generally speak if they are forced, and we do confess that that is exactly one point that accounts for our folly. "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." We cannot take any credit when we preach Christ crucified, because it lies within us like fire, and we cannot help but speak of it. (5) And surely men may speak when there is a great danger. If there were a house on fire, and a poor soul needed to be delivered, I do not suppose that before

a man wheeled the fire-escape up to a window you would stop him to see whether he could pass an examination at Oxford. And so we must be permitted while men are perishing to preach to them that alone which will save them—namely, Christ crucified. (6) We are determined, as any other sensible fools would do, to stop by what we know till we learn something better. In the State of Massachusetts there was a resolution passed that the State should be guided and governed by the laws of God till they had time to make some better; and we have determined that we will preach Christ crucified till we find something better. III. A WORD OF ACTION—"We preach," or proclaim as heralds. We are trumpeters for Christ, we go before Him to prepare His way. Hence, some have said the preacher ought to preach principally the second Advent. Undoubtedly; but first he should be able to say, "we preach Christ crucified," not "we preach Christ glorified." Because to preach means to proclaim, therefore we proclaim Christ as King. Submit yourselves unto Him. It is not a matter of choice with you. It is not "Will you elect some king?" but "He is King; submit to Him." Neither are we called upon to adorn Christ crucified. I think we are getting into great mistakes about sermons sometimes. Gild gold, and lay your colours on the lily, but let Christ alone, and if you cannot do anything but just tell simply the story of the love of God in providing an atonement, do tell it and leave those fine words at home. IV. THE TWO LAST WORDS—"Christ crucified." 1. Preach all of Christ. When Paul says, "We preach Christ crucified," he seems to me to say, "We preach the most objectionable part of Christ." I like a Christian man that preaches all he believes. "Now, Paul, this is very unwise of you. There is a Jewish gentleman, a man of large means; if we could get him into the Church he might very likely build a chapel, and you preached Christ. And then there was a Greek gentleman. Now, why did you not preach Christ in His glory, or say little about Him? We cannot expect to get these Jewish and Greek friends converted to us, if we will stiffly remain by the old orthodoxy. The whole current of thought leads you to believe that there is a great deal in Mahomedanism and Brahminism, and it is a great pity to push these distinctive points so very far." I fancy I hear anybody saying that to Paul! Did we come here to please men? I charge you never needlessly offend anybody; but if the truth offend anybody, let them be offended; for it is much better to offend all the world than to offend your Master. 2. As we preach all of Christ, so this is all. But we have some other doctrines. Yes; but they are all relating to this. When you have said that, you have said everything. 3. We preach Him as all. That is all. If you are converted, all your salvation lies in Christ crucified. "Oh, but I want a new heart." Go to Him for it. "Oh, but I want to feel my need." He gives you this, as well as all the rest. 4. We will all preach Christ. "But we are not all ministers," saith one. I hope you all preach Christ, you that are not ministers. A minister once said, "Now all of you must teach Jesus, and try to bring others to Christ; you must all tell what you know." There was a black man in the gallery called out, "Dat will I do." But his minister stopped, for Sam was the most ignorant member of the Church, and he said, "Sam, I do not mean you; because you do not know more than your A B C." "Dat's right, sar," said he; "dére be some niggers don't know A B C—Sam teach them dat." You young converts that do not know much about Christ, you know something other sinners do not know. Go and tell that, and each bit you get go and tell them. You will learn it all the better by teaching it yourself. 5. We preach Christ crucified to all. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ crucified*:—I. WE PREACH, *i.e.*, proclaim, herald. Commonly, however, in the N.T., voice, in contradistinction to other agencies, is usually intended. "Faith cometh by hearing." There are additional instrumentalities which have been greatly honoured. For instance, the gospel is printed. The press is a mighty power for good. Again, the gospel may be painted. Sermons have proceeded from studios as well as from studies, and the picture-gallery has illustrated impressively the glorious work of grace. Zinzendorf traced back his deepest convictions to the effect produced upon him by a representation of the crucified Saviour. And this is not marvellous. Look at the "Last Supper" of Leonardo; the "Transfiguration" of Raphael; or, the "Light of the World" by Holman Hunt. Are you unmoved by them? Nevertheless, it is chiefly by speech that the mind is reached and the heart touched. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." An experienced missionary has remarked, "I have never seen a Chinaman weep over a book; but I have seen a Chinaman weep under a sermon." We have the sermons of George Whitfield and the orations of Edward Irving, and the reason why you are not affected as others were is because

they heard, whereas you only read. II. WE PREACH CHRIST—Paul habitually called the attention of his hearers to a Person. "We preach Christ": Christ as He was, the one perfect and finished offering for human sin: Christ as He is, the Mediator between God and man; Christ as He will be, the Judge of every creature. In adopting such a course the apostles followed the Master Himself. Christ preached Christ. "I say," "I am," "I do," "I will": how often did these words fall from His lips! No prophet dared to speak as He spoke. The power of this Christian ministry is in the presentation, not simply of great truths, but of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. III. WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED. Because—1. Christ crucified reveals God. "Hereby perceive we the love of God." Write the biography of Columbus and say nothing of America, speak of Caxton and be silent about printing, allude to Wyckliffe and ignore the Reformation, then may we preach Christ and forget Christ crucified. 2. Christ crucified restores man. So Paul found. He spoke from experience. A North-American Indian was asked the means by which he and his brethren became Christians. The answer was: "A preacher came once, and desiring to instruct us, began by proving that there was a God. On which we said to him, 'Well! and dost thou think that we are ignorant of that? Now go again whence thou camest.' Another preacher appeared and said, 'Ye must not steal, ye must not lie,' &c. We answered him, 'Dost thou think that we do not know that? Go and learn it first thyself, and teach the people that thou belongest to not to do these things.' Some time after this, Christian Henry, one of the brethren, came to me in my hut, and sat down by me and said: 'I come to thee in the name of the Lord of heaven and earth. He acquaints thee that He would gladly save thee, and rescue thee from the miserable state in which thou liest. To this end He became Man, hath given His life for mankind, and shed His blood for them!' Upon this he lay down on a board in my hut, and fell asleep, being fatigued with his journey. I thought what manner of man is this? There he lies and sleeps so sweetly. I might kill him immediately, and throw him out into the forest, and who would care for it? But he is unconcerned. However, I could not get rid of his words; and though I went to sleep I dreamed of the blood which Christ had shed for us. Thus, through the grace of God, the awakening among us took place." What a lesson to all Christian workers! Behold the secret of power. Christ crucified is the world's hope. (*T. R. Stevenson.*) *The crucifixion of Christ*:—I. WAS MOST BITTER AND PAINFUL. II. WAS MOST VILE AND SHAMEFUL. Never by the Romans legally inflicted upon freemen, but only upon slaves. There is in man's nature an abhorrency of disgraceful abuse no less strong than are the little antipathies to pain. Whence it is not marvellous that as a transcendently good man, Christ was affected by those occurrences so mightily, according to that ejaculation in the Greek liturgies—"By Thy unknown sufferings, O Christ, have mercy on us." III. HAD IN IT SOME PARTICULAR ADVANTAGES CONDUCING TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF OUR LORD'S PRINCIPAL DESIGN. 1. Its being very notorious and lasting a competent time. For if He had been privately made away, or suddenly despatched, no such great notice would have been taken of it, nor would it have been so fully proved to the confirmation of our faith and conviction of infidelity; nor would His excellent deportment under such affliction have so illustriously shone forth; wherefore Divine providence did so manage, that as the course of His life, so also the manner of His death should be most conspicuous and remarkable. 2. By this kind of suffering the nature of that kingdom which He intended to erect was evidently signified—a kingdom purely spiritual, consisting in the government of men's hearts. No other kingdom could He be presumed to design, who submitted to this way of suffering. 3. By such a death God's special providence was discovered, and His glory illustrated in the propagation of the gospel. Thereby "the excellency" of Divine power and wisdom was much glorified: by so impotent and improbable means, accomplishing so great effects. 4. This kind of suffering to the devout fathers did seem in many ways significant, or full of instructive and admonitive emblems. (1) His posture on the Cross might represent unto us that large and comprehensive charity which He bare in His heart toward us, stretching forth His arms of kindness, pity, and mercy, with them, as it were, to embrace the world. (2) His ascent to the Cross might set forth His discharging that high office of universal High Priest for all ages and all people, the Cross being an altar. IV. CORRESPONDED TO THE PROPHECIES AND TYPES FORESHADOWING IT. V. AS APPLICABLE TO OUR PRACTICE. No contemplation is more efficacious towards the sanctification of our hearts and lives than this; for what good affection may not the meditation on it kindle? what virtue may it not breed

and cherish in us? (1) Love. (2) Gratitude. (3) Hope. (4) Obedience. (5) Penitence. (6) Fear. (7) Deterrence from wilful commission of sin. (8) Joy in contemplation. (9) Charity toward our neighbour. (10) Disregard of this world. (11) The willing inspection and the cheerful sustenance of the Cross. Since there be such excellent uses and fruits of the Cross borne by our blessed Saviour, we can have no reason to be offended at it or ashamed of it. (*I. Barrow, D.D.*) *The Cross of Christ*:—Note—I. ITS SIMPLICITY. 1. It was characteristic of the Jews to demand signs or portents. The especial sign which they sought was that of some manifestation of the Shekinah to encompass the Messiah. But the tendency was more general: it was the craving for the marvellous which still characterises Oriental nations, which appears in the licence of Arabian invention and credulity, and which among the Jews reached its highest pitch in the extravagant fictions of Rabbinical writers. The proverb "Credat Judæus" shows the character which they had obtained amongst the Romans for readiness to accept the wildest absurdities; and this disposition to seek for signs is expressly commended in the Mishna. To a certain extent this tendency is met by the gospel miracles (John ii. 11; Acts ii. 22). Yet on the whole it was discouraged (Matt xvi. 4; John iv. 48). And what is thus intimated in the Gospels is here followed out by the apostle. In answer to the demand for signs, he produced the least dazzling, the least miraculous part of Christ's career. The more ample we suppose the evidence for the Gospel miracles, or the more portentous their nature, so much more striking is the testimony of Christ and His apostles to the truth that it is not on them that the main structure is to be built. 2. This simplicity was also a rebuke to the intellectual demands of the Greek. The subtlety of discussion which had appeared in the numerous schools of Greek speculation, and which appeared afterwards in the theological divisions of the fourth and fifth centuries, needed not now, as in the time of Socrates, to be put down by a truer philosophy, but by something which should give men fact instead of speculation, flesh and blood instead of words and theories. Such a new starting-point was provided by the apostle's constant representation of the crucifixion. Its outward form was familiar to them; it was for them now to discover its inward application to themselves. II. ITS HUMILIATION. In order to enter into the force of this, we must picture a state of feeling which, in part from the effect produced on the world by this very passage and the spirit which it describes, is entirely removed from our present experience. Not only is the outward symbol of the Cross glorified in our eyes by the truth of the religion which it represents, but the very fact of the connection between Christianity and humiliation is one of the proofs of its Divine excellence. But at its first propagation, as now in parts of the world external to Christendom, it was far otherwise. The crucifixion was and is a "scandal" to the Jews as a dishonour to the Messiah. Christ has been called by them in derision "Toldi," "the man who was hanged"; and Christians, "the servants of him who was hanged." And in the Koran, the supposed ignominy of the crucifixion is evaded by the story that the Jews, in a judicial blindness, crucified Judas instead of Christ, who ascended from their hands into heaven. The same objection was felt by the educated Greeks and Romans; encumbered as Christianity then was in their eyes with associations so low. Nothing shows the confidence of the apostle more strongly than the prominence he gives to a teaching so unpopular. Phil. ii. 5–8 contains the prophecy of the triumph of Christianity not only in spite, but by means of this great obstacle. And now the Cross is enshrined in our most famous works of art, in our greatest historical recollections, in our deepest feelings of devotion. The society which consisted almost exclusively in the first instance of the lower orders, has now embraced within it all the civilisation of the world. (*Dean Stanley.*) *The Atonement adapted to all*:—There is a want in the human mind which nothing but the Atonement can satisfy, though it may be a stumbling block to the Jew, and foolishness to the Greek. In the words of Henry Rogers: "It is adapted to human nature, as a bitter medicine may be to a patient. Those who have taken it, tried its efficacy, and recovered spiritual health, gladly proclaim its value. But to those who have not, and will not try it, it is an unpalatable potion still." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *En touto nika*:—The foolishness of God? The weakness of God? Can God be weak? Can God be foolish? No, says St. Paul. For so strong is God that His very weakness, if He seems weak, is stronger than all mankind. So wise is God, that His very foolishness, if He seems foolish, is wiser than all mankind. Why, then, talk of the weakness of God, of the foolishness of God, if He be neither weak nor foolish? St. Paul did not say these ugly words for himself. The Jews, who sought

after a sign, the Greeks, who sought after wisdom, said them. There are men who say them now. Now, how is this? I. THE JEWS REQUIRED A SIGN; a sign from heaven; a sign of God's power. Thunder and earthquakes, armies of angels, taking vengeance on the heathen; these were the signs of Christ which they expected. And all that St. Paul gave them was a sign of Christ's weakness. Then said the Jews—This is no Christ for us. Then answered St. Paul—Weak? I tell you that what seems to you weakness is the very power of God. Weak, shamed, despised, dying, He is still Conqueror; and He will at last draw all men to Himself. What seems to you weakness is the very power of God; the power of suffering all things, that He may do good: and that that will conquer the world, when riches and glory, and armies, aye, the very thunder and the earthquake, have failed utterly. II. THE GREEKS SOUGHT AFTER WISDOM. They expected Paul to argue with them on cunning points of philosophy; and all he gave them seemed mere foolishness. He could have argued with these Greeks, for he was a great scholar and a true philosopher, but he would not. What you need, and what they need, is not philosophy, but a new heart and a right spirit. Then know this, that God so loved you that He condescended to become man, and to give Himself up to death, even the death of the Cross, that He might save you from your sins. And to that, those proud Greeks answered—The cross? Tell your tale to slaves, not to us. To give Himself up to the death of the cross is foolishness, and not the wisdom which we want. Then answered St. Paul, True, the cross is a slave's and a wretch's death; and therefore slaves and wretches will hear me, though you will not (vers. 26–31). You Greeks, with all your philosophy, have been trying for hundreds of years to find out the laws of heaven and earth, and to set the world right by them; and you have not done it. You have not even set your own hearts and lives right. But what your seeming wisdom cannot do, the seeming foolishness of Christ on His Cross will do. That what seems to you foolishness is the very wisdom of God. Know, that when all your arguments and philosophies have failed to teach men what they ought to do, one earnest, penitent look at Christ upon His Cross will teach them. And out of them shall spring that Church of Christ, which shall reign over all the world, when you and your philosophies have crumbled into dust. Conclusion: 1. Let us learn—(1) That self-sacrificing love which Christ showed on His Cross is stronger than all pomp and might, all armies, riches, governments; aye, that it is the very power of God, by which all things consist, which holds together heaven and earth and all there is therein. (2) That that love is wiser than all arguments, doctrines, philosophies, whether they be true or false. 2. Do you wish to be powerful? Then look at Christ upon His Cross; at what seems to men His weakness; and learn from Him how to be strong. Do you wish to be wise? Then look at Christ upon the Cross; and at what seemed to men His folly; and learn from Him how to be wise. For sooner or later, I hope and trust, you will find that true which St. Buonaventura (wise and strong himself) used to say, That all the learning in the world had never taught him so much as the sight of Christ upon the Cross. (*C. Kingsley, M.A.*)

Ver 24. **But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.**—*The offence and success of the Cross:*—God will always so ordain it in His providence that some shall at all times welcome His gospel. First, for the accomplishment of His own elect. Secondly, God will also have it for the honour of His own truth, and the doctrine itself which is delivered. Thirdly, for the encouragement of the labours of His own servants and ministers which are employed in preaching the gospel. This observation should accordingly be improved by those which are ministers to quicken them in their work; forasmuch as there where God calls them, He will more or less be assistant to them. Secondly, observe this, that a minister for the success of his doctrine is especially to consider how it takes with those which are most godly and religious; thus does the apostle Paul here, he does not so much trouble himself to think how it was accepted of those Jews and Greeks, but how it was to them which were "called." The ground hereof is this: First, because such as these they have best skill and judgment in the work; every one studies rather to approve himself in any business which he undertakes to workmen rather than to bunglers. Secondly, such as these they come to the Word freest from prejudice and carnal affection. A drunkard will never like that preacher that presses sobriety, nor an adulterer him that preaches for chastity. Thirdly, those which are godly and effectually called are most to be regarded for their entertain-

ment of the work, because they are most intended in the work itself. This condemns the contrary disposition and practice of many who more consider how their doctrine takes and is accepted of those which are great and wise and mighty in the world, than how it takes with those which are good and pious. We come now to the words more closely in themselves, "But unto them which are called," &c., where we have these two parts chiefly considerable. First, the success of the gospel considered simply in itself, "Christ the power of God," &c. Secondly, the parties to whom it is thus laid down two manner of ways. First, in their personal qualification, "To them which are called." Secondly, in their national qualification, "both Jews and Greeks." To these it is thus effectual and successful. We begin first of all with the parties; and that first of all in their personal qualifications. "To them which are called." For the further opening of it to you there are these three things especially considerable of us in it. First, the Author of it who it is that calls. That is no other than God himself. Thus in verse 9 of this present chapter, "God is faithful by whom ye were called," &c, And 2 Thess. ii. 14—"Whereunto He called you by our gospel," speaking of God. And 2 Pet. i. 3—"Through the knowledge of Him that hath called us"; he speaks of God still. It is God and He alone that is the Author of our effectual calling. Therefore let us learn to give Him the praise and glory of all, "and show forth the virtues of Him that hath called us." And let us look upon His call as the spring and fountain of all the good which comes from us. First, freely of His own accord, none moving or persuading Him hereunto. And secondly, sweetly in the preservation of the natural liberty of the will in the exercise of it. And thirdly, yet strongly in an irresistible drawing of the heart to the embracing of His heavenly motions. Secondly, for the subjects of this calling, who they are which are called; this we have from God to be only the elect (Rom. viii. 30). This now accordingly takes it off from any personal qualification in ourselves as to be the original and cause hereof unto us. And this for the subjects of this calling, who they are; for the general, they are the elect. The third is the terms from whence, and to which. This the Scripture sets forth unto us in sundry expressions, as first from darkness to light (Col. i. 12, 13). From the power of Satan to God (Acts xxvi. 18). From the world to the fellowship of Christ and the saints (chap. i. 9). From a state of hell, and wrath, and death, to a state of life, and peace, and salvation (1 Thess. v. 9; 2 Thess. ii. 14). These are the terms from whence and to which. And this sets forth unto us the excellency and dignity of our calling considered in itself. I come now to them in the second place, in their natural qualification both Jews and Greeks; this must be taken in connection with the former reference. The apostle had in the verse before laid a disparagement upon such, as concerning their rejection and ill entertainment of the gospel, affirming it to be to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness. Now that he might not be here mistaken as condemning these whole nations at large, he here qualifies this censure. "Bnt unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks," &c. In the laying of censures at any time upon a community of persons, whether nations or societies of men, we must take heed while we find fault with some, that we do not indefinitely condemn all. This restriction is requisite, first, to prevent discouragement in the condemned, that so we may not trouble the minds of those which are innocent. Not break the bruised reed, &c. Secondly, to prevent scandal in the standers by, and that others may not be offended at them for it. Thirdly, to prevent injustice in ourselves, and that we may not give wrong judgment. This does, therefore, meet with the rashness or malice of many persons in this particular; ye shall have some people so to condemn an whole company, as that they spare none at all in it. But to speak more particularly to the words, "To them which are called both Jews and Greeks." We see here that God has His numbers, and portion, more or less in all people and nations without any difference. This may be made good unto us from these considerations. First, both Jew and Gentiles they are the subjects of God's election. Secondly, Christ died for both. They have both alike interest in Christ. Thirdly, they have both alike interest in the gospel and means of salvation; this was cleared by Peter's going to Cornelius (Acts xi. 17, 18). The consideration of this present point is thus far useful unto us, as it teaches us two things—First, to pray for the calling and conversion of the Jews. And secondly, to pray for the accomplishment and fulness of the Gentiles. But then again a little further, these words may be here taken, not only in an historical sense, but in a moral; not only as spoken particularly of these two nations, the Jews and the Greeks, but likewise as spoken of such persons as were

noted either for simplicity or wisdom—the Jews being notorious for their stupidity, and the Greeks famous for their learning. And so there is this in it, that God has His lot and portion amongst learned and unlearned both; there is no exception in point of conversion. The ground hereof still is this, the good pleasure and will of God, who is no respecter of persons. Therefore let those which are unlearned not here excuse themselves. Again for those which are learned, let them not rest themselves in their human learning. Now the second is the success of this preaching itself, "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God"; where we may observe how as the apostle crossed these Jews and Greeks in what they desired, so also he did in a sort comply with them. Christ is to them which are called both the wisdom and power of God. First, He is so absolutely, and considered simply in Himself in the whole office of His mediatorship. For the power of God, first, this showed itself—First, in His incarnation, when He was born of a pure virgin. Secondly, in His crucifixion and death. Thirdly, in His resurrection (Rom. i. 4; 2 Cor. xiii. 4). Fourthly, in His ascension and coming to judgment (Mark xiv. 62; Matt. xxiv. 30). Lastly, as in that which was done upon Him, so also which was done by Him (Matt. xxviii. 18). Thus was Christ the power of God. Secondly, He was the wisdom of God; as God in Him did show forth His wisdom, and as in Him were hid all the treasures both of wisdom and knowledge (Col. ii. 3). And here Christ was the wisdom of God in divers explications. As—First, in choosing such a fit and accommodate means for the reconciling of His justice and mercy both. Secondly, in choosing such an unlikely and unexpected means, and thereby confounding the wisdom of the world. Thirdly, in furnishing of Christ with all such gifts as were fitting Him to perform that office which He had laid upon Him. And thus was Christ both God's power and wisdom considered absolutely in His own office. Secondly, He was so also relatively, in order and reference to believers, "To them which were called" He was the power and wisdom of God. First, I say He was so estimatively, in the apprehensions and opinions which they had of Him; they counted Him to be both the wisdom and the power of God. The reason of this is this, because that now after conversion men have a new understanding put into them, and see things with other eyes than they did before. Secondly, He is so to them which are called effectively, in that He has an answerable influence upon their persons, and that in each particular. First, He is the power of God to them (2 Cor. xiii. 3), "Mighty in you." And that again in sundry respects. First, in His death, the mortifying of their lusts (Gal. ii. 20; Rom. vi. 6). Secondly, in His resurrection, for the raising them up again. First, corporally in their bodies (chap. vi. 14). Secondly, spiritually in their souls (Col. ii. 12). Thirdly, Christ is powerful in believers for the conquering and overcoming of temptations, and fighting against principalities and powers (Eph. vi. 10, 11). Fourthly, in enduring of afflictions, which without this power they could never sustain. Lastly, in final perseverance (1 Pet. i. 5; Jude 24). Thus is Christ the power of God to them. Secondly, He is the wisdom of God to them also in sundry respects likewise. First, in revealing to them the mind and will of God in those things which concern their salvation (chap. i. 30). Secondly, in giving them discretion to walk worthy of their heavenly calling, and to honour religion by their conversation. Thirdly, in giving them a spirit of discerning, to judge aright of persons, and times, and things. Lastly, in teaching them to number their days, and to consider their latter end (Deut. xxxii. 29; Psa. xc. 12). (*T. Horton, D.D.*) *The power of God and wisdom of God*:—What was it in Christianity which mainly incensed the scribes and Pharisees? They disliked its simplicity, which contrasted with their ceremonial; its purity, which frowned on their dissoluteness; but what they above all detested was the Cross. Nor could the ignominy and agony which Jesus underwent of themselves be fascinating to any one. What was it, then, which induced so many to acknowledge in Christ crucified "the power of God and the wisdom of God"? I reply—I. THE HUMILIATION OF CHRIST WAS JUDICIAL. So His enemies professed to regard it. But they were not consistent in their accusations, and the sentence of Pilate has not been confirmed by man's sense of justice. And yet justice was maintained in His death; and this maintenance of justice commends and endears His death to indebted followers. He was cut off, but not for Himself. But how can the sinless justly suffer for the sinful? As a matter of fact the effects of iniquity often fall upon the blameless. But is substitution so utterly excluded from our own forensic proceedings, that the very idea of it should be scoffed at? An established mode of punishment is by fine, but fines are often paid by proxy. If a culprit were languish-

ing in a dungeon from inability to pay the sum demanded, and a friend paid it for him, the feeling would not be that righteousness had been outraged, but that law had been upheld while generosity was manifested and misery relieved. The clear doctrine of Scripture is that Christ's sufferings were sacrificial (Heb. ix. 26). Here is a pathway for pardon in which justice itself shines resplendent, and is more honoured in clemency than by countless retributions. Here is a road for the sinful ascending to heaven, yet such as to discourage sin and render it infinitely detestable. And if such be the character and influence of the Saviour's suffering, is not Christ crucified "the power of God and the wisdom of God"? II. THE HUMILIATION OF CHRIST WAS ACCOMPANIED WITH MANIFESTATIONS OF HIS DIGNITY. Certainly His abasement was profound. And yet all this humiliation was suitable to dignity. His was that dignity that was often attacked, but never impaired: a dignity which appears, like a majestic edifice or sublime promontory seen at night, more vast and imposing for the gloom with which it is surrounded. And we never find the Son in circumstances of special abasement without some accompanying seal or token of Paternal acknowledgment and favour. Note the attendant circumstances of His birth, baptism, death, &c. III. THE HUMILIATION OF CHRIST, IN ITS SPIRIT AND OBJECTS, INFINITELY TRANSCENDS ALL OTHER EXHIBITIONS OF MORAL EXCELLENCE AND GLORY. View it—1. In relation to the Sufferer. What filial obedience when He said, "The cup that My Father hath given Me shall I not drink it?" What fulfilment of righteousness when He met the claims of a broken law, and, contemplating it in all its magnitude, could say in expiring, "It is finished." What friendship to sinners when He died for them to gain them admission into His glory. 2. In relation to our race. In this respect it is the grand manifestation of God's love to man (John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 9). 3. In relation to its effects. Who can dispute their prodigious influence? They have visibly changed the aspect of the world. See the power of this love manifested in the apostle of the Gentiles. And this was but a single instance illustrative of countless multitudes. (*D. King, LL.D.*) *Christ —the power and wisdom of God:*—I. PERSONALLY. Christ considered as God and man is—1. The power of God. (1) From all eternity. "All things were made by Him," &c. (2) But when He came to earth He gave abundant proofs of His power in His miracles and resurrection. (3) He is the power of God now, for "He sitteth at the right hand of God." He hath the reins of Providence in His hands, and is the Sovereign Head of the Church, the Lord of heaven, and death, and hell. 2. The wisdom of God. (1) The great things that He did before all worlds were proofs of His wisdom. He planned the way of salvation; He built the heavens. Mark the world, and see all its multitudinous proofs of the wisdom of God. (2) And when He became man He gave proofs enough of wisdom. In childhood He astonished the doctors by His questions; and in manhood He confounded Pharisee, Sadducee, and Herodian. And when He paralysed those who came to take Him by His incomparable words. (3) And now that He is our Advocate before the throne, now that the reins of government are in His hands, we have abundant proofs that He is the wisdom of God. II. IN HIS GOSPEL. That gospel is—1. A thing of Divine power. (1) How could it have been established if it had not in itself intrinsic might? By whom was it spread? By learned doctors, fierce warriors? No, by fishermen, untaught, unlettered. How did they spread it? By their swords? No, but by their simple words. But what was this gospel? Was it a thing palatable to human nature? No, it was a gospel of morality most strict, it was a gospel with delights entirely spiritual. And yet it spread. Why? Because it has in it the power of God. (2) How has it been maintained? No easy path has the gospel had. The good bark of the Church has had to plough her way through seas of blood. But "the blood of the martyrs" has been "the seed of the Church." It has been like the herb camomile, the more it is trodden on the more it grows. (3) I do not wonder that the Church has outlived persecution, so much as I wonder she has outlived the unfaithfulness of her professed teachers. From the days of Diotrephes to the latter times men of all sorts have come into her ranks and done all they could to turn her aside. And, even now, when I mark the supineness of many; when I see the want of unction and prayerfulness, she must have the power of God within her, or else she would have been destroyed. (4) There are not a few of you who would be ready to bear me witness that I speak the truth. There are some who were drunkards, &c., and now you are here, as different as light from darkness. 2. The wisdom of God. The intellects of Locke and Newton submitted to receive the truth of inspiration. What a vast amount of literature must be lost if the gospel be not

true. No book was ever so suggestive as the Bible. III. IN THE HEART. 1. The power of God—(1) For salvation. (2) In temptation. (3) In trouble. 2. The wisdom of God. If you want to be a thoroughly learned man the best place to begin is to begin at the Bible, to begin at Christ. But wisdom is not knowledge, but the right use of knowledge; and Christ's gospel helps us by teaching us the right use of knowledge. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christianity, the wisdom and power of God*:—The wisdom of any scheme is evinced by the excellency of its effects, and the simplicity and fitness of the means by which they are produced. Power is seen in the sure and easy overcoming of obstacles which lie in the way of success. Applying these tests to the scheme of redemption, by means of the atoning death of Christ, we shall see enough to satisfy us that in it we have a transcendent manifestation of the power of God and the wisdom of God. Consider the influence of Christianity upon—I. THE WORLD AT LARGE. 1. The wisdom of God is seen in —(1) The exceeding excellence of its results. When it appeared the spiritual condition of mankind was deplorable. Among the Gentiles all knowledge of the true God seemed to have fled, and among the Jews the light of revelation was hid by thick clouds of prejudice and ignorance. It seemed the midnight of the world, but when this darkness was at its worst the Sun of Righteousness arose. Before it ancient superstitions yielded up their sway, the stiff formalisms of a shadowy economy gave place to living spiritual realities; old traditions grew decrepid, religion came back to be a dweller in man's heart, the reign of vice became smitten as with a dead palsy, the bonds of society were re-knit and made firmer than ever, philosophy, instead of pandering to man's passions, became the minister of his virtues, poetry dipped her sparkling cup in the river of the water of life, art bathed herself in the light of heaven; so that over the whole field of human interests there spread an influence which proclaims the surpassing wisdom of Him by whom the whole had been purposed and performed. (2) The simplicity of the means employed. A few poor, illiterate men went forth to convert the race—to tell the world that their Master was incarnate Deity, that He had died for the world's sins, and had gone up into heaven, and that through Him there was free remission of sin and eternal felicity to all who would come unto God through Him. This was all. No glare of worldly power; no resources of worldly learning; no artifices of carnal rhetoric; no courting the favour or the assistance of the great or wise. (3) The suitableness and adaptation of these means to the end in view. The design was not to establish Christianity by any means. (*a*) If fraud or force, *e.g.*, be used on its behalf, an injury and not a benefit is conferred upon it; for, being a religion of truth and love, it would be self-contradictory to suppose it capable of being aided either by falsehood or tyranny. (*b*) As its aim is to regulate man's whole being by spiritual principles and motives it can only interfere with this to mix up its appeals with anything which addresses itself to man's carnal and earthly nature. (*c*) As its great design is to erect in man's soul an undivided empire for God, it is necessary that he shall be made to feel that it is not on the ground of eloquence or science, but on the ground of God's word to him that his hopes of pardon and grace must rest. (*d*) Who, then, does not see in the means employed an agency most wisely adapted to attain this end and no other? Had the apostles come working no miracles, the proof of their Divine commission would have been defective; had they wrought miracles more frequently, they would have incurred the risk of attaching to them a multitude who were attracted by their power, but had no real love for their doctrine. Had they been men of splendid abilities, they might have rested so much upon these as to hide from the people the purely Divine character of their doctrine and mission. Had they put themselves under the protection or sought to advance their cause by the resources of human power, the empire which they would have founded would not have rested simply on the basis of inherent worth of the doctrine they taught. 2. The power of God is seen in the obstacles it has overcome. These obstacles were of a kind which might well have discouraged any but men who felt that they were sustained by Omnipotence. When we think how hard it is to effect even a slight reform in some long established and corrupt system; how interest, fashion, and prejudice, and even sometimes the better feelings of our nature rise up against any attempts to displace time-honoured errors or usages: we may well admire the boldness of the apostles who went forth to overthrow all the religions that then enjoyed the homage of the race. And when we consider their fewness, illiteracy, and poverty, the unpretending character of their machinery and the repulsiveness to human pride of their doctrines; when we see all the learning, wealth, and power of the world forbidding their progress;

when we see the kindling of the fires of persecution; and when we see how to meet all this they had no weapons but words, we may well stand in wonder at the courage which led the apostles of Christ to descend into the arena to do battle in His cause. But they knew perfectly what they were about. They knew that however humble the instrument, he becomes irresistible when the agent is the Almighty (vers. 27, 28). II. UPON INDIVIDUALS. 1. Here is a man who was once afar from God, resting on His righteous displeasure. Behold him now! He has been brought nigh to God; he has found the pardon of all his sin; and he waits but the summons of the Judge to enter His presence with a good hope of a triumphant acquittal at His bar. How transcendent the change in that man's condition and character and prospects! And how simply has it all been brought about—by the mere reception and realisation of the truth concerning Christ and Him crucified! And in spite of what tremendous obstacles has this been achieved—obstacles from old habits of evil, and the strong tide of custom and fashion, and the incessant assaults of him who goeth about seeking whom he may deceive and destroy! Who can refuse to see in such things a supernatural agency? 2. In judging of this subject we should not forget that the redemption of the sinner is the raising of him to a higher state of being and of blessedness than that from which Adam fell. By the work of the gospel on his soul man is brought nearer to God; he is placed under higher motives to love and serve God; and he draws from the Divine favour restored a depth of joy which those who have never lost that favour cannot reach. How wonderful is this! Who can refuse to behold here the working of Him whose attribute it is "from seeming evil" to be "still educing good"—of Him who is "excellent in counsel" as well as "wonderful in working"? (*W. L. Alexander, D.D.*) *Preaching the Cross*:—An air of singular antithesis will be observed to pervade this passage, and the verses with which it is connected. The wisdom of the world is contrasted with the inscrutable wisdom of God; and its vaunted science with its own palpable folly, as evinced in an unnatural but universal ignorance of God. The things which it accounts to be foolishness are placed in honourable competition with those which it falsely reverences as wise. Again, the blind infatuation of the Jews is set over against the unprofitable curiosity of the Grecks; the prejudice of the one against the insolent derision of the other. By the text itself our attention is invited to a brief but most comprehensive delineation of the character and great subject of the apostolic ministry. It was the preaching of "Christ crucified." And its subject was, not the truths of natural religion, not the precepts of moral virtue, but the work and glory of the Saviour, as inseparably associated with His own sufferings and death. Let us consider—I. THAT ASPECT OF REPULSIVENESS AND FOLLY WHICH THE GOSPEL HAS IN EVERY AGE PRESENTED TO THE GREATER PORTION OF MANKIND. The attestations demanded for the establishment of a new religious system must obviously vary with the condition of those to whom they are presented. The greatest force of argument may be expended in vain if it comport not, in its form and bearing, with our habitudes of thought. There are two comprehensive classes into which human minds may, with reference to this design, be advantageously divided: such as are susceptible of being wrought on through the medium of external objects, and such as are affected chiefly by the force of abstract reason. Now, to these great classes there are specific forms of proof respectively adapted. There is the evidence we are accustomed to denominate external, consisting of accrediting signals and actual events—and that also which we call internal, namely, the reasonableness, congruity, utility, and moral fitness of systems, considered in themselves. Neither of these should be wanting in a religion that assumes to be Divine. The demand, therefore, referred to by the apostle, if made with intelligence and candour, could not have been disregarded. It was natural, and could not be wrong, that they should call, in the one case, for a sign, to show that an institute, in all its parts so singular, had truly the impress of diviuity; and in the other for the manifestations of celestial wisdom, to evince that what was alleged to be revelation was beyond the reach of artifice and the power of falsehood. Their fault lay only in this. It was with perverted sentiments and obstinate preconceptions this demand was accompanied. Yet both these forms of evidence were amply and unitedly supplied. They who, with a mind open to conviction, had beheld the Saviour's miracles, were awed by the revelation of His power. "We know," said they, "that Thou art a Teacher sent from God; for no man can do those miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him." They who had listened candidly to His discourses were astonished at the discoveries of His superhuman wisdom, exclaiming, "Never man spake like this

man." In different instances, indeed, it would appear that each of these kinds of evidence alternately prevailed. It was probably the healing of the impotent man, rather than the preaching of Paul, which constrained the multitude at Lystra to exclaim, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." Yet in ordinary cases the internal evidence was inseparably linked with the external, and an answer equally provided for the satisfaction, or the silencing, whether of those who demanded a sign, or of those who sought after wisdom. Let us observe, further, the force of the term here employed to describe the method adopted in their publication of the gospel—"We preach"—proclaim, announce, in the manner of a herald, Him who was crucified at Jerusalem. We require of all men allegiance in His name; and, denouncing all rival pretensions, ascribe to Him an absolute dominion. We present these claims, not as subjects of debate, but of testimony. Our appeal is less to reason than to conscience, and more to the actual subjugation of the soul than either. And yet, as if the meanness of His outward circumstances had not been sufficiently opposed to all Jewish expectations, it was emphatically as "the Crucified" that they proclaimed Him. However easily they might have cast this fact into comparative obscurity, by dwelling on His inflexible constancy, His unparalleled benevolence, His heroic self-devotement, His resurrection; yet, disdaining all such evasions, they exultingly pointed to His crucifixion, now as a sacrifice, now as a triumph, and thus appeared to invite the united scorn and hatred of mankind. It is not easy adequately to conceive what amount of impulsive and imperious conviction must have been required, in that earlier age, to proclaim in this manner, as the Christ, one that had been crucified. To avow that belief, in the face of universal contempt, to defend it when its bare annunciation would seem an outrage on the very name of reason, must have demanded, I do not say a grandeur of moral heroism, but a strength and fixedness of persuasion, such as the world has rarely witnessed. But such as the gospel appeared to the Jews and Greeks of the first ages, such is still essentially its aspect, when viewed in its primitive and unsophisticated character, to multitudes in every country. They hate or they despise it for the same reasons. It presents to some of them a cause of offence and irritation; to others one of ridicule or proud neglect. There are the superstitious, who loathe its simplicity, and the speculative, who repel its practical requirements. As to the one class, it is too spiritual for their reliance on external ordinances, and far too humbling to flatter or confirm their self-dependence. As to the other, it is originally derived from a source unknown to all their wisdom, established by proofs not apprehensible by their investigations and experiments, and enforced by sanctions destructive of their vaunted freedom, recommended by inducements which appeal not to reason, but to faith. They may both conspire to acknowledge somewhat which they call by its name, but which has as little either of its native features, or its inherent energy. Elsewhere, though its doctrines are professed, its spirit is evaporated. In opposition, therefore, to all such attempts to modify or to disguise its character, we fearlessly allege the conduct of the first disciples. For it should never be forgotten that such as was the strength of their conviction, such, too, must have been the fulness of that proof by which it was sustained; and thus the measure of their confidence is the measure also of the credibility of the whole frame and fabric of the gospel. Thus, what was evidence to them will become, in a twofold manner, evidence to us; while we see, not only the belief in which it issued, but that actual and living character which belief, thus generated, was found in practice to create. Nor was their confidence misplaced. The gospel proved itself equal to every emergency, and adapted to every design. By this consideration we are led to examine—II. THOSE TRANSCENDENT MANIFESTATIONS OF THE DIVINE POWER AND WISDOM WITH WHICH THE GOSPEL HAS BEEN EVER SEEN TO BE ACCOMPANIED, BY ALL WHO HAVE RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD ITS PRINCIPLES, OR IMBIBED ITS SPIRIT. Let us endeavour, therefore, to form definite conceptions of the sense wherein the apostle intends to characterise the excellency of the gospel, when he calls it "the power of God and the wisdom of God." It is plain that there are two acceptations chiefly, wherein this statement may be understood, either as denoting that that gospel, and the great events which it makes known, constitute an eminent manifestation of God's power and wisdom, or else that they are an instrument by which His power and wisdom are eminently found to operate. According as we determine on the one or the other of these applications, the great mediatorial scheme will be naturally brought into comparison with different portions of the Divine workmanship, to which it will be seen to possess different, though not incongruous, affinities; and

the analogy of which to itself may aid us more precisely to apprehend, and more impressively to feel its import. If we select the former, the labour of human redemption will demand to be compared with those manifestations of the Creator's agency presented in the structure of the physical universe, or else with those more exalted essences formed by His word out of nothing, angels and the spirits of men. If the latter, then we shall be taught to compare the doctrine of redemption, in its practical effects, with the inexhaustible energies of nature, and its numberless and nameless influences, in quickening, renewing, beautifying that wondrous frame, whether of sentient or material things, with which we are surrounded. By the one, our attention is directed to the work and process of redemption; by the other, to the tidings which proclaim it. It is the Saviour Himself on the Cross that, in the one, shines forth with all the glory of omnipotence, bearing the burdens of a guilty world; and in the other, it is His gospel, realising, through the grace of His Spirit, the sublime purpose of its renovation. Perhaps it is not necessary wholly to separate these references, or to decide so rigorously between them, as that either should be excluded in the observations that follow. If we think of the design which was effected and the objects attained upon the Cross, how jarring claims were readjusted in the Divine administration, how infernal principalities were overthrown, and evils were decisively suppressed; if we advert to the honour which was thus insured to the great Ruler, and the benefit acquired to His dominions, to the progress of His righteousness and mercy; if we see the curse that had blasted the earth, now arrested, we are ready to take up the language of the text in its first and simplest application, and to speak of the crucifixion of Messiah as the last and greatest of those wonders which are for ever revealed in the wisdom and the power of God. Or, if we examine the actual effects flowing from the proclamation of the gospel, and permanently signalising it as an instrument for the renewal of mankind, we shall be equally prepared to adopt, though in another sense, the sentiment before us. We speak not of its efficiency to ameliorate men's secular condition. Our present reference is to consequences of a higher character; it is to those spiritual transformations, of which the gospel has ever, from the first ages, been everywhere productive. For the altars of heathenism sank not alone; but the strongholds of sin within the soul were equally demolished. The night of falsehood was dissipated, and the phantoms of error fled. The slumber of conscience was broken. The captivity of the affections was unloosed, and the imprisoned soul was invited to cast away her chains. The world was renewed around her. With the utmost justice, therefore, not less than with the utmost magnificence, may this doctrine of redemption be described under the appellations here employed; and it is not without reason that so eminent a place is assigned it, when the apostle calls it by the names of those two great attributes which stand foremost in the array of the Divine perfections—wisdom and power. And it must be so; for without consummate wisdom a being of unlimited power would be most inapt to the control of numberless free and accountable agents; but without power equal to His intelligence, a being of infinite wisdom, baffled by His own designs, and lost in the immensity of His own purposes, would be supremely and infinitely miserable. Their combination in equal measure, therefore, as it is inseparable from His nature, is required alike in order to His rectitude and His felicity. Each has its own sphere of action, and each its standard of independent excellence. It is power which brings out of nothing; wisdom which arrays and beautifies. Power is the source of elements; wisdom, of affinities; power, of innate forces and undirected energies; wisdom, of useful adaptations and beneficial results. Power might create a chaos; wisdom must fabricate a world. His power finds its witnesses in the lightning and the whirlwind; His wisdom, in those delicate and just proportions which fit the most destructive of elements to sustain and nourish life. Perhaps it is power which most astonishes us in the productions of nature; wisdom, which excites our greatest admiration in the disposals of providence; but the union of both, which we behold, with the sublimest ravishment, in the mystery of redemption. It is a high and sovereign exercise of power to pardon sin, but an arrangement of profoundest wisdom to make that pardon consistent with the honour of the Lawgiver, and the security of His dominion. Power might rescue; wisdom would redeem. We behold almighty power raising up from amongst the nations the ancestry of the Messiah, preserving His lineage unbroken through so many ages, and fulfilling, by continued miracle, what had once been uttered by an unalterable decree: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and to Him shall the gathering of the

people be." But we discern not less of wisdom, so ordering all things by the co-operation of natural causes, that, when the long-looked-for Messiah actually came, the state, both of the world and of His own people, should be such as to insure His rejection, and to issue even in His death; and yet to make the consequences of His ministry the most extensively effectual, causing their tidings to spread and their influence to be experienced with the greatest speed and certainty, over every land. How illustriously is the agency of omnipotence revealed, when at length, though lifted up upon a Cross, He becomes the Conqueror of death, the Spoiler of the grave, the Deliverer of captive souls, and the Emancipator of an enslaved world! And yet, conspicuous as are these discoveries, the features of unerring and awful wisdom are at least equally discernible. It is the part of such wisdom to attain the greatest ends without profuse or ineffective expenditure; to restrain the premature disclosure of its objects; to provide, infallibly, against emergent occasions and contingent events; to neutralise opposition and hindrance; or to convert opponent forces into auxiliaries and useful allies; and thus to secure its results, in a manner exempt from complication or embarrassment, as well as from ostentatious or unmeaning display. Now, in each of these is revealed "the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God," in the process of redeeming mercy. We select but one further discovery of the union of these attributes as exhibited in the gospel, viz., in the practical effect of all upon the hearts and conduct of men. When God had created the matter of the globe, and was about to put the stupendous mass first into motion, there remained one problem as yet unresolved, on which its welfare and permanency were essentially dependent. It was this: What was that specific direction in which an impulse might be given which should originate, by the same act, those complicated yet inseparable movements which insure the perpetuity of its place in the general system, and the regularity of those changes which are demanded for its own immediate service? Here, then, was an occasion for the combined and equal manifestation both of power and wisdom. Neither could accomplish the purpose, separately from its fellow. Hence followed the sweet interchange of day and night, the grateful vicissitude of seasons, the admirable diversity of climate, soil, and temperature, the perpetual freshness of the air and ocean, the inexhaustible plenitude of life, its constant renovation, and its numberless diversity. All was secured in a moment, but destined to continue, without interruption or rest, until the same hand should interpose to stay its progress or to change its course. Such is the analogous phenomenon, but presented on a sublimer scale and in connection with more awful elements, in the world, not of matter, but mind, and in relation, not to the physical events of nature, but the destiny of the imperishable soul. The problem here was to determine what was that mighty impulse which, in one act, should combine all that was essential to its separate happiness with all that was necessary to the order of the moral universe; what that mysterious movement which, once impressed upon it, should for ever continue unexpended, securing the completeness of its nature, together with the perpetuity of its relations; how the energy of duty could be united with the calm of dependence; rectitude of action, with simplicity of trust; quenchless aspirations, with unresisting submission; the consciousness of perfect liberty, with the necessity of unceasing obedience. That impulse could be imparted only through the agency of love. All was effected by the Cross. And oh! what marvellous transformations attest the greatness of that one and all-commanding impulse! What beneficial consequences are insured through the whole compass of our spiritual existence! What rich and happy productions spring up together, to reveal both its energy and its design! Hence it is that love derives her flame, adoration her incense, gratitude her song, hope her fairest visions, fear her most purifying terrors, humility and patience their most permanent motives and firmest support. Reason here finds the loftiest inquiry, contemplation the sublimest object, memory the sweetest recollections. And thus the power of the Cross prevails to sanctify the whole character both of thought and action; just as the same sap which supplies the root with moisture becomes verdure in the foliage, fragrance and beauty in the flower. Sin is hence made, not so much to be shunned because it is dangerous as to be hated because it is unholy; while the performance of duty is secured rather by its congeniality with the tendencies of a renewed nature, than by its mere connection with the acquisition of happiness. And the manner in which these results are wrought out is one equally applicable to every order of intellect and every condition of society. Besides, the just and practical belief of these truths is far from being

limited by the boundaries of their strictly intellectual revelation. They operate to save and purify, not because they are rational or beautiful, but because they are Divine; being in harmony with our whole spiritual nature, and proceeding from the same hand which has fashioned the constitution of our being. Many a voyager is therefore guided by these lights from heaven, by whom the wonders of their mechanism were never penetrated; and their "sweet influences" are often realised where their mystic glories are unknown. And now behold it in its not less wonderful effects upon our social affinities and conduct, and on the relation of the individual to the good of the whole. To soften barbarian ferocity, to refine the habits of the civilised, to strengthen the bands of human sympathy, and to entwine more firmly the links of universal brotherhood; these are the methods by which it insures an unrestricted diffusion, and an ever-widening control. Let us now attempt to deduce and apply to practical purposes. III. THE REFLECTIONS WHICH THIS REVIEW IS, IN BOTH ITS PORTIONS, FITTED TO SUPPLY. 1. It cannot, I think, be doubted that a sanguine calculator, judging from the rapidity and number of the first triumphs of the gospel, would have expected, before this period, its far more wide and unobstructed diffusion. "Such," he might say, "were its effects when it began to be proclaimed among the nations. Why have those effects in so large a measure disappeared? But the calculation would be made in ignorance both of the gospel and of human nature. Behold what it is really accomplishing wherever it is faithfully and simply preached. Or let its results be estimated in their more essential character. The experience of twenty centuries has borne uniform testimony to this truth, that no other apparatus is adapted to the momentous work of human renovation; and that even where this is employed its efficacy depends, to a very large extent, on its application being unencumbered and alone. 2. It is natural to inquire, Has the Church been at all times duly considerate of the method in which only it might anticipate prosperity, in its efforts for the diffusion of the gospel, and how it might legitimately commend it to approbation and confidence? As a matter of Divine revelation, we should surely present it without addition or retrenchment. Even in its external accompaniments and the circumstances attendant on its ministration, we should preserve the same subordination of all things to the discovery of its native greatness. The stateliness of sumptuous buildings, and the splendours of a gorgeous ritual, are little in harmony with the religion of the Cross. The effulgent beauty of the gospel requires not, and its majesty forbids, such enhancements. 3. We cannot but admire the method adopted by the first advocates of Christianity to secure the diffusion of their principles, and thus learn in what manner to pursue the same object for ourselves. They presented them, as we have seen, with the directness of an unwavering and solemn proclamation. Must man be wooed into acquiescence, or enticed into belief, when it is not speculative principles, but stupendous facts, on which his redemption is suspended? Or must the gate of life be set open with the pomp of ceremony and the voice of music, before the outcast will condescend to enter it, though the avenger of blood is behind him and the sword of justice is already flaming and unsheathed? Besides, if we are to judge what might have been the result of such accommodation by its effect in modern times, the expedient is one presenting little claim to have been employed at such a period, or by instructors so prepared. 4. How powerful is the inducement, and how plain the directory, to seek for ourselves an interest in the blessings of this great salvation! If it be the production of such wisdom and power our hope can never be disappointed. 5. What a test is supplied in this description to ascertain whether we have truly received the spirit of the gospel! If it be adjusted by infinite wisdom and armed with infinite power, then what should have been its effects, and what have they actually been? Has it conquered our vices, eradicated our evil propensities, humbled our presumption? Again, is it unresisted and absolute? Is one evil not supplanted by another, but all, increasingly, by this new element of good? Is the effect of Christian principle consistent and uniform? Does it pervade our total conduct and impart its character to all our actions? If not, what is our religion but a whited sepulchre, beautiful without, but full of death within? Let us never, then, rest satisfied with dubious or inoperative principles. 6. We are taught how to count on the future progress and final triumphs of the gospel. Thus organised and thus sustained, it might appear to guarantee even its own perpetuity. What need have we to shrink because of the ravings of blasphemy, the surmises of false wisdom, the sorceries of perverted genius, the sneers of wit, the antipathies of taste, the caprice of passion,

the assaults of unbelief? Has not the gospel already encountered enemies at least as formidable? Finally, we cannot fail to be reminded how great must be the glory wherein all shall issue. What the consummation when this scene of wonders shall be perfectly unfolded! (*R. S. McAll, D.D.*) *Christ the power of God*:—1. To redeem a world. 2. To save sinners. 3. To subdue sin and Satan. 4. To establish His kingdom. 5. To remove the curse and make all new. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The power of God in self-sacrifice*:—I. IS GOD A BEING PASSIBLE OR IMPASSIBLE? 1. It would seem to follow from the infinitude of His creatively-efficient power and the immensity of His nature that He must be impassible. Besides, He is spirit only, and what we call force cannot touch Him. 2. But after all there must be some kind of passibleness in God, else there could be no genuine character in Him. A cast-iron Deity could not command our love and reverence. The beauty of God is that He feels appropriately toward everything; that He feels badness as badness, and goodness as goodness—pained by one, pleased by the other. A very large share of all the virtues have, in fact, an element of passibility in them, and without that element they could not exist. Indeed, greatness of character culminates in the right proportion and co-ordination of these passive elements. And God is great as being great in feeling. 3. We raise a distinction between what we call the active and the passive virtues. If I impart a charity, that is my active virtue; if I receive an insult without wishing to revenge it, that is my passive virtue. And without this in its varieties we should be only no-characters, dry logs of wood instead of Christian men. Or, if we kept on acting still, we should only be active machines; for what better is the active giving of a charity if there be no fellow-feeling or pitying passion with it to make it a charity? Now God must have these passive virtues as truly as men. How, then, shall we conceive Him to have them when He is, in fact, impassible? The salvation is here; God, being physically impassible, is yet morally passible, *i.e.*, He is a Being whose very perfection it is that He feels the moral significance of things. He can feel ingratitude when He cannot feel a blow. He can loathe impurity when He cannot be injured by any assault. He is pleased and gratified by acts of sacrifice when He could not be comforted or enriched by benevolence. A thermometer is not more exactly and delicately passive to heat than He is to the merit and demerit of all actions. This, accordingly, is the representation given of Him in the Scriptures. Thus He is blessed according to the merit and beauty of whatever is done that is right. He smelled a sweet savour in Noah's sacrifice. He has pleasure in them that hope in His mercy. He is tender to the obedient, pitying them that fear Him as a father pitieth his children. On the other hand, by how many pains of feeling does He suffer in His relation to scenes of human wrong. The sighing of the prisoner comes before Him to command His sympathy. In all the afflictions of His people He is afflicted Himself. And, in the same manner, He is said to be exercised by all manner of unpleasant sentiments in relation to all manner of evil doings; sore displeased, wroth, &c. 4. But this painful feeling in regard to evil—what is this but to assume the unhappiness, or, at least, the diminished happiness of God? How, then, shall we save His infinite blessedness? By just dropping out our calculations of arithmetic and looking at facts. It seems to be good arithmetic that, if any subtraction is made from God's infinite happiness, He cannot be infinitely happy. No, on the contrary, He may even be the more blessed because of the subtraction, for to see that He feels rightly towards evil, despite of the pain suffered from it, to know that He is pouring the fulness of His love upon it, to be studying now, in conscious sacrifice, a saving mercy—out of this springs up a joy deeper than the pain, and, by a fixed law of holy compensation, the sea of His blessedness is kept continually full. All moral natures exist under this law of compensation. To receive evil rightly is to master it, to be rightly pained by it is to be kept in sovereign joy. II. Thus far I have spoken of God's passive virtue, principally as concerned in feeling towards what is moral just according to its quality. But THERE IS A MORAL PASSIVITY VASTLY HIGHER AND REACHING FURTHER, VIZ., A PASSIVITY OF MERCY OR SACRIFICE. 1. In this a good or perfect being not only feels toward good or evil according to what it is, but willingly endures evil, to make it what it is not—to recover and heal it. No extraordinary purity is necessary to make any one sensible of disgust in the contemplation of what is vile, but to submit one's ease to the endurance of wickedness, in order to recover and subdue it, requires what is far more difficult. 2. Just here, then, we begin to open upon the true meaning of "Christ the power of God." There is no so great power even among men as that which conquers evil by enduring evil. Just here evil becomes

insupportable to itself. It can argue against everything but suffering patience: this disarms it. All its fire is spent. Christ crucified is the power of God, because He shows God in self-sacrifice, because He brings out and makes historical in the world God's passive virtue. By this it is that He opens our human feeling, bad and blind as it is, pouring Himself into its deepest recesses and bathing it with His cleansing, new-creating influence. There is the highest efficiency in it for it is moral power, not physical force. Hence it is that so much is said of Christ as a new-discovered power—the power of God unto salvation: the Son of God with power; the power of Christ. The power is conceived to be such that Christ is really our new Creator. We are His workmanship created unto good works. 3. But how does it appear that so great efficacy is added to the known character of God by the life and death of Christ? Was not everything shown to us in His death explicitly revealed in the Old Testament? God was represented there as being duly affected by all evil according to its true nature; displeased, abhorrent, &c. But to have these things ascribed formally to God is one thing, and a very different to have them lived and acted historically in the world. Perfections that are set before us in mere epithets have little significance; but perfections lived and acted before the senses, under social conditions, have quite another grade of meaning. And if this be true respecting God's mere passivities of sensibility to right and wrong, how much truer is it when we speak of Him in sacrifice. No such impression or conception of God was ever drawn out, as a truth positive, from any of the epithets we have cited. And nature gives it no complexion of evidence. We could almost as soon look for sacrifice in a steam-engine as in nature. How necessary, original, powerful, then, is the God of sacrifice—He that endures evil and takes it as a burden to bear—when we see Him struggling under the load. Somewhere there is a wondrous power hid in the Cross! And the suffering is physical—a suffering under force. III. IF, THEN, GOD IS PHYSICALLY IMPASSIBLE, HOW DOES IT APPEAR THAT HE IS ANY WAY EXPRESSED IN THE PASSION OF CHRIST? how does the passion present Him as in sacrifice? 1. By the physical impassibility of God is not meant that He cannot suffer by consent or self-subjection, but only that He cannot be subjected involuntarily. To deny His liberty to exist under assumed conditions whenever there are any sufficient reasons for so doing might even be a greater infringement of His power than to maintain His natural passibility. 2. We can clearly enough see that there is no difficulty in the Passion of Christ which does not also exist in the Incarnation itself. How can the Infinite Being God exist under finite conditions? How (for that is only another form of the same question) can the Impassible suffer? And yet it would be a most severe assumption to say that God cannot, to express Himself and forward His negotiation with sin, subject Himself, in some way mysteriously qualified, to just these impossible conditions. 3. Be this all as it may, there are ways of knowing that are shorter and wiser than the processes of the head. In this Passion of Jesus it must be enough that I look on the travail of a Divine feeling, and behold the spectacle of God in sacrifice. This I see and nothing less. He is visibly not a man. I feel a divinity in Him. He floods me with a sense of God, such as I receive not from all God's works and worlds beside. And when I stand by His Cross I want no logical endorsement; enough that I can see the heart of God, and in all this wondrous Passion know Him as enduring the contradiction of sinners. Why should I debate the matter in my heart when I have the God of sacrifice in my heart? He that endures me so, subdues me, and I yield. O Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world! what Thou didst bear in Thy blessed hands and feet I cannot bear. Take it all away. Hide me in the depths of Thy suffering love. Conclusion: 1. Here let us learn to conceive more fitly the greatness of God. His greatness culminates in sacrifice. If He were only wise, omnipotent, eternal, just; even that would present Him as an object worthy of profoundest reverence, but in the Passion of Jesus He is more. There His power is force; here it is sacrifice. There He astonishes the eye; here He touches and transforms the heart. The God of mere amplitude will do to amuse the fancy of the ingenious—the God of sacrifice only can approve Himself to a sinner. 2. And here it is that our gospel comes to be so great a power. It is not, on one hand, the power of omnipotence falling in secretly regenerative blows. Neither is it, on the other, any mere appeal of gratitude drawing the soul to God by the consideration of what He has done. No; this wonderful power is God in sacrifice. This is the power that has new-created and sent home, as trophies, in all the past ages, its uncounted myriads of believing, new-created, glorified souls. 3. And you that have known this dawning of the Lord,

what a certification have you in this sacrifice of God's sympathy! How intensely personal He is to you! Go to Him in your every trouble. When the loads of conscious sin are heaviest on you, and you seem even to be sinking in its mires, address Him as the God of sacrifice. Have it also as your lesson, that you yourself will be most in power when readiest in the enduring of evil; that you will bear fruit and be strong, not by your force, not by your address, not by your words, but only when you are with Christ in sacrifice. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *The mystery of power*:—I. THE CROSS REPRESENTS THREE GREAT IDEAS WHICH SUM UP WHAT IS NEEDED BY US ALL FOR THE FULFILMENT OF VOCATION. 1. The idea of Duty. In the moral mystery of the Passion we see this special characteristic in the Representative Man. He perfectly subordinated every sinless desire of ease, or wish for deliverance, to the fulfilment of the infinite claim of duty, though it drove Him to His death. 2. The idea of Love. I am assured in the gloom of the Passion that "God is Love." And this force of the Passion has strength to attract the soul to the Redeemer with infinite desire. Love implies generosity of service; "loved *me*, gave Himself for *me*," rouses the generous answer "love for love." Now this is a spiritual power of the Passion drawing and enabling me to love God. 3. The idea of Holiness. Thus we name that perfect loveliness which is the sum of the moral glory of God. Now to the creature there is a possibility of the grasp and apprehension of the heavenly beauty. The fact was seen in Jesus crucified, and by the infinite merits of the Passion is guaranteed to man a share in the grace, in the life of the Man of men. Jesus crucified is the source, the promise of this power. II. IN THE CROSS THERE IS DIVINE POWER. 1. I have watched the wild waves of an Atlantic storm. The wind was screaming to a pitch of tempest, the clouds rolled mass on mass of inky blackness, only relieved by a glow of vivid fire. The waves towered high, then sank again in restless mountains and unstable valleys of seething sea. A splendid spectacle! the spectacle of nature in exercise of unrestrained tremendous power! 2. I have watched the great engines in Chicago pumping up with steady unabated beat their three hundred million gallons hour by hour from the central depths of Michigan, for the use of that strangest city of the New World. 3. I have started turning into the Scuola di San Rocco at Venice, brought suddenly face to face with that grand and pathetic picture of the Crucified, displayed there these centuries in living colour from the genius of Tintoretto. 4. Nature, Mechanical Invention, Art—each show the mystery of power. But the power that consoles the sunken spirit, kindles the heart's best affections, changes and invigorates the stern or failing will, and transforms the corrupted soul to the likeness of the Divine ideal—a power moral, spiritual, supernatural—that is the greatest of all. Ah! that is found in the Crucified; it becomes the possession of the creature by union with Christ. III. IN THE CROSS IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION. 1. What is it to be saved? Is it to make a satisfactory investment in insurance against final punishment, when here in our mortal pilgrimage we have, so to speak, "taken our fling," and passion and ambition have had their unrestricted play? Certainly not. (1) It is to be placed habitually on a higher platform of thought, and to be awakened to a sincerity of manly and abiding sorrow for aught in our motives or actions unworthy or wrong. (2) It is to have that light of the heart, that strength of the will, that eager purity of the affections, by the force of which we breast the waves of sorrow, sustain ourselves with meekness under the strain of success, and in the darkest hours, as in the brightest moments, do not fail in unselfishness and truth. (3) It is to rise out of the ruts of convention; it is to strangle the treachery of self; it is to have the clear eye and spiritual understanding of the inhabitant of eternity; to be advancing in fitness to play our part as citizens of that blessed commonwealth which is quickly coming—"the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." (4) In one word, it is to have the heart of a man, as his Creator conceived him, pure, tender, and loving; it is with that heart to love God supremely, perfectly; and in God to lose self in love for others—that is to be saved! 2. Can this be ours? Thou hast answered, "It can," O my Jesus! my Redeemer! The lesson of it comes from the Crucified; its power, its possibility from the precious blood. (*Canon Knox-Little.*) *Christianity's Divine power*:—Note three preliminary considerations. 1. Christianity is the only historical religion. Buddhism, Brahminism, and Mahomedanism have a history, but Christianity alone is founded upon a history. It could not have arisen anywhere else than where it did. It was the outgrowth of Judaism, and the realisation of the Messianic idea. Christianity is historical, too, because it is founded upon the history of Jesus. You

cannot separate Christianity from Christ. Its doctrines are simply the interpretation of Christ's history. 2. There was a preparation everywhere for the spread of Christianity, if it could prove its truth. The civilised world was then under the rule of Rome. The old religions were losing their hold, so there was a disposition to listen to a new religious claimant. There was also peace throughout the empire. There was in providence "the fulness of time." But these favouring circumstances would not have availed if the Christian preachers could not have vindicated the truth of the history on which it rested. 3. While Christianity had strong passions, selfish interests and prejudices to overcome, it had yet, in man's moral and spiritual necessities, wants which it professed to meet. And now, let us proceed to consider the conflicts which Christianity had to wage, and in which it showed its power and attested its truth. I. THE CONFLICT WITH A CORRUPT JUDAISM. With the Judaism of Moses and the prophets Christianity could have no conflict. "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets," &c. 1. But that a contest with contemporary Judaism was inevitable will be seen in the study of its leading features. Note—(1) The prevalent view as to the character and mission of the Messiah. The Messiah was the hope of the Jews. But they misread the prophecies; and they invested Him with a worldly dignity which was never claimed for Him. (2) It did not enter into their minds that there would be any material change in their worship under the Messiah. There were still, they believed, to be the priests, the temple, and its imposing ritual. (3) The Jews had long been God's peculiar people; and they believed that they would still continue to be so. 2. When the Messiah came, where, they asked, was His kingly splendour? Where was the national restoration His coming was to bring? But the apostles taught the kingship of Jesus; that salvation was only by believing in Him; that the sacrificial worship was to cease; that salvation was for Gentiles as well as Jews. How would you expect this religion to be received by the Jews? Just as we find it was received, with a contempt and hatred which soon took form in a bitter persecution. But in spite of the whole power of the hierarchy, and the prejudices and persecutions of the people, Christianity did root itself in Jerusalem. The bitter opposition encountered here was met wherever the apostles found Jews. But by and by the new faith conquered; the Church supplanted the synagogue. II. THE CONFLICT WITH PHILOSOPHY TO THE GENTILE WORLD. When Christ came, the literary activity in the Roman empire was great; and in the main centres of population there were schools, or colleges, which were crowded with students. 1. Let us look, then, at the teaching of these schools, and we shall see what Christianity had to encounter. The Stoics, while holding that God was the soul of the world, were yet virtually pantheists. In morals, they were distinguished by their austerity. They considered that a man had reached perfection when he was indifferent alike to pleasure and pain. The Epicureans, on the contrary, were practically atheistic. Having nothing either to hope or fear from death, they set themselves to extract from this world all its pleasure. Their maxim was: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." 2. Now where was the likelihood of Christianity commending itself to Stoic or Epicurean, if beneath its doctrine there had not been the solid ground of incontestable fact? The idea of Greek philosophers accepting a Jew as their teacher, and a crucified Jew as their Saviour! Nor were they more conciliated when they had a fuller exposition of Christian truth and duty, and came to see how much was demanded of them in the crucifixion of all the lusts of the flesh. And Paul was not blind to this. But Christianity triumphed. The philosophers could not controvert its facts; and humbling though its teaching was to their pride, and opposed to their passions, it yet won its way. And before many years went by, some of the ablest and most cultured of them were found among the defenders of Christianity. III. THE CONFLICT WITH PAGAN RELIGIONS. 1. These were in doctrine and worship directly opposed to Christianity. The heathen were surrounded with gods, and their whole public and private life was interwoven with the service of these gods. The old pagan religion had entwined itself round the entire man. And then the ceremonial of heathen worship was most imposing. It had its magnificent temples. Moreover, this old religion was patronised and upheld by the State. 2. Now the very claim of Christianity was fitted to arouse the votaries of this idolatry against it. It declared that there is no god but the God who is in Jesus Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. Here it would tolerate no compromise, would allow of no divided homage. And then Christianity had neither splendid temple, nor imposing service. It came recommended neither by the worldly greatness of its founder, nor that of its apostles. It demanded an entire

revolution of their life, a revolution which could only have the effect of impoverishing tens of thousands who were fattening on the revenues of idolatry. Had the gospel history not been true, no attempt could have been more hopeless than to overthrow the old idolatry. But mighty although the forces opposed to Christianity were, yet it overthrew them. IV. THE CONFLICT WITH THE LICENTIOUS SPIRIT OF THE AGE. Under the old pagan religions, a man might be held to be religious without being moral. But under Christ morality is a part of religion. Christianity threw its light on the evil of sin, disclosed its awful doom, and called on men as they valued their eternal peace to yield to that Divine Saviour who had died for them and risen again, and in simple faith to give their hearts to be ruled by Him, to be made holy by Him. It was no cheap attachment which it sought. Now, could the apostles ever have gained converts from the degraded masses if they had not been able to show them that the gospel history was true; and if the people had not felt that there was that in it which spake as nothing else had done to their conscience and their heart? Conclusion: 1. The success of Christianity in the face of these forces is thus a conclusive proof that it is from God. But that that conclusion may be confirmed, we must look at the rapidity with which Christianity spread. Hardly had the third century closed, when the Emperor Maximinus—one of the bitterest enemies—was constrained to say, in one of his edicts, that almost all "had abandoned the worship of their ancestors for the new sect." 2. And what has been its history since? A chequered but most instructive one. Other religions, like those of Buddhism and Mahomedanism, have risen and spread widely; but they have shown that they have no reviving power. Wherever they have decayed, they have never been restored. But Christianity has in it a power of revival which causes it to send forth new branches. Yes, while the old religions are dead or dying, Christianity is living and extending. 3. And this progress is precisely what was predicted. When a reformer, who is inflamed with enthusiasm, begins his work, he usually anticipates a speedy triumph. But Jesus buoyed up His people with no such hopes. He told them that they would have tribulation in the world, but assured them that ultimately His kingdom would triumph. And the result has been in accordance with the prophecy. (*A. Oliver, B.A.*) *Christ the wisdom of God*:—1. In His eternal nature. 2. In His incarnation. 3. In His mediation. 4. In His exaltation. 5. In the application of the gospel. 6. In its glorious results. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christ the wisdom of God*:—I. IN THE MYSTERIOUS CONSTITUTION OF HIS PERSON. He is styled, by one of the prophets, "the Wonderful." The more we gaze upon Him, the higher the wonder of His person will rise. But the wisdom of God became eminently conspicuous in the constitution of Christ as a propitiation for sin. Two natures were required, a suffering and a satisfying sacrifice. Suffering would not do without satisfaction; satisfaction could not be made without suffering. 1. An infinite satisfaction was required, consequently, there was but one nature that could present it. And here is that foundation on which the Divinity of Jesus rests. 2. But another nature was requisite for suffering; for Deity, abstractly considered, cannot suffer. And not only was suffering required, but human suffering; the penalty attached to the transgression of the law was suited to a human nature. But it was necessary that this human nature should be pure. A "holy thing" was required: the lamb was to be without blemish and without spot. 3. It was, moreover, necessary that these two natures should be constituted one person; and the union of the two natures was as perfect as the infinite wisdom of God required; for there was no change or confusion of the natures. The Deity, with all its ineffable glory was not deteriorated by its union with humanity. I know that there is wisdom displayed in every evolution of the Divine character; and great as it was to make man, it was greater to make God-man. II. IN THE GLORIOUS RESULTS OF HIS ATONEMENT. 1. The consummation of God's great purpose to redeem man. The great redeeming plan commenced with the Father, who "so loved the world," &c. And here is the difficulty—God is an infinitely righteous Being. God saw the fearful havoc which sin had wrought, and how was He to repair it? Justice required the execution of the penalty. There were but two modes of proceeding. The wisdom of God might have been displayed in destruction. But, oh, how much more illustriously does His wisdom shine in the recovery of man! 2. The manifestation of the Divine attributes in their perfect and harmonised glory. Here you behold justice, truth, goodness, love; but they are altogether. When did we ever behold such a spectacle? The attributes of the Divine Being had been displayed in angelic history—all His amiable attributes, in reference to those who kept their first estate, and all His fearful

attributes in the history of those who rebelled; but there were two separate and distinct theatres for these revelations. Nor does the human history furnish a parallel. The path of providence has occasionally exhibited one attribute and then another. Sometimes justice, as in the deluge, or in the overthrow of the cities of the plain; sometimes truth, as in the emancipation of the Hebrews; at one time, stern justice, and then at another, smiling mercy; but it was reserved for the gospel to exhibit them in combined and harmonious lustre; and when Jesus came to redeem our world, all God's attributes came rejoicingly with Him: "Justice and mercy met together—righteousness and peace embraced each other." 3. The triumphant manner in which our Lord conquered His enemies. Christ met Satan in His own way—the Cross was Satan's own weapon. But by that very Cross was the illustrious seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head, and destroying the powers of darkness; and it was by the Cross that Christ spoiled and triumphed over principalities and powers, made a show of them openly, and held them up to angelic scorn. 4. The firmer establishment of the Divine government. The Divine government is a government of motive, and all other kinds of government are coercive and irrational. Was there ever such a revelation of God's love as that which beamed on the Cross? And does not love beget love? Where much is forgiven, much is loved; and such a view of God attaches all spirits to Him. III. IN THE PRACTICAL DISPENSATION OF HIS GOSPEL. The Church, you know, is the theatre by which the wisdom of God is made known to principalities and powers. Angels are our fellow-students, and what do they see? First of all the agents—poor Galileans, with nothing to offer to the learned, nothing to the commercial man, nothing to the politician. If the first preachers of the gospel had been invested with all the attractive learning of the schools, the most splendid truths of the gospel would have been obscured by human greatness; but the less there was of man, the more there was of God. And do you not perceive how strikingly the wisdom of God is manifested in the adaptation of the discoveries of Himself to our conceptions? There sits a poor fatherless child, there a poor widow, yonder a desolate orphan; and the gospel proffers them all that consolation which God only can impart. But, besides this, there is the accompanying influence. To the mere eye of philosophy this is nothing; but a poor man comes in, and he gazes, and there is nothing to strike him; but by and by the scales fall from his eyes, by and by a new influence comes over the heart, and he exclaims, "God is in this place, and I knew it not!" Witness the poor publican, smiting on his breast, groaning out the sinner's only plea, "God be merciful to me a sinner"! (*T. Lessey.*) *The gospel is the sum of wisdom;* an epitome of knowledge; a treasure-house of truth; and a revelation of mysterious secrets. Ah, dear friends! if ye seek wisdom, ye shall see it displayed in all its greatness; not in the balancing of the clouds, nor the firmness of earth's foundations; not in the measured march of the armies of the sky, nor in the perpetual motions of the waves of the sea; not in vegetation with all its fairy forms of beauty, nor in the animal with its marvellous tissue of nerve, and vein, and sinew; nor even in man, that last and loftiest work of the Creator. But turn aside and see this great sight! an incarnate God upon the Cross; a substitute atoning for mortal guilt; a sacrifice satisfying the vengeance of heaven, and delivering the rebellious sinner. Here is essential wisdom; enthroned, crowned, glorified. Admire, ye men of earth, if ye be not blind; and ye who glory in your learning, bend your heads in reverence, and own that all your skill could not have devised a gospel at once so just to God, so safe to man. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Divine philosophy:*—1. Our age is eager in its pursuit of knowledge. It professes to be a truth-loving and a truth-seeking age. It has obtained a far insight into the dark processes of that which is called "nature." Wherever it has turned its steps, it has found stores of truth. In all this there is wisdom which we do well to study. Yet all these are but parts—a whole, of which nothing less than the infinity of Godhead is the measure. Hence it is that, while, in all the regions of creation, may be seen portions of this wisdom, only in the Son of God, in Christ Jesus, the incarnate Word, is the mighty whole contained. He, and He only, is "the wisdom of God." 2. By the expression, "the wisdom of God," thus applied to Christ, is not merely meant that He is infinitely wise. Suppose we have an able architect, and a goodly palace built by him, into which he has thrown his whole genius; we say of himself, he is skilful, but we say of his work, there is his skill, there is the outward personification of all that is in him, and without which you could not have known what is in him. Of other buildings erected by him we may say there is some skill; but only of his masterpiece should we say

that it is the skill or the wisdom of the man. So with the poet and his *magnum opus*. Thus it is with regard to Christ. In the works of creation God has displayed fragments of His wisdom: but in Christ He has summed up and put forth the whole of it. 3. Wisdom is one of the last things which we are in the habit of connecting with the name of Christ. We connect with it salvation, pardon, life, righteousness, love. Yet it is wisdom that God so especially associates with Christ. "He, of God, is made unto us wisdom." "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." When God looks at Him, that which He especially sees in Him is wisdom. 4. The subject is a very wide one; we take up here only that section of it which relates to the person of the Christ. (1) In this there are two parts—the Divine and the human; and these, both in themselves and in their union, distinction, adjustment, co-operation, harmony, make up that glorious Person. The whole Creator is in Him, and the whole creature is in Him; yet both retaining the properties distinct and unchanged by the union. In man is seen God; in God is seen man. All that is glorious in the Godhead, and all that is excellent in manhood, is gathered into one person, and fully exhibited in Him. By this union these two parts are revealed to each other; heaven is revealed to earth, and earth is revealed to heaven. (2) It seems to be union only at a single point; for it is with one body and one soul that the Godhead is united. But that single point is enough; that one link unites the natures. In order to moor a ship we do not require a thousand cables, each fastened to a separate plank or spar; one strong cable, fixed at one point, makes fast the whole, and connects the entire vessel with its anchor. (3) Nor was it with one particular stage of our being that this union was formed; but with all; from the first moment of conception in the womb to death and the grave. Had the Son of God united Himself with manhood in its maturity, there would have been no union and no sympathy with the different stages of human life and growth. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *The gospel adapted to the state and circumstances of man*:—I. THAT MAN, ALTHOUGH ENDUED WITH THE CAPACITY OF RECEIVING INFORMATION, YET BY HIS OWN UNASSISTED EFFORTS IS TOTALLY UNABLE TO ACQUIRE THE KNOWLEDGE OF THOSE TRUTHS WITH WHICH IT CHIEFLY IMPORTS HIM TO BE ACQUAINTED. II. THAT UPON HIS BEING ENLIGHTENED WITH THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND OF HIS DUTY, HE MUST NECESSARILY BE IMPRESSED WITH A DEEP SENSE OF HIS OWN DEPRAVITY AND GUILT. III. THAT HE HAS A CONSCIOUSNESS OF MORAL OBLIGATION, AND IDEAS OF MORAL EXCELLENCE, WHICH EXPERIENCE TELLS HIM HE CANNOT BY HIS OWN EFFORTS FULFIL AND REALISE. IV. THAT HE IS SUBJECTED TO MANY AFFLICTIONS, FOR WHICH, UPON THE PRINCIPLES OF REASON, HE CANNOT ACCOUNT, NOR DISCOVER TO WHAT GOOD PURPOSE THEY TEND. V. THAT ALTHOUGH HE FEELS BOTH PRESAGES OF, AND DESIRES AFTER A FUTURE STATE OF BEING, YET, FROM THE LIGHT OF NATURE, HE NEITHER DERIVES ASSURANCE OF ITS EXISTENCE, NOR ANY CERTAIN INFORMATION CONCERNING IT. (*John Kemp.*) *Christ is our wisdom*:—I. HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND THIS? 1. Objectively. As He alone is the object about which all true wisdom is conversant (Col. ii. 3). Wisdom is either Divine or human, the wisdom of God or of men. He is the wisdom of God, as the power of God (chap. i. 24), because the Divine power and the Divine wisdom were never so manifest in anything that ever He did as they were in Christ, that is, in the great work of our redemption by Him. All His works are made in wisdom (Psa. civ. 24; Prov. iii. 19). He governs the world in wisdom, wisely ordering all events to the great end of His own glory and His people's good. But above all, in our redemption by Christ. In Eph. iii. 10 it is called the manifold wisdom of God, such as angels wonder at. He alone is the object of all our true wisdom. There are other things about which wisdom is conversant, but none like Christ (1 Cor. ii. 2; Phil. iii. 7, 8). 2. Effectively, as He is the author and finisher of all that in us which is true wisdom. Now, that is grace; grace is true wisdom, and nothing else is so. How is it said He is made unto us of God wisdom? (1) In respect of eternal appointment and designation. (2) In respect of effectual application, in the fulness of time. What are the special acts of this wisdom, by which it may appear whether we are so turned, so made wise? (1) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, we have been in some measure convinced of our own folly; this is the first step (chap. iii. 18). A fool thinks himself wise (Prov. xxvi. 12). As the Pharisees (John ix. 40). A wise man knows himself a fool, as David (Psa. lxxiii. 22). Agur (Prov. xxx. 2, 3). Now inquire, How is it with me? What is the opinion I have of myself? (2) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, we are brought to see the excellency and usefulness of wisdom, and begin to prize it at a high rate, and to beg it of God rather than

anything else in the world. (3) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, we have chosen God for our chief good and highest end, and the Lord Jesus Christ as our alone way to Him. If so, we are wise; if not, to this day we are fools. The proper act of wisdom is to determine the choice to right ends; as in other things, so in spiritual things, the things of the soul. Inquire what is your chief good and highest end. (4) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, it hath taught us to fear the Lord, and to depart from evil (Job xxxviii. 28). There is this difference between wisdom and knowledge—knowledge is in speculatives, wisdom is in practice. Many have a great deal of the former that have none of the latter; good heads, but bad hearts and bad lives. See the properties of heavenly wisdom (James iii. 17). It was thus with David (Psa. cxix. 98–101; Eph. v. 15, 16). (5) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, it hath made the things of time to be as nothing to us, and the things of eternity to be all in all; it has altered our thoughts and pursuits. What are the good things temporal, riches, honour, pleasure, in comparison with the good things eternal? II. THE PRACTICAL INFERENCES. If Christ be made wisdom to those that are in Him, and only to those, then—1. They that are not in Him are not wise. Nabal is their name, and folly is with them. Christless people are fools. I prove it by three arguments: (1) They choose like fools. Is he not a fool, that when a pebble is offered to him by one and a pearl by another chooses the pebble and refuses the pearl? Was not Esau a fool in parting with his birthright for a mess of pottage? (2) They count like fools. They count themselves wise, and religious people a company of fools, when themselves are the fools, and the religious wise (John vii. 48, 49; Luke xviii. 10). They count upon time to come as their own, and presume accordingly; when, alas! it is not so. They count upon going to heaven when they die, but are miserably mistaken. (3) They carry it like fools. The carriage of a fool is vain and frothy; there is no seriousness in him. He carries it like a fool that hugs his worst enemy to his bosom, and turns his back upon his best friend; and doth not the sinner so? 2. They that are sensible of their want of wisdom, and would be wise, may learn hence whither to go, and what to do, that they may attain it. The way is to apply thyself to the blessed Jesus, who is made unto us of God wisdom. And plead this text—Lord, art Thou not made unto us of God wisdom? What need is there of this plea? Universal need, every day, in everything. They that have most have need of more. (1) We cannot carry it as we should in any relation without wisdom, neither as superiors, inferiors, nor equals. What need have magistrates of wisdom (Psa. ii. 9)! A conviction of this made Solomon ask as he did (1 Kings iii. 7–10). Ministers are in the same situation (Col. i. 28). What a plague are foolish shepherds (Zech. xi. 15). So are masters of families, husbands, wives, parents. (2) Nor can we carry it as we should, in any condition, without wisdom. If we prosper and thrive in the world, there is need of wisdom, to manage it so that we be not ensnared, not destroyed by it. If in affliction it is necessary, that we may keep the mean between fainting and despising. (3) Nor can we carry it as we should in any duty to be done to God or man without wisdom. If we pray, we need wisdom that we do not ask amiss. (4) Nor can we carry it as we should in any difficult case that lies before us, nor tell how to determine for the best, without wisdom (Eccles. x. 10). 3. Here is matter of unspeakable comfort to all true believers, that Jesus Christ is made wisdom, that is, as some interpret it, that all that infinite wisdom that is in Him as God, and all that infused wisdom which He had as God-man wherein He grew (Luke ii. 52), is all made over to us, to be employed for our good. Apply it—(1) To our particular, private affairs, especially in the great turns of our lives. If thou art in Christ, He will order them for thee, and He will order them wisely (Eph. i. 11), according to the counsel of His will. Therefore submit to His disposals quietly, patiently; of choice, cheerfully; wisdom would have it so. (2) To the public affairs of the Church and nation. (*Philip Henry.*)

Vers. 25–28. **Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God stronger than men.**—*The gospel as contemplated by man and employed by God*:—I. ITS DOCTRINE—is foolishness, yet wiser than men. II. ITS AGENCIES—are weak, yet stronger than men. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **For ye see your calling, brethren.**—*The Christian calling*:—1. The word "calling" means the great primary truth of religion, viz., that our erring life is governed by a will above it, and is capable of receiving influences of attraction from the Spirit of God. A man's common employment, too, is spoken of as his "calling." But this usage discovers

the same origin; for it must have sprung up in days when it was verily believed that each man's business in the world was a sacred appointment. A living faith not only justifies that view, but requires it; for it supposes that in the soul which has confessed its calling there is a power of holy consecration supreme over all the choices and pursuits of the mind. 2. The expression stirs some feeling of mystery. More is suggested than the understanding clearly grasps. But there is something here that is plain enough to common sense, and, to earnest moods at least, very welcome. How many weeks will any of us be able to live without coming to some spot where it will be felt as a rational comfort to believe that all our way was ordered for us by Him who sees the end from the beginning? If there is a "calling," there is one who calls, and who when calling has a right to be heard. It follows that there is one object in existence so pre-eminent that to accomplish that is to fulfil the great purpose of our being, and to fail of that is to miss the chief end. It is only trifers who conceive of their life as without a plan, and have never heard the call of the Master, "Go, work to-day in My vineyard." So true is this, that it has been observed of the most efficient and commanding men in the history of the world, that they were apt to represent themselves as led on by some Power beyond themselves—a demon, a genius, a destiny, or a Deity. But the apostle refers to something higher and holier than any dreamy sentiment like this. Standing on the verities of the gospel, speaking to those that have nominally assented to it, he summons them to a more solemn and searching sense of what it requires of them: "Ye see your calling, brethren." The truth is clear; you see it. It is not of men, but of God, who calls. Christ has lived, and He asks living followers. 3. It is remarkable how perseveringly the New Testament clings to this particular conception of the Christian relation. Disciples are said to be "the called of Jesus," "called out of darkness into marvellous light," "called unto liberty," "called to peace," "called to eternal life," "called" first, to be afterwards "justified and glorified," "called to inherit a blessing," "called in one body" and "one hope," "called by God's grace" to "holiness," to "His kingdom and glory," with "a holy calling," "a heavenly calling." The apostles are "called" from one place, work, suffering, joy, to another. To "walk worthy of the vocation" is made the business of a careful conscience. To make our "calling and election sure" is the victory of our warfare. The promise that subdues all anxiety as to the result is "Faithful is He which calleth you." Notice the prominent teachings of this language. I. THAT THE BUSINESS OF A CHRISTIAN LIFE IS SOMETHING SPECIAL—a "calling" by itself, to be distinguished from all other occupations. A Christian character springs from its own root, grows by its own laws, and bears its own peculiar fruit. It must have a beginning, which the New Testament everywhere speaks of as being born into a new life. Then there must be a growing into greater strength and goodness, without end. Here, therefore, is a new principle of conduct. It is a Divine calling. Paul speaks as if no pursuit were to be thought of in comparison with it. II. THAT THIS IDEA OF A "CALLING" INDIVIDUALISES NOT ONLY THE CHRISTIAN OBLIGATION, BUT THE CHRISTIAN PERSON. Paul had no conception of a social Christianity apart from the personal righteousness of the men that make up society. It is *your* calling. It is quite vain for us to congratulate each other on a state of general integrity and order if we tolerate depravity in ourselves or the class to which we belong. If we have a community here of a thousand people, in which we want to see the Christian graces flourishing, our only way is to go to work and turn one and another of the thousand into a Christian person, each beginning with himself. How weary and indignant God must be at hearing the Pharisaic praises of a Christian religion, legislation, literature, country, from speakers and writers who allow Christianity to conquer no one of their propensities to pleasure or to pride! The vocation is an individual matter. Ye see it, each for himself. The work is for each. "Repent," "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," "Take up the cross and come after Me," are for each. "Ye see your calling." III. THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING ALL THIS, CHRIST'S TRUTH IS A MATTER, NOT OF PARTIAL, BUT OF UNIVERSAL APPLICATION. The Christian spirit, revelation, privilege, and promises are not meant for a class of men culled out arbitrarily here and there; not for a few persons of special constitutional proclivities or whose circumstances happen to predispose them for a spiritual plane of being, making it easy for them to reach it. The Bible makes no such exceptions. "Whosoever will." Nor is the Christian calling a whit the less universal and impartial for the reason that it is special, requiring a personal consecration. On the contrary, its speciality is the very ground of its universality. The more

definite, important, and searching you make the Christian command to be, the more will the principles of its righteousness send their pressure into every department of life, and the spirit of its charity diffuse its fragrance into every nook and corner of the household of humanity. If there were any variations excusing men from this calling, they might be expected to exist either in their nature, their place, or their time. Yet how far these things are from constituting an apology for disregarding the duty of a disciple! 1. Take the inequalities of intellectual equipment. There is not much likelihood of men's seeking a release from taking up the Christian work and cross on a plea of mental infirmity. More probably the plea of exemption will arise in the opposite quarter, and be a pretence of gifts or a culture superior to the need of faith, independent of the humiliating doctrines of the Crucified (vers. 20–24). 2. Take the excuse of unfavourable outward fortunes. What are those fortunes? Poverty and hardship? Unto the poor the gospel was first preached, and in every age it is with them that its simple and consoling truths have found their most cordial and fruitful reception. Wealth and station? But unto whom much is given, of them shall much be required. Or is it the busy and contented state of pecuniary mediocrity or a competency? Yet that is the very state which, of all others, a wise man is represented as praying for, and which common sense would pronounce most favourable to a useful and healthy piety. Indeed, the whole honest spirit of our religion disallows the evasive notion that any position can liberate the child of God from loving his Maker, serving his Saviour, and living in godly charity with his fellow-men. 3. The changing aspects of the times are just as powerless to acquit any single conscience of its accountability for a Christian walk and conversation. Principles do not change with periods. The Christ of whom it is written that He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, is not subject to fluctuation, either in the measure of His affection or in His demands for allegiance. Conclusion: Ye see your calling—1. Families. On every domestic sanctuary Christ lays the law of a consecrated and holy economy. Set thy house in order; for these earthly tabernacles are to be dissolved. And while they last they take in no calm, no abiding light, save through invisible windows that open upward into the unshadowed and undivided heaven. 2. Parents. To exercise your trust you will have to feel that the Christian character of every child committed to your charge is immeasurably the most urgent interest of your parental office. 3. Men of action. "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you." (*Bp. Huntington.*) *Behold your calling*:—A concrete fact of faith. Our vague and vagrant life is attracted by a magnetism and swayed by a will superior to itself and supremely wise and good—the Spirit of God. Behold your calling—I. IS OF GOD. Supreme, authoritative, irreversible. The call of wisdom and love. "Faithful is He that calleth you." II. HIS GLORIOUS, COMPREHENSIVE BLESSINGS. Called out of darkness into marvellous light—"unto liberty," "to peace," "to eternal life," to "holiness," to "His kingdom and glory." It is "a heavenly calling," "a holy calling." III. IS TO SPECIAL, DISTINCTIVE MODE OF LIVING. IV. IS INTENSELY PERSONAL. V. INCLUDES THE WHOLE MAN IN ALL HIS RELATIONS IN LIFE. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) **How that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.**—*Not many wise, &c., are called*:—I. THE FACT. 1. Undeniable. 2. Lamentable. 3. Worthy of consideration. II. THE REASON. Not that God despises human wisdom, &c.—it is His gift—but that these gifts are perverted—1. By pride, in judging the things of God which are beyond human understanding. 2. By unbelief which rejects salvation. 3. By moral blindness occasioning self-sufficiency and independence. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The few and the many*:—1. There is a great difference between a historical statement and a doctrinal one. The former tells you something which is true with reference to a particular place or time; the latter what is always and everywhere true. It must, therefore, often be a grave, often a most ridiculous blunder, to take the one for the other. 2. Now, here is a statement which has been often taken as if it were doctrinal, though it is, in fact, historical, with mischievous results; for if these classes are always to be reckoned unchristian and unbelieving—(1) Thoughtful men of all classes would, on that account alone, hesitate to embrace the gospel. If Christianity were only fit for the mob, its prospects would be poor, especially as the education of the people will not suffer from having now been made a national affair. (2) It would be a misfortune for the world if what we call civilisation advances. Each generation more nearly than its predecessor approaches to the condition of the privileged classes of society—the wise, the mighty, the noble. 3. On the other hand, consider the text

as historical, and it is plain enough. We still sometimes hear explanations given of how it is that the learned and the great and the noble are not Christians, but—(1) These explanations account for what is not the fact, for there are as many Christians among cultivated and aristocratic people as in any other class; and—(2) These explanations, as a rule, would not account for the fact, if it were one. It is nonsense, *e.g.*, to say that wise men in their conceit reject Christianity because it is simple or because it is supernatural; for there is more conceit, not with those who have some knowledge, but with those who have none. 4. Now if we glance at Corinth, it is easy to understand why the classes specified were more reluctant than others to embrace Christianity. I. As regards THE "WISE MEN AFTER THE FLESH." 1. By these the apostle did not mean the great sages of antiquity. It would certainly not be anything to boast of if we had to suppose that Christianity rejected them or they it; for one could wish that the majority of Christians had attained to as lofty, as enlightened ideas as some in the golden age of Greek wisdom entertained and taught. But we have to do here with the men of a degenerate time—smatterers, would-be wise men, pretenders to universal knowledge, which is often largest and loudest where ignorance and frivolity divide between them the empire of the human mind. 2. Nor were they thinkers of our modern type. (1) The principles according to which our scientific men conduct their inquiries are modern discoveries. Our wise men try to discover the facts of nature, life, and history, and construct their theories according to the facts. But exactly the reverse was the common way of the wise men here spoken of. (2) Our modern thinkers are seekers after truth, and they are as likely to discover the truth of Christianity as other people, if not more so. These ancient wise men, on the other hand, were rather like our ignorant and superstitious masses, who take a side without candid inquiry, and are resolute to defend their side just because it is theirs. (3) Our literary and scientific men, as far as they are faithful to their vocation, inquire each man for and by himself, and own no allegiance to a party or a master, but to truth alone. But these ancient wise men, as leaders or adherents of their school, enjoyed what credit and influence they had, and were jealous of new opinions, as possibly inimical to their authority and its repute. II. As regards THE MIGHTY AND THE NOBLE. 1. When Christianity was new it had all the disadvantages of novelty. (1) So it most repelled those who had least to gain and most to lose by any change. These, of course, were the privileged classes here mentioned. (2) Remember, too, that the changes which Christianity threatened were the most violent, and therefore the most distasteful possible to these classes. They were free, and a great part of the community were their slaves. It is now a maxim—thanks to Christianity—that property has its duties as well as its rights. But that maxim had no existence then. (3) Then it was not some magnate of their own lofty order, or even of their own race, who told those lords of many to become the servants of all; it was a company of artisans, fishermen, slaves, foreigners. (4) Then consider that the gospel was gospel in those days. It was a plain, straightforward declaration of the truth that God is love, and man's true life is love; that to be selfish is to be damned, to love is to be saved. 2. The gospel has no longer these disadvantages. When sons of nobles are ill-paid clergymen, and sovereigns and statesmen are gratuitous defenders of the faith, there is nothing to hinder the great and noble, any more than the poor and lowly, from professing Christianity. And, as regards the practice of Christianity, the case is not different. The mighty and the noble, as a matter of course, now accept, along with their honours and their privileges, a host of duties, public and social, which are enjoined rather by public opinion than by law. So much are things changed, property now has not only duties as well as rights, but has fewer rights than duties, and there are at least as many of these classes as of any other who exhibit the true spirit of Christianity in lives of faith towards God and charity towards men. (*J. Service, D.D.*) *The benefits arising from human learning to Christianity*:—1. Of all the apostles St. Paul was the one endued with the greatest natural powers, cultivated with the most assiduous care, and one would have expected him ever to have been the advocate of knowledge. Against this, however, the text is often quoted. But this admits of a double construction—either "that not many wise men after the flesh" were called to believe the gospel, or were called to preach the gospel. Now, that the former interpretation is erroneous will be apparent when we tell you that, although during Christ's life the majority of the Pharisees and rulers did not believe on Him (John vii. 48; comp. xii. 42), immediately after the day of Pentecost a great company of the priests became obedient unto the faith (Acts vi. 7), and also that "many of those

who used curious arts at Ephesus brought their books together, and burned them before all men" (Acts xix. 19, 20). Since these two classes, converted to the faith, are to be reckoned amongst the wise and learned, with truth it cannot be said, "Not many wise men after the flesh are called" to become disciples of the Messiah. So we conclude that the text means that "not many wise men after the flesh," &c., called the Corinthians into the gospel. 2. Should, however, the correctness of the present version be maintained, we still deny that it was written to warn us against the acquisition of human learning, for the use and abuse of knowledge are not identical, and the text thus understood could only apply to the Greeks, who preferred their wisdom to revelation, and to the Jews, who, having misinterpreted their Scriptures, required a sign to confirm that misinterpretation. The passage which was intended to apply to such as these can never be quoted to condemn that which only becomes reprehensible when it is not made subservient to the religion of our Lord. This is a conclusion worthy your attention, inasmuch as, if disproved, it would tend to cause the pious scholar to throw aside all the aids he might derive from history, criticism, and science in explaining and defending the oracles of God. That such a course would prove a serious detriment to religion the records of our race abundantly testify. Where ignorance has prevailed, there infidelity or superstition has abounded, whilst in the train of knowledge more accurate conceptions of the Deity and of social duties have ever followed. When Christianity was spreading many of the wise, indeed, rejected it, but the more obstinate were found among those whose prejudices in favour of their ancient faith remained unshaken, because their minds had not been trained by knowledge to estimate the value of those doctrines propounded for their acceptance. Note, then—I. THE ADVANTAGES OF KNOWLEDGE TO RELIGION. 1. The annals of the Reformation speak an unmistakable language in favour of human acquirements. 2. It is from the arsenal of knowledge that the most formidable weapons have been taken wherewith to resist the assaults of infidelity. 3. The benefits of a knowledge of science, history, &c., to the missionary are simply incalculable. 4. The cultivation of learning greatly conduces to a right understanding of the Bible. II. THE OPPOSITION TO KNOWLEDGE commenced in primitive times. Whilst Origen and Clement recommended the study of literature, Tertullian declaimed against it as the source of those heresies which disturbed the peace of the Church. Because philosophers had erred philosophy was condemned; and yet, in defiance of the experience which has proved that there is no necessary connection between philosophy and infidelity, in spite of the fact that Newton and Bacon and Pascal and Boyle have submitted their powerful minds to the teaching of the gospel, the same objection and the same plea is boldly advanced. III. THE ABUSES TO WHICH IT IS LIABLE. 1. Prior to the promulgation of the gospel (though there then existed minds as powerful as any which have since adorned the pages of history) the grossest immorality prevailed amongst the wise ones of the earth. Hence we deduce the fact that by itself "the wisdom of the world" now, as then, is unable to reform the morals of mankind. "The world by wisdom knew not God"; and the writings of infidels have confirmed the assertion of our apostle. 2. Knowledge is fatally abused when Scripture is wrested from its obvious meaning in order to make it coincide with some cherished theory or to advance some favourite doctrine. Suppose that by an induction of facts we arrive at a conclusion opposed to a certain portion of the Bible, our duty is to extend our observation till we obtain a result in accordance with that indicated in the Word of God. (*D. H. Cotes, LL.B.*) *God's strange choice*:—Note—I. THE ELECTOR. Some men are saved and some men are not saved. How is this difference caused? The reason why any sink to hell is their sin, and only their sin. But how is it that others are saved? The text answers the question three times—"God hath chosen." This will be clear if we consider—1. The facts. God elected fallen man, but not the fallen angels; Abraham, the Jews, David, &c. God is a king. Men may set up a constitutional monarchy, and they are right in so doing; but if you could find a being who was perfection itself, an absolute form of government would be undeniably the best. The absolute position of God as king demands that, especially in the work of salvation, His will should be the great determining force. 2. The figures—(1) Salvation consists in part of an adoption. Who is to have authority in this matter? The children of wrath? Surely not. It must be God who chooses His own children. (2) The Church, again, is called—(*a*) A building. With whom does the architecture rest? With the building? Do the stones select themselves? No; the Architect alone disposes of His chosen materials according to His own will. (*b*) Christ's bride.

Would any man here agree to have any person forced upon him as his bride? II. THE ELECTION ITSELF. Now observe—1. How strange is the choice He makes. "He hath not chosen many wise," &c. If man had received the power of choosing, these are just the persons who would have been selected. "But God hath chosen," &c. If man had governed the selection, these are the very persons who would have been left out. 2. It is directly contrary to human choice. Man chooses those who would be most helpful to him; God chooses those to whom He can be the most helpful. We select those who may give us the best return; God frequently selects those who most need His aid. We select those who are most deserving; He selects those who are least deserving, that so His choice may be more clearly seen to be an act of grace and not of merit. 3. It is very gracious. It is gracious even in its exclusion. It does not say, "Not any," it only says, "Not many"; so that the great are not altogether shut out. Grace is proclaimed to the prince, and in heaven there are those who on earth wore coronets and prayed. 4. It is very encouraging. Some of us cannot boast of any pedigree; we have no great learning, we have no wealth, but He has been pleased to choose just such foolish, despised creatures as ourselves. III. THE ELECTED. They are described—1. Negatively. (1) "Not many wise men after the flesh." God has chosen truly wise men, but the *sophoi*—the men who pretend to wisdom, the cunning, the metaphysical, the rabbis, the doctors, the men who look down with profound scorn upon the illiterate and call them idiots, these are not chosen in any great number. Strange, is it not? and yet a good reason is given. If they were chosen, why then they would say, "Ah! how much the gospel owes to us! How our wisdom helps it!" (2) "Not many mighty." And you see why—because the mighty might have said, "Christianity spreads because of the good temper of our swords and the strength of our arm." We can all understand the progress of Mahommedanism during its first three centuries. (3) "Not many noble," for nobility might have been thought to stamp the gospel with its prestige. 2. Positively. "God hath chosen"—(1) "The foolish things"; as if the Lord's chosen were not by nature good enough to be called men, but were only "things." (2) "The weak things"—not merely weak men, but the world thought them weak things." "Ah!" said Cæsar in the hall, if he said anything at all about it, "Who is King Jesus? A poor wretch who was hanged upon a tree! Who is this Paul? A tent-maker! Who are his followers? A few despised women who meet him at the water-side." (3) "The base things"—things without a father, things which cannot trace their descent. (4) "Things that are despised," sneered at, persecuted, hunted about, or treated with what is worse, with the indifference which is worse than scorn. (5) "Things that are not" hath God chosen. Nothings, nonentities. IV. THE REASONS FOR THE ELECTION. 1. The immediate reason. (1) "To confound the wise." For one wise man to confound another wise man is remarkable; for a wise man to confound a foolish man is very easy; but for a foolish man to confound a wise man—ah! this is the finger of God. (2) "To confound the mighty." "Oh!" said Cæsar, "we will soon root up this Christianity; off with their heads." The different governors hastened one after another of the disciples to death, but the more they persecuted them the more they multiplied. All the swords of the legionaries which had put to rout the armies of all nations, and had overcome the invincible Gaul and the savage Briton, could not withstand the feebleness of Christianity, for the weakness of God is mightier than men. (3) "To bring to nought the things that are." What were they in the apostle's days? Jupiter, Saturn, Venus, Diana. Here comes Paul with "There is no God but God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent." He represents "the things that are not." So contemptible is the heresy of Christianity that if a list were made out of contemporary religions of different countries Christianity would have been left out. But where are Jupiter, &c., now? What was true in Paul's day is true to-day. Existing superstitions, though attacked by those who are things that are not, shall yet cease to be, and the truth as it is in Jesus, and the pure simple faith backed by the Spirit of God, shall bring to nought the things that are. 2. The ultimate reason is "that no flesh may glory in His presence." He does not say "that no man"; no, the text is in no humour to please anybody; it says, "that no flesh." What a word! Here are Solon and Socrates, the wise men. God points at them with His finger and calls them "flesh." There is Cæsar, with his imperial purple; how the Prætorian guards shout, "Great is the Emperor! long may he live!" "Flesh," saith God's Word. Here are men whose sires were of royal lineage. "Flesh," says God. "That no flesh may glory in His presence." God puts this stamp upon us all,

that we are nothing but flesh, and He chooses the poorest, the most foolish, and the weakest flesh, that all the other flesh that is only flesh and only grass may see that God pours contempt on it, and will have no flesh glory in His presence. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Weak things chosen* :—Luther says: "Next unto my just cause the small repute and mean aspect of my person gave the blow to the Pope; for when I began to preach and write the Pope scorned and contemned me. He thought, 'Tis but one poor friar; what can he do against me?' I have maintained and defended this doctrine in Popedom, against emperors, kings, and princes; what, then, shall this one man do?" We all know what the one man did, and we often see that weak ones who come in the name of the Lord of Hosts conquer where stronger ones have failed. The Lord often chooses weak things in order that we may more easily see that the victory is due to Him. *God's choice of instruments* :—A native convert originally belonging to one of the lowest castes thus delivered himself in my hearing: "I am, by birth, of an insignificant and contemptible caste—so low that if a Brahmin should touch me he must go and bathe in the Ganges for purification; and yet God has called me, not merely to the knowledge of the gospel, but to the high office of teaching it to others. My friends, do you know the reason of God's conduct? It is this: If God had selected one of you learned Brahmins, and made you the preacher, when you were successful in making converts bystanders would have said it was the amazing learning of the Brahmin and his great weight of character that were the cause; but now, when any one is converted by my instrumentality, no one thinks of ascribing any of the praise to me, and God, as is His due, has all the glory." (*H. Townley.*) *The gospel ministry—its power exemplified in the Corinthians* :—In proof of the superiority of the gospel over human learning, the apostle points to their own knowledge of the working of the Divine power and wisdom. Two facts are adduced in proof. I. THE UNFAVOURABLE CONDITION IN WHICH THE GOSPEL FOUND THEM, AND HOW IT MADE THEM THE SUBJECTS OF ITS POWER. The apostle divides society into two classes—1. The one consisting of the wise, the mighty, and the well-born—the man of thought, the man of action, and the man of leisure. These three he further describes as those who "are" (ver. 28)—those who are deemed somebody, the recognised of the world; those for whose sole interest all things are deemed to exist—what would now be termed "society." 2. The other class consists of the foolish, the weak, and the base, or despised, &c. Those forming this class are further described as those which "are not." They were those who had no status, and were ignored by the world as things utterly beneath notice. Of this class were the bulk of the Corinthian believers. "For ye see your calling." Thus it will be seen that the gospel chose as the subjects of its gracious operations—(1) Those whom the so-called wise, mighty, and noble utterly neglected, those who in the estimation of the world "are not." (2) Those who were incapable of helping themselves. Supposing they had been able to help themselves, society's neglect of them would not have mattered so much. Their utter helplessness is indicated by the descriptive epithets. But to such as these came the gospel. This proves its truly benevolent character, and sets it in direct contrast to the world's ways and methods. The spirit of this world is always to give where it sees the prospect of a return. The ancient gods always bestowed their favours upon those who brought to their altars the costliest sacrifices. The world follows the example of its gods. But it is the glory of the gospel that it seeks out the foolish, the weak, the base, and despised (Matt. xi. 4, 5). It was a new thing in the world to supply a gospel to the poor. A gospel preached to the poor must be something more than human. God alone can afford such grace as this. II. ITS EFFECTS UPON ITS SUBJECTS FAR TRANSCENDS THE WORLD'S HIGHEST GOOD AND MOST DESIRABLE POSSESSIONS. The world's highest good are wisdom, might, and nobility, *i.e.*, culture, prowess, and rank. But the gospel bestows upon its subjects far higher things (ver. 30). 1. "Things that are not," *i.e.*, without a status in the world, obtain one in Christ—one infinitely surpassing anything the world can boast of. 2. In Christ they are endowed with qualities far transcending the world's best gifts. Has the world wisdom, might, and nobility? The gospel—(1) Endues men with a wisdom far surpassing in worth the world's highest philosophy or culture—the wisdom that makes wise unto salvation. (2) It confers a might far surpassing in degree and nature the might of the world—the might of right. (3) It endows with a nobility far more glorious than that of blood, the nobility of holiness. Nobility gives a right of entrance into the highest society, holiness into the heavenly society. It requires blood to give the social nobility that men prize. Similarly the spiritual nobility comes of

the blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. And by virtue of this we become endowed with rank. The blood is royal blood, and they who come under its influence become royally related—they become kings and priests to God His Father. (4) They who "are not" are redeemed. This state of "being not," *i.e.*, of being without social status, implies a state of slavery. But He Who was made for them redemption brings them freedom from the bondage and degradation of sin, a freedom far more glorious than any social one. From being slaves of sin, and though still slaves of men, they become, not merely free, but sons of the heavenly King. (*A. J. Parry.*) **But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.**—*God's choice of the weak and foolish to confound the wise and mighty* :—Dr. Vinton was a sceptical physician. A friend advised him to read "Butler's Analogy," which satisfied his reason. A short time after he was called to the dying bed of a little girl who whispered that she had something to say to him, that she hardly had the courage, as it was about his peace with God; but she added, "To-morrow morning, when I am stronger, I will tell you." And on to-morrow morning she was dead. This led to Dr. Vinton's conversion, and a grand life in the ministry was the result. Who shall deny that "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty"? (*Bp. Phillips Brooks.*) *God's choice of feeble agencies* :—I. THE FACT. 1. God has chosen feeble agencies. 2. Has by them confounded the mighty. II. THE IMPORTANCE OF IT. It shows that Christianity—1. Regards all men alike. 2. Is independent of human help. 3. Is sustained only by the power of God. III. THE LESSON. 1. The humble should be thankful. 2. The proud humble. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *God destroying the conventionally great by the conventionally contemptible* :—I. EVILS EXIST UNDER CONVENTIONALLY RESPECTABLE FORMS. In Corinth dangerous errors wore the costume of wisdom. Power was also on their side. Statesmen, wealth, and influence stood by them, and they appeared "mighty." Here, as in Corinth, evils wear fine clothing, and pass under great names. 1. Infidelity writes and speaks in the stately formularies of philosophy and science. It is a "wise" thing of the world. 2. Licentiousness passes under the grand name of liberty. The vaunted religious liberty of England's population means often only power to neglect sacred ordinances. 3. Social injustice does most of its fiendish work in the name of law. 4. Selfishness goes under the taking name of prudence. 5. Bigotry, superstition, fanaticism, wear the sacred name of religion. 6. War is called glory. Could we take from sin the mantle of respectability that society has thrown over it, we should do much towards its annihilation. II. GOD IS DETERMINED TO OVERTHROW EVIL BY CONVENTIONALLY CONTEMPTIBLE MEANS. 1. Negatively. This language does not mean—(1) That the gospel is an inferior thing. The gospel is not "foolish," "weak," or "base." As a history of facts, as a system of thought, as a code of laws, it is incomparably the grandest thing within the whole range of human thought. What light it throws on man, the universe, God! What influence it has exerted, and what changes it has wrought! (2) That the men appointed as its ministers are to be inferior. This passage has been abused to support the claims of an ignorant ministry, than which few things have tended more to degrade Christianity. There are several things to show that the gospel ministry requires the highest order of mind. (*a*) The character of the work: "Teaching men in all wisdom." (*b*) The character of the system. What a system it is to learn! What mines of truth lie beneath the surface of the letter! What digging is required to reach the golden ore! Simpletons call the gospel simple, but intelligence has ever found it of all subjects the most profound and difficult. The greatest thinkers of all ages have found the work no easy task. (*c*) The character of society. Who exerts the most influence upon the real life of the men and women around him? The man of capacity, thought, sound judgment. If the gospel ministry is to influence men, it must be employed by men of the highest type of culture and ability. (*d*) The spirit of the work. Humble, charitable, forbearing, reverent. Such a spirit as this comes only from deep thought and extensive knowledge. Ignorance generates a spirit of pride, bigotry, intolerance, and irreverence. (*e*) The character of the apostles. Where can you find greater force of soul than Peter's, a more searching sagacity than James's, a more royal intellect than Paul's, a finer intuitional nature than John's? They were men of talent and men of thought. And more, they all understood Hebrew and Greek. We require a long college course for this, and then only very partially reach their linguistical attainments. 2. Positively. It means—(1) That the gospel was conventionally mean. It was so in the estimation of the age. The schools, religions, institutions, and great men of the day regarded it with contempt. It

was a "foolish" thing to the Greek, a "weak" thing to the Jew, and a "base" and "contemptible" thing more or less to all. (2) The first ministers were conventionally mean. They were not selected from chairs of philosophy, or seats of civil power, or homes of opulence. They were fishermen. The system and its ministers, however, are merely conventionally contemptible, nothing more. But these, like many other things that erring man regard as insignificant and mean, shall do a great work. The flake of snow is insignificant, but it is commissioned to build up a mountain that shall overwhelm widespread districts. The coral insect is insignificant, but it builds up vast islands, beautiful as paradise. The insignificant things do the work of the world. They clothe the earth with verdure, and provide subsistence for man and beast; they rear majestic forests, and provide materials for building our cities and our fleets. Even so the gospel. What work it has already done! What systems it has shattered! What towering institutions it has levelled to the dust! It has "brought to nought" a vast world of things; and so it shall proceed until all the "things that are" great in the estimation of man, but bad in themselves, are for ever brought to "nought." The little pebble shall smite the giant and send him reeling to the grave; the little stone shall shiver the colossus and scatter its particles to the winds. Conclusion: From this subject we may infer—1. That so long as evils exist in the world great commotions are to be expected. God hath chosen this system to confound, to put to shame, and bring to nought things that are. "It will overturn, overturn, overturn," the whole system of human things. The gospel, when it first enters a soul, confounds it. When it enters a country and begins its work it is revolutionary in its action. In the first ages it confounded the Jewish Sanhedrin, and the heathen priesthood, and the Gentile philosophy. 2. That the removal of evil from the world is, under God, to be effected through man as man. The gospel is to make its way, not by men invested with political power, scientific attainments, or brilliant oratory, but by men as men, endowed with the common powers of human nature, inspired and directed by the living gospel. Let no one say he is too poor or too obscure, too destitute of artificial endowments to minister the gospel to others; all that is wanted is the common sense, the common affection, and the common speech of man. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.—*The "things which are not": God's chosen instruments for advancing His kingdom:*—This clause is the last of a series of clauses, of which each that precedes it prepares the way for it, and by natural progress leads the mind toward it. The foolish and the weak, the base and the despised things—it is only natural that from the last and lowest of these the apostle should step to the things which are not; that is, which have no existence that is recognised by mankind; which arrest no thought, excite no fear, and are not prominent enough to be scorned. And these things, he says, the Lord hath chosen, to bring to nought the things that are; the great institutions, establishments, forces, which mark or mould the constitution of society. He hath chosen them for this purpose, to the end that His name may be magnified by their agency, and His glory be revealed in their ultimate triumph. That the "things which are," at any time, in human society, however venerable, are always liable to be displaced by others which were not in existence, or were not of recognised importance when the former were established. These are facts familiar as any fact of nature, which impress immediately the most careless observer. "Things which are not," so far as men's earlier knowledge is concerned, which exist but in embryo, and are only to be developed by a keener observation, are yet usually superior to the things which precede them, and more replete with a vitalising energy; that thus each industrious community is likely to surpass in its later years the attainments of its earlier, and the race itself to be gradually enriched and elevated as the centuries proceed; these also are facts which modern history clearly illustrates. But these things of which the age knows not and dreams not are all the time present to the mind of the Most High; they are indeed His preordained instruments, not only for working the changes which shall come in the aspects or in the life of society, but for the grander purpose of establishing supremely His kingdom in the world. So here, as everywhere, does Christianity vindicate its origin in God's mind, by placing us at once upon the highest levels of truth, and opening to our minds the widest range for reflection. Let us review the scenes amid which the text was written, and then the events which became its immediate and complete vindication. It was written from that delightful and populous city planted by the Ionian colony on the hills overlooking "the Asian meadows," along the Cayster.

In this city of Ephesus, important and peculiar, partly Greek but still more Oriental in its manners and spirit, the metropolis of a province, and with a commerce that drew to its wharves the representatives of all nations, in which schools of philosophy seem so much to have abounded that one of them was opened to Paul for his labours, yet in which the Eastern superstitions and magic haughtily confronted philosophy, and still had a power which they had not either at Athens or at Rome. In this city, where the East and the West were commingled, and within whose spacious walls and harbour was assembled so busy and so various a life, the apostle, coming westward from Antioch, abode for more than two years, and from thence wrote this Epistle. It was written to Corinth, that wealthier, more brilliant, and more luxurious town planted upon the celebrated Greek Isthmus, and by its position attracting the trade not only of Greece, but of all the countries whose shores were washed by either of the seas between whose almost meeting waves it fortunately stood. It is evident, then, at once, what were the institutions which Paul describes as "things that are"; the great established powers in society, which withstood, or at least did not harmonise with, the extension of Christianity. Foremost amongst them we must reckon, of course, that haughty Judaism, dogmatic and secular, into which the religion given by God to the people of His election had by degrees been transformed, and which now had the seat of its dominion in Palestine, but the outposts of its influence in many cities of the empire. Ennobled and vitalised as it had been at the beginning, by the supreme truth of the being of God, eternal and holy, almighty and wise, the Creator, moral Governor, and Judge of the universe, it received a practical impressiveness from the discoveries which it made of His presence and providence, and of His perfect law. Yet from this religion the nation had early and persistently swung away into grossest idolatries, reproducing in gold the Egyptian Apis beneath the very pavement of sapphire on which the feet of God were treading above the mount; in their subsequent history, polluting the hills which looked out upon Jerusalem with the fury and lust of sacrilegious observances. Second in order of these "things that are"—these powerful institutes of the day of the apostle, opposed to Christianity—must be reckoned of course the heathenism which prevailed outside of the Jews among all nations; which confronted Paul everywhere, ancient as man, but still vigorous in strength, imperial in place, and arrayed in universal opposition to the gospel. First of all it is to be recognised by us that this heathenism which so withstood Christianity was not an altogether artificial system in any nation; that it grew out of real and even deep motions in the general mind, and was not in its substance a matter of chance or a creature of contrivance, least of all an arbitrary and fabricated arrangement either of statecraft or of priestcraft; nay, that it had a certain real moral life in it, and was related not to depraved desire alone, to the lust and the pride which it never denied and too often deified, but related also, however insufficiently, to needs which the soul always feels to be inmost and knows to be abiding. Its answer was a vain one, but it sought to give an answer, to questions which never since the exile from Eden have ceased profoundly to agitate the race. Unconscious prophecies of better things lurked in many of its forms and in some of its traditions. Its sacrifices were efforts to staunch the flow from bleeding hearts. And while the popular mind acknowledged chiefly the hold of its ceremonies and shows, the thoughtful found also some solace or stimulus in its sublimated legends. Then further it must be noticed that as existing in any nation it took the form most germane to that people, to its genius and spirit, to its circumstances and habits; and that everywhere it allied itself with whatever was strongest, whatever most attracted men's minds. Thus in Greece, from the first, it enshrined itself in art; made eloquence its advocate; was indebted for the memorable form which it assumed to the noble poetry in which its mythologies were melodiously uttered. In Rome the same power allied itself with politics, and became a military force. Still further we must remember that in no land was this recent; in none was it devoid of that dignity and authority which were derived from a high antiquity; while to all the peoples, in proportion to their advancement, it was associated with whatever was to them most renowned and inspiring in their history. It was dear to them as the bond which connected their life with heroic ages. There remains a third thing to be recognised as standing among the "things that are"—the powerful institutes and establishments of society, opposed to Christianity—when Paul was writing from Ephesus to Corinth. But this was also the most powerful of all; the most dangerous to assail, to human view the

most inaccessible to change or decay; supreme over every force that could touch it, and comparing with them all as the Mediterranean with the restless streams which sought and sank into it. It was, of course, the authority and power of imperial Rome. It was hardly as yet at its uttermost height, this imperial power; for scores of years still slowly passed before that age of Trajan and the Antonines which marked its consummate might and splendour; while it was later even than this that Severus carried his victorious arms to Ctesiphon and Seleucia, transferred the entire legislative power from the senate to himself, and scattered the profuse memorial of his reign over Africa and the East. And so was this empire now exhibited to Paul, encircling the sea which was the centre of his thoughts, from Carthage to Alexandria, from Alexandria to Ephesus, and on to the very pillars of Hercules, with no sign of weakness. Considering its history, its growth, it seemed hardly so much a construction of man, this empire of Rome, as one of the pre-ordained elements of nature; reaching in its exhaustive roots to the centres of history, and draining the earth to give it nutriment. So it stood before Paul, as at Ephesus he saw it, as everywhere he met it, as he knew and felt it environing the earth. And Paul knew that this mightiest establishment of government on the earth, this impregnable despotism which was touched by no fear, against which human power seemed vain, that this should also, in God's own time, be wrecked and "brought to nought." But how should it be done? By what agencies should each of these prophesied victories over Judaism, heathenism, and the terrible iron-limbed empire of Rome, be brought to pass? Not, he affirms, by the forces which already are at work in the world, and which may be still further multiplied, and made to bear on this new issue; not by armies revolting, or statesmen conspiring, or philosophers projecting new answers to heathenism; not by nations reclaiming their ravaged rights, or the still existing senate combining with the people to bury the haughty imperial prerogative in a cataclysm of revolution. The forces which God shall employ for this work, and to which He shall give a might irresistible, are simply thus far the "things which are not"; the things which He alone can bring out of the secrets of thought and life, and make triumphant on their mission. How utterly insignificant was Christianity in the beginnings before one temple had sprung toward heaven; before one treatise had wrought its principles into scientific statement, or clothed them in the grace and the majesty of letters; before any government had sought to incorporate its rules into statutes; before any one of all the great names now associated with it had become its bulwark in the popular confidence. In the simply spiritual elements it involved, it was set against this array which opposed it; and of all the auxiliaries which it afterward gained, not one had as yet appeared on the earth. How utterly insignificant seemed then its force! How incredibly inadequate to the end to be accomplished! The truths which had been taught the apostles, and afterward recalled to them and unfolded more fully by the witness of the Spirit, and which were to be enshrined in evangelical narratives, not one of which had yet been written—these were the primary instruments to be used, with the oral proclamation of their principles and laws, for the spread of God's kingdom, and the overthrow of whatever withstood its advance. And these!—it seemed like binding the lightning in the meshes and knots of metaphysical argument. Epistles and talks in the synagogue against armies! The might that lay on letters and lips against the might that ruled from thrones! The publication of doctrines against establishments of power as rooted as the hills! And yet these were the very agencies—these "things which were not" in every sense—which were not regarded, and which hitherto existed only in germ, these Gospels and Epistles which were still to be written, these teachings and preachings which had scarcely commenced, these Christian forces in life and character which hardly thus far had appeared on the earth — these were the forces which God had chosen to bring to nought the "things that were"—the ancient, immense, and impregnable institutions that stood in all their august might and tremendous effectiveness fronting the gospel. Not with energy only, but with an exact precision of speech, had Paul then described them. The philosopher thought of them, if he thought of them at all, with a contempt only greater than that which he gave to the most absurd or childish of fables. The soldier regarded them less than the mists which had hovered last year around the crests of the hills. To the Jew, in comparison of his august forms and world-challenging miracles, they seemed as frail and shadowy as dreams. The whole wisdom of the world anticipated as little an impression from them as we that the tiny animalculæ in the ocean, streaking its waves with phosphorescent glow, will

arrest the revolution of shaft and wheel, and stay the steamship on its march. Those secondary forces, too, which were in time to be evolved by God's plans, and confederated in effective alliance with these, although, of course, existing in embryo, they were, if possible, still more unrecognised, and even unrealised, when Paul was writing. The awakening spiritual longings under Judaism, at which his ministry to so large an extent was sympathetically aimed; the awakening moral instincts within heathenism, whose premonitions he must have felt, of which Plutarch soon afterward became so illustrious an example; the gradual progress of moral decline in all the systems that were rooted in error and maintained by force —all these were things which one by one came into development, each in its time, as the truths and the spirit of the gospel went forward, but which were as latent, when Paul looked forth from Ephesus on the sea, as were the germs of modern oaks. And those still additional procedures and events, also auxiliary to these more silent forces, already were purposed in the mind of the Most High; already He saw their seeds unfolding; but how vaguely, if at all, were they thus far foreshown even to Paul; how entirely unsuspected were they yet by the world! The destruction of Jerusalem by the arms of Titus, who seems to have felt himself but the instrument of a power which he could not comprehend and could not contravene, in his overthrow of the city; the consequent extinction of the Jewish nationality, the final obliteration of all distinctions between the tribes, and the scattering of their impoverished remnant to the ends of the earth—this was a fact lying still as hidden among God's plans. Judaism was surpassed and terminated in a higher religion, more adequate to man's wants, more illustrative of God's glory. Heathenism was not only broken down, but it was made, thenceforth and for ever, the veriest outcast of civilisation. The Roman Empire was as finally extinguished as if the crust of the globe had been opened to swallow it up. And all was wrought within a few centuries by what at the outset had appeared so unreal or so ineffectual. (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*)

Ver. 30. **But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.**—*The life of the Christian from Christ*:—In using these words the apostle seems to have in mind the principal phases of Christ's being. I. WISDOM, by His life and teaching. II. RIGHTEOUSNESS, by His death and resurrection. III. SANCTIFICATION, by His elevation to glory. IV. REDEMPTION, by His future return. (*Prof. Godet.*) *The union of the genuine disciple with his Master*:—This union is—I. MOST VITAL. "In Christ," not merely in His school, dispensation, character, but in Himself, as branches are in the vine. He is their life. II. DIVINELY FORMED. "Of Him"—Whom? God. It is the Eternal Spirit that brings the soul into vital connection with Christ. "My Father is the Husbandman." III. BLESSEDLY PRODUCTIVE. 1. Wisdom. 2. Righteousness. 3. Sanctification. 4. Redemption, come out of this union. What transcendent blessings are these! IV. EXULTINGLY ADORING (ver. 31). It inspires the highest worship. It causes the soul to triumph to God Himself. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The connection of Christ with Christians*:—I. A MOST INTIMATE CONNECTION EXISTS BETWEEN CHRIST AND CHRISTIANS. "In Christ." The connection is—1. Real. "Ye are in Christ Jesus." Not imaginary; not theoretical; not prospective. 2. Vital. Not that of a sapless branch with a decayed root; not that of a pulseless arm with a lifeless head. 3. Essential to the continuance of spiritual life. Not merely a life like Christ's, but a life that is a part of Christ's life. The temperament of Christ pervades the whole body. II. THIS CONNECTION HAS BEEN FORMED BY GOD. "Of Him." Our Lord referred to Divine operation as well as supervision when He said, "My Father is the Husbandman" (Comp. Rom. xi. 17–24). Union with Christ is—1. Not natural. Our natural condition is one of separation and alienation. 2. Not affected by human agency; neither our own, nor another's. 3. Effected by Divine agency—(1) Incomprehensible in the mode of operation. (2) Inexplicable in the selection of its subjects. III. THIS CONNECTION HAS BEEN PRODUCTIVE OF MOST ADVANTAGEOUS RESULTS TO CHRISTIANS. These, as well as the connection, are of Divine ordination. 1. Observe the progression of thought. (1) There is the truth by which the mind is arrested, instructed, convinced, strengthened, and elevated. (2) There is the work *without* us by virtue of which we are accepted and treated as righteous; conjoined with—(3) The work *within* us by virtue of which we are purified and made actually righteous. (4) There is the final deliverance from all evil; when with the redemption of the body the soul will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God;

when salvation will be consummated in the glorification of all. 2. Christ is—(1) Our wisdom. He said "I am the truth." He is "the light of the world." He is that by which we are enlightened. The condition of the non-Christian is described in Eph. iv. 18, and Rom. x. 3. Ignorant of our real spiritual state, Christ enlightens us respecting it. Ignorant of our relation to God, Christ reveals our alienation from Him, and invites us to be reconciled. Ignorant of what is to be done, Christ tells us what is essential. Ignorant of the way of salvation, Christ says, "I am the way," &c. (2) Our righteousness. The revelation of truth is not all we want. Christ was not only the Revealer but the Doer, not only the Teacher but the Mediator. The condition of the non-Christian is represented as one of condemnation, guilt, and rebellion. Out of this we are brought by Christ. He is our Representative; in nature and character perfect; possessing immaculate righteousness; therefore competent to appear and act for us. His life and death of obedience are accepted on our behalf, and we are accepted through Him. The rebel is pardoned; alienation is displaced by friendship; as virtually righteous he is received into God's family, a joint heir with Christ. (3) Our sanctification. The condition of the non-Christian is one of corruption and defilement. Christ will have all His followers conformed to His image. The process of sanctification is—(*a*) Effected by direct and indirect agency. Direct. The influence of Spirit upon spirit. "The Spirit dwelleth in you," &c. Indirect. Christian ordinances and privileges, providential circumstances, social influences; every temptation resisted, trial endured, difficulty overcome, passion quelled, habit corrected; triumph over self, steadfast opposition to evil, loss suffered for the cause of Christ; manful exhibition of godliness, true-hearted adherence to principle. (*b*) Invisible and indescribable. More mystery respecting the internal work of the Spirit than the external work of Christ. Facts perceived by the senses are more easily described than those perceived by consciousness. (*c*) Sometimes prolonged. If immediacy may be regarded as a characteristic of justification, progressiveness is characteristic of sanctification. It is the work of our lifetime. (*d*) Generally apparently incomplete. But we cannot unveil the spiritual world. What constitutes completeness? Enough for us to aim at her lofty attainment. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father," &c. (4) Our redemption. Reference to the final release from the bondage, dangers, and trials of humanity. The condition of the non-Christian is one of bondage to sin (2 Pet. ii. 19). Christ makes His people free. The liberty of the sons of God includes not only release from the condemnation of law and from the power of sin, but also from the laws and limitations of human nature; from the habits which bind us, and dispositions which enslave us; from the annoyances of earthly life; from associations with evil; from injurious influences, human and satanic. IV. THIS CONNECTION AND ITS RESULTS ARE DESIGNED TO PROMOTE THE GLORY OF GOD (vers. 29, 31). Not to glorify ourselves, but to live, in time and in eternity, to the glory of His grace, who "hath made us accepted in the Beloved." (*T. T. Waterman, B.A.*) *The relation of Christ to His people*:—He is set forth as made unto us—I. "WISDOM." A controversy has been carried on as to the character of real wisdom from the days of Job (Job xxviii. 20). But his definition is the only correct one (ver. 18). 1. What is wisdom unconnected with Christ? It can elevate man's mind by leading it up the pathway of science, it can help to the study of men and manners, it may solve some of the higher problems of morality. But its best efforts are only as the light of the taper compared with the sun. It cannot bestow peace or joy in the moment of trial, or in the day of death. 2. What is wisdom connected with Christ (James iii. 17)? II. "RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. xxiii. 6; Rom. viii. 33). III. "SANCTIFICATION." 1. It is necessary to distinguish between justification and sanctification. They differ essentially—(1) In their nature; the one being an alteration of his state in the sight of God, the other a change in his character before man and his conscience. (2) In their causes; the former is imputed through Christ's obedience, the latter is communicated by the Holy Spirit's influence. 2. Sanctification is a difficult work, so far as we are concerned in it. (1) Our nature is opposed to it. (2) The world generally is opposed to it. (3) Satan with all his varied instruments are opposed to it. 3. But yet it is possible and easy; for Christ is made such unto us. How is this? It is simply to have Christ enter the lists with sin in us (Phil. iv. 13; 1 Thess. v. 23). IV. "REDEMPTION." Our present redemption is only partial. We have a privilege to come into God's presence, &c. Nevertheless the "glorious liberty of the sons of God" yet remains to be enjoyed. Then every fetter shall be knocked off. The mind no longer shall be hindered in

its investigations; the heart shall be deceitful no more; the body itself shall no more be weary. (*G. F. Galaher, M.A.*) *What is Christ to us*:—I. OUR PROPHET TO IMPART WISDOM. 1. Anointing us with His Spirit. 2. Revealing Himself in us. 3. Giving us understanding to know Him as the only way to the Father. II. OUR HIGH PRIEST TO IMPART RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. Making atonement for us. 2. Pronouncing our absolution. 3. Constantly interceding for us at the right hand of God. III. OUR KING TO COMMUNICATE HOLINESS. 1. Pouring out His Spirit. 2. Ruling in our hearts. 3. Giving us dominion over sin. IV. OUR FINAL DELIVERER FROM ALL EVIL. (*E. Fraser.*) *God's device for the salvation of sinners*:—I. THE WHOLE OF MAN'S SALVATION IS FROM CHRIST. God has made or constituted Him the fountain of all salvation, from whom it must be conveyed to all that shall partake of it (Psa. lxxxix. 24). 1. Man is ignorant naturally of the way to true happiness; he has lost God, and knows not how to find Him again. For remedy of this Christ is made "wisdom" (Col. ii. 3), and He is constituted the grand Teacher of all that seek for eternal happiness. 2. Man is unrighteous, and cannot stand before a righteous God. Now, the natural man, for remedy of this, goes about to work out a righteousness of his own. But when it appears in the light of the holy law, it is nothing but as a moth-eaten garment, that cannot cover the soul before the Lord (Isa. lxiv. 7). For remedy of this Christ is made righteousness. He, by His obedience to the law's commands, and suffering the wrath it threatened, hath brought in everlasting righteousness, which is a large garment, able to cover all that betake themselves to it. 3. Man is unholy, unfit for communion with a holy God here or hereafter. The natural man, to help himself in this point, calls together his natural powers, and endeavours to turn the stream of his life into the channel of the law. Some prevail this way to the reformation of their outward conversation; but there is as much difference betwixt true holiness and their attainment as between a living body and an embalmed corpse. Others find all their endeavours to no purpose, and so they come to despair of sanctification, and therefore even lay the reins on the necks of their lusts (Jer. ii. 25). But for remedy in this, Christ is made sanctification. There is a fulness of the Spirit of holiness lodged in Him, to be communicated to the unholy; and to Him God sends the unholy sinner, that out of His fulness he may receive, and grace for grace. 4. Man by the fall is become liable to many bodily infirmities and miseries, and at length must go to the grave. Nature could find no remedy for this. But man's salvation cannot be complete without a remedy; therefore Christ is made "redemption," who will give in due time deliverance to His people from misery and death (Rom. viii. 23). And in this sense He calls Himself "the resurrection and the life." II. ALL WHO ARE SAVED MUST BE SAVED BY VIRTUE OF UNION WITH CHRIST. As the stock is stay, strength, and sap, to the branches, so is Christ wisdom, &c., to those who are united to Him. The sap of the stock is not conveyed to branches that are not in it; neither is Christ wisdom, &c., to any but those who are in Him. He is the Saviour of His body; and we must be partakers of His salvation as members of His body. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Adaptedness of Christianity to man's spiritual necessities*:—This is a very strong evidence of its Divine character. 1. An individual is taken suddenly ill in the street. Persons gather round him, administering many things for his relief; but all is in vain. A stranger draws near, examines his symptoms, and from his case administers a medicine. Immediately he is relieved, and they all cry out, "He is a doctor!" His ability to make a correct diagnosis and to prescribe the proper medicine demonstrates his professional character. 2. We are all of us sinful, and suffering, and dying. Can any one provide a relief? Men have been experimenting ever since the days of Cain; the wisest and best have utterly failed. It follows, then, that if there be a provision by which we can be saved from sin, such provision must come from God. 3. We claim that in the gospel God has made such a provision, which is very comprehensively stated in our text. God is its author, Christ is its medium or agent, and wisdom, &c., are its benefits. Christ is made unto us—I. WISDOM. 1. What is the first great need of mankind? Light; knowledge of God, of His law, of Christ, of the way of salvation, of duty and interest. 2. We have evidence of this in the general practice of Christian parents in seeking the spiritual welfare of their children, which is to impart instruction. And when our missionaries go to heathen countries, their first work is the same. And is it not a constant effort of the Church, both at home and abroad, to spread religious knowledge through the Sabbath school, the pulpit, and the religious press? 3. The gospel provides this light. Hence Jesus Christ is made unto us "wisdom," by furnishing to us—(1)

The Bible. But for His mediation we should never have received it. These Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation. (2) The institutions of the Church. (3) The lives, activities, and instrumentalities, of Christian believers, who are "the light of the world." (4) The teachings of the Holy Spirit; His Divine illumination, His assistance enabling us to apprehend and understand the written Word. II. RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. Light, in its first revealings, does not always bring comfort and hope. When we see our moral condition we discover ourselves to be lost sinners; as absolutely helpless as was a poor man once upon the rock just above the falls of Niagara. Certainly he saw and felt that if he ever regained the shore and the home of his love, it must be through some agency other than his own. And when we discover our sinfulness and helplessness, how anxiously do we inquire where help may be found! 2. Righteousness is a conformity to law. If we observe the laws of the State there is no unrighteousness in us in relation to those laws. And if we could observe the law of God, there would be no unrighteousness in us in respect to His law. It is because we have transgressed that law that we are unrighteous. 3. Being thus under condemnation, Christ rendered a perfect obedience to that law, and having thus honoured it, He submitted to its penalties in our stead. Thus Christ has wrought out a righteousness for us; He has made it possible for us to obtain the remission of our sins. 4. But if this were the extent of the atonement, it would leave us still unrighteous in character, unconformed to the law in our motives and spirit. It was, therefore, necessary that there should be "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost"; so that Jesus Christ might work a real righteousness within us. 5. If the provision were to stop here it would still fail of meeting the whole case, because we are accountable to God, and our conduct subsequent to this great exercise of mercy toward us must be in conformity with the principles and spirit of His law. We consequently need the constant help of our Lord and of the Divine Spirit. 6. And even with these helps we are not able so fully to meet the claims of this law that we do not need constantly to depend upon the atonement. III. SANCTIFICATION. But the regenerate have still further spiritual needs. 1. The converted man hates sin; and when he finds it in his heart he is afflicted. To him there is nothing so lovely, so precious, as holiness. How he hungers and thirsts after it! He cannot be satisfied until he realises it, any more than a famishing man can be satisfied without food and drink. His heart, his soul, cries out for the nature and image of God! 2. Can we realise this full salvation? Yes, for "He is able to do exceeding abundantly," &c. "The blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanseth us from all sin." When we are thus brought to bear the image of the heavenly—IV. Is there still anything further needed? Yes, we still need Christ as our REDEMPTION. To redeem is to deliver from some obligation, or embarrassment, or danger, or necessity, from which a person is unable to deliver himself. 1. We are subject to affliction, and we need the presence, and power, and comfort, of Christ to enable us to stand. 2. We have many duties to perform. Who of himself is competent to work the works of our Divine Master? None of us; but, through Christ strengthening us, we can do all things, meet all our obligations to our own souls, to our fellow-men, and to God. 3. And how about the dying hour? With the Captain of our salvation with us, we can meet death with joy, accounting it a gain. (*Bp. Janes.*) *Christ Jesus the believer's wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*:—Let us—I. EXPLAIN THE WORDS. Christ is made unto us—1. Wisdom. (1) As in knowing Him we know everything that is essential, and especially God, "whom to know is life eternal." God in nature is God above us; God in providence is God beyond us; God in law is God against us; but God in Christ is God with us and for us. (2) As He is the Author of our wisdom. He opens the eyes of our understandings, and, by His Spirit, "leads us into all the truth." And the knowledge, which He imparts, is always distinguished by its influences and effects. Wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence, but the excellency of this wisdom "is that it giveth life to them that have it." 2. Righteousness. "Christ is the end of the law of righteousness, to every one that believeth." 3. Sanctification. (1) The former is a relative thing, this is a personal. The former is the change of our state, this the change of our nature; the former is a work complete at once, but the latter is gradual, and carried on through the whole of life. But then, though these are distinguishable, they are never separate. (2) But what is this "sanctification." It must be something more than mere reformation or morality. A man cannot be sanctified indeed, unless he be moral; but he may be moral, without being sanctified. Sanctification is a transformation

by "the renewing" of the mind; the implantation of new principles; a separation from the Spirit and course of the world, and a deliverance from the dominion and the love of sin, and a dedication of ourselves to the service and glory of God. 4. Redemption. The resurrection is called so—(1) Because it is the effect of the Saviour's purchase; for He ransomed the bodies of His people, as well as their souls. (2) Because of the grandeur that awaits us. II. APPLY THE WORDS. If we be "made of God unto us wisdom." 1. We see the state we are all in by nature. We see that we are destitute of all these things, and that, if ever we have them, we must obtain them from another. 2. We see the value and importance of the Lord Jesus. 3. We need not wonder that He should be the subject of the whole of revelation. 4. He ought to be the theme of every minister. 5. We see the wretched and dreadful state of unbelievers. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life," hath not "wisdom," &c. 6. What can be so worthy of our pursuit as to seek after union and communion with Him. This was the apostle's conviction—"That I may win Christ, and be found in Him." 7. We learn the happiness of all those who belong to Him—or rather to whom He belongs. (*W. Jay.*) *Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption derived from Christ:*—This is one of the most comprehensive texts in the Bible. It is a short but full inventory of the invaluable blessings of the gospel; enough to make a poor sinner rich, and a miserable sinner happy. I. WISDOM. 1. Wisdom chooses the best objects, and then pursues the best means of obtaining them. 2. All wisdom is from God; but there is a peculiar and superior kind of wisdom, viz., religion (Prov. xxviii. 28); and this St. Paul terms being "wise unto salvation," and James, "the wisdom that is from above." 3. Christ is the original fountain of wisdom. He is "wisdom" itself (Prov. viii.; Col. ii. 3); so that whatever true wisdom is found in the world is derived from Him, even as the natural sun is the source of all the light of this world. Accordingly, we find Him, by His personal ministry, diffusing wonderful light, and when He ascended into heaven He committed this work to the Holy Spirit. "The natural man knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God"; but, by His gracious help, "they are spiritually discerned," and believers learn "the mind of Christ." 4. Other kinds of wisdom have their value; yet what do they avail? "I have spent my life," said a great scholar on his dying bed, "I have spent my life in laborious trifling!" Compared with heavenly wisdom, all literary attainments will be as a grain of sand to a mountain, or a drop of water to the ocean. II. RIGHTEOUSNESS, *i.e.*, perfect conformity to the will of God. The word signifies that which is full weight or measure, the standard being God's holy law. And is there any man thus righteous? No; "there is not a just man upon earth"; that is, one "that doeth good, and sinneth not." Yet, without a perfect righteousness, no man can be justified. But must we, then, despair? Yes; of making ourselves righteous; but not of becoming righteous by other means, for "Christ is made unto us righteousness" (Rom. iv. 24). But do any suppose that we may therefore become careless about good works? Let them attend to the declaration that Christ is made unto us—III. SANCTIFICATION. 1. By this we mean the renewing of our nature in the image of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and through the mediation of Christ. 2. Sanctification differs from justification. Justification respects the state of man; sanctification respects His nature, disposition, conduct. A man may be tried for his life, and he may be acquitted; but if he have, at the same time, a mortal disease upon him, he will die. The province of a judge and a physician are very different. Justification is the act of God as a Judge; sanctification is the work of God the Spirit as the great Physician of souls; and we find both these works united in Psa. ciii. 3. It is also to be observed that our title to heaven is founded only on the righteousness of Christ, by which we are justified; but in sanctification consists our meetness for heaven. 3. Christ is made unto us sanctification. (1) Because He first relieves us by His atoning sacrifice from the guilt and defilement of sin. (2) By His intercession (John xvii. 15, 17). (3) By His Word—its doctrines, precepts, examples, promises, and threatenings. (4) By union to Him. (5) By His example. (6) By His love, which is, of all motives to holiness, the strongest and most effectual. IV. REDEMPTION. If Christ be made unto us wisdom, we are delivered from the powers of darkness; if righteousness, we are redeemed from the curse of the law; if sanctification, we are delivered from the dominion of sin. In these things consists the redemption of the soul. But the "redemption of the body" seems to be intended; and this agrees with Rom. viii. 21. (*G. Burder.*) *Christ the believer's wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption:*—I. I would

point out to you THE FOUNTAIN FROM WHICH ALL THOSE BLESSINGS FLOW, THAT THE ELECT OF GOD PARTAKE OF IN JESUS, "who of God is made unto us," the Father, He it is who is spoken of here. Not as though Jesus Christ was not God also; but God the Father is the fountain of the Deity. II. I come to show WHAT THESE BLESSINGS ARE WHICH ARE HERE, THROUGH CHRIST, MADE OVER TO THE ELECT. 1. Christ is made to them "wisdom"; but wherein does true wisdom consist? Were I to ask some of you, perhaps you would say in indulging the lust of the flesh: but this is only the wisdom of brutes. Others would tell me true wisdom consisted in adding house to house; but this cannot be true wisdom, for riches often take to themselves wings, and fly away. But perhaps you despise riches and pleasure, and therefore place wisdom in the knowledge of books; but it is possible for you to tell the numbers of the stars, and call them all by their names, and yet be mere fools; learned men are not always wise. "Know thyself," was a saying of one of the wise men of Greece; this is certainly true wisdom, and this is that wisdom spoken of in the text, and which Jesus Christ is made to all elect sinners. They see the necessity of closing with a Saviour, and behold the wisdom of God in appointing Him to be a Saviour; they are also made willing to accept of salvation upon our Lord's own terms: thus Christ is made to them wisdom. 2. "Righteousness." Christ's whole personal righteousness is made over to, and accounted theirs. 3. Christ is not only made to them righteousness, but sanctification; by sanctification I do not mean a bare hypocritical attendance on outward ordinances, nor do I mean a bare outward reformation, and a few transient convictions, or a little legal sorrow; for all this an unsanctified man may have; but by sanctification I mean a total renovation of the whole man. Their understandings, which were before dark, now become light in the Lord; and their wills, before contrary to, now become one with the will of God; their affections are now set on things above; their memory is now filled with Divine things; their natural consciences are now enlightened; their members, which were before instruments of uncleanness, and of iniquity unto iniquity, are now instruments of righteousness and true holiness. But, before we enter upon the explanation and contemplation of this privilege—(1) Learn hence the great mistake of those writers and clergy who, notwithstanding they talk of sanctification and inward holiness, yet they generally make it the cause, whereas they should consider it as the effect, of our justification. For Christ's righteousness, or that which Christ has done in our stead without us, is the sole cause of our acceptance in the sight of God, and of all holiness wrought in us: to this, and not to the light within, or anything wrought within, should poor sinners seek for justification in the sight of God. (2) From hence also the Antinomians and formal hypocrites may be confuted, who talk of Christ without, but know nothing, experimentally, of a work of sanctification wrought within them. 4. Let us now go on, and take a view of the other link, or rather the end, of the believer's golden chain of privileges, "Redemption." But we must look very high; for the top of it, like Jacob's ladder, reaches heaven, where all believers will ascend, and be placed at the right hand of God. By the word redemption we are to understand, not only a complete deliverance from all evil, but also a full enjoyment of all good both in body and soul. (*G. Whitfield, M.A.*) *The fourfold treasure*:—I. OUR SPIRITUAL EXISTENCE. 1. Its origin, "Of Him," *i.e.*, as some think, "through Him." Are you this day united to Christ—a stone in that building of which He is both foundation and topstone—a limb of that mystical body of which He is the head? Then you did not get there of yourself. "By the grace of God I am what I am." He "hath begotten us again unto a lively hope." 2. Its dignity. Being in Christ you are of God. God's husbandry, people, children, beloved. Some have thought it a great thing to be of a prince's household; but you are of the Divine family. 3. Its essence. We have no life except as we are "in Christ Jesus." Out of Christ we abide in death. II. OUR SPIRITUAL WEALTH. Here are four things, and in the original the second and third have a peculiar connecting link. The wisdom stands alone, and the redemption, but the righteousness and sanctification have a special link, as though we should be taught that they always go together. Christ is made unto us—1. Wisdom. The apostle had been speaking of some other wisdom which set itself up in opposition to the Cross. Now, instead of pointing to his own brain, or to the statue of Socrates or Solon, he says Christ is made of God unto us wisdom. There are those who will have it that the gospel such as was preached by Bunyan, Whitefield, and Wesley, was very well for the dark times in which they lived; but that there is wanted in this intensely luminous century a more progressive theology. We are afraid that instead of

bringing greater light, the advanced thinkers have made darkness worse. Christ makes us wise—(1) By His teaching. All you want to know of God, of sin, of life, of death, of eternity, &c., Christ has either personally, or by His Spirit in the Word of God, taught you. Anything that you find out for yourself over and above revelation, is folly. (2) By His example. You shall never be a fool if you follow Christ, except in the estimation of fools. (3) By His presence. Let none of us ever be so foolish as to suppose that when we have received Jesus we have occasion to blush when we are in the company of the very wisest. Carry a bold face when you confront the brazen-faced philosophy which insults your Lord. 2. Righteousness. The doctrine of imputed righteousness is firmly established in the Word of God; yet it is possible to put too much stress upon "imputed," and scarcely enough upon "righteousness." Not only is Christ's righteousness imputed to me, but it is mine actually, for Christ is mine. 3. Sanctification. (1) Because we are in Christ we have the basis of sanctification, which consists in being set apart. (2) The power by which we are sanctified comes to us by virtue of our union with Christ. The Holy Spirit who sanctifies us through the truth works in us by virtue of our union with Jesus. (3) Let Jesus always be the motive for your sanctification. Is it not a strange thing that some professors should look to Christ alone for pardon and justification, and run away to Moses when they desire sanctification? "The love of Christ constraineth us"; not fear of hell. 4. Redemption. Somebody says: "That ought to have come first; because redemption is the first blessing that we enjoy." Ay, but it is the last as well. You are not yet redeemed altogether. By price you are—but you are not yet redeemed by power. In a measure you are set free by Divine power, but there are links of the old chains yet to be snapped from off, and there is a bondage still about you from which you are ere long to be delivered. You are "waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of the body." Conclusion: If all this be the case, then let all our glory be unto Him. What insanity it is to boast in any but in our Lord Jesus! How foolish are they who are proud of their wisdom, of their wealth, &c. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ the wisdom of believers*:—I. BECAUSE OF THOSE NEW AND ILLUSTRIOUS REVELATIONS WHICH HE HAS GIVEN TO US OF GOD. Christ is the great Teacher of God. 1. By declaration. In the course of His ministrations He did not reason concerning God. "No man hath seen God at any time." Man, therefore, must darkly reason, and doubtfully infer. "The only-begotten Son, who lay in the bosom of the Father," neither acquired nor made known this knowledge in that way. "He hath declared Him." An instance of this declaratory mode of teaching we have in His conversation with the Samaritan woman (John iv. 21-24). What instruction is here! What a contrast to the teachings of men! 2. By action. In His life, He was the visible image of God's purity; in His works, of God's power; in His condescending compassion, of God's yearning goodness; in the freeness of His gifts, of God's abundant grace and liberality; in His intercourse with His disciples, of God's regard for pious humble souls; in His denunciations of judgment, of God's justice; and in His death, the brightest and most awful demonstration was given of His holiness, justice, and love united. II. BY THE VIEWS WHICH HE HAS GIVEN US OF THE MORAL CONDITION OF MAN. The sinfulness, helplessness, and danger of mankind have all been acknowledged and felt; but in what new and awful views are they placed by Christ! Sin is not a trifle. See the proof of this in the sufferings of thy Saviour. It is not in man to make atonement for sin. Behold, the Victim which God appointed was both God and man. The punishment of sin is not light. If the Substitute so suffered, what must the principal suffer, should he reject his Saviour? By those sufferings justice was satisfied, and God reconciled to man; and this light is thrown upon our condition, that, sinful, helpless, and endangered as it is, we are all invited to obtain mercy. III. IN THE DISCOVERIES HE HAS MADE OF THE NATURE, EXTENT, AND POSSIBILITY OF HOLINESS. The foulest blot in creation is an unholy spirit. The brightest, the loveliest idea that can enter the human mind is that of moral order, and the purity of the heart. The nature of real holiness is explained to us by Christ. It is not a ceremonial holiness—the mistake of superstition. It is not merely a regulation of the heart and conduct—the mistake of philosophers. It is not a sentimental approval of what is fair and good—the mistake of men of imagination. It is the conversion of the heart to God; the renewal of the primitive image of God in man. The possibility of this is explained by Christ. Without hope there could be no effort. The agency exhibited by Christ in the accomplishment of our sanctification is equal to the effect. His Spirit is the sanctifier; and the whole process of our consecration to God is

the mighty working of the Holy Ghost, with the means which He has appointed in order to that end. (*R. Watson.*) *Wisdom in Christ:*—Having Christ, believers have a key which unlocks the mysteries of God's eternal purpose of mercy and of the present life; and knowing this eternal purpose and the eternal realities, they are able to choose their steps in life. (*Prof. Beet.*) *Union with Christ the only way to sanctification:*—Consider Rom. vii. 4; John xv. 5; Gal. ii. 20. I. THE HOLINESS DERIVED FROM CHRIST. It is that disposition of heart and course of life which is conformable to God's holy law, and pleases Him. 1. True holiness is universal in respect of the commands of God (Psa. cxix. 6). A profane life is a sure evidence of a profane heart (Gal. v. 19, &c.). 2. True holiness is not only in external duties, but necessarily includes internal obedience of the soul to the will of God (Psa. xxiv. 3). 3. In true holiness there is a bent, inclination, and propensity of heart to obedience. By Adam's fall the hearts of men got a wrong set (Rom. viii. 7; Hosea xi. 7). Now, in sanctification it is bent the other way, towards God and godliness (2 Thess. iii. 5), that as the needle in the compass, touched with a good loadstone, turns towards the north, so the heart, touched by sanctifying grace, inclines Godward and Christward. 4. As the love of God is the great comprehensive duty of holiness, love is the fulfilling of the law; so love runs through all the duties of religion, to give them the tincture of holiness (Heb. vi. 10). 5. True holiness is influenced by the command of God. The will of God is not only the rule, but the reason of a holy life (John v. 30). 6. True holiness has for its chief end the glory of God (chap. x. 31). He that is the first cause of all goodness must needs be the last end of it. 7. Lastly, true holiness is universal as regards man. (1) Mortification is universal (Gal. v. 24). It is no true mortification where one lust is spared. (2) Vivification is universal (2 Cor. v. 17). As when the body of Christ was raised there was life put into every member; so when the soul is raised to live the life of holiness, the image of God is repaired in all its parts, and the soul embraces the whole yoke of Christ, so far as it knows the same. So that sanctification sets a man on every known duty. II. THIS HOLINESS IS DERIVED FROM CHRIST, ACCORDING TO THE GRAND DEVICE OF INFINITE WISDOM FOR THE SANCTIFYING OF AN UNHOLY WORLD. 1. God made the first Adam holy, and all mankind was so in Him (Eccles. vii. 29). 2. Adam, sinning, lost the image of God, so that all mankind are naturally dead in sin. 3. Man's sanctification by himself thus being hopeless, it pleased God to constitute a Mediator, to be the head of sanctifying influences to all that should partake of them. 4. Though by the death and resurrection of Christ the sanctification of His people is infallibly insured, as the corruption of all mankind was by the fall of Adam; yet we cannot actually partake of Christ's holiness till we have a spiritual being in Him, even as we partake not of Adam's corruption till we have a natural being from him. 5. As Christ is the prime receptacle of the Spirit of holiness, as the head of all the saints; so the continual supplies of that Spirit are to be derived from Him for the saints' progress in holiness, till they come to perfection. And faith is the great mean of communication betwixt Christ and us (Acts xv. 9). III. USES. 1. Of information. This lets us see—(1) The absolute necessity of holiness. (2) In vain do men attempt sanctification without coming to Christ for it. (3) Unholiness ought not to stop a sinner from coming to Christ, more than a disease ought to hinder a man to take the physician's help, or cold from taking the benefit of the fire. (4) True faith is the soul's coming to Christ for sanctification as well as justification. For faith must receive Christ as God offers Him, and He offers Him with all His salvation. Now He is made sanctification. Wherefore the soul, being willing to take Christ with all His salvation, to be sanctified, comes to Him for it. 2. Of exhortation. Come then to Christ for sanctification, and note the following motives. (1) If ye be not holy ye will never see heaven (Heb. xii. 14). (2) Ye will never attain holiness if ye come not to Christ for it. (*a*) While ye are out of Christ ye are under the curse; and is it possible for the cursed tree to bring forth the fruit of holiness? (*b*) Can ye be holy without sanctifying influences, or can ye expect that these shall be conveyed to you otherwise than through a Mediator, by His Spirit? (*c*) Ye have nothing wherewith to produce holiness. The most skilful musician cannot play unless his instrument be in tune. The lame man, if he were ever so willing, cannot run till he be cured. Ye are under an utter impotency, by reason of the corruption of your nature. (*d*) If ye will come to Christ ye shall be made holy. There is a fulness of merit and spirit in Him for sanctification. Come then to the fountain of holiness. The worst of sinners may be sanctified this way (chap. vi. 11). (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Christ our righteousness:*—One day, as I was passing into the field, and that too

with some dashes on my conscience, fearing lest all was not right, suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul, "Thy righteousness is in heaven"; and methought withal I saw with the eyes of my soul Jesus Christ at God's right hand. There, I say, was my righteousness, so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me, "He wants a righteousness," for that was just before Him. I also saw, moreover, that it was not my good frame that made my righteousness better, nor my bad frame that made my righteousness worse; for my righteousness was Jesus Christ Himself, "The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Now did my chains fall off my legs indeed. I was loosed from my afflictions and my irons; my temptations also fled away, so that from that time those dreadful Scriptures of God left off to trouble me. (*John Bunyan.*) *Christ is our sanctification*:— I. WHAT IS SANCTIFICATION? 1. It is to be changed (2 Cor. iii. 18). Sanctification makes a great change; the judgment is changed, the disposition, the way, the company. 2. It is to be cured. Sin is the sickness of the soul. The only physician is our Lord Jesus Christ, raised up of God for that purpose; no hand but His can heal us. 3. It is to be cleansed. Sin is the pollution of the soul; and it is pollution in grain, such as nothing can wash us from but the fountain opened, and that fountain is Christ (Zech. xiii. 1). 4. It is to be clothed. A sinful condition is a naked condition (Rev. iii. 17). And what must poor naked souls do, but come to Christ, to His shop, and here buy of Him white raiment (Rev. iii. 18; Zech. iii. 3, 4). "I clothed thee also with broidered work," &c. (Ezek. xvi. 10–14). Grace is rich raiment, princely, priestly, comely clothing, that waxeth not old. 5. It is to be consecrated. Sanctifying is the same with consecrating, that is, setting apart from common and profane to holy and spiritual uses, as persons, places, vessels, times, were under the Old Testament. II. HOW IS JESUS CHRIST MADE ALL THIS TO US? 1. Principally by the working of His Spirit and grace. The Spirit of Christ is the Sanctifier. When He comes into the heart to dwell there, He renews, and He regenerates, and He raises, and He reconciles. It is through Jesus Christ. If He had not satisfied and died, to make God friends with us, He would never have sent the Spirit, to make us friends with Him. 2. Instrumentally by the Word, "Sanctify them through Thy truth" (John xvii. 17). Error never sanctifies. Truth only doth that (James i. 17; Titus i. 1). The Word of truth begins, and the same carries on this good work. III. THE PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT. 1. Shall I propound one needful question to you? Are ye sanctified? is Jesus Christ made of God sanctification to you? It is a thing that may be known. There are three marks: (1) Where Christ is made to us sanctification, it is become natural to us to walk in all holy obedience to the will of God. I say natural, not to the old, but to the new, nature. Then, says one, I fear I am not sanctified. I reply, The trial is not to be made by any one single action at any one time, but by our course and way. How is it ordinarily with us? There is no man but doth something that beasts do; but is he therefore a beast? There is no beast but doth something that a man doth; but is he therefore a man? (2) Where Christ is made to us sanctification, holiness is highly prized and dearly loved, and more and more of it earnestly desired. I believe it is never otherwise among the truly sanctified. (3) Where Christ is made to us sanctification, He is owned and acknowledged as our all in all. The crown is set upon His head. To us to live is Christ. 2. I shall suppose you now propounding to me another needful question. What may I do that Christ may be made to me sanctification? (1) We must be inwardly and thoroughly convinced that there is an absolute necessity He should be so. If we mean to please God in this world. None but the sanctified are accepted of Him. He hath no pleasure but where His image is. Our sacrifices are an abomination, our prayers an abomination, otherwise. Till the tree is good the fruit cannot be good. And also, if we mean to enjoy God in the other world. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xii. 14). (2) We must apply ourselves to the Lord Jesus by faith and prayer. (3) We must attend upon the ordinances. These are the conduit pipes through which the grace of sanctification is conveyed to poor souls. 3. What must they do to whom Christ is already made sanctification? (1) They have cause to bless God for it every day, all their days (Psa. ciii. 1–3). (2) They must press after further degrees of sanctification, more and more. Dying to sin. Living to righteousness. (*Philip Henry.*) *Christ is our redemption*:— That Jesus Christ is made of God unto all men that are in Him redemption. I. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN—"made redemption"? He is made of God redemption to us; that is, God hath ordained and appointed Him from all eternity, and in the fulness of time raised Him up, and sent Him, to be the author and procurer of

redemption for us; or, which is all one, to be a redeemer to us (Luke i. 68). Now to redeem is, in general, to recover those that are in bondage out of bondage, as the Jews were released by Cyrus out of their captivity in Babylon. Redemption, viz.—1. By power; when those who kept us in bondage are conquered and overcome. 2. By exchange; when one prisoner is let go for another. 3. By price; when a sum of money is paid to buy off a prisoner, more or less, according as the quality of the prisoner is. Now this last is properly redemption, and this last is the way in which Jesus Christ hath made us free. To this purpose we are told of a covenant of redemption which was transacted from all eternity between the Father and the Son, the terms whereof were—That if the Son would come and be man and die, that dying of His should be accepted as the price or ransom of all the elect, how many soever there were. The Son accepted of this motion, did what was to be done, suffered what was to be suffered, and so became our redemption. See some footsteps of this covenant transaction in two Scriptures (Psa. xl. 6–8: Isa. xlix. 2, 6, 9). But—II. WHAT KIND OF REDEMPTION IS THIS? 1. Needed redemption. It is the redemption that we needed. He came to supply all our needs. Now among other needs, being in bondage, we needed one to redeem us; not only one to clothe us, being naked; to feed us, being hungry; to wash us, being filthy; to heal us, being wounded; to cure us, being sick;—but to redeem us. If He had done all this for us in our bondage, and left us still in bondage, we had been miserable notwithstanding. 2. It is a nonsuch redemption, when compared with other redemption. Whether personal, as Joseph out of prison, or Peter (Acts xii.), or Daniel out of the lions' den. Whether public, as from Egypt, from Babylon. It surpasses them all in number, way, and consequences. 3. Distinguishing redemption. It is denied to the angels that sinned. The commons are ransomed, the nobles left behind. He paid no price to redeem them. 4. It is divers, manifold redemption according to the manifold evils that we lay under. They are of three sorts—temporal, spiritual, eternal. (1) He is redemption to us from temporal evils. Such as concern the body, and the life that now is; such as sickness, death, poverty. Not that they shall not befall us, but that they shall not hurt us. The sting of them is taken out (Psa. xci. 10). (2) Which is better, it is redemption to us from spiritual evils. These are worse evils than the former, because they affect the better part of us. The guilt of sin; whereby we are bound over to punishment, the fear whereof causes bondage (Heb. ii. 14). To redeem us from this, He is made righteousness to us for our justification. The filth and power of sin; whereby sin hath dominion over us, and we are perfect slaves to it, the vilest of slaves (John viii. 34). To redeem us from this He is made sanctification to us. (3) There is another sort of evils yet, and those are eternal evils; and by redemption here we are especially to understand our deliverance from those. Because it is mentioned after righteousness and sanctification as a thing different from them; and because of what we find in other Scriptures, where redemption is applied to something in the other world: "Waiting for the redemption of the body" (Rom. viii. 23), that is, the resurrection and glorification of our bodies: compare Luke xxi. 28 with Eph. iv. 30, the day of redemption. 1. What those eternal evils are which redemption frees us from. (1) It frees us for ever, not only from the guilt, and filth, and power of sin, but from the very being of it also. (2) It frees us from Satan ever having any more to do with us, either as a tempter or as a tormentor. He is busy now with the saved (1 Pet. v. 8), and he will be more busy hereafter with those that perish (Matt. xviii. 34). But where the redeemed are he comes not (Rom. xvi. 20). (3) It frees us from all sorrow and suffering, of what kind soever, in mind or body (Rev. xxi. 4). (4) It frees us from all society with wicked and ungodly men, and that for ever. They are blended here, and it pleases neither (Psa. cxx. 5, 6). But there is a redemption coming (Matt. xxv. 33). 2. What there is that is positive in this redemption. (1) As soon as the redeemed die their souls immediately go to God, to the vision and fruition of Him in glory (Luke xxiii. 43; Phil. i. 23). (2) At the resurrection, at the last day, the same soul and the same body shall come together again. Though we are not redeemed from death, we are to be from the grave (Isa. xxvi. 19; Hos. xiii. 14). (3) To all eternity there shall be a fulness of uninterrupted joy and felicity; a remaining rest; a Sabbath without a week of working days after it, perpetual, eternal. 3. I shall show how Jesus Christ is made this to us, this future redemption. He is the purchaser of it; it was bought with His blood, bought back. We had mortgaged it for an apple, and must never have retrieved it, had not He died (Eph. i. 14). He is our forerunner in it (Heb. vi. 20). He went thither as our attorney or proxy, to

take possession of the purchase in our name and stead (John xiv. 1, 2). It is He that Himself actually puts us into possession of it. At the resurrection it is His voice and trumpet that raises the dead; He is the resurrection. It is He Himself alone that is the sole object of all our future happiness; to be with Him, to see and enjoy Him, is our future redemption (Rev. xxi. 23). III. THE IMPROVEMENT. 1. Then it concerns us all, by all means, to give all diligence to make sure to ourselves our interest in this redemption. 2. If Jesus Christ be made of God this redemption to you, then, in God's name, take the comfort of it. Lift up the head and hands that hang down; "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say, rejoice." 3. Then live as the redeemed of the Lord. (*Ibid.*) *Christ our sanctification:*—"I remember a short time ago, when I was conducting a service at Oxford, a working man came into the meeting. He was the first penitent that night, and he has frequently told me since that he had been most honestly and sincerely trying for twenty years to be a true Christian, but he had failed every day and almost given up in despair when he came by accident and heard this truth—that his failure was due to the fact that he had been trying to be a Christian in his own strength. He then went into the inquiry-room, trusted in Christ, and was united with Christ, shared the life of Christ, and from that day to this he has done what he could not do for twenty years before, although he was really trying, because he was strong in the life which he shared with Christ. Are not some of us in danger of supposing that we can make ourselves better Christians, more Christlike Christians, by our own resolution, and efforts, and rules, and discipline?" (*Hugh Price Hughes, M.A.*)

Ver. 31. **He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.**—*Glorying in the Lord:*—There is an irresistible tendency in us to glory in something or other. All classes of men glory. Good people have the tendency to glory, and sometimes they glory in unworthy objects, and therefore God has prepared a cure for it—not by repressing the instinct, but by giving it a worthy subject. The prevention or cure of glorying in men, in riches, and in self, is glorying in the Lord. Let us—I. GLORY ONLY IN THE LORD. Because—1. The theme is too great to admit of another. If God fills all in all, there can be no other god; and if the glory of God be infinite, then there can be no second glory. 2. Any other object highly provokes the Most High. He has said, "My glory will I not give to another, nor My praise to graven images." Where the ark of the Lord is, Dagon must come down. God will be all, or nothing. Think of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Herod. 3. There is no other fit ground for glorying. (1) If there were some other object in which we thought we could glory, yet since it came from Him it would be idle to glory in the streams, we had better boast in the fountain-head from which the stream descends. (2) Moreover, all things in this world are fleeting, and wherefore should we glory in that which to-day is, and to-morrow will pass away? Let your glory be in that which will last as long as your own being. (3) Besides, there is nothing in this world worth glorying in, in comparison with God. He is the sun; the stars must hide their heads when He appears. Let us bless the eternal ocean of all-sufficient glory and goodness, and not turn aside to magnify our little Abanas and Pharpars. 4. When we do so we shall be in accord with the true order of the universe. (1) With creation "The heavens are telling the glory of God." "All Thy works praise Thee, O God." Creation is a temple in which every one speaks of His glory. (2) With Providence. "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be the glory for ever." (3) With the angels. What is their song? "Glory to God in the highest." (4) With the Divine Trinity; for what does the Father do but glorify the Son? What does the Son aim at when He says, "Father, glorify Thy Son"? It is, "that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." What does the Holy Spirit do when He takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us? Has not Jesus said of Him, "He shall glorify Me"? II. GLORY HEARTILY IN THE LORD. Because of—1. His love. Glory in—(1) Its antiquity. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love!" (2) In its wonderful benefactions. (3) In its freeness. He loved us because He would love us; not because we were lovely, but because He was love. Glory in it, therefore, all the day long, for well you may. "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." 2. His faithfulness. Whom once He loves He never leaves, but loves them to the end. 3. His holiness. "Bless the Lord, O my soul," and "All that is within me, bless"—His gracious name, is it? No. His loving name? No; but "His holy name," because the whole includes all the parts, and the holiness, or the wholeness of God is a grander thing than any one of the distinct attributes which make up His character. Glory in the holiness of God, for

there is none holy as the Lord. It is this which angels glory in, for as they veil their faces, they say, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts." 4. His all-sufficiency, and the liberality with which He distributes His mercies among His chosen. In Christ Jesus is not one good thing given to us, but every good thing. Do we need to be instructed? Christ is our wisdom. Do we need to be clothed in the sight of God with a righteousness that shall render us acceptable? Christ is our righteousness. Do we need to be purified and cleansed? Christ is our sanctification. And do we need to be set free and delivered from all bondage? Christ is our redemption. 5. The nearness and dearness of the relationship which God holds to us. The man who can bow his knee, and say from his heart, "Our Father," has more to glory in than the emperor of the grandest nations. Is Christ my Brother? I am ennobled by that relationship. III. GLORY IN THE LORD GROWINGLY. That is to say, we should glory in God in proportion as we learn more of Him, and receive more from Him. Glory growingly in the Lord as you know more of Him—1. By revelation. And as you see more of Him, go and tell abroad more of Him, and let others know what a glorious God you serve. 2. By experience. Never let a special season pass without praising Him; and as answers to prayer increase, as grace is given to you in times of need, and as you see converting work going on in others glorify Him more. By and by, as time rolls on, we shall know more of the Lord, and get to be more like Him, and approach nearer to the glory itself. Beholding that glory, as in a glass, we are changed from glory to glory, as by the image of the Lord. IV. GLORY IN THE LORD PRACTICALLY. 1. By owning that you belong to Him. A man does not hide away that which he glories in. Charge a veteran with having been at Waterloo, and he will glory in it. Accuse an artist of being a Royal Academician, and he will own the charge. Abuse me for loving my wife and children, and I smile at you. Why, then, blush to be called a follower of Jesus? 2. By talking about Him on all fit occasions. We are too reticent in our piety. As the rose betrays itself by its perfume, and the glowworm by its shining, so should our glorying in the Lord discover us to all observers. A foreigner may speak English well, but he is known by his accent, and the accent of grace is quite as marked as that of nature. 3. By standing up for Him when He is opposed. If you hear the proud ones ridicule His gospel, and despise His people, put in a word for Jesus. 4. By being calm under your troubles. 5. By having a contempt for those things which others value so much. Do not be greedy after the world. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *True glorying*:—Man—I. LOVES TO GLORY. II. HAS NOTHING IN HIMSELF OF WHICH HE CAN GLORY. III. SHOULD GLORY IN THE LORD—who—1. Has given him all. 2. Redeemed all. 3. Is become his portion for ever. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *God exalted and creatures humbled by the gospel*:—That men are sinners I shall assume. If, then, there is any salvation for them, it must be by grace. And such a salvation cannot fail to exalt God and humble the sinner. None will deny that the world are proud. The tendency of the gospel to exalt God and humble the creature appears—1. IN ITS OUTWARD ADMINISTRATION. This includes—1. The humble appearance of Christ in our world. When we understand the reasons of this humble appearance of Christ, we see in it the wisdom of God; but had it been left to us beforehand, we should have assigned Him the most magnificent state. Thus did the wisdom of man pronounce. Indeed, the pride of man, showing itself in lofty pretensions to the omniscience of wisdom, was seen to be the most intrepid enemy which the religion of heaven had to encounter. It therefore was a main point in the outset to overwhelm this enemy with convictions of his own ignorance and folly and of the far superior wisdom of God. In all these proud pretensions reason aspires to a place for which it was never designed. It is not its province to penetrate the mysteries of the universe by its own ken, but to work up into judgments materials furnished by information. It is the eye, but it cannot see without light. In no other science but that which relates to the incomprehensible God and to the interests and government of the universe, does reason attempt to build on its own independent discoveries. The anatomist does not presume to tell you how a man ought to be made, but with all submission proceeds to examine the animal system which God has exposed to his view. And why does man act so differently in this case from what he does in all others? Because in other sciences he wishes to obtain accurate knowledge; in this, relief to his conscience and fears and mortified pride. He does not like God, and wishes to modify Him after his own taste. 2. Another way in which the outward administration of the gospel took the pride of the world, was in the weakness of the instruments employed, the simplicity of their preaching, and their triumphant success. Instead of angels or Jewish doctors or

Grecian philosophers, Christ chose fishermen. II. THE SAME TENDENCY APPEARS IN THE TEXTURE OF THE GOSPEL. This is noticed in our text and the preceding verse. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord." 1. Our wisdom. Instead of ignorant and prejudiced reason, on which the wise men of the world proudly rested for the discovery of God, Christ, the great Prophet of the world, was appointed to lay open the secrets of the eternal mind, and to bring "life and immortality to light"; "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." 2. Our righteousness. There is nothing to which men more strongly adhere than to the claims of their own merit. The whole texture of the gospel is fitted to put down this arrogant pretender, to annihilate the last lurking pride of man. (1) The atonement. (2) The obedience of Christ. (3) The intercession of Christ. But the soul-humbling and God-exalting process is not yet ended. Not only are the atonement, obedience, and intercession of Christ thus provided, in a way to support the rights and claims and government of God, to condemn sin, and cover pride with eternal confusion; but no man is allowed to share in this salvation until, from the bottom of his heart, he has approved of all these measures and all their expressions; until he has taken back all his proud speeches against God, and bent his imperious head to his Maker's feet. Even pardon itself buries the sinner still lower in the dust. This is none of that poverty of spirit which involves degradation. It is only viewing things according to truth. III. THE SAME TENDENCY OF THE GOSPEL APPEARS IN ITS APPLICATION. Christ is made of God unto us sanctification, "that, according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord." As the race were condemned by the law to the curse of eternal abandonment, the Spirit could not come to men without the mediation of Christ. The heathen philosophers depended on the self-determining power of the will for all their personal virtue, and on their self-taught ethics for the reformation of the world. In opposition to all these proud aspirations, the gospel casts the world for sanctification on the Spirit of God and the purchase of Christ. Nor is this all. In their spiritual death it finds nothing in them to aid their resurrection, and ascribes to God, not only the whole power, but a conquering power, "the working of mighty power," as great as that "which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." Thus every part of the gospel is calculated to abase the pride of man, to break and subdue and humble the sinner, to support the rights, the claims, the government of God, and to give all the glory to Him. Whatever light or holiness or title to salvation we possess, comes from God through the Redeemer. Whatever brings out God to view, exalts Him, abases sinners, and humbles and blesses the creation. Let us, then, see what and how much of God is revealed in the plan of salvation. In the first place, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are brought out to view in their own proper and infinitely important characters; a distinction never whispered to the universe in any of His other works. In the next place, His inflexible resolution, at all hazards, to support His moral empire over the creation, comes out; disclosing His infinite attachment to all the principles of His law and to the happiness which it subserves, and thus manifesting His holiness, justice, and benevolence. In the next place, His amazing compassion and mercy and patience and condescension and accessibleness and truth are brought to light; His power, too, in subduing the carnal heart, in restraining, bounding, and defeating all the machinations of Satan. But the wisdom elicited is that on which I wish chiefly to dwell. This wonderful plan of the Incarnation was the forming of a connecting link between finite and infinite natures, and filling up the whole chasm between God and us. He confounded the wisdom of men by the triumphs of that very weakness which provoked their contempt, and by making, in various ways, the most unpromising means lead to the most splendid success. He so shaped the gospel, that, in every part, it should be at war with pride, and touch it in every tender spot, and call into the field every arm of that foe, and exhibit it before heaven and earth in the hideous attitude of warring against all the love and authority of the gospel. He pressed into the service of His cause all the agents in the wicked world; the policy of kings, the pride of philosophers, the craft of priests, and the very ferocity of bloody persecution. He defeated all the stratagems of Satan and effectually bruised the serpent's head. Elect man is a gainer by his own ruin. His sin is made the occasion of higher advances in holiness; for to whom much is forgiven the same loveth much. His misery is made the occasion

of his greater blessedness. And finally, the wisdom of God appears in that capital measure to vindicate His own impartiality, the appointment of the Friend and Brother of man to be his Judge. "The Father hath given Him authority to execute judgment also because He is the Son of man." Why should you think that this grandest of all the exhibitions of God will be shut up in the nut-shell of a single world? (*E. D. Griffin, D.D.*)

CHAPTER II.

VERS. 1–5. **And I, brethren, . . . came . . . not with excellency of speech or of wisdom.**—*The spirit or tone in which St. Paul preached*:—It was in—I. A DECISIVE TONE OF PERSONAL CONVICTION. It was "the testimony of God," not an opinion. He does not say, "I think so," but "God says so." So in Gal. i. 11, 12. St. Paul was no hired, official expounder of a system. He felt that his words were eternal truth: hence their power. Hence, too, arises the possibility of discarding rules of oratory. For it is half-way towards making us believe when a man believes himself. Faith produces faith. II. A SPIRIT OF SELF-ABNEGATION (ver. 2). There were no side glances at his own prospects, reputation, success. And this sincerity and self-forgetfulness was a source of power. It was so with the Baptist, who declared of Christ: "He must increase, but I must decrease." In any work which is to live, or be really beautiful, there must be the spirit of the Cross. That which is to be a temple to God must never have the marble polluted with the name of the architect or builder. III. A SPIRIT OF PERSONAL LOWLINESS (ver. 3). Partly this refers to his infirmities and disadvantages; but partly, too, it means deep humility. Now, remember who it was who said this—the daring St. Paul, whose soul was all of flame, whose every word was a half-battle, who stood alone on Mars' Hill, and preached to the scoffing Athenians "Jesus and the Resurrection." How little they who heard his ponderous sentences could have conceived that "weakness, and fear, and much trembling" of the invisible spirit! But again: see how this tells on the tone of his ministry. St. Paul did not begin with asserting his prelatical dignity and apostolic authority. He began with declaring truth, and that in "trembling." Then, when men disputed his right to teach, he vindicated his authority, but not till then. And this is a lesson for modern times. Each minister must prove his apostolical succession by apostolic truthfulness, sincerity, and courage—as St. Paul proved his—and by his charity, and by his Christ-like meekness. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Paul a model preacher*:—Look at—I. HIS MATTER.—1. He excludes all that is foreign to his purpose. 2. Knows nothing but Christ. II. HIS MANNER. 1. He is modest in the consciousness of his own weakness. 2. Plain in the conviction of the presence and power of the Spirit. III. THE EFFECT. 1. Faith not in the man. 2. But in the power of God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *A faithful picture of a true gospel preacher*:—The grand subject of his ministry—I. IS THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST, because—1. He is the highest revelation of God's love for men. 2. He is the most thrilling demonstration of the wickedness of humanity. 3. He is the grandest display of loyalty to moral rectitude. II. SOUL-ABSORBING (ver. 3). The man who has some paramount sentiment looks at the universe, through it, and values it so far as it reflects and honours that sentiment. Hence to Paul Christ was "all in all." All other subjects—political and philosophical—dwindled into insignificance in its presence; it swallowed up his great soul. III. MAKES HIM INDIFFERENT TO ALL RHETORICAL CONSIDERATIONS (ver. 1). The theme was infinitely too great for it. Does the splendid apple-tree in full blossom require to be decorated with gaudy ribbons? Christ crucified is mighty eloquence. IV. SUBDUES IN HIM ALL SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS (ver. 3). V. INVESTS HIM WITH DIVINE POWER OVER MAN (vers. 4, 5). (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The Christian preacher*:—I. HIS MESSAGE. 1. The testimony of God. 2. Concerning Christ. 3. Divine, therefore true. II. HIS METHOD OF DELIVERING IT. 1. Not artificial in style, matter, or manner. 2. But plain, simple, pointed. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Gospel preaching*:—Note—1. That the proper method to convert men in any community, Christian or Pagan, is to preach or set forth the truth concerning the person and work of Christ. 2. The proper state of mind in which to preach the gospel is the opposite of self-confidence or

carelessness. The gospel should be preached with a sense of weakness and with great anxiety and solicitude. 3. The success of the gospel does not depend on the skill of the preacher, but on the demonstration of the Spirit. 4. The foundation of saving faith is not reason, *i.e.*, not arguments addressed to the understanding, but the power of God as exerted with and by the truth upon the heart. (*C. Hodge.*) *Preaching—fruit and flowers* :—At Hampton Court Palace every one regards with wonder the enormous vine loaded with so vast a multitude of huge clusters: just outside the vine-house is as fine a specimen of the wistaria, and when it is in full bloom, the cluster-like masses of bloom cause you to think it a flower-bearing vine, as the other is a fruit-bearing vine. Fit emblems these two famous trees of two ministries, both admired, but not equally to be prized—the ministry of oratory, luxuriant in metaphor and poetry, and the ministry of grace, abounding in sound teaching and soul-saving energy. Gay as are the flower-clusters of the wistaria, no one mistakes them for the luscious bunches of the grape; yet there are many simpletons in spiritual things who mistake sound for sense, and seem to satisfy their hunger not on solid meat, but on the jingle of a musical dinner-bell. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Conditions of successful preaching* :—If a preacher wishes to be successful he must—1. Deny himself (ver. 1) and exalt Christ (ver. 2). 2. Feel himself weak (ver. 3), yet strong (ver. 4). 3. Ignore the human and magnify the Divine (ver. 5). (*J. Lyth.*) *Brilliant, but not saving, sermons* :—Sir Astley Cooper, on visiting Paris, was asked by the surgeon *en chef* of the empire how many times he had performed a certain wonderful feat of surgery. He replied that he had performed the operation thirteen times. "Ah, but, monsieur, I have done him one hundred and sixty times. How many times did you save his life?" continued the curious Frenchmen, after he had looked into the blank amazement of Sir Astley's face. "I," said the Englishman, "saved eleven out of the thirteen. How many did you save out of one hundred and sixty?" "Ah, monsieur, I lose dem all; but de operation was very *brilliant*." Of how many popular ministries might the same verdict be given! Souls are not saved, but the preaching is very brilliant. Thousands are attracted and operated on by the rhetorician's art, but what if he should have to say of his admirers, "I lose them all, but the sermons were very brilliant!" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The messenger like the message* :—1. As the gospel is the foolish thing of God, so the apostle had no wisdom or utterance of his own (vers. 1, 2). 2. As the gospel is the weak thing of God, so the apostle came to Corinth in weakness, fear, and trembling (ver. 3). But as Christ is the power and wisdom of the gospel, so the Spirit is the power and wisdom of the ministry (ver. 4). 3. As the gospel is the mystery of God, and therefore a Divine power, so the ministry is a Divine power, and therefore the manifestation of Divine wisdom. (*Principal Edwards.*) *The Divine testimony, and the apostle's responsibility in relation to it* :—Consider—I. THE THEME. "The testimony of God," which has to do with "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (ver. 2). The "declaration" of this theme, in all its manifold relations and aspects, is the preaching of the gospel. The gospel is characterised by—1. Wisdom (ver. 6). Perfection of moral character is seen only in the character of Jesus Christ. 2. "Hidden wisdom." 3. Ancient wisdom. "Ordained before the world." 4. Glorifying wisdom. "Ordained unto our glory." II. THE DECLARATION (ver. 1) was—1. Simple in its character. "Not with excellency of speech"—"not with enticing words of man's wisdom." 2. Convincing in its arguments. It was "in demonstration of the Spirit." 3. Powerful in its effects (ver. 5). 4. Of exclusive importance (ver. 2). (*The Study.*) *Faith, not intellect* :—A friend said to Archbishop Whately on his death-bed: "The Lord has heard your prayers and preserved your intellect unimpaired." He replied: "It is not intellect which can avail me now, but faith in Christ Jesus." *Rhetorical preaching* :—In ascending the lofty peaks of the Jungfrau and Monte Rosa, the guides, I have read, not unfrequently resort to the innocent artifice of endeavouring to interest the traveller in the beauty of the flowers in order to distract his attention from the fearful abysses which the giddy path overhangs. What the Alpine guides thus innocently do, we preachers are often tempted to do not so innocently. We are prone so to occupy our hearers with the graces of composition and the flowers of rhetoric that they are in danger of altogether forgetting that there is a dread abyss beside them, and that there is but a step between them and death. (*J. Halsey.*) *The spirit of successful preaching* :—The Rev. Dr. McAll, founder and superintendent of the remarkable mission in Paris and other parts of France which bears his name, was the son of the celebrated Robert S. McAll, LL.D., of Manchester, some of whose

sermons are justly ranked amongst the noblest productions of pulpit literature. His ministry was powerfully influenced by what he considered to be the failure of his father's ministry. He tells how "he had repeatedly seen his father weep because, while so much run after and admired on account of his eloquence, so little spiritual good seemed to be done, and there were scarcely any conversions." Warned by this example, "he determined," he says, "to throw overboard 'excellency of speech and of wisdom' and to strike direct for the heart and conscience of the unconverted, in the hope of saving many." *The right kind of preaching*:—Mr. Spurgeon uttered words in one of his prayer-meeting addresses which speak volumes as to the secret of his successful ministry: "I think I can honestly say that when I have had something come to me rather fine—a nice, rare oratorical bit, and I think I could do it—I think if I tried I might say something very fine—I have pulled it out of my mouth and flung it away that I might not take away the attention of any hearer from Christ crucified. 'Here is a sword.' 'But,' says one, 'it has not a handsome scabbard.' No; we pull that off. We throw that to some old rag and bone dealer. We use nothing but the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ. When that does not save men, men shall be lost. We know nothing equal to it for the keenness of its edge; for the force with which it slays. It is a strange sword. With its edge it kills, and with its back it heals."

Ver. 2. **I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.**—*Paul's theme*:—I. PAUL'S THEME. 1. Christ. 2. Him crucified. II. HIS DETERMINATION. 1. To know nothing else. 2. Spite of ridicule and reproach. III. HIS MOTIVE. This was—1. His duty. 2. His delight. 3. His glory. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Paul's one theme*:—Paul was emphatically a man of one idea. He went forth not to baptize (1 Cor. i. 17); not to preach self (2 Cor. iv. 5); not to teach philosophy (1 Cor. i. 23); not to practise tricks of rhetoric (1 Cor. ii. 4); but everywhere in synagogues, market-places, judgment halls, prison, crowded cities, his one theme was "Christ and Him crucified." In the synagogues at Antioch and Thessalonica, what does he preach?—Acts xiii. 38; xvii. 3. On Mars Hill, what?—Acts xvii. 31. Before Felix and Agrippa, what?—Acts xxiv. 25; xxvi. 23. In the prison at Rome, what?—Acts xxviii. 31. And now in writing to the Corinthian Church, what? Why does Paul give such prominence to this theme? Because—I. IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THEME. Philosophy would have reached only the cultured. A plea for the oppressed would have reached only the patriotic, but the Cross commands universal attention, for it touches a universal want. It means—1. Remission of sins. Sin is the source of all ills. Christ is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." 2. An immortality of glory. II. IT IS THE GRANDEST THEME. 1. Grand is the starry world above, but grander is the Cross. 2. It gives grandeur to the life. If it be grand to die for one's country, grander is it to die for the salvation of men. If it be grand to minister to a mind diseased, grander is it to minister to a soul diseased. The Cross made Paul's life grand, and Luther's, Whitfield's, and Wesley's. III. OF THE CENTRAL POSITION OF THE THEME IN THE GOSPEL. (*J. C. Williamson.*) *The great subject of evangelical preaching*:—I. THE DETERMINATION OF THE APOSTLE. 1. "Jesus" signifies a Saviour. The kind errand upon which He comes is included in this name—to save from the guilt of sin, by imputing the merit of His sacrifice, and from the dominion of sin, by imparting His Spirit. 2. Christ signifies the Anointed One (Psa. xlv. 7). As kings and priests and prophets were anointed, so He was especially anointed of God as the King, the Priest, and the Prophet of His Church. 3. A special emphasis must be laid upon the words, Him crucified. "Jesus Christ" they know in heaven; "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," sinners are to be acquainted with upon the earth. 4. Paul determines to "know" this. To know sometimes meant—(1) Respect and love. "I beseech you to know them which labour among you in the Lord." (2) To make it known to others. And this the apostle did. (3) The word here signifies especially that he so resolved to preach among them "Christ crucified," as if he knew nothing so much as—nothing in comparison with—"Christ, and Him crucified." And read his sermons and epistles, and see how he carried out this blessed determination. II. SOME REASONS FOR THIS DETERMINATION. 1. It was a subject which God approved. He calls it "the testimony of God," because to His crucified Son God has given wonderful testimony in the Scriptures. 2. It was the subject calculated to convert sinners. And why? Because the Spirit, as the glorifier of Christ, will not apply any other subject but this. 3. It was fitted

to comfort the sorrowful. We have in it everything adequate to our present and eternal necessities. 4. It was adapted to promote holiness. If I wish you to manifest His obedience in all your conduct, how is it to be obtained? "The love of Christ constraineth us." If I want to press upon your attention holy love to Christ, it proceeds from the same source. If I want to excite you to holy liberality, where can I point you but here? "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor," &c. 5. It agrees with the theme of heaven. (*J. Sherman.*) *The man of one subject* :— Paul was a very determined man, and whatever he undertook he carried out with all his heart. "This one thing I do" was always his motto. He had once been a great opposer of Christ; it was not therefore to be wondered at that he should now bring all his faculties to bear upon the preaching of Christ crucified. I. WHAT WAS THIS SUBJECT TO WHICH PAUL DETERMINED TO SHUT HIMSELF UP while preaching to the Church at Corinth? 1. He first preached—(1) His great Master's person—Jesus Christ. (*a*) He held Him up as a real man, no phantom, but one who was crucified, &c. (*b*) He had no hesitation about His Godhead. He preached Jesus as the wisdom and power of God. (2) His work, especially His death. "Horrible!" said the Jew; "Folly!" said the Greek. But Paul did not, therefore, put these things into the background and begin with the life of Christ and the excellency of His example, and thus tempt them onward to His divinity and atonement. 2. Very impolitic this must have seemed. (1) Wise men would have remarked upon the hopefulness of the Israelites, if handled with discretion, and their advice would have been, "We do not say, renounce your sentiments, Paul, but disguise them for a little while." The apostle yielded to no such policy, he would not win either Jew or Gentile by keeping back the truth, for he knew that such converts are worthless. (2) Another would say, "But if you do this you will arouse opposition. Do not provoke the contempt of all thinking men. Argue with them, and show them that you too are a philosopher. Be all things to all men. By these means you will make many friends, and by degrees bring them to accept the gospel." But the apostle puts down his foot with, "I have determined." 3. He resolved that his subject should so engross attention that he would not even speak it with excellency of speech or man's wisdom. He would hide the Cross neither with flowers of rhetoric nor with clouds of philosophy. Some preach Christ as the painter who, in depicting a sea fight, showed nothing but smoke. II. ALTHOUGH PAUL THUS CONCENTRATED HIS ENERGIES UPON ONE POINT, IT WAS QUITE SUFFICIENT FOR HIS PURPOSE. If the apostle had aimed at pleasing an intelligent audience, or had designed to set himself up as a profound teacher, he would naturally have looked out for something a little more new and dazzling. A select Church of culture would have assured him that such preaching would only attract the servants and the old women; but Paul would not have been disconcerted by such observations, for he loved the souls of the poorest and feeblest: and, besides, he knew that what had exercised power over his own educated mind was likely to have power over other intelligent people. 1. Paul desired to arouse sinners to a sense of sin, and what has ever accomplished this so perfectly as the doctrine that sin was laid upon Christ and caused His death? 2. But he wanted also to awaken the hope that forgiveness might be given consistently with justice. Need a sinner ever doubt when he has once seen Jesus crucified? 3. He longed to lead men to actual faith in Christ. Now, faith cometh by hearing, but the hearing must be upon the subject concerning which the faith is to deal. 4. He wanted men to forsake their sins, and what should lead them to hate evil so much as seeing the sufferings of Jesus on account of it? 5. He longed to train up a Church of consecrated men, zealous for good works; and what more is necessary to promote sanctification than Christ, who hath redeemed us and so made us for ever His servants? I say that Paul had in Christ crucified a subject equal to his object; a subject that would meet the case of every man; a subject for to-day, to-morrow, and for ever. III. THE APOSTLE'S CONFINING HIMSELF TO THIS SUBJECT COULD NOT POSSIBLY DO HARM. A man of one thought only is generally described as riding a hobby: well this was Paul's hobby, but it was a sort of hobby which a man may ride without any injury to himself or his neighbour. 1. But Christ crucified is the only subject of which this can be said. (1) A class of ministers preach doctrine only, the effect of which is generally to breed narrowness, exclusiveness, and bigotry. (2) Others preach experience only. (*a*) Some of them take the lower scale of experience, and say that nobody can be a child of God except he groans daily, being burdened. This teaching brings up a race of men

who show their humility by sitting in judgment upon all who cannot groan as deeply as themselves. (*b*) Another class preach experience always upon the high key. For them there are no nights; they sing through perpetual summer days. They have conquered sin, and they have ignored themselves. So they say, or we might have fancied that they had a very vivid idea of themselves and their attainments. Certainly their conventions and preachings largely consist of very wonderful declarations of their own admirable condition. (3) Another class preach the precepts and little else, and the teaching becomes very legal; and after a while the true gospel which has the power to make us keep the precept gets flung into the background, and the precept is not kept after all. Do, do, do, generally ends in nothing being done. (4) Others make the second advent the end-all and be-all of their ministry, and in many cases sheer fanaticism has been the result. 2. But keeping to this doctrine cannot do hurt, because—(1) It contains all that is vital within itself. Within its limit, you have all the essentials for this life and for the life to come; you have the root out of which may grow branch, flower, and fruit of holy thought, word, and deed. This is a subject which does not arouse one part of the man and send the other part to sleep; it does not kindle his imagination and leave his judgment uninstructed, nor feed his intellect and starve his heart. As in milk there are all the ingredients necessary for sustaining life, so in Christ crucified there is everything that is wanted to nurture the soul. (2) It will never produce animosities, as those nice points do which some are so fond of dealing with. "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Christ," comes from not keeping to Jesus crucified; but was there ever yet a sect created by the preaching of Christ crucified? IV. BECAUSE OF ALL THIS WE SHOULD ALL OF US MAKE THIS THE MAIN SUBJECT OF OUR THOUGHTS, PREACHING, AND EFFORTS. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Paul's determination:*—Nothing but Christ—1. Could satisfy the preacher. 2. Save the hearer. 3. Please God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Method of preaching:*—Paul had been trained up in all the learning that was common among the Jews, and it would seem from some casual expressions in his writings, in much also that was common among the Greeks; he might, therefore, have taken his hearers upon their own favourite grounds; he might have treated them in a way suited to the prevailing taste, he might have touched lightly upon those parts of the Christian system against which their prejudices were most powerfully directed, and thus have escaped not only the contempt of his auditors, but secured their admiration. I. This determination was plainly founded on a deep and heartfelt conviction that CHRIST JESUS, IN THAT WHICH HE HAS DONE AND SUFFERED, IS THE ONLY GROUND OF THE SINNER'S HOPE. The apostle knew that, though the case of the sinner was dreadful, it was not hopeless, and bearing in mind that the eternal safety of the soul is a matter compared with which everything else must sink into insignificance, we cannot understand how he could form any other resolution than that which he here expresses, when he says, "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." II. But the apostle's determination to know nothing but Christ, and Him crucified, rested not merely on the fact that, by the atoning death of Christ, it was rendered possible for God to extend His pardoning mercy to rebellious man, but upon the other fact, that BY THE SAME MEANS, THE SINNER IS RENDERED A FIT SUBJECT FOR PARDON, AND ENDOWED WITH CAPACITY FOR ENJOYING THE BLESSINGS WHICH PARDON SUPPOSES IMPARTED. Man is not only guilty, but polluted; he is not only subjected to the wrath of God, here and hereafter, because he has broken His law and incurred its penalty, but he is excluded from His fellowship here, and from the enjoyment of Him hereafter, because, by the depravity of his tastes, his feelings, his desires, his affections, he is incapable of holding that fellowship, and enjoying that felicity. It is the tendency of the preaching of Christ crucified to remedy this evil, to reduce the rebellious sinner to throw aside the weapons of his rebellion, to enkindle within his bosom the flame of love, and to adorn his soul with all the virtues which adorn the Saviour, and to change him into the same image from glory to glory. And in illustration of this tendency of the preaching of Christ crucified to produce these effects, we remark, that the strongest possible assurance is thereby afforded to men of God's willingness to be reconciled to them. Nothing surely can tend more to dispel the fears and strengthen the confidence of his creatures, to soften their hearts, and to win them over to His service, than the view in which the gospel represents God as willing to be reconciled; as not only willing, but earnest that such a reconciliation should be effected, as even sending His Son to suffer and die, that this end might be effected, and delegating men as heralds to

offer terms to the guiltiest and most unworthy. But, again, by the preaching of Christ crucified, there is such a demonstration of love afforded, as tends most directly to ensure a return of the same affection. Do we think of a departed parent's tenderness, her days of toil and nights of watching, that she might bring us (under the blessing of God), through the weakness and dangers of infancy, without wishing her alive, that we might afford her, during her declining years, a practical proof of our gratitude? Can the helpless orphan think of the beneficence of the philanthropist, whose hand has rescued him from want and ignominy and death, and raised him to affluence, without bedewing his grave as he stoops over it with the tears of sensibility and tender recollection? Can we think of the love of God, not only in saving us, but in giving up His Son to the death for us all, in order to save not His friends but His enemies, without having our hearts warmed with a kindred love, and constrained by an irresistible influence, to live no longer to ourselves, but to Him who hath died for us and risen again? And does not the contemplation of the character of Christ, as exhibited in His life of suffering and death and agony, tend to beget in us a conformity to His image? You behold the Son of God leaving a palace, and becoming the tenant of a prison; and who can indulge in pride that contemplates such an overpowering exhibition of humility? You behold the Lord of all worlds wandering to and fro upon this earth without a house to afford Him shelter, yet not repining; and who, having food and raiment, should not therewith be content? You behold Him rejected by the nation He was sent to save, yet lamenting its infatuation, and weeping in the foresight of its doom; and who would not pity the miserable man who does not forgive the injurious? You see the crucified Jesus laid in the grave; and who would not repose in the bed He has hallowed? You see Him rising in glory; and who would not exult in the hope of immortality? Had Christ not been crucified, this Spirit had never been sent to earth, to move, to arrange the disordered elements of our moral nature, to convert the desert into the fruitful field, and the bleak and barren wilderness into the paradise of God. What, then, we ask, should the apostle have determined to know, in comparison with the great subject upon which he dwelt? What is more suited to the hungry than bread—what more consonant to the state of the weary traveller than rest—what more cheering to the guilty than pardon; and what could the apostle, in his regard to the honour of his Master, and to the interests of his fellows of the city of Corinth, guilty and polluted sinners, preach more adapted to their situation, than that Jesus, by whose blood they might be forgiven, by whose Cross and Spirit they might be sanctified, and thus be prepared, both by title and qualification of nature, for a place in that heavenly family, in reference to which they were now foreigners and strangers. (*J. Clason.*) *Christ crucified: the theme of St. Paul's preaching:*—I. WHAT IT IS TO MAKE KNOWN JESUS CHRIST. By separating the idea of Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ crucified, the apostle means by the first to specify the person of Christ. To make known the person of Christ is to proclaim Him—1. The incarnate God. Such he declares Him to be in many passages, "Who, being in the form of God," &c. "He is God over all, blessed for ever." "He is the true God and eternal life." 2. The great Prophet of man. As such He was spoken of by the prophets (Isa. lxi. 1). Hence they, by predicting His advent, applied to Him the epithet, the Messiah, or the Anointed. 3. Jesus Christ the example. "Leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps." Men are prone to imitation, it is one of the principles that come earliest into action, by it the child acquires the art of speech. Of this great principle Jesus Christ availed Himself in effecting His benevolent purposes on the moral condition of men; He commanded them to be perfect, as their Father in heaven is perfect; and, lest their hearts sink within them, and they should turn away from the effort in despair, He hath Himself obeyed His own commandments. In the example He has set they may confide: it is perfect in the embodying and personifying His law. II. WHAT IT IS TO MAKE KNOWN JESUS CHRIST CRUCIFIED. 1. For pardon—"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood." 2. Christ crucified for purification—for if He died a propitiation for men, to save them from their sins, His work must be either complete or completely ineffectual: ineffectual it would be to save them from the punishment of sin if they were still left under its ruling power. By that death Christ having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, sheds Him abroad on the hearts of His people, destroying the tyranny of passion, weakening the power of habit, correcting the taste, implanting new principles, regenerating the affections. 3. Christ crucified for protection—for the

protection of those whom He died to save (Phil. ii. 8–10; Eph. i. 22.) He is the ruler of providence, and subordinates all its events to promote the object for which He was crucified, even the salvation of men. They are exposed to danger from temptation, the sin that remains within them would precipitate them into guilt, His grace restrains; the world would seduce, He discloses the vanity of its fascinations; in the hour of death, when trial assails every weakness of humanity, He illumines and supports. 4. For resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4, 12, 13). 5. For eternal glory—this is the consummation of it (John xvii. 24). Of His glory, "it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive"; but elsewhere it is said, that His followers shall be like Him, and that as they have borne the image of the earthly, so also shall they bear the image of the heavenly, and that image shall never be defaced. III. WHAT IS THE IMPORT OF THE PHRASE "NOT TO MAKE KNOWN ANYTHING"? 1. Anything at variance with, or opposed to, these doctrines. These doctrines were novel; novelty of opinion implies opinions previously existing, which are for the most part not only distinct, but opposite; for truth is one, and opinions respecting it are either consistent with it or are inconsistent. Novelty of opinion, therefore, implies opposition. The opposition in the present case was extensive; the doctrines of Christianity contrasted themselves with every department, throughout the whole sphere of religious thinking, at Corinth. The sufficiency of reason to instruct and to regulate was tacitly assumed by them; of the necessity of Divine instruction they had no general idea. Naturally allied to this was the sufficiency of human merit to command acceptance. The moral character of their gods was so low that few men, however bad, could despair of reconciling themselves to one or other deity: the thief, the murderer, the adulterer, could all find examples of their own vice in the superior beings they feared. A degradation of the standard of virtue necessarily followed, accompanied with callousness of moral disapprobation. Even in those religious rights where human inability appeared more unambiguously acknowledged in the sacrifices by which they deprecated the wrath of offended Deity, it is easy to descry the spirit striving by such means to establish a claim on the Divine equity for protection and blessing, rather than the mere mercy of God. And again, allied to this, and forming but a new aspect, was the assumption of the sufficiency of human effort to originate and carry on to perfection excellences of character. I mention further their notions of the relative value of the virtues: pride was with them elevation of spirit; brute courage, designated by way of eminence, virtue; a spirit of revenge was esteemed honour, and the constituted favourite topic of their most lauded poets. Throughout the whole sphere there was a lamentable destitution of spirituality in their modes of thinking and feeling. Now, as these were the opinions that obtained at Corinth, and as all these are directly at variance with Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, with the Christianity which the apostle had to make known, it is obvious that in the text he referred specifically to these opinions, and that he considered them as what was not to be made known by one to whom was committed the ministration of the gospel; and condemning them thus specifically, he condemned them by their principles, and so he condemned all the consequences of such principles whenever they should in after years, under any other forms, appear. 2. Not anything exclusive of these doctrines. At first sight it appears impossible that any one, pretending to make known Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, should be able to do it in a way exclusive of the doctrines we have explained: they seem so essential to Christianity. Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, and Christianity, are convertible terms, they signify the same thing. But as what appears to man to be impossible is often possible with God, so what appears to man to be impossible is often possible with the great enemy of God and His Son: the arch enemy of the doctrines of Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, has devised the means of doing what is apparently impossible: these means vary with circumstances; but one of the most common is to originate controversy respecting the minor matters of the law and the subordinate or less essential parts of religion. By giving to these a temporary and unmerited importance, the attention of those appointed to make known Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, is concentrated and engrossed, weightier matters are in proportion neglected, and the duty of promulgating Christianity is performed in a way more or less exclusive of its characteristic doctrines. 3. Not anything so habitually as those doctrines. There is no virtue, no excellence, that in practice may not be carried to an extreme; and every extreme is bad. On this subject, of making known Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, men having indulged in the utmost extravagances; have, under the best and most pious feelings, conceived

that in the words of the apostle they are enjoined so to make known the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, as to exclude everything else; have tacitly denied any importance to the minor parts of the system, and have deemed the explication of them unworthy their attention. By thus failing to accommodate themselves to the demands of the system, and the mixed character of those who hear the gospel, they have given offence to the sensible, disgusted the almost Christian, and by limiting their range of topics, have introduced into their illustrations and enforcements a monotony of thinking, destructive, in no small degree, of ministerial usefulness. Such persons seem to act under the mistake that they have to make Jesus Christ known only to the unconverted. IV. WHAT IS EXPRESSED BY THE RESOLUTION, "I determined not to know anything," &c. 1. His conviction of the truth of these doctrines. 2. His sense of their importance. "Why am I invested," he would naturally ask himself, "by the Creator, the Ruler of men, with extraordinary and supernatural power to propagate among them these tenets, unless they are of more than worldly importance to them? 3. His determination to act worthily of his convictions. How peculiar and how sublime was the attitude in which he now stood! He saw the mightiest purposes of benevolence identified with his efforts, he saw the cause of truth dependent on his success, he heard the voice of gratitude for his own preservation summoning him to the sacred enterprise. (*W. Moodie, D.D.*) *Preaching Christ*:—"Don't you know, young man," said an aged minister, in giving advice to a younger brother, "that from every town, and every village, and every hamlet in England, there is a road to London?" "Yes," was the reply. "So," continued the venerable man, "from every text in Scripture there is a road to the metropolis of Scripture—that is, Christ. And your business, when you get a text, is to say, now what is the road to Christ, and then preach a sermon, running along the road towards the great metropolis, Christ." In considering what is implied in preaching Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, we remark—I. That it implies THE PREACHING OF CHRIST'S DIVINITY. II. To preach Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, implies THE PREACHING OF THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF CHRIST'S CHARACTER. "The Lord Jesus, it has been remarked, is the subject of all prophecy, the substance of all types, the end of the law, the jewel that lies in the casket of every promise, the sun in whom all the rays of heavenly truth centre, and from whom they radiate, filling the minds of all redeemed men, and of all holy angels, with their light and glory." III. Preaching Christ implies PREACHING HIM IN ALL HIS OFFICES AS PROPHET, PRIEST AND KING. IV. Preaching Christ, and Him crucified, implies THE SETTING FORTH IN ALL ITS FULNESS AND FREENESS CHRIST'S ATONING SACRIFICE, and commending Him and it for the acceptance of all hearers. Now, whilst the substitutionary work of Christ must ever be the theme of true gospel preaching, preachers should be careful to be fervent in spirit whilst commending Christ and His salvation to men. No doubt God may bless clear and cold preaching. For illustration, when Dr. Kane was in the Arctic regions he cut a piece of ice clear as crystal, in the form of a convex lens, held it up to the sun's rays, and to the surprise of the natives set in a blaze some dry wood which had been gathered. So an unconverted preacher may be the medium by which the truth may be brought to other hearts and kindle them with the holy flame of Divine love. Still, that is not usual, and it is well it is not. True preaching should be earnest; and, indeed, all the most eminent soul-winners may be said to have had their hearts in their mouths, so fervent were they in spirit. Thus, Richard Sheridan used to say, "I often go to hear Rowland Hill because his ideas come red-hot from the heart." Dr. Mason, when asked what he thought was the strong point of Dr. Chalmers, replied, "His blood-earnestness." And a Chinese convert once remarked in conversation with a missionary, "We want men with hot hearts to tell us of the love of Christ." Such is the manner in which Christ, and Him crucified, should be preached. (*D. Scott, D.D.*) *St. Paul's determination*:—And was the apostle wrong in his determination? He speaks as if the doctrine of the Cross were ample enough, comprehensive enough, for all his powers. Does this at all indicate that he was of a narrow and contracted mind, which could apply itself to only one topic, whilst a hundred others, perhaps nobler and loftier, lay beyond its grasp? Nay, not so; the tone of the apostle is not that of a man who is apologising for the limited character of his preaching, or its humiliating tendency; it is rather that of one who felt that the Corinthians had nothing to complain of, seeing that he had taught them the most precious, the most diffusive, the most ennobling of truths. Here, then, is our subject of discourse—the apostle determined to know nothing save the Cross; but the Cross is the noblest study for

the intellectual man, as it is the only refuge for the immortal. How different was the plan of the apostle from that pursued by many who have undertaken the propagation of Christianity. The missionary might keep back all mention of the Cross, because fearful of exciting dislike and contempt. But, all the while, he would be withholding that which gives its majesty to the system, and striving to apologise for its noblest distinction. Now, we need hardly observe to you that, so far as Christ Jesus Himself was concerned, it is not possible to compute what may be called the humiliation or shame of the Cross. It is altogether beyond our power to form any adequate conception of the degree in which the Mediator humbled Himself when born of a woman, and taking part of flesh and blood. But when the Redeemer, though He had done no sin, consented to place Himself in the position of sinners, then was it that He marvellously and mysteriously descended. "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." Here it is that the word "shame" may justly be used; for in this it was that Christ Jesus became "a curse for us." We read nothing of the shame of His becoming a man, but we do read of the shame of His dying as a malefactor. And if we allow that it was a shameful thing, that it involved a humiliation which no thought can measure, with what other emotions, you may ask, but those of sorrow and self-reproach, should we contemplate the Cross? Shall we exult in the Cross? The awful transactions of which Calvary was the scene should never be contemplated by us without a deep sense of the magnitude of the guilt which required such an expiation, and great self-abhorrence at having added to the burden which weighed down the innocent sufferer. But though of all men, perhaps, St. Paul was the least likely to underrate the causes of sorrow presented by the Cross, this great apostle, in determining to know nothing but the Cross, could adopt a tone which implied that he gloried in the Cross. And why, think you, was this? Or why, if there be so much of shame about the Cross, was the apostle wise, when addressing himself to a refined people, in determining to "know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"? Indeed, there is no difficulty in finding answers to these questions; the only difficulty is in the selecting those which are the more pertinent and striking. 1. We may first observe that the great truth which the apostle had to impress on the Corinthians was that, in spite of their sinfulness and alienation, they were still beloved by the one true God. And how could he better do this than by displaying the Cross? The greater the humiliation to which the Son of God submitted, the greater was the amount of the Divine love towards man. We know not whether it be lawful to speak of the possibility of our having been saved through any other arrangement. We may not be able to prove, and perhaps it hardly becomes us to investigate, what may be called the necessity for Christ's death, so that, unless Jesus had consented to die, it would not have been in God's power to open to us the kingdom of heaven. But we cannot be passing the bounds of legitimate supposition if we imagine for a moment that some less costly process had sufficed, and that justice had been satisfied, without exacting from our Surety penalties so tremendous as were actually paid. And is it not too evident to ask any proof, that in the very proportion in which you diminish the sufferings of the Mediator, you diminish also the exhibition of His love, and leave it a thing to be questioned? It is, then, to "Christ Jesus, and Him crucified" that we make our appeal when we would furnish such evidence of Divine love as must overbear all unbelief. We do not rest our proof on the fact that we have been redeemed, but on the fact that we have been redeemed through the bitter passion and the ignominious death of God's only and well-beloved Son. It is here that the proof is absolutely irrefragable. Notwithstanding all which man hath done to provoke Divine wrath and make condemnation inevitable, he is regarded with unspeakable tenderness by the Almighty. Teach me this, and you teach me everything. And this I learn from Christ crucified. I learn it, indeed, in a measure from the sun, as he walks the firmament and warms the earth into fertility. I learn it from the moon, as she gathers the stars into her train and throws over creation her robe of soft light. But if I am taught by these, the teaching after all is but imperfect and partial. But when I behold Christ crucified, I cannot doubt the Divine love. I cannot doubt of this love, that it may justly be called inexhaustible, and that, if I will only allow myself to be its object, there is no amount of guiltiness which can exclude me from its embrace. 2. We proceed to observe that, although to the eye of sense there be nothing but shame about the Cross, yet a spiritual discernment perceives it to be hung with the very richest of trophies. It is necessarily

to be admitted that, in one point of view, there was shame, degradation, ignominy, in Christ's dying on the Cross; but it is equally certain that in another there was honour, victory, triumph. There are impaled those principalities and powers, the originators and propagators of evil; there is fastened Death itself, that great tyrant and destroyer of human kind; there our sins are transfixed, having been condemned in the flesh, because borne in Christ's body on the tree. And am I, then, to be ashamed of the Cross? It is to be ashamed of the battle-field on which has been won the noblest of victories, of the engine by which has been vanquished the fiercest of enemies. It is to be ashamed of conquest, ashamed of triumph, ashamed of deliverance. And therefore was His death glorious, aye, unspeakably more glorious than life, array it how you will with circumstances of honour. This turns the crown of thorns into a diadem of splendour. This converts the sepulchre of Jesus into the avenue of immortality. 3. But we have hitherto scarcely carried our argument to the full extent of the apostle's assertion. Not only was he determined to know amongst the Corinthians "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," but he was determined to know nothing else. And if you consider for a moment what reason we have to believe that every blessing which we enjoy may be traced to the Cross, you will readily acknowledge that St. Paul went no further than he was bound to go as a faithful messenger of Christ. I can say to the man of science, thine intellect was saved for thee by the Cross. I can say to the father of a family, the endearments of home were rescued by the cross. I can say to the admirer of nature, the glorious things in the mighty panorama retained their places through the erection of the Cross. I can say to the ruler of an empire, the subordination of different classes, the working of society, the energies of government, are all owing to the Cross. And when the mind passes to the consideration of spiritual benefits, where can you find one not connected with "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"? But we have yet another remark to offer. St. Paul must have desired to teach that doctrine which was best adapted to the bringing the Corinthians to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world." If, therefore, he confined himself to any one doctrine, we may be sure that he considered it the most likely to be influential on the practice, on the turning sinners from the error of their ways, and making them obedient to God's law. And what doctrine is this if not that of "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"? (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The knowledge of Jesus Christ the best knowledge*:—I. I AM TO EXPLAIN WHAT IS MEANT BY "NOT KNOWING ANYTHING, SAVE JESUS CHRIST, AND HIM CRUCIFIED." By Jesus Christ we are to understand the eternal Son of God. By this word "know," we are not to understand a bare historical knowledge. It implies an experimental knowledge of His crucifixion so as to feel the power of it. II. I pass on to GIVE SOME REASONS WHY EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD, WITH THE APOSTLE, DETERMINE "NOT TO KNOW ANYTHING SAVE JESUS CHRIST, AND HIM CRUCIFIED." 1. Without this our persons will not be accepted in the sight of God. Some may please themselves in knowing the world, others boast themselves in the knowledge of a multitude of languages. The meanest Christian, if he know but this, though he know nothing else, will be accepted; so the greatest master in Israel, the most letter-learned teacher, without this, will be rejected. 2. Without this knowledge, our performances, as well as persons, will not be acceptable in the sight of God. Two persons may go up to the temple and pray; but he only will return home justified, who, in the language of our Collects, sincerely offers up his prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord. Farther: As our devotions to God will not, so neither, without this knowledge of Jesus Christ, will our acts of charity to men be accepted by Him. As neither our acts of piety nor charity, so neither will our civil nor moral actions be acceptable to God, without this experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ. The death of Jesus Christ has turned our whole lives into one continued sacrifice. III. EXHORT YOU TO PUT THE APOSTLE'S RESOLUTION IN PRACTICE, and beseech you, with him, to determine "not to know anything save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." (*G. Whitfield, M.A.*) *The knowledge of Christ crucified*:—1. Let us be thankful to God for a crucified Redeemer. There is nothing in heaven and earth such an amazing wonder as this, nothing can vie with it for excellence. 2. Let us delight in the knowledge of Christ crucified, and be often in the thoughts and study of Him. Study Christ, not only as living, but dying. (1) This will keep up life in our repentance. We cannot look upon Christ crucified for us for our guilt, but the meditation of this must melt us into sorrow. (2) It will spirit our faith, when we shall see His blood confirming an everlasting covenant wherein God promises to be gracious. (3) This will animate us in our approaches to God. Not only a bare coming, but

a boldness and confidence in coming to God was purchased by a crucified Christ (Heb. x. 19). (4) This will be a means to further us in a progress in holiness. An affection to sin, which cost the Redeemer of the world so dear, would be inconsistent with a sound knowledge and serious study of a crucified Saviour. (5) This will be the foundation of all comfort. What comfort can be wanting when we can look upon Christ crucified as our Surety, and look upon ourselves as crucified in Him; when we consider our sins as punished in Him, and ourselves accepted by virtue of His Cross. (*Bp. Hacket.*) *The demonstration of the Spirit*:—If the wisdom of men had been to advise about the most effectual means to promote Christianity in the world, they would presently have considered what those things are which are most likely to prevail on mankind, and, according to their several inclinations, would have made choice of one or the other of them. Some would have been for the way of external greatness and power as most apt to oversway the generality of mankind. Others would have thought this an improper way of promoting religion by the power of the sword, because that is more apt to affright than convince men, and the embracing religion supposes the satisfaction of men's minds about it, and all power doth not carry demonstration along with it; therefore such would have proposed the choosing out of men of the finest parts and best accomplishments, who, dispersing themselves into several countries, should, by their eloquence and reason, prevail on the more ingenious and capable sort of men, who by degrees would draw all the rest after them. Thus the wisdom of men would have judged; but the wisdom of God made choice of ways directly contrary to these. He would not suffer His truth to be so much beholden for its reception either to the power or the wit of men. I. WHY ST. PAUL DOTH SO UTTERLY RENOUNCE THE ENTICING WORDS OF MAN'S WISDOM? For we are not to imagine it was any natural incapacity or want of education which made him forbear them. The apostle implies an unsuitableness in these enticing ways of man's wisdom to the design of promoting the Christian religion; what that was I shall now more particularly search into. 1. As to the enticing words of persuasion. 2. As to the way and method of reasoning, or man's wisdom. 1. As to the way of eloquence then in so much vogue and esteem, called by St. Paul (ver. 1) the excellency of speech. And what harm was there in that that it could not be permitted to serve the design of the gospel? Is not the excellency of speech a gift of God as well as knowledge and memory? What are all the instructions of orators intended for but to enable men to speak clearly and fitly and with all those graces and ornaments of speech which are most apt to move and persuade the hearers? And what is there in all this disagreeable to the design of the doctrine of Christ? Are not the greatest and most weighty concernments of mankind fit to be represented in the most proper and clear expressions, and in the most moving and affectionate manner? Why, then, should St. Paul be so scrupulous about using the enticing words of man's wisdom? To clear this matter we are to consider a twofold eloquence. (1) A gaudy, sophistical eloquence is wholly renounced by him, of which the apostle seems particularly to speak, mentioning it under the name of man's wisdom, which was in mighty esteem among the Greeks, but suspected and cried down by wiser men as that which did only beguile injudicious people. And the great orator himself confesses the chief end of their popular eloquence was so to move their auditors as to make them judge rather according to passion than to reason. This being the common design of the enticing words of man's wisdom in the apostle's age, had they not the greatest reason to renounce the methods of those whose great end was to deceive their hearers by fair speeches and plausible insinuations? (2) The apostle is not to be understood as if he utterly renounced all sober and manly eloquence; for that were to renounce the best use of speech as to the convincing and persuading mankind. And what is true eloquence but speaking to the best advantage, with the most lively expressions, the most convincing arguments, and the most moving figures? What is there now in this which is disagreeable to the most Divine truths? Is it not fit they should be represented to our minds in a way most apt to affect them? 2. As to the way and method of reasoning. So some think these words are chiefly to be understood of the subtilty of disputing because the apostle brings in demonstration as a thing above it. But this again seems very hard that the use of reasoning should be excluded from the way of propagating Christian religion. But that which St. Paul rejects as to this was—1. The way of wrangling and perpetual disputing, by the help of some terms and rules of logic, so that they stuck out at nothing, but had something to say for or against anything. No

man that understands the laws of reasoning can find fault with the methodising our conception of things by bringing them under their due ranks and heads; nor with understanding the difference of causes, the truth and falsehood of propositions, and the way of discerning true and false reasonings from each other. But men were fallen into such a humour of disputing that nothing would pass for truth among them. And therefore it was not fitting for the apostles of Christ to make use of these baffled methods of reasoning to confirm the truth of what they delivered upon the credit of Divine revelation. 2. The way of mere human reasoning as it excludes Divine revelation. The apostle proves the necessity of God revealing these things by His Spirit (vers. 10–12). II. To INQUIRE INTO THE FORCE OF THAT DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT AND OF POWER WHICH THE APOSTLE MENTIONS AS SUFFICIENT TO SATISFY THE MINDS OF MEN WITHOUT THE ADDITIONAL HELP OF HUMAN WISDOM; wherein are two things to be spoken of. I. What is meant by the demonstration of the Spirit and of power? 1. It must be something by way of proof of another thing, otherwise it could not bear the name of demonstration. If the apostle's words were understood of the conviction of men's consciences by the power of preaching, his argument could reach no farther than to those who were actually convinced, but others might say, We feel nothing of this powerful demonstration upon us. Since, therefore, St. Paul speaks for the conviction of others, and of such a ground whereon their faith was to stand (ver. 5), it is most reasonable to understand these words of some external evidence which they gave of the truth of what they delivered. 2. That evidence is described by a double character—it was of a Spiritual nature and very powerful. And such a demonstration was then seen among them in the miraculous gifts and works of the Holy Ghost. 3. Why this was not as liable to suspicion as the way of eloquence and logic, since those had been only corrupted and abused by men, but the power of miracles had been pretended to by evil spirits. Why, then, did God reject the most reasonable ways of dealing with men in the way of eloquence and demonstration, which were more natural and accommodate to the capacities and education of the most ingenious minds, and make choice of a way which the world had been so much abused in by the imposture of evil spirits? 1. Because the method God chose did prove it was not the invention of men, which would have been always suspected if mere human arts had been used to promote it. Whereas if the way of promoting this religion had been ordinary with the usual methods of persuasion, men would have imputed all the efficacy of it only to the wisdom of men. For God knows very well the vanity and folly of mankind, how apt they are to magnify the effects of their own wit and reason. 2. God gave sufficient evidence that these extraordinary gifts could never be the effects of any evil spirits. (1) The publicness of the trial of it, when it first fell upon them on the day of Pentecost. (2) The usefulness of this gift to the apostles, for considering the manner of their education and the extent of their commission to preach to all nations; no gift could be supposed more necessary. (3) The manner of conferring these miraculous gifts upon others show that there was somewhat in them above all the power of imagination or the effects of evil spirits. II. The power of miracles, or of doing extraordinary things, as well as of speaking after an extraordinary manner. This seems the hardest to give an account of, why God should make choice of this way of miracles above all others to convince the world of the truth of the Christian doctrine, upon these considerations: (1) The great delusions that had been in the world so long before under the pretence of miracles. (2) The great difficulty there is in putting a difference between true and false miracles. 1. How we may know when anything doth exceed the power of mere nature as that is opposed to any spiritual beings; for some have looked on all things of this kind as impostures of men. 2. We must therefore inquire further, whether such things be the effects of magic or Divine power. For which end these two things are considerable. 1. That Christ and His apostles did declare the greatest enmity to all evil spirits, professing in their design to destroy the devil's kingdom and power in the world. 2. The devil was not wanting in fit instruments and means to support his kingdom; and God was pleased, in His infinite wisdom, to permit him to show his skill and power, by which means there was a more eminent and conspicuous trial on which side the greatest strength did lie. Thus the matter is brought to a plain contest of two opposite powers, which is greater than the other, and which shows itself to be the Divine power. To which purpose we may consider these two things. That the pretended miracles of the opposers of Christianity did differ from the miracles wrought by the apostles in several weighty circumstances. 1. In the design and

tendency of them. Most of the wonderful things whereof the enemies of Christianity did boast were wrought either—(1) To raise astonishment and admiration in the beholders. (2) To gratify the curiosity of mankind. (3) To encourage idolatry. (4) To take men off from the necessity of a holy life. 2. In the variety, openness, usefulness, and frequency of them. The greatest magical powers were limited and confined; and the spirits which ruled in the children of disobedience were sensible of their own chains. I shall only add one circumstance more, wherein the miracles wrought to confirm the Christian religion exceed all others, and that is—3. In the satisfaction they have given to the most inquisitive part of mankind, *i.e.*, either to convince them of the truth of the doctrine confirmed by them, or, at least, to bring them to this acknowledgement that, if the matters of fact were true, they are a sufficient proof of a Divine power. (*Bp. Stillingfleet.*) *The determination of Paul*:—I. ITS IMPORT. 1. What are we to understand by "Christ, and Him crucified"? This theme is distinguished by—(1) Great simplicity. Other teachers engaged the mind with speculations on subjects of various degrees of interest, but this teacher had for his theme a Person and a fact. Leaving the philosophers to their "wisdom" he held up a Man, and that Man hanging on a Cross. Other instructors spoke with great respect of eminent men, whose opinions they were anxious to advance; but it was never known before that a person and his sufferings were to be the foundation and the superstructure of every discourse. (2) Vast comprehensiveness. It was not Paul's practice to indulge in an endless repetition of the name of Christ, or in a mere detail of His history, but to exhibit His life and death as the basis of a grand system of truth. He "preached Christ, and Him crucified," as the brightest and best revelation of the Divine character, and the grand announcement of mercy to man. In His incarnation and death we see the Divine love, for "God so loved the world," &c.; the Divine wisdom, for "Christ is the wisdom of God"; the Divine power, "for the gospel is the power of God unto salvation"; the Divine justice, for the Saviour lived and suffered that the righteousness of God might be revealed; the Divine truth, for Christ came to "confirm the promises made of God unto the fathers." 2. In what sense we are to understand the apostle's determination. He determined—(1) To exclude every subject that would deprive the gospel of its power. The gospel is a sharp, two-edged sword, but if we lower its ethereal temper by forging it anew on our own anvil, it will wound no conscience and slay no sin. It is a fire able to melt the hardest heart, but if we damp its flame by earthly additions, the heart of stone defies its power. It is the sincere milk of the Word; but the admixture of human fancies and dogmas will destroy its power to sustain. It is a mirror, in which the sinner is to see the correct reflection of his own image; but beclouded by the mists of error, the natural man cannot be expected to behold his face in this glass. And therefore would we humbly cherish the apostle's holy jealousy for the unadulterated gospel, and "know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." (2) To exclude everything that might tend to deprive the gospel of its glory. His anxiety on this subject is clearly expressed in vers. 1, 4, 5. He knew the effects assigned by the Greeks to human wisdom, the power ascribed to persuasive words, and how ready they would be, supposing great moral changes to follow, to give to his reasoning and eloquence the glory of bringing those changes about, and therefore was he most careful to prevent this evil. II. ITS REASONS. 1. His anxiety to be found faithful. A sacred trust had been reposed in him. How, then, could he most effectually shield himself from the woe threatened against unfaithfulness, and give up his account with joy and not with grief? It was simply by having his mind so engrossed with the grand theme of the gospel as to shut out every other. 2. His desire to promote the highest interests of man. He was eminently a philanthropist, and it is easy to see how such a true lover of mankind would seize with avidity this remedy for universal suffering, and be ready to employ the real means for "promoting the greatest good of the greatest number." In the great announcements of mercy connected with "Christ, and Him crucified," he had the panacea for the spiritual woes under which men were suffering. 3. His grand aim to give the greatest glory to God. When the Redeemer was within a few days of His crucifixion He said in His prayer, "Father, save Me," &c. (John xii. 27, 28). From this prayer, and its supernatural answer, we learn, first, that the prevailing desire of every holy mind is the glory of God; and, secondly, that that glory was displayed in the death of Christ and its great results. The prayer of Christ is that of every child of God, "Father, glorify Thy name." It was so in a remarkable degree in Paul. And it was by the faithful exhibition of "Christ, and Him cruci-

fied," that he could most effectually secure the high end he had thus constantly in view. All the Divine perfections are displayed in the sacrifice of Christ. And the effects of this great theme on the minds that receive it are of such a nature as to bring the highest honour to the Divine name. The case of the apostle is a striking illustration. When he became a preacher of the faith he had once attempted to destroy, men "glorified God in him." The character of the Divine artist could be seen in the work of His hands. What power, in turning the stubborn will, and causing it to move in the true way! What love, in receiving into the Divine friendship a bitter enemy! What wisdom, which when it was revealed caused the disciple of Gamaliel to count all his learned notions as dross, for the excellent knowledge to which it was now supplanted! And all who believe the gospel, become in like manner the living epistles of God, known and read by all men, and furnishing to the whole intelligent universe the best and the brightest displays of the character of God. (*W. Owen.*) *The determination of Paul:*—Let us—I. EXPLAIN IT. He determined—1. To preach Christ crucified, as the ground of hope, and the motive to obedience. 2. To exclude everything else. II. VINDICATE IT. This was—(1) All he was commissioned to preach. (2) All it was necessary to preach. (3) Everything else but weakens the efficacy of the truth. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The preaching of Christ crucified:*—I. THE APOSTLE PREACHED CHRIST, AND HIM CRUCIFIED. 1. Preaching Christ means making known the truth respecting Him, *i.e.*, the great facts concerning His birth, His life, His death, His resurrection; the ends for which He did and suffered all this, and the benefits procured by it. 2. Preaching Christ and Him crucified is stating the fact of His ignominious death, and making known all the blessings connected with it. II. HE PREACHED NOTHING BUT CHRIST, AND HIM CRUCIFIED, *i.e.*—1. He made Christ known on every occasion on which he addressed them. 2. He rejected from his preaching whatever was not intimately connected with this all-important theme. 3. He made known no doctrine, precept, promise, but in connection with Christ and Him crucified. III. HE DETERMINED TO PREACH NOTHING ELSE. It was not a hasty resolution, but his deliberate settled purpose. Let us consider what were the reasons which induced him, and which should induce every minister of Christ to adopt the same determination. 1. He saw the glory and excellency of this subject. Others might consider it foolishness, but the light of its glory had shone into his mind. When a man has his mind taken up with a subject in which he is delighted, he is quite out of his element if you lead him from it, and whatever subject he is engaged upon he will make it turn on his favourite theme. 2. The suitableness of this subject to answer the great ends of the Christian ministry. It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Paul knew that this was the only doctrine which could reach the hardened heart, bring peace to the conscience, inspire a hope of pardon, make men love God, and cultivate all the beauties of holiness. 3. His Lord's command. The question with him was, not what message will be agreeable, but what have I been commanded to deliver. He was commanded to preach the gospel, therefore necessity was laid upon him, and the Saviour has made the discharge of this duty a test of love to Him. Lovest thou Me? Feed My sheep. (*W. R. Taylor, A.M.*) *Paul's resolve:*—I. THE MEANING OF THE PHRASE. Those who believe in the atonement interpret it as a sacrifice for sin, and consider faith in it necessary to salvation. Others understand it as a bare fact, or as martyrdom for truth. The apostle, however, gives his own explanation (chap. i. 23, 24). II. THE PROPOSITION THAT THIS IS THE ONLY DOCTRINE WHICH IS SAVING! 1. What is our condition? (1) We are corrupted! (2) Guilty—actually criminal, and this is the cause of eternal death. 2. This very condition it is which adapts the gospel to us. Try every other doctrine and see if it will do. (1) True, it reveals the glory of God, but what avails all our knowledge of God if no sacrifice? The gospel discovers His goodness in glowing characters, but while this rises on the scene it is shaded by His justice. (2) But you say, the gospel is a beautiful moral law for our guide. True; but what comfort is this to guilty man? Take the statute-book to the victim condemned to die; expatiate on the law he has violated; alas! he wants pardon, not law. 3. You say, there is the example of Jesus. Granted. We cannot study it too much; yet example is only law in action, and the former answer applies to it; if the law is unwelcome, so is its exhibition. And what is the fact? See the Jews. Was it not the excellence of the example which made them hate it? 4. You say, there are many promises in the gospel without that of Christ, or salvation by Christ. True; but hope cannot rest on them. The promise of a common providence, food, raiment, &c., is made; but we are guilty—and what are these if

hell is to be our portion? And again, the promises are all to His people. 5. There is nothing, then, in the gospel on which to rest but the sacrificial death of Christ. Here, "what the law could not do," &c. Application: 1. The Cross is of no use to us if we do not confess our corruptions, inability, and danger. 2. We see the certainty of pardon—all is hope in the gospel, and all certainty too. Say not that you are unworthy—all your unworthiness is assumed in the gospel—it justifies in the character of ungodly. 3. We see what is meant by living a life of faith in the Son of God, all flows from Him, all your petitions are presented by Him, the blood of Christ and faith in that blood are all that stand between you and God. 4. Pray that a ministry may ever be among you to preserve this doctrine. (*J. Summerfield, A.M.*) *The knowledge of Christ crucified*:—I. THE KNOWLEDGE HERE MENTIONED. 1. Its subject. (1) Christ's person. Jesus points out divinity: the signification being Jehovah, the Saviour. It was given Him in fulfilment of the prophecy which declared that He should be called Immanuel, or God with us. (2) His offices. Christ or Messiah means "anointed," as were prophets, priests, and kings—all types of Christ. (*a*) He is the prophet of His Church (Deut. xviii. 18, 19). He reveals to us the will of God, and accompanies it with the illuminating influences of the Spirit. (*b*) He is High Priest who, having offered sacrifice for sin, arose to make intercession. (*c*) He is King; He restrains, and finally destroys His enemies; He makes His people willing in the day of His power, governs them by His holy laws, and defends them. 2. His work. "Him crucified." The atonement thus made is explicitly inculcated in every part of the scriptures. In the prophets (Isa. liii. 5; Dan. ix. 24, 26, &c.). By our Lord (Matt. xx. 28; John vi. 51); Matt. xxvi. 28). By the apostle (Rom. v. 6, 10; Col. i. 14). It was pointed out by all the sacrifices, and in heaven the Redeemer appears as "a Lamb as it had been slain" (Rev. v. 6, 9, 11, 12). 3. The kind of knowledge which we should have of this subject. There are two kinds of knowledge of Christ—speculative and practical. The former remains in the head, the latter in the heart. The former is obtained by exercise of our own faculties; the latter only by the Holy Spirit. The latter is intended in the text. This knowledge leads us to receive Jesus as our Divine Saviour; which prompts us to rely on Christ in reference to every one of His offices. Intellectual knowledge, however, is not to be neglected, because we cannot be affected by truths of which we are ignorant. II. ITS SUPREME IMPORTANCE. 1. Absolutely it gives important benefits. (1) Acquaintance with the real character of God. The Cross of Christ impresses us with a sense of—(*a*) His holiness and justice. (*b*) His mercy and love. (*c*) His wisdom. (2) Peace to the wounded conscience. (3) The foundation of all Christian graces, tempers, and obedience. It is the view of Him whom our sins pierced which leads us to mourn for them. It strengthens faith—"He that spared not His own Son, . . . shall He not freely give us all things?" It furthers progress in holiness. We abhor that sin which heaped such suffering on the Redeemer. 2. Relatively—(1) It is more useful than any other kind of knowledge. Human learning has its important use, but the interests of eternity are preferable to those of time. (2) It is more easily acquired. It is true, indeed, that where a right disposition be wanting, you shall find things hid from the wise and prudent. It is true that persevering diligence is requisite. It is true that there are depths attending this knowledge which the utmost powers of intellect cannot fathom. (*J. J. S. Bird, B.A.*) *Preaching Christ and Him crucified*:—1. The great men of the world are those who discover or apply great truths to the times in which they live, in such a manner as to work effectual reformations of society. A man is great, not by the measure of his faculty, but by the results which he produces in life. Paul was, then, one of the greatest. 2. It is more than a matter of curiosity, when a man has been raised up of God to do great things, to have him give a view of his own life, its aims and methods. Paul here sounds the keynote of his life and course. You will take notice, in all the preceding chapter and in this, that it is not Christ, but Christ *crucified*, Christ with His Cross, that was the essential qualifying particular. Paul did not mean, then, to be a skirmisher, nor an elegant trifler. He did not propose to be a routinist, either through ceremonies or dialectics. For it was his business to work a thorough change of character in the men that came under his influence, and so to lay the foundation for the renovation of society itself. What could be greater than this work? 3. Many things were going on for the renovation, or rather the restraint, of men's passions? But it was a work imperfectly understood, and not done. Paul declared what was the power by which it might be achieved. He did not

declare that he meant to exclude everything else. The declaration is only a comprehensive renunciation of secular interests and influences as working powers. When a man goes into a community to work, he instinctively says, "How shall I reach these men? What things shall I employ for their renovation?" The apostle says, "After looking over the whole field, I made up my mind not to rely on my power to discourse eloquently, nor upon my intellectual forces. This had been done by many a man with great cogency. But Paul, looking at such men as Socrates and Plato, said, "I determined that I would rely upon the presentation of God's nature and government as manifested particularly through the Christ as a sacrifice for sinners. By these I meant to get a hold upon men's conscience, affections, and life." A warrior preparing for battle walking through his magazine passes by bows and arrows, and old-fashioned armour, and says, "They were good in their time and way, but I do not intend to rely upon them." But when he comes to the best instruments of modern warfare, he says, "Here are the things that I mean to depend upon." Therefore, when the apostle said, "I determined not to know," &c., he avowed his faith that in that there is more moral power upon the heart and the conscience than in any other thing, and his determination to draw influences from that source in all his work. In view of this I remark—I. THE PERSONAL INFLUENCE OF CHRIST UPON THE HEART IS THE FIRST REQUISITE FOR A CHRISTIAN PREACHER. We may preach much *about* Christ, but no man will preach *Christ* except so far as Christ is in him. There are many men that by natural gifts are qualified to stand pre-eminent above their fellows, who exert but little religious influence; and, on the other hand, there are many of small endowment whose life is like a rushing, mighty wind in the influence which it exerts. The presence of Christ in them is the secret of their power. II. A MAN'S SUCCESS IN PREACHING WILL DEPEND UPON HIS POWER OF PRESENTING CHRIST. There is a great deal of useful didactic matter that every minister must give to his congregation. There is a great deal of doctrine, fact, history, and of description that belongs to the ministerial desk. The Bible is full of material for these things, and ethics should occupy an important place. But high above all these is the fountain of influence, Christ who gave Himself a ransom for sinners, and now ever lives to make intercession for them. Though one preaches every other truth, if he leaves this one out, or abbreviates it, he will come short of the essential work of the gospel. Put this in, and you have all, as it were, in brief. III. THERE CAN BE NO SOUND AND EFFECTIVE METHOD OF PREACHING ETHICS, EVEN, WHICH DOES NOT DERIVE ITS AUTHORITY FROM THE LORD CHRIST. The motives derivable from the secular and human side of ethics are relatively feeble. Whatever method is pursued, the indispensable connection between the spiritual element and the practical development should be maintained. Morality without spirituality is a plant without root, and spirituality without morality is a root without stem and leaves. I have a right to introduce into my sermons all secular topics as far as they are connected with man's moral character and his hopes of immortality. If I discuss them in a merely secular way, I desecrate the pulpit; but if I discuss them in the spirit of Christ, and for Christ's sake, that I may draw men out of their peculiar dangers, and lead them into a course of right living, then I give dignity to the pulpit. IV. ALL REFORMATIONS OF EVIL IN SOCIETY SHOULD SPRING FROM THIS VITAL CENTRE. It is a very dangerous thing to preach Christ so that your preaching shall not be a constant rebuke to all the evil in the community. That man who so preaches Christ, doctrinally or historically, that no one trembles, is not a faithful preacher of Christ. On the other hand, it is a dangerous thing for a man to attack evil in the spirit of only hatred. The sublime wisdom of the New Testament is this: "Overcome evil with good." Was Christ not a reformer? Did He not come to save the world? And did He not hate evil? And yet with what sweetness of love did He dwell in the midst of these things, so that the publicans and the sinners took heart, became inspired with hope, and drew near to Him. Christ reformed men by inspiring the love of goodness as well as by hatred of evil, and He drew men from their sin as well as drove them from it. V. HENCE ALL PHILANTHROPIES ARE PARTIAL AND IMPERFECT THAT DO NOT GROW OUT OF THIS SAME ROOT. When philanthropy springs from this centre, and is inspired by this influence, it becomes, not a mere sentimentalism, but a vivid and veritable power in human society. Philanthropy without religion becomes meagre. It is the love of man uninspired by the love of God! VI. ALL PUBLIC QUESTIONS OF JUSTICE, OF LIBERTY, OF EQUITY, OF PURITY, OF INTELLIGENCE, SHOULD BE VITALISED BY THE POWER WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS. There are other motives that may press men forward in a little way, but

there is nothing that has such controlling power as the personal influence of Christ. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Preaching Christ and Him crucified*:—I. THIS IS THE GREAT DOCTRINE SUITABLE FOR MAN, VIEWED AS A BEING GUILTY IN THE SIGHT OF GOD. This state of guilt we bring into the world with us; we augment it by actual transgression, and we cannot remove it by any service or obedience of our own. In these circumstances the duty of the ambassadors of Christ is not to gain the applause of their perishing fellow-creatures, by displaying from week to week the depth of their own learning; but to offer simply this one remedy for men's guilt. II. THIS IS THE ONLY DOCTRINE SUITABLE FOR MAN, VIEWED AS A BEING WHO HAS TO BE RAISED TO HOLINESS. Describe holiness as you will; speak of its beauty and its dignity; invest it with all the charms which fancy can devise or language utter—and to the human heart alienated from Christ, your efforts will be as unavailing as if you were to exhibit the finest combination of colours to the blind, for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Or point to God, as the highest type of holiness—you only plunge the sinner into utter wretchedness. But the preaching of "Christ crucified" exhibits a new aspect of the Divine character, which he can look upon without fear; he now strives to keep God's holiness constantly before him; and his language is not "Depart from me," but "My soul thirsteth for God." III. THIS IS THE ONLY SUBJECT SUITABLE FOR MAKING AN IMPRESSION UPON MAN IN THE WAY OF LEADING HIM TO THE DISCHARGE OF ACTIVE DUTY. The growth of holiness in the heart is indicated by the fruits of righteousness in the life. Now, when the sinner is once convinced that God loves him, and when fear, and doubt, and suspicion have thus given place to hope, and joy, and confidence—then does he begin to ask what he can do to manifest his gratitude to his merciful Redeemer. (*A. D. Davidson.*) *The centre of the gospel*:—1. The teaching of Paul is remarkable for comprehensiveness. In Romans he traverses the whole range of doctrines bearing on sin and salvation; in Ephesians, from another standpoint, he goes still further into thoughts of grace, love, glory; in Corinthians, Timothy, Titus, he discourses of human life, the world, congregational and individual difficulties; in Thessalonians, of prophecy and the future. Moreover, he impresses on all Christians to go on unto perfection, and not rest content with the elements of truth. Therefore, to "know Jesus Christ and Him crucified" is not to him the minimum, but the maximum of knowledge—the culmination of all doctrines, the starting-point of all duties. 2. Paul knew not Jesus in His earthly life; he saw Him only in His glory; yet the deepest impression left on the heart of Paul was the sweet name "Jesus"; the indelible image burnt into his soul was "Jesus Christ crucified." 3. Paul, more than any other, knew the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. His own weakness made him take hold of the inexhaustible power of God, as the crucifixion leads to resurrection-life and victory. As when he is weak then is he strong, so the Cross of Christ is the power of God. (*A. Saphir, D.D.*) *Nothing but Christ*:—I. CHRIST THE SUBJECT. II. CHRIST THE MOTIVE—we believe, therefore speak. III. CHRIST THE END—to Him be all the glory. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The Christian ministry*:—I. IS A MINISTRY OF ONE TEXT ONLY. "Save Jesus Christ." As such—1. It is most adapted to the intellectual condition of the world. 2. It is most adequate to reveal God. "In Him dwells the fulness of the God-head bodily," &c. 3. It is most complete. Christ is the Alpha and Omega of its tidings. Everything in Him and through Him. II. AS A MINISTRY OF ONE TEXT IS A MINISTRY OF THE ONE BEST TEXT. "Save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." It is the best because—1. Jesus is its sum and substance. "Save Jesus Christ." 2. It reveals the Saviour in the most pleasing aspects of His love. "Him crucified." 3. It brings the Saviour within the reach of all. "Among you." (*W. Maurice.*) *Are Christians narrow?*—1. Paul preached to the Corinthians all that had done him any good, and all he knew that would do them good: that was, the crucified Jesus Christ. 2. At the first this seems a narrow basis on which to erect a private character and a public life. But Paul deliberately adopted it. In his case it succeeded, and he believed it must succeed in every case. To a Greek, occupied with his philosophies, to a Roman, taken up with his politics, this must have seemed absurd. Even now superficial scientists and engrossed materialists regard the whole system of Christianity as a narrow theory, standing in contrast with "the liberal arts." 3. Does the history of the mental development and practical life of Paul, or any other Christian, confirm that view? Let us remind ourselves of certain things taught by the history of mind. Men have attempted to liberalise themselves by dipping into all the arts and sciences, and have thereby become most pleasant society men, and have made some figure while

they lasted. But how long did they last? Compare them with the men who have each taken some great field of intellectual labour and devoted their lives to it, and how small they seem. Compare, *e.g.*, the Admirable Crichton with Copernicus! What has Crichton done for the world? His life perished like a splendid rainbow, while that of the one-ideaed Copernicus fell on all fields like fructifying showers. Then Paul may have been right in selecting one single topic for study and preaching. And he was; for the knowledge of "Christ crucified"—I. RAISED PAUL TO BE AT THE HEAD OF ALL THE PHILOSOPHERS. The study of Jesus led Paul—and will lead us—into the perception that the material is only an expression of the ideal, that there is a soul to the universe. It is in seeking to explain the existence of such a being as Jesus of Nazareth, and such a life as His, that we come to the underlying basis of the spiritual world. Matter could not do it at all. Now it is so that all questions of bodily and mental health and disease, of the moral forces of the universe, of the social questions of human life, of development and progress, are concerned with Jesus more than with any other one person or subject known to men. For what was all this universe of worlds and men created? "For Him," said Paul, speaking of Jesus. We have not yet found the centre of the physical universe; but we have demonstrated that there is a centre to every system, and that there is one last, supreme, unmovable point, around which all worlds revolve. The man who shall determine that exact spot shall wear the grandest starry crown among the princes in the Court of Astronomy. But to know Christ, in all He was and did, would be to know the whole material universe. Science has no other basis so broad, philosophy has no other element so simplifying and unifying all the works of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God," but that glory "shines in the face of Jesus." For all that work which found its consummation on the Cross of Christ all the other works of God were wrought. Believing this, Paul became the philosopher who lifted a light which is now the central splendour of all human intellectual efforts and results. II. ENLARGED PAUL INTO A BROAD, INTELLIGENT HUMANITARIAN. Recollect the age in which he lived, and the nation from whom he sprung. It was not an age of humanity; indeed our race had no right views of the value of humanity till Christ came. Now there is no view of humanity which so makes every man precious to every other man, as the doctrine that the God became flesh, and that love found its greatest expression in a sacrifice, in which every man had an interest, and which should bring good to every man. It takes in all there is of God and all there is of man. It is to the heart of man what the doctrine of universal gravitation is to his intellect. All the atoms of the whole material world rush toward one another, because they rush towards the centre. All the individual hearts of our whole humanity rush toward one another, just as all feel the attraction of the loving crucified One. Paul was lifted to his broad love for man, by refusing to know among his brethren anything except their relation to Him who had loved them and given Himself for them, the just for the unjust, to bring them to God. The more he knew of that love the more humanitarian he became, until the distinction between Jew and Gentile, &c., lost itself in the great fact that man was the object of the love of the Heavenly Father, as taught by the dying Redeemer. III. MADE PAUL A MOST PRACTICAL BUSINESS MAN. A good practical business man is one who in the beginning sets before himself distinctly an end worth the devotion of his life; who uses the methods reasonably adapted to the gaining of that end; who pushes his work by sustained efforts to its legitimate conclusion, and who promotes the general weal in gaining his own ends. Now such a man was Paul, and he learned to become such at the Cross of Christ. Full of business, never idle, never hurried, "the care of all the Churches" on him, study and trouble and work always pressing, he succeeded in organising Christian societies whose influence will go on for ever. So those men who make a business of their religion and a religion of their business, these men, by the knowledge of the crucified Jesus, become the greatest, the best, the most practical business men. This text is as good a motto for the merchants as for the preachers. IV. MADE PAUL A TENDER, HAPPY MAN, LOVING AND BELOVED IN HIS GENERATION. Paul does not seem to have been an amiable man naturally. But from being the hard, ambitious student of Gamaliel and instrument of the Sanhedrin, how tender he became! The Cross had softened him and his love begat love. Read the salutations in his letters. See what friends he made. Conclusion: Now, consider this case. Here was a man born in a province, taught in a sectarian school, reared under every political and ecclesiastical influence calculated to cramp and embitter him, driven from his own people at last, and killed by their conquerors after years

of persecution. This man became a profound philosopher, a wide and consistent philanthropist, a man of great practical business capabilities, and a tender, noble gentleman, through Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. No other culture ever made such results. Will you now dare tell me that Christianity is not liberal, that Christians are narrow, that the religion we preach to you is in the way of human progress or individual advancement? (*C. F. Deems, D.D.*) *The right subject in preaching*:—"Preach Christ Jesus the Lord," said Bishop Reynolds two hundred years ago. "Determine to know nothing among your people but Christ crucified. Let His name and grace, His spirit and love, triumph in the midst of your sermons. Let your great end be to glorify Him in the heart, to render Him amiable and precious in the eyes of His people, to lead them to Him as a sanctuary to protect them, a propitiation to reconcile them, a treasure to enrich them, a physician to heal them, an advocate to present them and their services to God, as wisdom to counsel them, as righteousness to justify, as sanctification to renew, as redemption to save. Let Christ be the diamond to shine in the bosom of all your sermons." Those who most closely follow such advice are most likely to stay the plague of modern superstition and infidelity, as well as build up the waste places of our Church and restore the foundations of many generations. *One great idea*:—It is said that Luther was a man of one idea, and that idea—Jesus. But it does not mean, I suppose, that he had no other ideas in his mind. This would be false to fact. It means, I conceive, that Jesus was the one idea of his mind from which all others emanated; the same as the trunk of a tree is one, but gives life and growth to scores of branches, hundreds and thousands of buds and leaves; just as a great tradesman has one idea, his trade, but that divides and works out into a thousand ideas of ways and means of promoting his trade. In this sense Paul, Wesley, Howard, Whitefield, Wellington, &c., were men of one idea. He who wishes to fulfil his mission in this world must be a man of one idea. (*John Bate.*)

Vers. 3–5. **And I was with you in weakness and in fear.**—*The apostle's discouragements*:—St. Paul was laden with a message that would seem homely and jejune beside a fine-spun rhetoric. Come from Athens, where he had partly failed, to make at Corinth a fresh attempt to confront the grandeur of Greek philosophy with the simplicity of the gospel, was enough to make him timid. Of this contrast he was daily conscious, and the weakness here described was ethical, not physical. He was naturally anxious, lest in poising the plain argument of the Cross against the colossal fabric of a seated philosophy, he might fail: was a David armed with such a pebble to prevail against a Goliath in such a panoply? But in his "fear and trembling" the apostle was encouraged by a vision of God's presence and his own duty (Acts xviii. 9). (*Canon Evans.*) *The feelings of a faithful minister*:—I. THEIR CHARACTER—often—1. Intense. 2. Painful. II. THE OCCASION OF THEM—a sense of—1. The importance of his work. 2. His own insufficiency. 3. His responsibility. 4. The tremendous issues. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **And my . . . preaching was not with enticing words, . . . but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.**—*Enticing words*:—It is related of Dr. Manton that, having to preach before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, he chose a subject in which he had an opportunity of displaying his learning and judgment. He was heard with admiration and applause by the intelligent part of his audience; but as he was returning from dinner with the Lord Mayor, a poor man, following him, pulled him by the sleeve of his gown, and asked him if he was the gentleman that preached before the Lord Mayor. He replied he was. "Sir," said he, "I came with the hopes of getting some good to my soul, but I was greatly disappointed, for I could not understand a great deal of what you said; you were quite above my comprehension." "Friend," said the doctor, "if I have not given you a sermon, you have given me one: by the grace of God, I will not play the fool in such a manner again." *Some displeased and one converted*:—The Rev. John Cotton was an eminent minister of the seventeenth century, who laboured for many years at Boston, in Lincolnshire. When at the University of Cambridge, he was remarkable for learning and eloquence; and being called upon to preach at St. Mary's church in that town, high expectations were raised as to the character of the sermon. After many struggles in his own mind, arising from the temptation to display his talent and learning, and from a powerful impression of the importance of preaching the gospel with all simplicity, he at length wisely determined on the latter course. The vice-chancellor and students were not pleased, though a few of the professors commended his style; but his sermon was blessed to the conversion

of Dr. Preston, who became one of the most eminent ministers of his day. *Effective preaching*:—I. NEEDS NO DISPLAY. 1. This does not exclude the use of knowledge or talent. 2. But the ostentatious exhibition of it. 3. Which helps nothing. 4. But damages much. II. DEPENDS ON DIVINE POWER. 1. The convincing energy of the Holy Spirit. 2. The saving power of the truth. III. REQUIRES THE COMMUNICATION OF THE SPIRIT. 1. To the preacher. 2. To the hearer. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Flowery preaching*:—Hall was once asked what he thought of a sermon which he had just heard delivered, and which had appeared to produce a great sensation among the congregation. His reply may suggest an important hint to some Christian ministers—"Very fine, sir; but a man cannot live upon flowers." *Force the main consideration in preaching*:—I had tried to drive certain long brass-headed nails into a wall, but had never succeeded, except in turning up their points, and rendering them useless. When a tradesman came who understood his work, I noticed that he filed off all the points of the nails, the very points upon whose sharpness I had relied; and when he had quite blunted them, he drove them in as far as he pleased. With some consciences our fine points in preaching are worse than useless. Our keen distinctions and nice discriminations are thrown away on many; they need to be encountered with sheer force and blunt honesty. The truth must be hammered into them by main strength, and we know from whom to seek the needed power. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Popular and apostolical preaching*:—I. POPULAR. 1. Is distinguished by display, attractiveness, novelty. 2. Aims at pleasing and sensational effect. II. APOSTOLIC. 1. Plain. 2. Unvarnished. 3. Accompanied by the convictions of the Spirit and the saving power of God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Paul's preaching and the blessing that attended it*:—I. "THE SPEECH AND PREACHING" OF THE APOSTLE. 1. His great subject was the gospel. He was a great preacher of the law; for no man preaches the gospel who does not preach the law, and our appreciation of the gospel is always in direct proportion to our real perception of God's holy law. But that which Paul delighted in was the gospel. He preached in all His fulness a full Christ; he exhibited Him in the glory of His person, in all the perfection of His atonement, in all the freeness of His free-grace salvation. And he preached it largely, and wherever he went. He preached it holily too; he set it forth in all its holy tendencies, and he exhibited it in its holy effects in his own life (1 Thess. i. 5). 2. His manner was "not with enticing words of man's wisdom." His subject was grand, awful, sublime, wondrous; but his speech was plain, simple, unadorned, and homely. No glare and glitter were his, no traps for human applause, no desire to be thought a man of great talent; the gifted apostle was above it. How does this show to us what sort of preachers we want! We do not mean that the apostle did not suit his speech to those to whom he spake, for he became all things to all men, &c. II. THE BLESSING THAT ATTENDED IT. "In demonstration of the Spirit and of power." 1. Many understand by this the miraculous gifts that Paul was able to exhibit, as proof that he was an apostle of Christ. That he wrought miracles, is quite clear; and that they were great seals to his ministry is also quite clear (Rom. xv. 18). But the Word of God tells us that signs and wonders may be the means of hardening those who work them. Besides, a continuous miracle would cease to be a miracle; and the mightiest could never of itself convert one single soul. 2. More marvellous things than those that wrought in the triumph of God over matter are wrought when He triumphs over mind. The apostle set forth the truth to men's understanding, but the Holy Ghost conveyed the light into their minds; he spake to men's consciences, but the Spirit conveyed the tenderness of heart, and made the word effectual. Here is no violence, no new faculty, no new truth; but the Holy Ghost put forth His power, and brought in demonstration (Col. i. 5–6; 1 Thess. i. 5, ii. 13). 3. The power of the gospel is demonstrated—(1) In the conversion of the sinner. (2) In the comfort of the mourner. (3) In the sanctification of the believer. (4) In the hour of death. (*J. H. Evans, M.A.*) *Powerless sermons*:—Many a powerful sermon so called is a powerless sermon, because of the absence from it of what is invisible. The gospel preached without power is like a cloud without rain; there is a promise of rain, but there is no water of life, and no springing up of the seed the result. The gospel preached without power is like a well with all its arrangements for drawing perfect—but without water. (*G. Pentecost.*) *True power lies in the gospel itself*:—Hipponicus, intending to dedicate a costly statue, was advised by a friend to employ Policletus, a famous workman, in the making of it; but he, being anxious that his great expense should be the admiration of all men, said that "he would not make use

of a workman whose art would be more regarded than his own cost." When, in preaching the great truths of gospel salvation, the enticing words which man's wisdom teacheth are so much sought out that the art of the orator is more regarded by the hearers than the value of the truth spoken, it is no wonder that the Lord refuses to grant His blessing. He will have it seen that the excellency of the power lies not in our speech, but in His gospel. **That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.**—*Faith*:—1. Upon what does your faith stand? 2. Where ought it to stand? 3. Why should it stand there? (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *True faith*:—I. CANNOT BE PRODUCED BY THE WISDOM OF MAN. 1. He may convince by the force of argument or persuasion. 2. But such a faith is—(1) Impure. (2) Unsettled. (3) Inoperative. II. DEPENDS UPON THE POWER OF GOD. 1. Through the operation of the Spirit. 2. This—(1) Heals the conscience. (2) Converts the soul. (3) Sanctifies the life. III. SHOULD BE THE END OF ALL PREACHING. 1. The preacher should aim at it. 2. The people should desire it. (*Ibid.*) *The domain of faith*:—I. THE DOMAIN OF FAITH IS TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM THAT OF HUMAN WISDOM. 1. Men are ever confounding the two. Faith, they think, is simply the intellect in its ordinary processes dealing with religious things. The man who rejects Christianity does it on this ground. "I cannot," he says, "reason out a demonstrative proof of Christianity; therefore I refuse to believe it true." Because faith cannot stand in the wisdom of man, it cannot, he thinks, stand at all. Now, according to the apostle, faith stands in "the power of God." What is the difference? 2. How do we know things? (1) By sensible proof. If I put my finger into the fire it burns me; if I hear music it delights me. This is the proof which my body furnishes concerning things that appeal to it. I do not reason about them; no spiritual or moral sympathies are called into exercise. I prove them exactly as a brute does. (2) By rational proof. If a man tells me that two and two make four, that a whole is greater than its part, my senses, my religious feeling have nothing to do with the proof—it is a process of pure reason. A brute could not prove anything in this way. A rational man must believe on such evidence. (3) Moral proof. When I see moral qualities in a man, I instinctively receive impressions concerning him. I say he is a kind man, a true man, a reverential man. If he be a hypocrite, he may deceive me; but that does not affect the validity of this method of proof. Life would be impossible if we could not trust men until we had collected evidence about them. We are always trusting men whom we know nothing about, because of the moral judgment of them which we form. 3. Now, this distinction of different kinds of proof will carry us a long way in understanding the domain of faith as distinguished from that of intellectual wisdom. When God speaks religious things to me, He does not appeal to my physical senses. He does not appeal to my reason, as the multiplication table does, as a proof in logic does; He appeals directly to my religious sense. Is not this religiously true, pure, suitable? And my religious sense responds, as the eye responds to light, understanding to intellectual truth, the heart to love. Men who are "of the truth" respond to moral truth when they see it. 4. Now, the strong tendency is to interchange these methods of proof. "I can believe nothing," says the materialist, "that I cannot prove." Quite true; neither ought you. "Aye, but I mean that I cannot prove by processes of reason," which is quite another thing. Suppose the brute should say, "I will believe nothing which I cannot prove by the senses. I will not believe in your mathematical astronomy, your subtle chemistry." And is he not as much justified in denying your rational proof as you are in denying my spiritual proof? Your rational proof belongs to a higher nature than his; my spiritual proof belongs to a higher nature than mere reason. What can reason do with moral qualities? You cannot reason out right and wrong; you cannot by reason prove love, or purity, or goodness; you can only feel them. You tell me that you have explored nature, but cannot find God; as well may the surgeon conducting a post-mortem examination tell us that he cannot find the pure patriot, the loving father. How can he detect moral qualities by physical tests? 5. We are always trying to get above the domain of mere matter into that of reason. How the painter and the poet idealise nature; change actual colour and form into glorious ideals! How the philosopher uses them for the creation of a science! How the economist uses them for an economy of social life! And so we are always trying to get above the domain of reason into the domain of faith. It is the necessity of our nature to think about good and evil, to form moral judgments about things. There is another tendency which is always dragging the spiritual down to the

sensual; but all men agree to call this wrong moral feeling; Christianity calls it sin. 6. Faith, then, is that quality of our spiritual nature which, when it hears God's truth, sees God's purity, feels God's love, simply and implicitly believes it. It does not wait for processes of reason to prove it, any more than the eye waits for processes of reason to prove light, or the heart for processes of reason to prove love. But, it may be said, does not this make faith irrational? Certainly not. It simply goes farther than reason can go, sees things that reason cannot see, feels things that reason cannot feel. When a truth of God is spoken to me—first, my senses are exercised; next, my reason—it judges the meaning of the words, of the thought, then it delivers the sentiment to my spiritual faculty. Is it religiously true, suitable, and precious? Simple reason could not pronounce upon this; but my religious heart does. I am told of the existence of a God; my senses cannot recognise Him, my reason cannot demonstrate Him, but my spiritual nature confesses His existence, just as the heart confesses love. I am told of the Incarnation; neither sense nor reason can prove it; but my religious consciousness testifies that it is precisely what my condition needed. So with the atonement—the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, the resurrection of Christ; and the immortal life that He gives. II. How did Paul set forth Christ? (ver. 1). Not as a rhetorician, or a moral philosopher. Why not? There is no merit in abjuring reason, when it is a process of reasoning that has to be conducted. But it was not an argument that Paul had to conduct; it was a testimony of God that he had to bear. It was not a science of religion that he had to construct; it was a simple fact that he had to declare. Men knew all about sin; he did not need to prove that they were sinful. Men earnestly craved to know "what they must do to be saved." He did not need to reason about that. And he simply declared the great fact that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"; that was all he said, but that was enough. Thus, receiving his testimony to the Divine fact, the faith of these men "stood not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Christ, then, is to be preached, and His atonement set forth by bearing testimony. It is the cry of a herald rather than a philosophical argument. The physician does not need to prove to the sick that they need healing; he needs only say, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Preaching Christ is simply setting Him forth as the great gift of the Father's love. They who hear the testimony have only to trust in the crucified Christ for forgiveness and life. And when so believing God's testimony we receive Christ, and have experience of His redeeming grace, our "faith stands in the power of God." "We have the witness in ourselves"—a certainty and strength of belief which is like the consciousness of life; argument cannot disturb it. Christ is "formed in us"; we "know whom we have believed." (*H. Allon, D.D.*)

Vers. 6–8. **Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world.**—*The wisdom of God, as preached by the apostles of Christ*:—I. Explain the character here mentioned as necessary to discern true wisdom. 1. The apostle means by "them that are perfect," such as have attained that measure of understanding which is necessary to comprehend the wise design of the whole, and perfect consistency of the several doctrines of Christianity. 2. "Perfect men" conveys the idea of minds unprejudiced, and free from the bias of irregular passions and affections; and this is indeed necessary to a just understanding of things: for truth can never appear as it is through a gross and fallacious medium. 3. A sincere and upright heart is another character essential to the perfect man. Wisdom flies the grasp of a dishonest mind; and, though it were possible he could find it, he would soon let it go; for the double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. II. Show the wisdom of God manifested in the redemption of man by Jesus Christ, according to the doctrine of His apostles. 1. We read clear characters of Divine wisdom in the discovery that the gospel has given man of his true state. 2. The wisdom of God, by the gospel, is visible in the glorious end it purposes and publishes to the world, that is, the salvation of sinners. 3. Our thoughts might trace with pleasure a vast variety of topics to illustrate the wisdom of God in the means He hath chosen to accomplish the mighty design of His mercy to mankind. To reconcile sinners to Himself, He hath chosen the fittest Mediator that could possibly be, His only begotten and well-beloved Son: the only one who could approach God without terror, and converse with men without pollution; who alone could make up the peace by laying His hand upon both. But another thought, which I cannot pass, to magnify the wisdom if God in the redemption of man

discovered by the gospel, and that is to observe how it draws the greatest good from the greatest evil, taking occasion from sin to honour God, by raising man to a more exalted state. 4. The wisdom of God discovers itself in the honourable terms of mercy which the gospel hath established. (1) Faith, or a firm persuasion of all that God hath recorded in His Word: the most plain and speedy way to truth, particularly in those matters which the bulk of mankind have not time or capacity to trace; and the only way in matters which the reason of man could not discover or comprehend. (2) Repentance, or amendment of life, is another term of salvation wisely fixed, because without it the guilty can never be fit objects of mercy, or capable of happiness. 5. As it exceeds the power of man to work such a change of heart and life in himself, the wisdom of God is manifested in the direction and assistance He hath provided to bring His mighty purpose to effect. (1) For his direction, He hath given him such a system of precepts, such an assemblage of illustrious examples, as the wisdom of man could never devise, as the history of mankind could never furnish. (2) That men, seriously concerned to be saved, might not fall short of the end of their faith, the gospel hath done what no other law or doctrine so much as pretends. It hath assured us of sufficient help and ability to practise the duties it teacheth. And we may come boldly to the throne of grace, not only to obtain mercy, but to find grace to help in the time of need. Conclusion: 1. The folly of infidels, who spend all their wit and learning to oppose the gospel of Christ, the plan of Divine wisdom, a system so friendly to virtue, which they pretend to patronise; a scheme so directly calculated to purify the hearts and refine the manners of mankind. 2. Since the gospel of Christ reveals the wise counsels of God for the salvation of men, it must be our duty, who preach it, to understand more and more of the unsearchable riches of Christ, that we may speak to others with greater success and better hope. 3. To the hearers of the gospel let me only say (James i. 21). (*Wm. Beat.*) *The contrast between the wisdom of this world and the wisdom of God*:—I. THAT is—1. Changeable. 2. Presumptuous. 3. Fallible. II. THIS is—1. Divine. 2. Eternal. 3. Enjoyed by the perfect. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Wisdom, human and Divine*:—A blind tortoise lived in a well. Another tortoise, a native of the ocean, in its inland travels happened to tumble into this well. The blind one asked of his new comrade whence he came. "From the sea." Hearing of the sea, he of the well swam round a little circle, and asked, "Is the water of the ocean as large as this?" "Larger," replied he of the sea. The well tortoise then swam round two-thirds of the well, and asked if the sea was as big as that. "Much larger than that," said the sea tortoise. "Well, then," asked the blind tortoise, "is the sea as large as this whole well?" "Larger," said the sea tortoise. "If that is so," said the other, "how big, then, is the sea?" The sea tortoise replied, "You having never seen any other water than that of your well, your capability of understanding is small. As to the ocean, though you spent many years in it, you would never be able to explore the half of it, nor to reach the limit, and it is utterly impossible to compare it with this well of yours." The tortoise replied, "It is impossible that there can be a larger water than this well; you are simply praising up your native place in vain words." (*J. Gilmour, M.A.*) *The hidden wisdom*:—I. IS GLORIOUS IN ITS NATURE. 1. Apprehensible only by the perfect. 2. Not of this world. 3. Divine in its origin. 4. Adapted to secure eternal happiness. II. IS UNDISCOVERABLE BY HUMAN REASON (ver. 8). 1. Proved by the ignorance and conduct of the princes of this world. 2. By the unsearchableness of the Divine purpose. III. IS REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD (ver. 10). 1. He searcheth the deep things of God. 2. Communicates them to man. IV. CAN ONLY BE COMMUNICATED BY THE HELP OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD (vers. 13). 1. We must use the words of the Spirit. 2. He must create spiritual discernment. V. IS REALISED AND ENJOYED BY THOSE WHO ARE SPIRITUALLY ENLIGHTENED (vers. 15, 16). Who—1. Judge all things. 2. Are understood by none. 3. For God is unsearchable. 4. Have the mind of Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Paul's view of spiritual wisdom*:—It is necessary to bear in mind that the "wisdom" with which the apostle was confronted was not the vigorous and lofty aspirations of Aristotle and Plato, but the hollow and worn-out sophistries of the last days of the Greek rhetoricians. Still, although a different turn would doubtless have been given to the whole argument if the living power of the gospel had been met not by a dead form, but by a power which, though of lower origin, and moving in a different sphere, was still living like itself, the general truth here urged remains the same. It is not by intellectual, but by moral and spiritual excellence, that the victories of the gospel have been achieved. Religion is not philosophy. But although the two

spheres of intellect and Christianity are thus distinct, the apostle also wishes to show that there is in Christianity an element analogous to that by which intellectual wants are gratified; as though he had said, "Although the Christian lives in a world of his own, yet in that world he is independent of all besides (what the philosophers would have called *αὐταρκης*), and the more fully his Christian stature is developed, he will find every craving of his nature the more completely satisfied." This element he here introduces under the names of "wisdom," "the Spirit," and "solid food" as distinct from "milk." Taking into comparison the other passages (John iii. 12, xvi. 12; Heb. vi. 1), where a similar contrast is drawn between the higher and lower stages of Christian progress, the reference seems not to be to any exhibition of new doctrines, but to the deep spiritual intuitions which have always been regarded as the highest privilege of advanced Christian goodness. Thomas à Kempis says that "a pure heart penetrates the secrets of heaven and hell"; the "beatific vision" has always been regarded as the consummation of our intellectual and moral perfection; and the analogy which is here drawn between the perceptions of the human intellect and those of the enlightened spirit might be illustrated abundantly from the biographies and devotions of good men in all ages. What this was in its highest or most extraordinary form may be seen in the account of St. Paul's rapture (2 Cor. xii. 1, 4) or of St. John's (Rev. i. 10, iv. 2). What it was in its more ordinary form may be seen in the whole atmosphere of St. John's first Epistle, especially in the connection between love and knowledge which pervades it, and which is illustrated in chap. xiii. 8, 12 of this Epistle. See also Rom. xi. 33, 34; Eph. i. 8, 17, 18. This use of the passage—I. ACCORDS WITH THE WORDS EMPLOYED. "Wisdom," although suggested in the first instance by the contemporary philosophy, derives its religious sense chiefly from its use in Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus, where it is applied not to the gaining of new truths, theological or natural, but to a deeper practical insight into moral truth. This general sense is further limited in this passage by the indication of its subject, viz., the "glory" or blessedness of Christians, which in vers. 8, 10 assumes such a prominence as to be almost identified with the "wisdom" itself that seeks it. And the faculty by which this wisdom is obtained is described emphatically as "spiritual"—"the Spirit." The word is chosen partly from the frequent use of the phrase both in Greek and Hebrew, to express the intellect—chiefly as expressive of a direct connection with God. It is the "inspiration" which in Scripture is ascribed to every mental gift (Exod. xxxi. 3; Job xxxii. 8, &c.), but which is specially applicable to the frame of mind (to use the modern form of speech founded on the same metaphor) "breathes the atmosphere" of heaven. The same sense also—II. AGREES WITH THE GENERAL CONTEXT AND OCCASION. When the apostle says, "But *to us* God revealed it by His Spirit," the use of the first person, here as elsewhere, indicates that, though speaking of believers generally, he especially refers to his own experience. The consciousness of his spiritual gifts, especially of his spiritual insight into things invisible, was always present with him, and never more so than at the period of these two Epistles (chap. xiv. 18; 2 Cor. xii. 1, 4). And this tendency to dwell on the inward, as distinct from the outward blessings of the gospel—on the things which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard," as distinguished from the things which the eyes of the first apostles had seen and their ears had heard—was a peculiarity of St. Paul's teaching. III. IT BEST SUITS THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS, who had no especial need of new intellectual truths, nor, if they had, was there any especial impediment to their reception. But a higher consciousness of the Divine presence; a knowledge deep and comprehensive, as being grounded in love; an insight into the spiritual world—were gifts which, on the one hand, the apostle might well long to give them, and which were yet, on the other, most alien to their state of faction and bitterness. How could they, who were absorbed in their contentions, enter into the atmosphere of peace which surrounds the throne of God? How could they, who were for ever insisting on particular names and party watchwords, enjoy the vision where all else is lost in the sense of communion with Christ? Controversy and party spirit may sharpen the natural faculties of shrewdness and disputation, but few sins more dim the spiritual faculty by which alone all things are rightly judged. These disputes and rivalries were "of the flesh," no less than the sensual passions which are commonly so classed; and, if so, they have no place in heaven, they are directly opposed to "the Spirit." (*Dean Stanley.*) *The wisdom of God as displayed in the gospel:*—I. IN RELATION TO ITS GREAT END. The gospel is glad tidings of good. This good is—1. Most suitable. God, who well knows our nature, has adapted His gifts to its

wants. 2. Permanent. God has formed us to endure for ever; and the good which He has prepared for us is enduring also. 3. Divine. God has revealed Himself as the chief, the only satisfying good. He only can fill the powers of the soul—He only subsists through every changing scene. Let us admire the wisdom of God in proposing such a good to us; and let us recollect that such a good as is proposed to us in the gospel is to be found nowhere else. II. IN RELATION TO THE MEDIUM THROUGH WHICH IT IS COMMUNICATED. 1. The salvation of the race is made to turn on the death of an individual. This is above all the ideas of men; it never could enter the human mind that one man could be saved through the mediation of many, much less that all could be saved through the mediation of one. This was "a stumbling-block to the Jews," &c. But this displays the highest wisdom. It is not an individual merely, but an individual fashioned expressly for the work. In the person of Christ we see a man with a person capable of suffering; and a Divine person, to make His sufferings meritorious. Had Christ been mere man, there could have been no merit; had He not been man, He could not have suffered. Had the question been asked, "How shall man be just with God?" it could not have been answered to eternity; but, "in the fulness of time, God sent forth His Son," &c. The way to reconcile the justice and the mercy of God could never have been conceived but for the wisdom of God in fitting this God-man and sending Him to suffer for the sins of the world. 2. The wisdom appears in Christ's defeating Satan by the very weapons which he employed to subvert His designs. By the Cross of Christ God has, as it were, reversed the order of things. In the first Adam man fell by aspiring to be as God; Jesus Christ, the second Adam, saves by condescending to become man. Man was indebted for his ruin to an evil spirit; he owes his recovery to a good Spirit. As man was ensnared by deceit and vanity and became miserable, he is liberated by truth and purity and becomes happy. The machinery of Satan is thus turned upon himself. III. IN THE DISPENSATION OF THE GOSPEL the wisdom of God appears—1. In the manner in which the truths of the gospel are taught. There are two modes of communicating instruction: the one is by facts, the other is by argument. The latter mode is generally considered the most efficient, and was most commonly employed by the ancients in their schools of learning. But many subtleties were resorted to in this mode of teaching. Learning was clothed in such a garb that it did not even attract the attention of the common people; they could not comprehend it, they could not be benefited by it. But God taught by facts. "I came declaring unto you the testimony of God." Such were the facts the apostles asserted, that the truths they taught must stand or fall by those facts. And these facts are the very soul of the gospel. He who believes that the apostles spake truth, that Jesus Christ really came, and died, and rose again, and ascended, must also believe that He died for the salvation of sinners. And he who considers the number of these witnesses, their character, the harmony of their testimony, their miracles, and refuses to believe their testimony, will be found turning the gospel of the Saviour against himself. In all this the wisdom of God's teachings appears above the teachings of the philosophers. They retired from the crowd; but heavenly wisdom is addressed to all, and is founded upon facts that all may understand. 2. In committing the dispensation of the gospel to men. They can enter into the states of those whom they address; they can comfort those that mourn by the same consolations with which they have been comforted; they can have access to them at all times. And not only was the dispensation of the gospel committed to men, but to men of obscure station and mean talents (chap. i. 26, 31). Had God employed the great and the wise to propagate His gospel, suspicions might have been raised in the minds of men that its success was to be ascribed to the elevated talent and station of its propagators. But the greatest effects have been produced more by piety than by talent. God will not divide His success with any human being. (*R. Hall, M.A.*) *The wisdom of the gospel*:—I. THE WISDOM OF THE GOSPEL IS—1. Divine. 2. Transcendent. 3. Spiritual. 4. Practical. II. ITS RESERVED COMMUNICATION. 1. Among the perfect who believe, study, practise it. 2. Because they only can understand, appreciate, and profit by it. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The superlative wisdom of the gospel* is demonstrated—I. BY ITS ORIGIN. It proceeds—1. Not from the wise and mighty of this world. 2. But from the hidden depths of the Godhead. II. BY ITS PURPOSE, which is—1. Not realised in time. 2. But in eternal glory. III. BY ITS ESSENTIAL MYSTERY. 1. Unknown to the greatest in times past. 2. Undiscoverable by reason or sense. IV. BY THE MODE OF ITS REVELATION. 1. Through the Spirit of God. 2. To the spirit of man. (*Ibid.*) *The gospel*:—I. ITS NATURE. Wisdom. The wisdom

of a system may be determined—1. By the character of the end it contemplates. A system which aims at an insignificant or unworthy end would scarcely be considered wise. The end the gospel aimed at was the restoration in human souls of supreme sympathy with God. This man lost in the Fall. Its absence is the cause of all the evils that curse the world; its restoration is the soul's salvation. When the value and the influence of one soul are considered, is not this restoration, even in one case, a grand end? But the gospel aims at it in all souls. 2. By the fitness of the means it employs. Though a system contemplate a grand end, yet if the means are unadapted it could scarcely be called wise. The means Christianity employs to generate this love for God are—(1) A personal manifestation of God. (2) A human manifestation of God. God in the form of an angel, *e.g.*, would not awaken this affection. God in any form but man's would rather terrify and repel than inspire with confidence and hope. (3) A loving manifestation of God. A manifestation of coldness or anger would never awaken love. Love alone begets love. These things are essential, and the gospel in Christ gives us a personal, human, loving manifestation of God. It is, therefore, emphatically the "wisdom of God." It is Divine philosophy. II A RULE FOR ITS PREACHERS. "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect." The word "perfect" has, some think, an allusion to the heathen mysteries. These mysteries were religious observances of a secret kind, open only to the initiated. The apostle clearly means by the word "perfect" those in the Christian community who were more advanced in the knowledge of Christ, who stood most in contrast with those who are but "babes in Christ." One of three ideas may be attached to the language of the apostle. Either that he had an exoteric and esoteric doctrine for men, or that the most advanced Christian alone could discern the wisdom of his doctrine, or that he adapted his teaching to the capacity of his hearers. Which of these ideas are we to accept? Not the first, for Paul had not two messages, one for those who were without the Church, and one for those within—one for those who had high capacity, and one for those who had weak. His message to all was one—God's love to the world through Christ. Not the second, for the man who was the least advanced in the Christian life must have some appreciation of the gospel. It was the last, namely, that he accommodated his teaching to the capacity of his hearers. In another place he tells the Christians at Corinth that he had hitherto "fed them with milk, and not with meat, because they were not able to bear it." His conduct I take as a rule for all true preachers. The great saving facts of the gospel are few and simple, viz., that Christ died and rose again. But the doctrines connected with these facts and their relation to man, God, the universe, and phases of truth which can only be appreciated by those who have attained to certain stages in Christian knowledge and experience. The Great Teacher has said, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." III. AN OBLIGATION UPON ITS HEARERS. If the higher aspects of gospel religion can only be appreciated by those who are "perfect," those who have attained to a high stage of Christian knowledge, it is manifestly their duty to endeavour to advance beyond the "first principles of the oracles of God." This duty hearers owe—1. To themselves. The more knowledge man has of the wisdom of the gospel, the more power he has within him to purify his affections, exalt his character, and bless his being. The ignorant Christian is feeble, fickle, uninfluential. 2. To their minister. The man who has to minister to hearers who make no progress in Divine truth is limited in his thoughts to the mere rudimentals of the gospel. His motives for pulpit study weaken, and he becomes the commonplace utterer of platitudes. 3. To the system of Christ. The glorious system of Christ, which is "the wisdom of God," will only grow in power, influence, and extent in the world as men's knowledge of it increases. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The gospel and the intellect*:—1. It must not be thought that the gospel despises wisdom. The gospel is itself wisdom, only it is God's wisdom and not man's. "We speak wisdom . . . yet a wisdom not of this world." There is nothing which some of us need more just now than a demonstration of this sort. 2. It is constantly assumed that the progress of knowledge has exploded the gospel; that the cultivated intellect leaves faith behind; that the triumph of reason means the overthrow of religion. 3. This is bad enough, but what is worse is that some Christian people countenance such a view. They look askance at science, believing it to be an enemy of the faith. Huxley and Tyndal are very terrible names to them. They are uncomfortable when they find their sons are beginning to question and to think. Reason has an unpleasing suggestion of "The Age of Reason" and the French Revolution. Then these good people quote, "Not

many wise are called," omitting the qualifying "after the flesh." 4. Does Christ relinquish His claim on able men? No. The Christian religion is distinguished from all other religions in this, that it is an appeal to the reason, it calls into play all its powers and welcomes all the established results of science. It asks us to believe that we may know and understand. It calls for faith, but only that faith which reason allows or requires. And as the religion differs from other religions, so our Scriptures are distinguished by their constant eulogy of wisdom. The Bible is not only an appeal to the conscience; it is also an appeal to the brain. It is so constructed that it demands diligent study. I. WHO ARE THE NATURAL MEN NOWADAYS WHO CORRESPOND TO THOSE WHO, IN ST. PAUL'S TIME, WERE INCAPABLE OF RECEIVING THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD? 1. Those who tell us that matter can explain Spirit, that thought is a mere function of a grey, unthinking substance called the brain. Now they cannot receive the wisdom of the gospel—not because they are wiser than every one else, but because their wisdom is after the flesh, and a limited and foolish kind of wisdom. So far from being really wise, they do not even comprehend the question which agitates all earnest men, viz., the meaning of the spiritual world of which you are all more or less conscious. They say, "The spiritual world is only part and parcel of the material world with which we are familiar." But if thought comes from brain, then it must be already a thinking brain from which it comes. If spirit is a mere outcome of matter, then it must be already a spiritual matter which produces it. Materialism cannot apprehend the wisdom of the gospel, for it has juggled away the very meaning of its terms—spiritual and material. 2. Those who speak as if the understanding could answer all the questions and meet all the needs of the human spirit. The understanding cannot comprehend God; therefore, say they, God does not exist. The understanding cannot explain the freedom of the will; therefore the will is not free. And not admitting the existence of God or the freedom of the will, moral responsibility is quickly discredited. On the same showing love and hope and self-sacrifice ought to be dismissed as chimeras—and perhaps by some they are. Now, such people cannot understand the wisdom of the gospel; not because they are so much cleverer than all the world, only because they have made a rather childish mistake, they have not noticed the limits within which the understanding is able to work; they are like men who should deny that the atmosphere exists because they cannot walk on it as the birds of the air can. The understanding is only a part of our being. Every man is more than understanding; he is also heart, conscience, will. The understanding is only absolute within its own sphere. II. THE WISDOM WHICH PAUL "SPEAKS AMONG THE PERFECT" IS NOTHING LESS THAN THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT OF THE CHRISTIAN MAN. Just as consciousness alone can be aware of our own inward life, so God's consciousness alone can understand the depths of God; and only by being made partakers of God's consciousness can we search those depths. 1. Such an indwelling Spirit will rescue us from the two errors on which we have been reflecting: of materialism and the undue exaltation of the powers of our own understanding. This indwelling Spirit forces us to recognise that the world and life, as we see them, stand forth out of an encircling sea of mystery in which their origins and issues are hidden. It makes us glad to learn from science all about the process of development, but it clearly teaches us that in the last resort it is only in the will of God that either the world or the life upon it could have its birth and find its issue. 2. But this wisdom of the gospel is more than an admission of mystery and of our own limitations. It comes to us as the explanation of the mystery and as the aid of our limitations. The gospel gives us the key to creation, culminating in humanity, the Incarnate God-Man—Christ Jesus; the key to man's great dumb longing for God in God's great uttered longing for man; the key to the heavy sorrow which oppresses the life of man, in the suffering of the God-man; the key to the dead weight of sin in the complete and voluntary sacrifice of Christ. 3. Nor is this all; in the mind of Christ, an intellect in which there meets the fullest understanding of God with the most tender sympathy for man, is really hidden a treasure of wisdom, a solution of all the questionings of our imperfect spirits. "We have the mind of Christ." The humble and unlearned believer is made partaker of that wonderful mind, is allowed to share its workings, and so to apprehend the answer which it is always giving to the searchings of man. III. THUS, AS WE REFLECT ON PAUL'S PREGNANT SENTENCES, WE BECOME AWARE THAT THE GOSPEL DOES NOT SUPPRESS WISDOM; IT IS A WISDOM FAR SURPASSING THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD. It would be the greatest mistake to suppose that by the "wisdom" of chap. i. 20, 21, 26 Paul means the reason, or the

exercise or products of reason. Indeed, there is not a little almost unintentional irony in his use of the word, and his comment on its rarity among the "called." He speaks rather as one might speak to a number of miners who have just come out of the bowels of the earth into the broad light of day. "You see your calling, my friends; not many torchbearers among you; not many people carry safety-lamps." No; and, indeed, under so glorious an expanse of sunlit blue there is not for the general purposes of life much need of them. We have had among us in this generation many brilliant "natural" men, highly gifted with wisdom after the flesh. There was the late Professor Clifford; there are Haeckel, Maudsley and Spencer. Have they thrown light upon the universal question? Why are we—intelligent spiritual beings, with conscience, will, and hearts—why are we here at all; whence coming, whither going? So far from superseding this wisdom of which Paul speaks, they fall very short of it. For the most part they modestly confess they have no answer to the question. But Paul has an explanation; and to spiritual minds reason is satisfied. (*R. F. Horton, D.D.*) *Christianity a system of wisdom and mystery*:—I. A SYSTEM OF CONSUMMATE WISDOM. 1. Devised by God. 2. Before the world began. 3. To our glory. II. A SYSTEM OF MYSTERY. 1. Hidden from the world. 2. Mysteriously communicated. 3. Among the perfect, who believe and act upon it. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Mystery revealed*:—I. THE REVELATION OF THIS MYSTERY IS MADE—"THEM THAT ARE PERFECT," *i.e.*, those who have qualifications for receiving the wisdom. 1. Of course, we are told at once that this is the ignorant conceit of religious people. But why ignorant conceit? You do not speak of the ignorant conceit of the physician, or of the engineer, or of the chemist, or of the artist, or of the poet. Nay, does not the ignorant conceit belong rather to those who think that without faculty, without study, they can understand as well as the most assiduous and learned? A spiritual man must know that he has a faculty of spiritual discernment, just as a poet knows that he has a faculty of poetic discernment. And an unspiritual man should know this also, that he has not the spiritual faculty which the other man has. The great doctrine of the apostle is that in religious things right feeling, a right disposition, is the condition of all knowledge. "If any man will do His will," &c. If you begin with an ignorant or unspiritual man by simply instructing his understanding in the hope that his heart will be affected, you have this difficulty—his hardened spiritual feeling will hinder understanding. We all know how difficult it is to make men understand what they do not like. All the training of a university will not make some men mathematicians. Again, if a man does not love truth and honesty, you cannot make him true and honest by expounding truth or honesty; you must begin by creating within him a feeling of truth and honesty; then you can easily teach him what things are true and honest. You must have a moral faculty for discerning moral things. 2. I think, therefore, we may see the profound wisdom of the gospel method. It begins by setting man's feeling right, producing in him a desire for holiness and a hatred of evil. The apostle tells us that this is the working of the Spirit of God. Take the little faults of men; you cannot reform a habit or a temper by merely teaching about it—nay, by a mere resolution of the will. The root of the thing is in the love for it, and you must begin by destroying this and cultivating love for good, or you will never succeed. You can cure a bad passion only by producing a good one; you can expel an evil affection only by the Spirit of God. 3. The way of the world in seeking religious truth and life is to investigate evidence, to exercise the reasoning faculties—just as you would investigate a problem of history, or demonstrate a proposition in mathematics or logic. Hence it is that so many learned philosophers and theologians never attain to Christianity; to them it is simply an intellectual study; they study it as they would study Buddhism or Mohammedanism. They can understand theology as a science of God; they can understand religion as a theory and a morality; but they have no conception of its spiritual character. "The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit"; they are discerned only by a spiritual faculty. II. BUT THEN IT IS WISDOM, EVEN TO THE PERFECT, OF A MYSTERIOUS KIND. 1. A man cannot reason out such a system as God's salvation by Christ; it is discerned, as Paul says, by spiritual recognition, just as the poetry of a landscape cannot be discerned by a mere mathematician, by a mere engineer. Christianity is a revelation of facts, not a mere notion; Christ tells us what God is, that He is "our Father in heaven"; what God has done, that God "has given His only begotten Son, because He so loved the world." Now these facts could not have been imagined, could not have been demonstrated by human reasoning. But when they are testified by God, when

they are proved by evidence to be facts, then, if I am a "perfect," *i.e.*, a spiritual man, I at once feel that this revelation of God in Christ is true; that it is exactly suited to my personal need; it "commends itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." None of the princes of this world in thought or in politics have believed. They did not see the principles of truth, righteousness, and love that were manifested by Jesus Christ. Had they seen these as the man of spiritual feeling sees them, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Pilate had some philosophical knowledge; he felt even an interest in and wanted to save Christ. He talked with Him about His kingdom and about the truth; but Pilate's corrupt selfishness, his political interests, permitted him to sentence a man to crucifixion—whom he knew to be innocent. There was the moral blindness in close conjunction with the philosophical intelligence. 2. Every teaching about God must have mystery pertaining to it that can never be revealed. This is true, indeed, of everything in human life. Let a man begin to think about God and about moral being, and how soon he comes to a blank wall that he cannot penetrate! Well, it is not that God purposely conceals things, it is that we cannot comprehend them. Instead of adding to the mystery of God, we understand more of God through Jesus Christ than we can on any other theory. And yet how much remains that is impenetrable! We are compelled to exclaim, "Oh! the depths," &c. Who can fathom the mystery of the incarnation, of the atonement, of the quickening of spiritual life in men, &c. In the love of Christ, in the love of God, there are heights and depths that pass knowledge. And yet observe—(1) That there are no mysterious things in Christianity. Christianity has no sacred rites, inscrutable puzzles, artificial concealments. (2) That Christian mysteries are revealed to men so far as they are qualified to discern them. Nothing in Christianity is purposely concealed. The religious life of us men and women who have to do with the business of this great city, is never so powerfully moved, so loftily inspired, so practically directed, as when we simply stand before the great Christian doctrines. (3) What a practical temper this gives to the religious life! What a passionate desire for God, for the study of God, in His Word, in prayer, in worship! (4) The domain of the knowable is sufficient for all the practical needs of man. It is so in science. We eat without knowing the chemistry of food; we act without knowing the philosophy of motion. It is so in religion. I may, however ignorant of the higher mysteries of being, practically realise the life of virtue and piety. The way of life through Christ is plain. (*H. Allon, D.D.*) *The foundation of faith*:—In the verses which precede the text, St. Paul reviews the motives which actuated him, and the line of conduct he had pursued during his ministry at Corinth. When he went there, two courses were open to him. He might have aimed to gain personal adherents, merely using Christianity as a means of displaying the extraordinary powers of mind. Nor can we doubt that he would have been successful. The other course was for him to gain believers in the gospel he preached, and disciples for the Master whom he served. Without the least hesitation, he chose the latter as his aim. Self was studiously kept in the background. This faithful man could say, with perfect sincerity, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord"; whilst he assigns this as his motive, "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Now the steadfast pursuance of this plan, by St. Paul and his colleagues, gave a marked feature to the early Churches. I refer to their singular and rapidly acquired independence of apostolic care. Scarcely was a community of believers gathered, although it might be in the midst of some heathen city, before the little flock were left to themselves, to be instructed by their native teachers, and to preserve their fidelity by mutual oversight. Indeed, but for this, the progress of Christianity could not have been so rapid as it was. Its chief original agents were very few, and if they had been compelled to remain long in one place, only a much smaller portion of the world could have been covered by their labours. Here, in the text, we have described two foundations on which our faith may rest—"the wisdom of men," and "the power of God," and we have to make our election between them. I. THE HUMAN FOUNDATION. "The wisdom of men." 1. The personal influence of good and wise men in the Christian Church is an ordinance of God, and when kept within proper limits, is an incalculable blessing. It is perfectly right, as well as perfectly natural, that any man who is endowed with eminent gifts, added to sincere piety and fervent earnestness, should win the respect, affection, and confidence of brethren. They involuntarily place themselves under his direction, taking him as their guide and teacher. He becomes a high authority in their

estimation. So far all is lawful; but go beyond this, and the most serious consequences follow. If any man was ever entitled to the kind of authority I have described, it was St. Paul, who not only had these personal excellences, but possessed supernatural inspiration. Yet hear how he limits that authority, and indicates a point where it would fail him—"Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Again, "Be ye followers of me"; but observe, he adds the qualification, "even as I also am of Christ." These limits to human influence, however, are commonly disregarded. There are human teachers who are not only allowed to be influential, but omnipotent; not only good, but perfect; not only wise, but infallible. Respect for them passes into blind obedience; affection into something very much like idolatry. Their utterances are regarded as above criticism. Whatever they say is taken as gospel; not because of its intrinsic truth and reasonableness, but because they say it. This is clearly a form of the evil which St. Paul so earnestly deprecated when he wrote, "that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men." 2. This undue influence of men in matters of religion is not only exercised through their oral teaching, and over those who are personally acquainted with them, but also through their writings. No man who is sincerely anxious about his spiritual culture, and is glad of light, from any quarter, upon the most important of all subjects, can afford to neglect the stores of Christian thought which have come down to us as precious legacies from the past, or which are still issuing from the press. And yet the teachers, however wise and good, who speak to us through their books, ought to be listened to with the same cautious reserve as those who address us in an audible voice. They ought to be treated as helps, not as final authorities. Is it not a very common thing to hear the inquiry, not "What saith the Scriptures?" but, "What say the fathers? What saith St. Chrysostom? What saith St. Augustine?" And the answer obtained is considered as final. The opinions of commentators, the systems of theologians, and even the beautiful dreams of Christian poets, may be useful to us, but to take our religion from them alone is to let our faith stand in the wisdom of men. 3. A faith which rests on such a foundation must of necessity be insecure. If men have given us our faith, men can take it away from us. What one has built up, another can destroy. Are there not multitudes continually undergoing such changes of religious belief? They are ever passing from one teacher to another; the last and newest is sure to have them. No anchorage, no stability for them! Staggered by each new scientific theory, which appears hostile to religion, or captivated by the last vagary of superstition, they are "children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men." But insecurity of belief is not the only evil in their case. The life they live is as unstable as the faith they hold. Character degenerates, and every semblance of piety disappears, when the influence which gave birth to it is withdrawn. II. THE DIVINE FOUNDATION. "The power of God." We recognise this phrase as one which the apostle uses elsewhere. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation." In the previous chapter he had said—"We preach Christ crucified . . . the power of God." When, therefore, he desires that faith should stand in the power of God, he means that it should rest upon the gospel, and especially upon Christ, who is the gospel's central Object. This grand revelation has been made to the world once for all. It is open to universal, to individual inspection. We may be very thankful to another for telling us what he sees in Christ. For if he is a man of eminent piety, who has looked long and earnestly, with an eye whose perceptions love has quickened, and holiness has purified, he may point out to us some features which would otherwise have escaped our dimmer vision. But what he tells us should rather stimulate than supersede our personal observation. All such helps should be like the guide books which a traveller takes with him when he ascends a mountain. If he did not consult them now and then, he might miss some points of interest in the panorama which lies around him. But then he does not allow them to prevent him from using his own eyes. It is evident, however, that St. Paul meant something more than the contact of individual minds with Divine truth, when he speaks of faith standing in the power of God. The power of God can never give stability to faith until it actually enters the soul and exerts its mighty influence there; until Christianity ceases to be a mere set of opinions, and becomes a vital experience. It may seem very satisfactory to say—"my religion is not to be found in the teaching or writings of men, it is contained between the covers of the Bible." But if your religion is shut up there it is a worthless thing. It is not the perception, but the

entrance of God's Word that giveth light, and heat, and life, to our dark, cold, dead nature. It is when the power of God brings peace to our conscience, and submission to our wayward will, and purity to our sinful heart, that it makes our faith a strong and indestructible thing. (*B. Bird.*) *Obedience begetting faith*:—According to Scriptures there are two remedies for unbelief; one the way of argument, the other the way of experiment. In these two ways it is possible to establish the great doctrines of revelation. A careful investigation of the "Evidences of Christianity" is exceedingly helpful to some persons. But it is well to remember that historical knowledge is one thing, belief another. They may quicken the intellect; they do not necessarily enkindle devotion in the soul. Again, Christ's Church has had a noble history—one with which we do well to acquaint ourselves. Still, a knowledge of its sufferings, sorrows, trials, losses, triumphs, and glories does not necessarily produce faith. There are some, not a few, who endeavour by a process of speculation to strengthen their faith in God and in His revealed will. It is admitted that in matters of religious faith reason should be satisfied. Intelligent service is what our Heavenly Father demands. Commending most heartily the application of reason to the solution of questions connected with religion, we are nevertheless justified in severely condemning the spirit of rationalism. Rationalistic speculation has accomplished but little good in the world. Some persons are disposed to view truth in abstract form. They endeavour to comprehend what is, always has been, and for ever must remain incomprehensible to finite minds. Argument, it is true, has its place in the defence of Scripture. It establishes God's people in the truth. It by no means follows, however, that arguments, however potent they may be, will convince the prejudiced. Proof is not conviction. The establishment of the facts is not the removal of antagonism to the facts. Moreover, the way of argument, when exhaustive, is exceedingly laborious. We would find it quite inconvenient to believe nothing till we had established it by unanswerable arguments. May I believe nothing in astronomy, nothing in geology, nothing in chemistry until I have possessed myself of all the arguments bearing upon the subjects? Must I analyse every species of food before eating anything? Supposing I have the ability to do so, will I ever have the opportunity of examining critically all the arguments bearing upon Christianity? There assuredly must be some more direct method of establishing the truth. Yes, says Christ, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself." Yes, says Paul, "Your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." "Stand in the wisdom of men." How could our faith rest secure on such a tottering foundation? Man's wisdom is folly. Look at the seething whirlpool of opinions, philosophies and elaborate systems, all driven by the breath of some new metaphysical nondescript into the gurgling vortex of endless oblivion. What metaphysical truth has been so firmly established that no defiant caviller has presumed to call it in question? Shall we found our faith on this ever-heaving ocean? No. Do and know. Stand in the power of God and live. There is then a more direct way of securing faith than by the toilsome process of argumentation. The seeker after truth may experiment. He may test God. He may test doctrine. He may test religion. He may test prayer. He may test piety. He may do and know. Does he lack faith in the efficacy of Christ's merit? Let him come to Christ. They who have cordially accepted the Saviour have never questioned His saving ability. Do any question the preciousness of Jesus' love? "Oh taste and see that the Lord is gracious." God, then, has seen fit to allow His system of faith to be tested by actual experiment. He invites us, commands us to try it in our own experiences. In this age the inductive method of philosophising is universally accepted. Scientific truths are established by a carefully conducted series of experiments, not by *a priori* reasoning. The ancient philosophers endeavoured to determine the facts of each science by reasoning from first principles. "Cease your blind reasoning," said Bacon. "Sit as learners at the feet of Nature and listen to what she has to say. Gather up the facts. Arrange them logically. Form generalisations. Interpret nature." As a result of the adoption of this method, the physical sciences have made gigantic strides in these last days. To most of us, therefore—for we insensibly imbibe the spirit of the age—it is a question of no small moment: "Are the doctrines of revealed religion open to experiment?" We answer, Yes, we may make a scientific investigation of the truths we are asked to adopt. In adopting this method of establishing truth, however, it should be borne in mind that we have no right to make our own selection of the tests. I have no right to say, "If there is a sovereign ruler of the universe,

let Him speak to me in an audible voice from heaven." Are we justified in imitating the cavillers of the Saviour's time and exclaiming, "We would see a sign"? "To such no sign shall be given." Though there are experiments that would be irreverent, there are others that are entirely proper. (*J. S. Van Dyke, D.D.*)

Ver. 7. **But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery.**—*The wisdom of God in the gospel* appears—I. IN ITS ORIGIN—the Divine purpose. II. IN THE FORM OF ITS REVELATION—mystery. III. IN THE MODE OF ITS COMMUNICATION—by man. IV. IN ITS ULTIMATE DESIGN—to our glory. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The gospel-wisdom:*—I. IT IS GOD'S WISDOM (vers. 6–9). II. IT IS REVEALED INWARDLY BY THE SPIRIT (vers. 10–13). III. IT IS UNDERSTOOD ONLY BY THE SPIRITUAL MAN (ver. 14–iii. 4). (*Principal Edwards.*) *God's wisdom in a mystery*:—Christianity is—I. "THE WISDOM OF GOD." Wisdom is knowledge directed to practical ends through the most effectual means. The moral systems of Greece ill deserved that appellation. They were imaginative; they fed the appetite for speculation, but fell with no power upon conscience or conduct. But in the gospel "the wisdom of God" is displayed in efficient and wondrous arrangements to enlighten and save a fallen world. 1. It affords infallible instruction in all necessary truth. All true knowledge properly comes from God. Even art and science were probably first suggested to the mind by God, but secretly and without any mark of distinction. It is conceivable that much of Bible truth might have been thus secretly suggested, and have been published only as the results of the human investigation. Beyond their own rational evidence none of these truths, however, would have had, in this case, a greater than human authority. They would have been but matters of opinion still. The disadvantage of the most enlightened paganism was, that what of the wisdom of God was in it was not known to be from God. When they met with truth they met also with error; and both appeared to rest upon equal authority, and each was held with equal unsteadfastness and doubt. What was wanting was truth in a revealed form. "The wisdom of God" has supplied that desideratum. Whilst human teachers remained in the human court darkly investigating what might be hidden within that veil, the "Teacher sent from God" rent that veil, and He who dwelt between the cherubim "shone forth." Whilst they were gazing upon every dark form of error which flitted before them like the clouds of night, He came forth, and cried, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me," &c.; and the credentials He bore were equal to this high declaration. 2. It is a Divine contrivance to administer pardon to the guilty. This is peculiar to the gospel. The question, "What must I do to be saved?" has been sighed from many a breast, but has obtained no answer except from Christianity. 3. It is an efficient scheme for promoting personal and universal happiness. Man is miserable, and cannot be otherwise. Between sin and misery there is a necessary connection. Many experiments have been tried to build up happy and peaceful societies, but all have failed. Christianity would not have been "wisdom" had it not provided for man's happiness; and it could only provide for it by effecting his regeneration. When this takes place the heart is at rest; "the fruits of the Spirit" spring forth from the renewed soil; then man lives to help and bless his fellows. II. "THE WISDOM OF GOD IN A MYSTERY." The apostle here probably alludes to the mysteries of Paganism. The priesthood in many places pretended to be in possession of a higher and purer doctrine which they kept from the vulgar, under the plea that they were too base and impure to be entrusted with it. It was, therefore, "hidden wisdom." But it was occasionally communicated to distinguished persons. The "initiated" had, however, to undergo severe penances; scenic symbolic representations in caverns, and in the night, were the means adopted for unfolding the secret; and these, and other ceremonies, were employed to inspire greater awe and to enforce secrecy. Probably this secret doctrine contained some of the ancient and purer theology, but mingled with fables. The apostle supposes—1. Points of resemblance; but even the resemblances are implied contrasts such as exist between the sun and a fire, which at once calls our thoughts from what is common to both, to the contrast exhibited between a darkened blaze and an unsullied light. (1) Christianity was connected with symbolic representations running through the previous ages, of which it was at once the accomplishment and the exposition; and it retained some figurative rites of its own—*e.g.*, Baptism, the Eucharist, and the Sabbath. (2) It, too, is hidden from the profane, and those who receive it must be prepared by a previous discipline. But its discipline is not some foolish bodily austerity or onerous

ceremonies, it is the discipline of humility and prayer. For "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him," and to them "He shows His covenant." (3) It also produces deep impressions of awe and reverence upon those who are admitted to it. Religion has an awful grandeur, but nowhere is it displayed so impressively as in the gospel. 2. Points of direct contrast. (1) The mysteries of Paganism were, for the most part, by artifice; those of Christianity by nature and necessity. The bottom of this ocean is not discovered, not because the waters are muddy, but because they are deep. (2) In the Pagan mysteries plain truths were often hidden in doubtful enigmas; in Christianity nothing is mysterious but what is so by the appointment of Him who hides that from us which is unfit for us to know, or from the necessary magnitude of the objects. (3) The impression produced upon the initiated was the result greatly of trick, and brought the spirit of man into bondage and disquieting superstition. But "the mysteries of godliness" at once humble and exalt; and whilst they inspire fear, elevate, strengthen, and sanctify. (4) In the mysteries of Paganism, whatever wisdom was "hidden" was for the few; that of Christianity, for all. From the former the poor were systematically excluded. The poor find mercy in the gospel, but nowhere else. III. THIS "WISDOM OF GOD IN A MYSTERY" WAS "ORDAINED BEFORE THE WORLD TO GLORY." 1. Christianity was ordained "before the world." We hear sometimes of its invention by man. We acknowledge that things invented have been added by human authority. But these are no parts of the system itself; and we may ask, When was that invented? And what human mind first devised its leading fundamental principles?—that man is a fallen being who can be saved only through the merits of a Divine sacrifice. 2. It was ordained as a perfect and efficient plan for human recovery. (*R. Watson.*)

The great theme of gospel preaching:—I. THE WISDOM REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT. It is called the wisdom of God; by which we are to understand, not that attribute of God's nature, but that attribute in its display. The wisdom of God has been denominated manifold—manifold, not simply because the things in which it is displayed are many, but because, as displayed in each of those things, it is in itself manifold; in other words, ample, full in its display. And of what does he thus speak? It is of God's wisdom as displayed in the economy of human salvation. What is wisdom? What but that which, having an object in view, chooses a plan, and employs means for the attainment of its object—not indeed any plan, but that which is indisputably the best—nor any means, but those which are indisputably the most suitable; and by its choice of the one and its employment of the other, both seeks the attainment of its object, and makes provision for the removal out of the way of what would otherwise operate to make its attainment impossible. If this be what wisdom is, does it not furnish an explanation of what the wisdom of God is, as displayed in the economy of human salvation? He had an object in view. That object was twofold—His own glory and man's salvation. Had sinful man been left to perish, without any regard to the wish of mercy, the holiness, and the faithfulness, and the justice of God would doubtless have been seen in man's perdition. Or had sinful man been rescued from destruction, without any regard to the demand of holiness, and faithfulness, and justice, the mercy of God would doubtless have been seen in man's preservation from ruin. But where—in either the one or the other of those supposed cases—where would have been God's glory? For His glory is not His mercy, or His justice, or His faithfulness, or His holiness, in their separate form, but all these perfections in combination. And is not this the appearance which these perfections of God present to view in His mode of saving man? II. THE PECULIAR DESCRIPTION which the apostle in the text further gives of it. 1. "The wisdom of God in a mystery." By this, questionless, the apostle primarily intended to intimate that in speaking, or in ministerially publishing the wisdom of God, or the plan of human salvation in the mode of its accomplishment, in which the wisdom of God has its highest illustration, he proclaimed that which, in itself, is mysterious or incomprehensible. And is it not so? But though there is here that which is mysterious, that which is incomprehensible, there is nothing that is incredible. To refuse the plan of human salvation a place in our creed, because the mode of its accomplishment transcends our comprehension, we must, in order to be consistent, disbelieve whatever we cannot fully understand or explain. And in what tremendous and hopeless scepticism would this involve us! For what is there that is not to us replete with mystery? 2. But though the apostle may have referred to what is strictly mysterious in the plan of human salvation when he said, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery," yet, from what immediately follows, it would appear that he meant to be understood as referring, not so much

to the essential incomprehensibility of that plan, as to its previous secrecy. The plan of human salvation was before a mystery, a secret; but in consequence of the commencement of the Christian era, it is now made known: hence, "We speak"—I and my fellow-apostles "speak"—publish, proclaim, the once "hidden wisdom." His meaning is, that, compared with the revelation of it now made, all former revelations of it were imperfect. Though adapted to be spiritually and morally useful, yet every former revelation was not only partial, but oftentimes obscure. In this latter revelation, however, there was no darkness; it was clear, intelligible, satisfactory. But the apostle refers, not merely to the complete discovery now made of the plan of human salvation compared with the former partial and defective revelations of it, but also to its benevolent, its philanthropic character, when he says, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom." The plan of human salvation was primarily revealed to the progenitor of the human race as their representative; but subsequently this revelation was made only to a portion of his descendants. The rest of mankind needed it, as well as these favoured ones; but from all without the pale of their privileged community it was withheld, and long withheld—so long, that to this latter class it seemed its revelation was never to be made. Until the commencement of this era the calling of the Gentiles to be partakers with the Jews of the blessings of salvation was a "mystery," a secret; but no sooner did this era commence than the original benevolent and philanthropic character of the plan of human salvation was made manifest. Widely was the revelation of this plan spread during the apostolic age; widely has it been spread since; but still it is far, very far from being universally spread. III. THE SOURCE WHENCE IT ORIGINATED, THE ANTIQUITY OF ITS DEVICE, AND THE GRANDEUR OF THE OBJECT OF ITS REVELATION. 1. Its source was God. "We speak the wisdom of God"; that in which "the wisdom of God" was illustriously displayed we publish—even the plan of human salvation "which God ordained"; that is, which God decreed, and having decreed, revealed as His own contrivance. And is not this what the plan of human salvation is? Could it have any other origin than that to which it is here traced? Does not that about it which exceeds all description and transcends all conception prove that its contrivance not only was, but must have been Divine? 2. The antiquity of its device. "We speak the wisdom of God"—the plan of human salvation "which God ordained before the world, that is, before the creation of the world; and if before the creation of the world, before the beginning of time; and if before the beginning of time, from eternity. And is not the plan of human salvation thus ancient? "Known unto God," it is said, "are all His works from the beginning of the world"; language which, whilst it undeniably imports antecedent arrangement, as undeniably implies that that arrangement was, on the part of God, eternal. And if, in reference to all His other works, the date of God's plans must be fixed in eternity, what other date can be reasonably assigned to His plan of human salvation? What admiration, what gratitude, what confidence is this fitted to excite in our breast! 3. The grandeur of the object of its revelation. "We speak the wisdom of God, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory." In devising the plan of human salvation, God sought His own glory; and in the accomplishment of that plan His glory has been secured. But though in devising that plan God chiefly sought His own glory, yet He sought ours also; even our spiritual, moral, and eternal benefit, which constitutes our glory. Indeed, the device of that plan would have failed in its object had not its accomplishment combined, in this sense, our glory with the glory of God. And have we not every reason to be assured, from it adaption to our case, of its fitness to promote our glory, by promoting our spiritual, moral, and eternal benefit? (*A. Jack, D.D.*) *The wisdom of God in mystery*:—Light and darkness are here mingled together. It is wisdom, but wisdom in a mystery. We may know from it enough to make us wise unto salvation, but the gospel never proposes to give answers to the catechism of curiosity. Consider—I. THE MYSTERY WHICH LIES IN THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST. It is entirely a mystery to us—1. How it could comport with the justice of God to lay the punishment of our sins on the head of an innocent Being. He has done it. There is no mystery about that. But we know no more. 2. How justice could be satisfied through such an infliction. We cannot tell. All we know is that Divine justice positively did receive there the very last item of her demands. 3. How Christ could render satisfaction to Divine justice, while, at the same time, He was the Being to whom satisfaction was rendered, and the very Being who rendered it. 4. How it came to pass that, while

the Divine nature is utterly unsusceptible of pain and death, nevertheless the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ have all their value and efficacy from the Divine nature of the Victim. We know it is so, but we know nothing further. 5. How there could be, in the "one person" of Christ upon the Cross, such a wonderful union of grandeur and humiliation—of complaining and omnipotence—of immortal Deity and expiring humanity! They are truths, but they are mysteries—Divine mysteries of Divine truth. 6. How that Son on the Cross, in whom the Father was well pleased, could have been abandoned at such a moment, and left to wail, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" 6. How the love of God should ever have brought Jesus Christ to the Cross. II. THE DEMONSTRATION THAT ALL THIS MYSTERIOUSNESS IS NO GREATER THAN WE OUGHT TO EXPECT ON THE SUBJECT-MATTER BEFORE US. It perfectly accords with all the facts and all the other arrangements of the plan of redemption. In this accordance beams out the wisdom of God. 1. Sin was the great evil which brought our Saviour into the world and took Him to the Cross. And the existence of sin is just as mysterious a matter to us as its expiation. If sin is a mystery, the expiation of it ought to be a mystery also. And so it is. Great is the mystery of godliness, &c. 2. Why did the Son of God select this world as the theatre of His redeeming wonders? Spirits as precious as ours had fallen. Why did God pass angels by when He rescued us? No answer comes, except, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." There we must leave it. And if it be a mystery how God came to select this apostate world, it accords with God that that work itself should be a mystery also. 3. There is an entire correspondence between the doctrines of Christ's expiation of sin and satisfaction of justice, and all the other information we have about the Saviour Himself. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is just as mysterious to us as His atonement. That Jesus Christ should be able to give strength to the poor cripple's bones, and yet be Himself weary and wayworn—that He should feed thousands of men, and yet be a man of hunger—that He should please the Father, and yet the Father be pleased to bruise Him, these are things before which faith and love may wonder and adore, but which reason can never explain! 4. There is something truly amazing in the mode of the redemption of sinners. If it were so, that Jesus Christ were coming into this world to ransom sinners, we should naturally have expected that He would come in the chariots of His omnipotence! But He was a poor man, and at the end of His work, instead of receiving any signals of triumph, He was mocked as an impostor and crucified as a malefactor. This is the mode in which God treated His Son! It corresponds with the mysteries of its design. 5. Through this Christ some sinners are brought into favour with God. They are believers. They are adopted into God's family, and He loves them with an unequalled tenderness and strength. But how does He treat them? The very pathway by which they travel to heaven corresponds in wonders with all the rest of their redemption! (*I. S. Spencer, D.D.*) *Christianity the wisdom of God in a mystery*:—I. MYSTERY PRIMARILY SIGNIFIES A SECRET, and Christianity is the wisdom of God in a mystery, because of its having been long a secret. "It was ordained before the foundation of the world"—it was a Divine plan formed in the mind of God, but, from eternity to the point of time when it was needed, it remained a secret there. But at the moment of man's fall then came the wisdom of God out of this long mystery. And whilst justice shut the gates of paradise, mercy opened the new and living way to reconciliation and friendship with God. But the apostle speaks of God's purpose to call the Gentiles as a mystery. The wisdom of God had retired behind the impenetrable cloud for ages till our Saviour gave the charter of salvation to all nations—"Go ye into all the world," &c. II. A MYSTERY IS AN EMBLEM, and Christianity is the wisdom of God in a mystery, because it has delighted in all ages to array itself in emblem. The parables of our Lord were called mysteries for this reason, and "the golden candlesticks" and "the stars" in the Book of the Revelation. But the object of a mystery, in this respect, is not so much concealment as to test whether men love the truth sufficiently to investigate the figures under which it is presented. The wisdom of God chose the ancient types for the manifestation of itself. All nature is made use of in this respect. The sun is the established emblem of Christ, the light of the world. In the shadows of evening the voice of heavenly wisdom admonishes us that the night cometh in which no man can work. Dews and rains remind us of the great promise of the fertilising and life-giving Spirit. It was for this very reason that the sacraments were anciently called mysteries. Baptism teaches us the washing away of sin, and the Lord's Supper that we live by His

death. III. A MYSTERY IS A DEEP AND DARK ENIGMA, and Christianity is the wisdom of God in a mystery, because it is by the most perplexing circumstances that it has often accomplished its designs. Take—1. The humiliation of our Lord. The great pretensions of all the prophets were that He was to save and redeem and reign. Well, this Saviour is seen in the form of an infant—is placed in entire obscurity for thirty years. He was despised and rejected by the people at large, and His character and designs often perplexed His immediate followers. By and by we see this universal sovereign and Saviour expiring on a Cross, and provoking the taunt, "He saved others, but Himself He cannot save." Yet, however deep that mystery, there was wisdom behind it, and on the morning of the resurrection the wisdom of God came forth from the mystery. There seems to be an allusion to this in the words of St. Paul: "Great," says he, "is the mystery of godliness," &c. 2. The history of the Church. There have been so many manifestations of the wisdom of God in the mystery that certainly there is something for faith to rest upon with respect to the grand result as to the Church; and yet how deep and portentous are the clouds which arise before the mind of him who contemplates the apostasies of the Church, &c. IV. A MYSTERY IS A PROCEEDING WHICH CONTRADICTS THE NOTIONS WHICH MEN ORDINARILY FORM OF FITNESS; and Christianity is the wisdom of God in a mystery, because it employs, for the accomplishment of its purposes, means which contradict all the notions of men. 1. There was nothing agreeable to human wisdom in the agents appointed for the conversion of the world; but Paul tells us that the wisdom of God had proved stronger than the wisdom of men, and that God had chosen the weak things to confound the mighty, &c. The mystery was to the men of the world; the wisdom in the mystery was manifested in the end. 2. There is the soul of a man immersed in worldliness and sin to be made sensible of its sin and danger—to have produced within it a new train of emotions which shall lead to God. What is the instrumentality which the wisdom of God employs in producing this effect? Is it the work of an angel? Verily it were worthy of such an agency. But now the wisdom of God veils itself in mystery, and makes use of a fellow-man, and by the secret influence which God gives, the work is done. 3. A soul reconciled to God is to be matured in grace and to be qualified for glory. How often does the wisdom of God, in accomplishing this great end, wrap itself in mystery! One object is to cure the spirit of worldly care, and a load of additional care is laid upon it. Another object is to teach reflectiveness of spirit, and the subject is plunged in most perplexing circumstances. Another object is to increase the peace of the soul; and yet the soul is placed in the midst of the turbulent storm. Another object is to excite a higher love, and yet the heavier stroke of the Lord is laid upon him. Here is the mystery; but we know the wisdom notwithstanding this, "for tribulation worketh patience," &c. 4. A nation sunk in ignorance and immorality is to be raised into a better state. How is it done? Never by means which are at all taken into the calculation of statesmen. God raises up His own instruments—they may be few in number—from the lower class of society, and the work goes on, principles are secretly spreading, and the scene changes. It is amusing to read the theories of the worldly wise on these changes, whereas the whole proves that the wisdom of God has been proceeding in a mystery to them. 5. And so it is with respect to foreign missions. V. A MYSTERY IS AN UNFATHOMABLE SUBJECT, and Christianity is the wisdom of God in a mystery, because the subjects with which it is conversant are of this kind. There are many persons who object to our religion because of its mysteriousness. But what would a religion be that had no mysteries? What view could you have of God if you could comprehend Him? God is eternal—can the creature of a day take in the idea of eternal duration? God's plans must be like Himself; must they, then, not be incomprehensible by the necessity of nature to creatures like ourselves? The subject is clear, but our minds are clouded by reason of darkness. We cannot perceive the beauty and the proportions of an extended landscape, not because the objects in themselves are indistinct, but because they are distant. VI. CHRISTIANITY IS A MYSTERY OF LOVE. Great has been the manifestation of the goodness of God to His people. Christ has come—the Holy Spirit has been poured out—the ordinances of Christianity instituted; but there is a period coming of still greater glory for the Church. They whom Christ has redeemed are to be with Him for ever and see His glory. (*R. Watson.*)

The mystery of the gospel:—I. IN ITS PRINCIPLES. It reveals reconciliation with God. 1. By sacrifice. 2. By the sacrifice of His own dear Son. II. IN ITS SPIRITUALITY.

1. It is revealed by the Spirit of God. 2. To the spirit of man. 3. By faith. III. IN ITS DESIGN. 1. To manifest the glory of God. 2. Secure the glorification of man. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The mystery of the gospel*:—The gospel—I. MAY WELL BE MYSTERIOUS—for it is the wisdom of God. II. MUST BE ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE MYSTERIOUS. For its doctrines—1. Transcend human thought. 2. Are spiritual in their nature. 3. Are in opposition to our common modes of thinking. III. Is WISELY MYSTERIOUS. 1. To command our reverence. 2. Humble our pride. 3. Provoke our inquiry. 4. Awaken anticipation of a brighter revelation in another life. (*Ibid.*) *Mystery*:—The word has four meanings which may be arranged almost in chronological order. I. THAT WHICH IT IS FORBIDDEN TO DIVULGE EXCEPT TO THE INITIATED. Such were the secrets of the political and religious festivals held in most cities of Greece. We have a trace of this meaning in Matt. xiii. 2. In 2 Pet. i. 16 it is said that the apostles did not follow the false track of rationalised myths, but were eye-witnesses by initiation of Christ's majesty (Col. ii. 3). II. THAT WHICH CANNOT BE KNOWN EXCEPT BY REVELATION (*cf.* Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. iii. 3, 4; Col. i. 26). III. SACRED CEREMONIES THAT HAVE A SYMBOLICAL OR SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE; sometimes restricted to denote the Eucharist. After the time of Tertullian this is its prevailing signification, and its Latin equivalent is *sacramentum*. IV. A TRUTH THAT TRANSCENDS THE HUMAN INTELLECT TO COMPREHEND, and this may be absolute impossibility or impossible till the Spirit of God gives an inward revelation. In the present passage the word includes somewhat of all these meanings except the third. The word "perfect," while it signifies "full-grown," contains an allusion to initiation into mysteries. (*Principal Edwards.*) *Mystery no obstacle to faith*:—Each human being at his birth has everything to learn. The child is apt to imagine that those who are older than himself, and whom he has found able to answer his first inquiries, know almost everything, and he is surprised and disappointed when he finds, in many instances, that no sufficient explanation of his difficulties can be given, and he is inclined to disbelieve whatever offers itself as a mystery to his mind. In this vulnerable point, scepticism in reference to subjects of a religious nature is wont to assail the mind. It would have it believed that mystery is something peculiar to religion, and then insists that what is so incomprehensible cannot rationally be believed. But neither is true. We purpose to show the contrary. I. THERE IS MYSTERY IN EVERYTHING. 1. Of nothing can we feel a greater certainty than of our own being and personal identity. But what am I? I can no more understand the essence of my conscious self, than I can that of God the Infinite Spirit. The philosopher here is no wiser than the child. 2. Turn to nature in any of her various departments. Look, *e.g.*, at—(1) The facts presented in the animal kingdom. Explain the nature of instinct. Observe that spider, which has spread her gossamer across your window. How did she learn to construct that octagon as perfect as if drawn by the nicest geometrician? Or watch the robin; that nest is the first she ever built: yet see how perfect—the most practised of her kind has never formed a better. Where did she gain her skill in architecture? (2) Animal life and the functions of the vital economy. What is it that prevents the decomposition of the flesh of animals so long as the vital principle is there, while decay commences the moment it is gone? Tell us how it is that the gross substances taken in the form of food are converted into the beautiful carnation of the human cheek, and the gorgeous and variegated dyes of birds and insects. Show what it is that keeps the heart for ever throbbing, and the lungs perpetually heaving, without any effort of the will. (3) The vegetable world. There is the rose blushing crimson by your window. What elements have been concerned in its production? Light, heat, moisture, and the common earth. But by what means have the petal, the odour, and the hues been elaborated from such materials? How has the same sap been made to produce the hard stalk, the sharp thorn, the green leaf, and the admirable flower? There, too, is the lily by its side. It springs from the same soil, is warmed by the same sun, watered by the same showers, yet instead of having the same colour it is white as the virgin snow. Again, there is the grass and the violet that both spring from one common mould, and yet, one is a soft and lively green, and the other an imperial purple. (4) Inorganic matter. You have here the laws of chemical affinity and repulsion. You find that certain substances when reduced to a fluid state and then placed in given conditions, return to solids by the process of crystallisation; and that in doing this one always takes the cubic form, another always that of an octahedron, another always that of a parallelopiped, and so on. But of these, and a multitude of other plain and unquestionable facts, you cannot by the nicest

observation detect the cause, or the mode of its operation. Nature veils it in deep mystery. (5) Those subtle yet efficient agents that produce the more general and grand phenomena of nature. Put an end to the conjectures of mankind, by telling us what light, and heat, and electricity, and magnetism are. That mighty universal force, to which, by way of concealing our ignorance, we give the name of gravity, which brings the pebble to the earth, and chains revolving worlds about their centres; search out the secret and instruct us in relation to its nature. You cannot answer our inquiries. You see, then, that mystery is written all over the universe of God. II. THAT THE TRUTHS OF REVEALED RELIGION ARE CONFESSEDLY MYSTERIOUS, IS A CONFIRMATION OF ITS DIVINITY. 1. A system of religion which professed to be from God, and yet claimed to have no mysteries, would prove it to be false. For such a system would be anomalous, and we should justly reason that if earthly things are found to be beyond our comprehension, much more ought heavenly things to be expected to be so. To the Omniscient only are there no dark and hidden things. 2. There may be many other reasons besides that of our want of capacity to comprehend Him, to render it fit that God should withhold from us many kinds and degrees of knowledge which might without difficulty be imparted. It might, for example, only perplex us to have our minds excited to yet higher inquiry by further disclosures as to things that have no immediate relation to our duty or our happiness for the present. Life is so short, so full of engrossing occupation, that very little time is allowed us for merely speculative thought. Then, further, it is no less obvious that this living in the midst of mysteries may prove a most salutary moral discipline. By contact with the as yet unopened secrets of the universe our pride receives a salutary check. Both as regards the ends of practical life and the development in our souls of sentiments of humility, of veneration, and of worship, there are great advantages to be derived from the present withholding of many parts of Divine knowledge which might possibly be revealed. 3. Instead, then, of suffering ourselves to be perplexed because we encounter mysteries in the Christian revelation, it is much wiser, as well as more becoming, that we cultivate a humble, docile spirit. How exceedingly limited, at best, is our horizon! What an infant, in a sober view, does the wisest man on earth appear on the scale of universal being! 4. We ought likewise to consider, for the enkindling of a heartfelt gratitude, that the mysteries of our being had been far deeper and darker than they are, but for the partial light which God has afforded in His Word. By the help of this, where the wisest heathen, in all ages, have groped their way, we are able to see distinctly; and though we are able to know so little comparatively, yet let us devotedly praise God that He has enabled us to know enough to enable us to discern and keep the path of duty and of life. 5. For the rest it may content us that we can confidently anticipate the future increase of our knowledge. (*Ray Palmer, D.D.*) *Christianity mysterious, and the wisdom of God in making it so:*—The reasons of this may be stated upon these two grounds. I. THE NATURE AND QUALITY OF THE THINGS TREATED OF. 1. Their surpassing greatness to the mind of man. God is an infinite being, a world in Himself, too high for our speculations and too great for our descriptions. Heaven enters into us, as we must into it, by a very narrow passage. But how shall the King of glory, whom the heavens themselves cannot contain, enter in by these doors? How shall these short faculties measure the lengths of His eternity, the breadths of His immensity, the heights of His prescience, and the depths of His decrees? and those mysteries of two natures united into one person and of one nature diffused into a triple personality? 2. Their spirituality. When we read that God is a Spirit, and that angels and the souls of men are spirits, we cannot frame any notion or resemblance of them. We can fetch in no information from our senses. Imagine a man born blind, able upon hearsay to conceive all the varieties of colour, to draw a map of France, &c. But as it would be extremely irrational for a blind man to deny that there are such things as colours, &c., because he cannot form any mental perception of them, so would it be superlatively more unreasonable for us to deny on the same grounds the great articles of our Christianity. 3. Their strangeness and unreducibleness to the common methods and observations of nature. Take, *e.g.*—(1) Christ's satisfaction for sin. That He who was the offended person should provide a satisfaction and concern Himself to solicit a needless reconciliation, that a Father should deliver up an innocent and infinitely beloved Son for the redemption of His enemies, are transactions such as we can find nothing analogous to in all the dealings of men. (2) Regeneration, concerning which men wonder by what strange power it should come to pass that

any one should be brought to conquer inveterate appetites and desires, and to have new ones absolutely contrary planted in their room. So that when our Saviour discoursed of these things to Nicodemus, he asked, "How can these things be?" (3) The resurrection. II. SOME OF ITS PRINCIPAL ENDS AND DESIGNS. But may it not be objected that the grand design of religion is to engage men in the practice of its commands, and that the way to obey a law is to know it, and the way to know it is to have it plainly propounded? To this I answer, first, that it is as much the design of religion to oblige men to believe the credenda as to practise the agenda of it: and secondly, that there is as clear a reason for the belief of the one as for the practice of the other. They exceed indeed the human reason to comprehend them scientifically, and are therefore proposed, not to our knowledge, but to our belief; but since God has revealed them we may with the highest reason, upon His bare word, believe them. But then, as for those things that concern our practice, they indeed are of that clearness that being once proposed to us, need not our study, but only our acceptance. In sum, the articles of our faith are those depths in which the elephant may swim, and the rules of our practice those shallows in which the lamb may wade. But as both light and darkness make but one natural day, so both the clearness of the agenda and the mystery of the credenda of the gospel constitute but one entire religion. I come now to show that the mysteriousness of the credenda, or matters of our faith, is most subservient to the great ends of religion. 1. Because religion in its prime institution was designed to make impressions of awe and reverential fear upon men's minds. God, who designed man to a supernatural end, thought fit also to engage him to a way of living above the bare course of nature, and for that purpose to oblige him to a control of his mere natural desires. And this can never be done but by imprinting such apprehensions of dread as may stave off appetite from its desired satisfactions, which the infinite wisdom of God has thought fit to do, by nonplussing the world with certain new and unaccountable revelations. To protect which from the encroachments of bold minds, He has hedged it in with a sacred obscurity in some of the principal parts of it, inasmuch as "familiarity breeds contempt." 2. Because religion is delivered by God to humble the pride of man's reason. Man fell by pride, founded upon an irregular desire of knowledge, and therefore Divine wisdom contrived man's recovery by such a method as should abase him in that very perfection, whereof the ambitious improvement first cast him down from that glorious condition. 3. Because He would engage us in a more diligent search into the articles of religion. No man studies things plain and evident. We are commanded by Christ to search the Scriptures, and whosoever shall apply himself to a thorough performance of this high command, shall find difficulty enough in the things searched into to perpetuate his search. For they are a rich mine which the greatest wit and diligence may dig in for ever and still find new matter to entertain the busiest contemplation with, even to the utmost period of the most extended life. Truth, we are told, dwells low, and in a bottom; and the most valued things of the creation are hidden from the common view, so that violence must be done to nature, before she will produce and bring them forth. 4. Because the full knowledge of it may be one principal part of our blessedness hereafter. All those heights and depths which confound the subtlest apprehension shall then be made clear to us. (*R. South, D.D.*)

Vers. 8, 9. **Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**—*Spiritual ignorance, evil, good*:—I. THE CAUSE OF IMMENSE EVIL. These princes of the world, through ignorance, "crucified the Lord of glory." 1. A greater crime than this was never perpetrated. It involved—(1) The grossest injustice. He was embodied virtue. His enemies and judges bore testimony to His innocence. (2) The basest ingratitude. He not only did no evil, but "went about doing good." (3) Most heartless cruelty. They put Him to a death the most ignominious and excruciating that infernal malignity could desire. (4) Most daring impiety. Whom did they thus treat? "The Lord of glory" (Psa. xxiv. 8). It is impious to trifle with His laws and rebel against His throne, but how much more so to crucify the universal Lawgiver and King! 2. That this ignorance was the cause of this immense evil is evident. (1) Because it is itself an evil, and like will produce like. There are two things necessary to knowledge—mind and means. When either of these is absent, ignorance is a calamity, but when they are present it is a crime. These princes had both—they were not idiots, and they had means by which they could know

Christ; the Old Testament Scriptures, John the Baptist, Christ Himself. They need not have been ignorant. Their ignorance was a sin, and sin, like virtue, is propagated. (2) Had it not existed, such an evil could never have been perpetrated. II. THE OCCASION OF IMMENSE GOOD. This crucifixion introduced things that "eye had never seen," &c., viz., God's love to the world and His method of saving it; Divine pardon, spiritual purity, immortal hopes. Conclusion: From this subject learn—1. That the sinner is always engaged in accomplishing that which he never intended. These "princes"—(1) Ruined themselves. It brought upon them and their country in this world tremendous judgments—and what in the world to come? Sinner, what are you doing? You are ruining yourself, but you do not intend it; but you are nevertheless doing it in the commission of every sin. (2) Executed the plan of the great God. "Him being delivered," &c. God overrules for good. So now, we have not to determine whether we shall serve God or not; we have to determine how—by our will or against it. 2. Whatever good a man may accomplish contrary to his intention is destitute of all praiseworthiness. What oceans of blessings come to our world through the crucifixion! Yet who can ever praise the crucifiers? 3. That no man should act without an intelligent conception of what he is doing. How many act from prejudice, custom, blind impulse! How few have a right conception of what they are doing! (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Ignorance of the truth*:—I. ITS AWFUL PREVALENCE. 1. It has abounded in all time. 2. Pervades all classes. II. ITS INJURIOUS EFFECTS. 1. It occasions the worst crimes. 2. It led to the crucifixion of our Lord. III. ITS FATAL ISSUE—destruction of both body and soul. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The guilt of man in crucifying the Lord of glory.* Consider—I. THE DEED. II. ITS AGGRAVATION. 1. He was the Lord of glory. 2. Came from glory. 3. Conducts to glory—dwells in glory. III. ITS UNMITIGATED GUILT. A sin of ignorance. 1. Not therefore relieved, because the ignorance was wilful. 2. Not inevitable through the purpose of God, because had they known they would not have done it. (*Ibid.*) *Christ the Lord of glory*:—I. THE ESSENTIAL GLORY OF CHRIST, which He hath as God from everlasting; which is unspeakable and inconceivable glory (Phil. ii. 6). He has a peerage or equality with His Father in glory (John x. 30). And again, "All things that the Father hath are Mine" (John xvi. 15), the same name, the same nature, the same essential properties, the same will, and the same glory. II. THE MEDIATORIAL GLORY OF CHRIST is exceeding great. This is proper to Him as the Head of the Church, which He hath purchased with His own blood (Phil. ii. 9, 10). 1. The fulness of grace inherent in Him. The humanity of Christ is filled with grace, as the sun with light (John i. 14), excelling all the saints in spiritual lustre and gracious excellencies. 2. The dignity and authority put upon Him. He is crowned King in Sion; all power in heaven and earth is given unto Him (Matt. xxviii. 18), He is a Law-giver to the Church (James iv. 12). 3. Jesus Christ shall have glory and honour ascribed to Him for evermore by angels and saints, upon the account of His mediatorial work; this some divines call His passive glory, the glory which He is said to receive from His redeemed ones (Rev. v. 8–10). Inferences: 1 How wonderful was the love of Christ, the Lord of Glory, to be so abased and humbled as He was for us vile and sinful dust! 2. How transcendently glorious is the advancement of believers by their union with the Lord of Glory! 3. Is Jesus Christ the Lord of Glory? Then, let no man count himself dishonoured by suffering the vilest indignities for His sake. 4. Is Christ the Lord of Glory? How glorious then shall the saints one day be, when they shall be made like this glorious Lord, and partake of His glory in heaven! (John xvii. 22.) 5. How hath the devil blindfolded and deluded them that are frightened off from Christ by the fears of being dishonoured by Him! 6. If Christ be the Lord of Glory, how careful should all be who profess Him that they do not dishonour Jesus Christ, whose name is called upon by them! 7. What delight should Christians take in their daily converse with Jesus Christ in the way of duty! 8. If Christ be so glorious, how should believers long to be with Him, and behold him in His glory above! (*John Flavel.*) **Eye hath not seen . . . the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.**—*Spiritual blessings*—I. LIE BEYOND THE RESEARCHES OF THE UNREGENERATE MIND. They are—1. Not seen by the observation of nature, providence, grace. 2. Not heard by the report of the preacher, &c. 3. Not conceived by reason, speculation, inquiry. II. ARE REVEALED TO THOSE WHO LOVE GOD. 1. Much depends on the heart. 2. The revelation is glorious. 3. Is effected by the Spirit. 4. Is completed in glory. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The excellency and blessings of the gospel*:—I.

THE SUPERLATIVE EXCELLENCY OF THE GOSPEL. 1. Its discoveries and blessings far exceed all human knowledge or conception. (1) "Eye hath not seen." And yet by the eye we have surveyed many of the works of God; and if we look upon ourselves, we discover displays of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness. All these are glorious discoveries; but they say not how, when, or why they were formed. (2) "Ear hath not heard." When sight is exhausted, we can still drink in knowledge. But we never heard how the spring of moral conduct might be purified, life and heart made holy, and man be fitted for the society of God. We never heard of such powerful motives as the love of Christ, or such rich blessings as the beatitudes on the mount. (3) "Nor hath entered the heart of man," *i.e.*, man never imagined. Every man carries about with him an ideal world of his own. How often have we attempted to paint to ourselves a character just such as we should approve! But it never entered into the heart of man to conceive of true dignity of character, or of the sources of real happiness as suited to the nature of man. 2. The peculiar excellency of this gospel will appear from—(1) The sublime and interesting truth which it discovers. Briefly, the design of the gospel is to raise man from the ruin of the fall—to wash him from sin—to adorn him with righteousness—to inspire him with sublimity of thought and holiness of affection—to lead him in all the paths of obedience, and finally to exalt him to the society of angels and fellowship with God. But who could have barely thought of such a purpose? Who could have admitted the possibility of the fact? The Divine Being was under no obligations to redeem man. All the motive is revealed to us in the gospel, and is to be found in His own unfathomable love. "God so loved the world," &c. And who would ever have conceived of such a simple plan of communicating such blessings! "Believe on the Lord," &c. (2) The pure and intense happiness it imparts. Even the speculative knowledge of these truths raises man in the scale of intelligence. But the gospel does more. The gospel calms the tumult of passion, reconciles man to God, and makes him to be at peace with himself. Now, "eye hath not seen," &c. Some have had every advantage and opportunity of knowing this subject, but they are still natural men. They cannot conceive how a man can know his sins forgiven, nor of the joy and peace in believing. The natural man doth not comprehend these things; and even believers do not form conceptions sufficiently noble. (3) The happy and glorious prospects which it unfolds. Philosophy never found out a remedy for the fear of death. It points to a few instances of apparent calmness and confidence. But it never fully met the evil. Death, to it, has ever been dissembled. But Christianity reveals the immediate consequences of death, and then supplants the fear of death. Where will philosophy show anything like the death of Stephen? And how is this to be explained? (Acts vii. 55.) And all in whom is the spirit of Stephen have the like glorious prospects. But what are they? Nay, "Eye hath not seen," &c. The grandest description is, that it is beyond all description. If we cannot know all that God has prepared for us here, how can we conceive of the joys of heaven? (John iii. 12.) "We walk by faith, and not by sight!" We could not possibly understand it; we have no powers of perception suited to such knowledge. Eye hath not seen so glorious a body as that of the Transfiguration, the model of ours; or so glorious a city as "that great city, the holy Jerusalem," &c. Ear never heard strains so melting as those John heard—"the voice of harpers harping with their harps." It never entered into the heart of man, the pure and unsullied bliss of the redeemed (Rev. vii. 15–17). II. THE CHARACTERS FOR WHOM THESE BLESSINGS ARE PREPARED. For "them that love Him." Consider the love of God as—1. A necessary principle. Mere admiration will not suffice. The infidel may admire the character of the Creator as impressed upon His works, and be without even a desire to enjoy these blessings. Nor will a mere transient impression of the passions be sufficient, such as is frequently felt whilst contemplating gospel truths, even as a matter of speculation. A consideration of the love of God, the sufferings of Christ, &c., produces no permanent effect, but is obliterated by the next consideration. Now this love of God is necessary. "Without holiness no man shall see Him." Holiness is the image of God, and "God is love." These things are prepared only for them that keep His commandments, &c. But the whole law is comprised in this, "Thou shalt love," &c. Hence, "this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." It is only the love of God that gives us the true knowledge of Him. "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." This love of God is essential to our enjoying God. No man can enjoy

what he hates. 2. A Divine principle. No man loves God by nature. Nothing less than Divine love can conquer this enmity of the human heart. A manifested principle. The love of God is the love of holiness, for God is holy. And if we love God we shall keep His commandments. This love cannot possibly exist without influencing the practice, and thus manifesting itself. (*F. A. West.*) *The gospel a revelation*:—The "things" are the gospel in the wealth of its blessings, not only for another world, but also for this. The eye has seen much, the ear has heard much more than the eye has seen, the heart pictures creations more wonderful still; but such truths as the gospel declares belong to a higher world; they are the fruit of God's hidden wisdom, His deepest thought. They are thus of necessity a mystery to man. It never entered the heart of man that these things would come—I. FROM THE SOURCE THEY DID—from God. Man's ideas of God, apart from revelation, sprang rather from his own heart than from the teaching of nature, and therefore to imagine our salvation would flow from the source it did was impossible. After man sinned he changed God into his own image and likeness. The gods of the heathen consequently were perfectly destitute of those properties from which the gospel blessings could flow. They were destitute of holiness—heathenism has its heroes, but it has no saints. They were destitute of love, and were notorious for their cruelty and their lack of tenderness. II. IN THE WAY THEY DID. "As the heavens are higher than the earth," &c. The way God took to save the world—by the incarnation and death of Immanuel—was so strange, that no one could imagine or dared imagine it but Himself. Not only is it so great that man could not in his own strength discover it, but so great that, after being revealed, it baffles man to comprehend it. The gospel is so Divine a conception that it dazzles the wise of this world into blindness. God's smallest thoughts, His thoughts in nature, perplex man. What then about the thought He conceived in the silence and solitude of eternity? III. TO THE DEGREE THEY DID. Paul considered the fact that Christ was preached to the Gentiles a sufficiently great mystery to be put side by side with the Incarnation. Sin makes man selfish. The Romans deemed all others enemies, to be vanquished and made slaves; and once made slaves, they were of less value in their eyes than the beasts which perish. The Greeks judged all others barbarians, who ought to be robbed and slain. The Jews likewise were animated by the spirit of exclusiveness—they deemed all others unclean and worthless. Though our advantages are numerous and important, yet this truth is not properly understood by many in our day. All are not willing, even in this age, that the dew of God's blessing should fall outside their little garden. The old objections are being revived, that to attempt to evangelise the heathen is sheer waste. Such blind fatuity! The man who would try to stop the clouds to rain and the sun to shine outside the fences of his tiny farm would be looked upon as a lunatic. But his conduct were wisdom itself compared with that of those who in the vanity of their speculations would leave certain races outside the pale of civilisation and salvation. God's provision for the world is worthy of the high source whence it emanated, and the strange instrumentality whereby it was brought about, at once worthy of the infinite love and the precious sacrifice. To provide for only one nation would not be worthy of Him. Indeed, to provide sparingly for even the whole world would not be according to His custom—plenteousness characterises all His acts. With such fulness of grace in store, no one, be he who and where he may, need be lost. (*W. Morris.*) *God's revelation of heaven*:—Note—I. THE INABILITY OF THE LOWER PARTS OF HUMAN NATURE—the natural man—TO APPREHEND THE HIGHER TRUTHS. 1. Eternal truth is not perceived through sensation or science. "Eye hath not seen." (1) There is a life of mere sensation. (*a*) The highest pleasure of sensation comes through the eye. The Corinthians could appreciate this. Theirs was the land of beauty. They read the apostle's letter, surrounded by the purest conceptions of Art. Let us not depreciate what God has given. There is a joy in contemplating the manifold forms in which the All Beautiful has concealed His essence. It is a pure delight to see. (*b*) But the eye can only reach the finite beautiful. It does not scan "the King in His beauty, nor the land that is very far off." And the visible is perishable beauty—not the eternal loveliness for which our spirits pant. Therefore Christ came not in the glory of form; "He had no form nor comeliness," &c.; 'there was no beauty that they should desire Him." The eye did not behold, even in Christ, the things which God had prepared. (*c*) This is an eternal truth. This verse is quoted as if "the things prepared" meant heaven. But the world of which Paul speaks God hath revealed, only not to eye nor ear. In heaven this shall be as

true as now. The pure in heart will see God, but never with the eye; only in the same way, but in a different degree, that they see Him now. (2) Again, no scientific analysis can discover the truths of God. Science proceeds upon observation. Experiment is the test of truth. Now, you cannot, by searching, find out the Almighty to perfection, nor a single one of the blessed truths He has to communicate. 1. It is in vain that we ransack the world for probable evidences of God, and idle to look into the materialism of man for the revelation of his immortality; or to examine the morbid anatomy of the body to find the rule of right. If a man go to the eternal world with convictions of eternity, the resurrection, God, already in his spirit, he will find abundant corroborations of that which he already believes. But if God's existence be not thrilling every fibre of his heart, if the immortal be not already in him as the proof of the resurrection, if the law of duty be not stamped upon his soul as an eternal truth, science will never reveal these. the physician comes away from the laboratory an infidel. Eye hath not seen the truths which are clear enough to love and to the spirit. 2. Eternal truth is not reached by hearsay—"Ear hath not heard." (1) No revelation can be adequately given by the address of man to man. For all such revelation must be made through words, the mere coins of intellectual exchange. There is as little resemblance between the coin and the bread it purchases, as between the word and the thing it stands for. Looking at the coin, the form of the loaf does not suggest itself. Listening to the word, you do not perceive the idea for which it stands, unless you are already in possession of it. Speak of ice to an inhabitant of the torrid zone, the word does not give him an idea, or if it does, it must be a false one. Talk of blueness to one who cannot distinguish colours, what can your most eloquent description present to him resembling the truth of your sensation? Similarly in matters spiritual, no verbal revelation can give a single simple idea. For instance, what means justice to the unjust, or purity to the licentious? What does infinitude mean to a being who has never stirred beyond a cell? Talk of God to a thousand ears, each has his own different conception. The sensual man hears of God, and understands one thing. The pure man hears and conceives another thing. (2) See what a hearsay religion is. There are men who believe on authority. Their minister believes all this Christianity true; therefore so do they. He calls this doctrine essential; they echo it. They have heard with the hearing of the ear that God is love, that the ways of holiness are ways of pleasantness. But the Corinthian philosophers heard Paul; the Pharisees heard Christ. How much did the ear convey? He alone believes truth who feels it. He alone has a religion whose soul knows by experience that to serve God and know Him is the richest treasure. 3. Truth is not discoverable by the heart—"neither have entered into the heart of man"—the power of imagining, and the power of loving. (1) It is a grand thing when thought bursts into flame, or when a great law of the universe reveals itself to the mind of genius, or when the truths of human nature shape themselves forth in the creative fancies of the poet. But the most ethereal creations of fancy were shaped by a mind that could read the life of Christ, and then blaspheme the Adorable. Some of the truest and deepest utterances ever spoken came from one whose life was from first to last selfish. The highest astronomer of this age refused to recognise the Cause of causes. The mighty heart of genius had failed to reach the things which God imparts to a humble spirit. (2) The heart of man has the power of affection. The highest moment known on earth by the merely natural, is that in which the mysterious union of heart with heart is felt. Yet this attains not to the things prepared by God. Human love is but the faint type of that surpassing blessedness which belongs to those who love God. II. THE NATURE AND LAWS OF REVELATION. 1. Revelation is made by a Spirit to a spirit. Christ is the voice of God without the man—the Spirit is the voice of God within. The highest revelation is not made by Christ, for He said, "The Spirit shall take of Mine and shall show it unto you." And therefore it is written here—"The Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God." Now the Spirit of God lies touching, as it were, the soul of man. They mingle. The spiritual in man, by which he might become a recipient of God, may be dulled, deadened, by a life of sense, but in this world never lost. All that is wanted is to become conscious of the nearness of God. God has placed men here to feel after Him if haply they may find Him, albeit He be not far from any one of them. 2. The condition upon which this revelation is made to men is love. These things are "prepared for them that love Him," or revealed to those who have the mind of Christ. (1) Love to man may mean love to his person, or it may mean

simply pity. Love to God can only mean love to His character: *e.g.*, God is purity. And to be pure in thought and look is to love God. God is love—and to love men till private attachments have expanded into a philanthropy which embraces all, is to love God. God is truth. To be true—to hate every form of falsehood—to live a brave, true, real life—that is to love God. God is infinite—and to love the boundless, reaching on from grace to grace, and rising upwards ever to see the ideal still above us, aiming insatiably to be perfect even as the Father is perfect—that is love to God. (2) This love is manifested in obedience. (*a*) "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me," &c. We remember the Roman commander who forbade an engagement with the enemy, and the transgressor was his own son. He accepted the challenge of the leader of the other host, slew, spoiled him, and then in triumph carried the spoils to his father's tent. But the Roman father refused to recognise the instinct which prompted this as deserving of the name of love—disobedience contradicted it and deserved death: weak sentiment, what was it worth? So with God—strong feelings, warm expressions, varied internal experience coexisting with disobedience, God counts not as love. (*b*) To love, adoring and obedient, God reveals His truth. As in the natural, so in the spiritual world. By compliance with the laws of the universe we put ourselves in possession of its blessings. Obey the laws of health and you obtain health. Arm yourselves with the laws of nature, and you may call down the lightning from the sky. In the same way there are laws in the world of Spirit, by compliance with which God's Spirit comes into the soul with all its revelations. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." "No man hath seen God at any time." "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us." "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." (*c*) These laws are universal and invariable. There is no favourite child of nature who may hold the fire-ball in the hollow of his hand and trifle with it without being burnt; there is no selected child of grace who can live an irregular life without unrest; or be proud, and at the same time have peace; or indolent, and receive fresh inspiration; or remain unloving and cold, and yet see and hear and feel the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him. And if obedience were entire and love were perfect, then would the revelation of the Spirit to the soul of man be perfect too. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Heaven:*—Every prophet who has stood upon the borders of a new dispensation might have uttered these words. Abraham might have looked forward to the Mosaic dispensation, &c., and have turned to his brethren who lived in the patriarchal age, and said, "Eye hath not seen," &c. At the close of the Levitical dispensation the prophets might have thus spoken of the coming glories. And now we stand on the borders of a new era. But persons are curious to know what kind of dispensation the millennial one is to be. Will the temple be erected in Jerusalem? Will the Jews be positively restored to their own land? &c. We cannot answer. "Eye hath not seen," &c. And this brings us to make the application of the subject to heaven itself. I. WHAT HEAVEN IS NOT. 1. It is not a heaven of the senses. (1) "Eye hath not seen it." What glorious things the eye hath seen! Have we not seen the gaudy pageantry of pomp crowding the gay streets? We hear of the magnificence of the old Persian princes, of palaces covered with gold and silver, and floors inlaid with jewels; but we cannot thence gather a thought of heaven, for "eye hath not seen" it. We have thought, however, when we have come to the works of God, surely we can get some glimpse of what heaven is here. By night we have turned our eye up to the stars, and we have said, "If this earth has such a glorious covering, what must that of heaven be?" At another time we have seen some glorious landscape, and said, "Surely these grandeurs must be something like heaven." It was all a mistake—"Eye hath not seen" it. (2) "The ear hath not heard" it. Have we not sometimes heard the sweet voice of the messenger of God when he has by the Spirit spoken to our souls! We knew something of heaven then, we thought. We have heard music, whether poured from the lungs of man—that noblest instrument in the world—or from some manufacture of harmony, and we have thought, "This is what John meant by the voice like many waters, and the voice of harpers harping with their harps." But we made a mistake. "Ear hath not heard" it. (3) Others look upon it as a place where they shall be free from bodily pain, and where they will eat to the full and be satisfied. What a mistake! We can get no conceptions of heaven through the senses; they must always come through the Spirit. 2. It is not a heaven of the imagination. Poets let their imaginations fly with loosened wings, or the preacher weaves the filigree work of fancy, and you say, "It is sweet to hear

that man speak; he made me think I was there." But imagination, when it is most sublime, and freest from the dust of earth, and kept steady by the most extreme caution, cannot picture heaven. "It hath not entered the heart of man," &c. Your imaginary heaven you will find by and by to be all a mistake. 3. It is not a heaven of the intellect. Men describe heaven as a place where we shall know all things, and their grandest idea is that they shall discover all secrets there. But "It hath not entered into the heart of man." II. "HE HATH REVEALED IT UNTO US BY HIS SPIRIT." This means that it was revealed unto the apostles by the Spirit, so that they wrote something of it in the Holy Word. We think also that it means that every believer has glimpses of heaven by the influence of the Spirit. A Christian gets a gaze of what heaven is—1. When in the midst of trials and troubles he is able to cast all his care upon the Lord, because He careth for him. Heaven is something like that—a place of holy calm and trust. 2. In the season of quiet contemplation, for the joys of heaven are akin to the joys of contemplation. 3. At the Lord's table. You get so near the Cross there that your sight becomes clearer, and the air brighter, and you see more of heaven there than anywhere else. 4. When we assemble in our meetings for prayer. 5. In extraordinary closet seasons. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Heaven*:—The city of Corinth has been called the Paris of antiquity. Indeed, for splendour, the world holds no such wonder to-day. The commerce of all nations passed through her ports; the mirth of all people sported in her Isthmian games, and the beauty of all lands walked her porticos, and threw itself on the altar of her stupendous dissipations. Column and statue and temple bewildered the beholder. And the best music from the best instruments in the world resounded in her theatres. It was not to rustics who had never seen or heard anything grand that Paul uttered this text, and it was a bold thing for him to stand there amid all that and say, "All this is nothing; eye hath not seen," &c. We can in this world get no idea of—I. THE HEALTH OF HEAVEN. When you were a child you had never felt sorrow or sickness. Perhaps later you felt a glow in your cheek, and a spring in your step, and an exuberance of spirits, and a clearness of eye, that made you thank God you were permitted to live. You thought that you knew what it was to be well, but the most elastic and robust health of earth, compared with that of heaven, is nothing but sickness and emaciation. Look at that soul standing before the throne. On earth she was a life-long invalid. See her step now, and hear her voice now. Health in all the pulses! Health of vision; health of spirits; immortal health. No racking cough, no consuming fevers, no exhausting pains, no hospitals of wounded men. That child that died in the agonies of croup, hear her voice now ringing in the anthem. That old man that went bowed down with the infirmities of age, see him walk now with the step of an immortal athlete—for ever young again. To have neither ache, nor pain, nor weakness, nor fatigue. "Eye hath not seen it—ear hath not heard it." II. THE SPLENDOUR OF HEAVEN. John tries to describe it, and as we look through his telescope we see a blaze of jewellery, a mountain of light, a cataract of colour, a sea of glass, and a city like the sun. John bids us look again, and we see thrones; thrones of the prophets, patriarchs, angels, apostles, martyrs, throne of Jesus—throne of God. John bids us look again, and we see the great procession of the redeemed passing. "Eye hath not seen it, ear hath not heard it." Skim from the summer waters the brightest sparkles, and you will get no idea of the sheen of the everlasting sea. Pile up the splendours of earthly cities and they would not make a stepping-stone by which you might mount to the city of God. Every house is a palace. Every step a triumph. Every meal is a banquet. Every day is a jubilee, every hour a rapture, and every moment an ecstasy. III. THE RE-UNIONS OF HEAVEN. If you have ever been across the seas, and met a friend in some strange city, you remember how your blood thrilled, and how glad you were to see him. What then will be our joy to meet in the bright city of the sun those from whom we have long been separated. In this world we only meet to part. It is good-bye, good-bye. But not so in heaven. Welcomes in the air, at the gates, at the house of many mansions—but no good-bye. IV. THE SONG OF HEAVEN. There is nothing more inspiriting to me than a whole congregation lifted up on the wave of holy melody. But, my friends, if music on earth is so sweet what will it be in heaven! They all know the tune there. All the best singers of all the ages will join it—choirs of white-robed children! choirs of patriarchs! choirs of apostles! Harpers with their harps. David of the harp will be there. Gabriel of the trumpet will be there. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *The things which God has prepared*:—1. THEIR NATURE. 1. The mysteries of the gospel salvation. 2.

Extending into the eternal future. II. THEIR TRANSCENDENT VALUE. 1. Worthy of God. 2. Surpassing all human comprehension. III. THEIR PARTICIPATION—depends on love to God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The things prepared and their enjoyment:*—I. THE THINGS PREPARED. Suggesting—1. The Divine forethought, and the infinite fulness and carefulness of God's love for His children. Remember—(1) How the world was prepared before man came upon it. (2) How God prepared a body in which Christ should be one with us, die to be our Saviour, and ascend to hold the sceptre of the universe. (3) How Christ reminded His disciples that the dignities of the kingdom were only for those for whom it is prepared of the Father. (4) How He went to prepare a place for us, and sent the Spirit to prepare us for the place. 2. The Divine treasury. The figure suggests a vast building over whose portals we read, "Ask and it shall be given," &c.—a building divided into so many stores of Divine love. Let us open their doors. (1) One contains the "purposes" of the Divine love, delivering mercy, sustaining grace—purposes that no need can exhaust, no opposition thwart, no eternity unfold. (2) Another "promises" Divinely—(*a*) Simple, little children can understand them. (*b*) Profound, angels cannot fathom them. (*c*) Certain, for "heaven and earth shall pass away," &c. (*d*) Sweet and rich, "sweeter than a honeycomb," and "more precious than gold." (3) Divine "provisions"—the mercy-seat where we obtain grace to help; the Cross, its cleansing fount, infinite ransom, Divine righteousness; the Lord's Table. (4) The "fulness" that is treasured up in Christ—fulness of grace to pardon, of merit to atone, of strength to sustain, of glory to reward. (5) Things prepared in the ministry of the Holy Spirit—regeneration, comfort, sanctification. (6) Glories that await us hereafter—the "crown" of triumph, the "harp" of praise, the "mansion" of repose and blessing, the "living fountain" of joy. II. THE REVELATION OF THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THESE THINGS ARE MADE MANIFEST TO US. 1. Striking thought! God takes men into His confidence about matters that human reason could never fathom. It was so with Abraham. "Shall I hide," &c. Amos declares that the Lord will hide nothing, but will reveal His secret unto His servants. In proportion to our intimacy with God the Divine purposes will be made plain to us. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." The disciples pleaded with John, who reclined on his Master's bosom, to ask Him a secret which they did not venture to ask themselves. He lived so much nearer to Christ, and therefore had more of His secret. We deprive ourselves of unspeakable blessings in regard to God's dealings in providence from our failure to recognise God's hand in every gift. And God's children should feel that in regard to the mysteries of the world around they shall have light resting on their path, and truth revealed by the indwelling Spirit which enables them to trust where others cannot. The man that is nearest the sun will have most of light, and the man who lives nearest the throne will have deeper draughts of the water of life that proceeds therefrom. 2. As to the revelation by the Spirit of Divine things, take the case of Simeon, unto whom it had been revealed by the Holy Ghost that he should not die until he had seen the Christ. How long he waited for the consolation of Israel! But at last it came. So God may have revealed to you in His Word and by His Spirit truths that have yet to come in their Divine significance and power. Wait patiently; God's time is always the best. Take the case of Peter who, when all were dumb before "Whom say ye that I am?" received at once a revelation that Jesus was the Christ, &c. You may say "We are not Simeons or Peters." No; but remember how Christ thanked God that the things withheld from the wise and prudent were revealed unto babes, *i.e.*, babes in spiritual experience. But even to your children, who shall say at how early an age God, by His Spirit, shall reveal the truth? Remember Samuel. III. THE CONDITION ESSENTIAL TO THE RECEPTION OF THE BLESSING. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us"—there is the origin of all Christian love. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost"—that is the next step. Then we are the children of God, and the Spirit beareth witness with our spirits, &c. Then the circle is complete. And the Divine love thus enjoyed must manifest itself in self-sacrificing love to men. (*J. P. Chown.*) *The things prepared for a prepared people:*—The apostle here is quoting from Isa. lxiv. 4, and only intends to give the general sense of the passage. Both passages are generally used as referring to the heavenly state, but we can only apply them thus by accommodation. Yet this is a legitimate application. For if the text is true of our imperfect condition of privilege in this life, much more will it be true as applied to that perfection of bliss that awaits us in the life to come. You cannot judge of the real

merits of a story till you see how it ends. You cannot decide about the value of a casket till it is opened and you see the jewels which it enshrines. You cannot pronounce on a campaign till you see what fruits result from its hard-fought battle-fields. And so, in estimating the real worth of redemption, we can only form an approximate judgment of it in this life. There are three points of view from which we may contemplate our portion for the future, as set before us in the text. I. THE PLAIN AND POSITIVE VIEW. "Things prepared." 1. "Things" plural—not one element of joy, but many. It is a caricature of heaven when psalm-singing is represented as its chief occupation. A wonderful variety marks the imagery of the Bible as to the heavenly state—"a city that hath foundations," "the marriage supper of the Lamb," being "present with Christ, and beholding His glory," is being made "like Him," &c. These varied expressions suggest that our heaven will be a condition of being in which the mind, with its large desires, its deathless cravings, and the soul, with all the warmth of its affections and sympathies, will find the fullest scope for their development. As the vine puts forth its tendrils, and finds something to cling to for its support and growth; so, doubtless, will all the innocent tastes and longings of our renewed nature find in the heavenly state that which answers to their wants, "prepared," as a trellis, to which they may cling, and in clinging to which they will find their delight. 2. And these are not things thrown together at hap-hazard. They are "prepared things." How eloquent all nature is as to the teachings of this word! Note the wonderful care with which God has "prepared" for the wants of every tree, animal, bird, and fish; yea, for every worm; just that which will best meet its wants and minister to its comfort. Then, when we think of the souls God has redeemed at the price of His Son's death, to whom His love has flowed out in a deeper channel than to any other of His creatures, whom He deigns to say that they are to be His portion; when we think of "the things prepared" for them in their final home, what shall we say? How shall we put limits to the extent to which His power, wisdom, and goodness will go in seeking to promote their happiness? II. A NEGATIVE OR COMPARATIVE VIEW. Heaven's happiness is such as "eye hath not seen," &c., or to which all the eye hath seen, &c., bears no proportion. 1. It is clearly the inferential teaching of the text, that "the things prepared" exceed in glory all that we are familiar with in this outer creation. (1) And the eye sees wondrous beauty as it ranges through the world of nature. But there is no comparison between what the eye sees here and "the things prepared" for God's people in the future. (2) And then the ear opens an avenue to another world of enjoyment peculiarly its own. Yet the highest rapture of the most gifted musician through the organ of hearing bears no comparison to the joy the redeemed will experience in "the things which God has prepared for them." (3) And then the imagination has a wondrous power to call into existence worlds of beauty and loveliness all its own. But when you put these things together—all that the eye can see, &c., of that which is beautiful or grand—they will be infinitely surpassed by "the things prepared" by God as the future portion of His people. 2. And there is something very sweet in the thought of this instituted connection, between these glories spread over the face of nature and that blessed home which Jesus is preparing for us. It shows how God means that the one should remind us of the other. The Jewish Rabbis inform us "that when Joseph had gathered much corn in Egypt he threw the chaff into the Nile, that so flowing down to the neighbouring cities, and nations more remote, it might bear witness to them of the store of good things garnered up in the treasure cities of Egypt." And so God, to make us know what glory there is in heaven, has thrown some husks to us here, that we might draw out our inferences. If we find so much of glory spread over earthly things, what may we expect to find in those that are heavenly? If He give us so much in the land of our pilgrimage, what will He not give us in our own country? If He can lavish so much on His enemies what will He not reserve for His friends? III. THE PERSONAL VIEW. "For them that love Him." These things are designed for a "prepared" people. The preparation on the one side is just as necessary as that on the other. What is the use of preparing a feast unless you know that the guests those who are to be admitted to it can see; of preparing a grand concert unless will have appetites; of arranging the paintings of a splendid gallery unless the audience can hear? The glorious things of the future are prepared for a people who love God. The planting of this love in the heart is the great personal preparation for heaven that we need. The necessity for this is absolute. "Except a man be born again, &c., he cannot see the kingdom of God." These two things—love to God, and a new birth—always go together. (*Richard Newton, D.D.*) *Love*

is the eye that sees, the ear that hears, the heart that realises the things of God (*cf.* chap. xiii. 8, 12; Eph. iii. 18). (*Principal Edwards.*)

Ver. 10. **But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.**—*The things of God revealed by the Spirit*:—When a telescope is directed towards some distant landscape, it enables us to see what we could not otherwise have seen; but it does not enable us to see anything which has not a real existence in the prospect before us. It does not present to the eye illusive imagery, neither is that a fanciful and factitious scene which it throws open to our contemplation. The natural eye saw nothing but blue land stretching along the distant horizon. By the aid of the glass there bursts upon it a charming variety of fields and woods, and spires and villages. Yet who would say that the glass added one feature to this assemblage? It discovers nothing to us which is not there; nor, out of that portion of the book of nature which we are employed in contemplating, does it bring into view a single character which is not really and previously inscribed upon it. And so of the Spirit. He does not add a single truth or a single character to the book of revelation. He enables the spiritual man to see; but the spectacle which He lays open is uniform and immutable. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *The revealed communications of the Spirit are*:—I. TRANSCENDENT IN CHARACTER. 1. The deep things of God. Reason suffices in other matters; these can only be revealed by the Spirit, who teaches us to cry "Abba, Father." II. AN ABSOLUTE GROUND OF CERTAINTY AND CONFIDENCE. 1. He knows all things. 2. Reveals that God is love. 3. This truth is as unchangeable as God Himself and becomes the immovable ground of our happiness. III. SUFFICIENT FOR ALL OUR SPIRITUAL NECESSITIES. We want nothing more when this love is revealed in us because—1. His gracious purpose is disclosed. 2. All the miseries of our nature are met in Christ. 3. Christ is revealed as a new source of life and happiness. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The wisdom of God*:—I. THE RELATION OF INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE TO THE WISDOM OF GOD. In the apostle's presentation of this question there are two things very manifest, viz., that the true Wisdom involves a very large and important element of intellectual conception, and yet that, on the other hand, it must be radically distinguished from merely intellectual operations and discoveries. The former of these two positions is clearly seen in the way in which He presents the wisdom of a perfect Christianity as competing with, and transcending, the philosophic wisdom of the Greek. This side of the apostle's position is condemnatory of the modern craze to recklessly ignore important differences in the intellectual conceptions of truth held by Christian people, and to talk at random about oneness of spirit. In the mature Christian life the spirit largely determines, and is largely determined by, the central conceptions of truth. Essential differences in the "wisdom" we hold must be a sign of serious spiritual divergence, though it may be difficult to detect it in the moral life. To take an extreme case, there is a vast difference between the spiritual state of an atheist and a Christian man, even though the moral life of the former may be unimpeachable. But, as we have said, the apostle also maintains that the wisdom of God is far more than a system of thought, so much so that it is impossible to attain it by the mere force of intellectual power, however great its sweep and however large its results. The senses cannot discover this wisdom, nor can thought evolve it. The seat of the highest wisdom is not intellect, but spirit. But the spiritual consciousness of which we speak must not be confounded with the more superficial element of emotion. The latter sweeps over the surface of the life, the former is fixed deep in the centre of it. The latter is transient and uncertain, the former is set in the heart of eternal relations. The latter is fickle and untrustworthy, the former affords the most trustworthy testimony concerning the truths to which it testifies. Clearly enough, then, Paul excludes from participation in the true wisdom all that have not entered into a spiritual relation of life and love with God; and, more explicitly still, all that fail to apprehend God in Christ. A love of scientific investigation and an apprehension of spiritual realities do not necessarily go together; and without the latter even the elements of true wisdom are absent. II. WHAT IS THE RELATION OF PHILOSOPHIC MORAL AND RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS TO THE BIBLICAL SYSTEM? Can we claim for the Christian Scriptures an inspiration which cannot be claimed, say, for the moral systems of Greek philosophy? The principle laid down in our text seems to me to state clearly the truth of the matter. It is not my intention to deny that the Greek received a revelation from God, for I believe he did receive a Divine revelation, and that a revelation of considerable range and grandeur. Further than this, I affirm

that, wherever there has existed any degree of moral and spiritual consciousness, God has necessarily manifested Himself through it. "The Word is the light that lighteth every man." But there was this essential difference between the Jewish prophet and the Greek philosopher, a difference that revealed itself more fully as their several histories developed: the apprehension of truth by the former was predominatingly spiritual, by the latter intellectual. The Greek reached his conclusions by elaborate processes of thought; the Hebrew received his revelations in the Spirit, and spoke as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. It is to this unique experience that we give the name of "inspiration." The unique revelation which this experience involved is asserted clearly enough in the principle laid down in the text; for it asserts this, that the revelation received through the Spirit of God transcends every other, and covers a sphere into which no other can enter. III. THE RELATION OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT TO THE WISDOM OF GOD. The apostle clearly lays down the principle that the development of spiritual apprehension accompanies the development of spiritual life. It is to the man of mature spiritual life that the apostle reveals the higher wisdom of the gospel. Spiritual things are revealed by the Spirit of God, and are therefore apprehended in the proportion that we possess this Spirit. But, if this be so, if a clearer vision of truth must be ever coming to developing spiritual life, does it not follow that the New Testament Scriptures may be superseded, and that we must look for the latest revelation of truth to the spiritual man of to-day? When Christ came, and when, in the full light of His teaching, the central facts of His life and death, and the central significance of these facts, had been recorded, the book of God's revelation closed. The glorious opportunities for the conveyance of final and complete truth to men were such as could not recur. If we cannot find the certainty of truth here, then there is no rest for the sole of our foot for ever. But we must distinguish between the finality of the revelation and finality in the comprehension of it. I see no difficulty at all in admitting that even the apostles were wiser than they knew, that their teaching contained vast possibilities of unfolding and latent grandeurs which they but dimly apprehended. The truest theology is that which, like a growing child, maintains its identity, not through stagnation, but through development. God help us to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! But the most deep-lying development in the Christian life, deeper than thought-articulation of truth, is spirit-apprehension of it. Underneath the grandest thought-apprehension of truth there is a still grander spiritual consciousness of it. Truth in its deepest origin is life. In the full life which holds in its bosom the full truth consists man's highest heaven. This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. (*John Thomas, M.A.*)

True religion a revelation:—I. RELIGION IS THE FRUIT OF A REVELATION FROM GOD. There are those who tell us that there is no such thing as a supernatural light to guide man through the maze of his soul's life. The little sparrow has that within itself that, like a luminous flame, guides it in all that pertains to its existence. In seeking its food it is able to distinguish between that which will nourish and that which will poison; it can also choose its own home: "Yea the sparrow hath found a house and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young." The sun in the heavens guides man in all this lower life. Is it possible that he has been left without a light to illumine his mind and spirit? There was need of a revelation; for those who had seen the greatness and glory of nature had failed to see, hear, or to conceive the things God had prepared for the soul. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged." But why be content with merely carnal senses? Why not receive the light and grace of the Holy Spirit, that you may by spiritual discernment understand the things of God prepared for you? II. RELIGION IS A REVELATION TO LOVE. We must not forget in our study of these words that they speak of a revelation which has been made; it is not something we are to look forward to. "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." The state of mind to which God makes known the things which He has prepared is love. God is love, and love can only make itself known to love. The subject must be in sympathy with the object. The strange conduct of the Jews towards Christ can only be explained on this principle. The Saviour's life was in the truest sense really beautiful, as it is admitted by the most pronounced unbelievers in these days. And yet the people of His age esteemed Him as a "root out of a dry ground: He had no form nor comeliness"; when they saw Him, "there was no beauty that they should desire Him." God reveals His love to love.

"We love Him because He first loved us." The infinite kindness of God is to be seen in the method of His dealings with the world. If His method of saving men were mainly intellectual, few comparatively would be redeemed; for the plan would of necessity be so cold and formal, that only the few gifted minds would be interested by it. The many can only be reached by a direct appeal to their feelings, and hence the religion of Christ addresses the minds of men through their hearts; and the apostles laid emphasis, not on the great thoughts of God, but upon His infinite love in the gift of His Son. It is clear, then, that the religion of heaven is a revelation of love to love. God cannot reveal Himself to any other temper. We have sometimes gone into gardens, and observed plants that should be in full bloom still unopened. The green bud appeared full, almost to bursting; it was past the time for it to send forth its fragrant blossom, and still it was completely inclosed in its natural shield and entirely hidden from view. The reason of the delay was the state of the air; it was cold and frosty, and they could only reveal themselves to a bright sun and in a genial atmosphere; were they to open in the frosty air they would endanger their lives. A cold critical spirit is fatal to the revelations of love, it freezes the channels to the heart; and makes it impossible even for the love of God to find its way into it. But where a loving disposition exists, the love of God is sure to reveal itself. III. RELIGION IS THE FRUIT OF A COMPLETE REVELATION. 1. The Holy Spirit has revealed the great truth that "God is light." God is the light of the soul, it is from Him we obtain the light that enables us to solve spiritual problems. 2. Another important truth has been revealed by the Spirit, that "God is love." This is done in a most effectual manner. "Because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which was given unto us." 3. The Spirit has revealed the truth that God is life: "For with Thee is the fountain of life." He in the first instance breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of man. (*D. Rhys Jenkins.*) *Divine revelation*:—I. ITS INDISPENSABLE NECESSITY TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. Because—1. God stands alone, and is known only to Himself. 2. He is infinitely less comprehensible than men who cannot, though of the same nation, comprehend each other. II. ITS POSSIBILITY AND SUFFICIENCY. The Spirit—1. Is as intimately one with God as the spirit of man is one with Himself. 2. Knows all things perfectly. 3. What He knows He can reveal. III. ITS CONTENTS AND OPERATION. 1. It contains a revelation of the Divine purpose, of Christ, of the things prepared for us in eternity. 2. He who teaches these things awakens desire, produces faith, confirms and comforts the heart in the knowledge of them. (*R. Watson.*) *The Spirit as a Teacher*:—On entering a cavern you inquire for a guide who comes with his lighted flambeau. He conducts you down to a considerable depth, and you find yourself in the midst of the cave. He leads you through different chambers. Here he points you to a little stream rushing from amid the rocks, and indicates its rise and progress. There he points to some peculiar rock, and tells you its name, then takes you into a large, natural hall, tells you how many persons once feasted in it, and so on. Truth is a grand series of caverns. It is our glory to have so great and wise a conductor as the Holy Spirit. Imagine that we are coming to the darkness of it. He is a light shining in the midst of us to guide us. He teaches us by suggestion, direction, and illumination. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Spiritual sight restored*:—A little boy was born blind. At last an operation was performed—the light was let in slowly. When one day his mother led him out of doors and uncovered his eyes, and for the first time he saw the sky and the earth, "Oh, mother!" he cried, "why did you not tell me it was so beautiful?" She burst into tears, and said, "I tried to tell you, dear, but you could not understand me." So it is when we try to tell what is in Christ. Unless the spiritual sight is opened by the Holy Spirit we cannot understand. *The office of the Holy Spirit*:—The Rev. E. Hopkins, in showing the importance of knowledge to the Christian, told as an illustration what had happened to a friend of his in Yorkshire, who, though practically a poor man, owned an estate in that county. One day a geologist told him there was in his estate an abundance of iron ore. Believing this to be true he felt at once that he was no longer poor but rich. Even so it is the office of the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the boundless riches that are treasured up in Christ. **For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.**—*The agency of the Holy Spirit*:—I. HE SEARCHETH THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD. 1. His purposes of grace. 2. His particular dealings with individuals. 3. The glorious issue of His dispensations. II. HE REVEALS THEM TO MAN. 1. To us and in us. 2. With saving power. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The deep things of God*:—We walk in a daily

wonder, ourselves the strangest of mysteries. Our knowledge is only the glimmer of light upon the surface of the ocean of existence. Beneath are the deep things of God. We need not go far to stand on the shore of the deep things of God. Our science has not gone to the root yet of a single blade of grass. I. CONSIDER SOME OF THESE MYSTERIES. 1. To begin with the lowest, what do we know about the nature of matter? You can tell me as easily what the angels' wings are as tell me the ultimate constitution of a single particle of matter. Common oxygen and hydrogen, and all elemental principles, belong by nature to the deep things of God. The very dust of the earth upon which we tread is in its real principle as unknown to us as the nature of God Himself. 2. But if the common earth is thus the wonder of science, much more is that dust a mystery when, by unknown forces, it is taken up and woven dexterously after a predetermined pattern and organised into a thing of life. Sometimes investigators, pressing hard after the molecules of matter, have thought they had almost won the secret of life; but, just as our science seems about to put its finger upon that fugitive thing, life, it flies from its hand and we are no wiser than before. Life is one of the deep things of God, whose origin no man can discover, and of whose future what we call death is only our ignorance. Perhaps to see the spring of life would be to see the living God Himself. 3. But if the life which colours the petal of the flower, and finds wings in the bird, and culminates in the form of man, is a mystery, what shall we say of that life when it has become conscious and is a thinking, willing mind? The human soul is one of the deepest of the deep things of God. 4. What then shall we say of all those further problems of life of which these things are, as it were, but the terms or elements? Our thoughts flutter over these deep things of God as the seabirds dip their wings in the ocean's waves. They only shake from their feathers the spray of the surface. Yet we cannot help thinking of the deep things of our soul's past, of the deeper things of its future. Whence came the evil that gives the good a bitter taste? How did death ever gain dominion over us? How did this hard, poisonous core of sin ever grow in the midst of this fair life? And who thus shall lift the veil for us from the future? We can see signs all around us of a great system of retribution. There is no doubt but that what a man sows that shall he also reap. The present retributive tendencies of things no sane man can deny. And they extend into the future; they work on and on. We can follow them out until they disappear in the unknown depths of futurity. II. WE ARE READY NOW TO DRAW FROM SUCH REFLECTIONS SOME USEFUL AND PERTINENT CONCLUSIONS. 1. We may infer that—(1) There are some people who know more than their Creator ever intended that they should know. There are some, *e.g.*, who know that the Bible is false, and religion a superstition, because, in this cast-iron world, a miracle seems impossible, prayer folly. Before they can be sure of that, however, they should know vastly more of the structure of this material universe than any mortal eye has as yet ever seen. Possibly this may not be a "cast-iron" universe; possibly it may be something more than a mere museum-world of biological specimens; and yet, for all we know to the contrary, this material system may be as permeable to Divine influences as this earth, which seems a globe so solid, is supposed to be open as wicker-work to all movements of the ethereal waves. "There," said Lacordaire, as he overheard in a Paris restaurant St. Beuve saying, "I cannot believe in God, because I believe only in what I understand"—"there is St. Beuve, who does not believe in God because he does not understand Him; nor does he understand why the same fire melts butter and hardens eggs, and yet he eats an omelet." 2. There are people who know there can be no such place as hell, because God is good. I could trust better their assurance if only they could prove that there never could be such a place as Sodom, because God is good. Surely it is the part of a wise man not to dogmatise, but so to live as not to pitch his tent toward any Sodom, either in this world or in the world to come. 3. There are persons so wondrous wise as to know that God cannot exist as a Trinity, because three are not one. We, too, ever since we learned to count our fingers, have known that three are more than one; but there is a puzzle of arithmetic which we have not solved yet, and that is, how I can be at one and the same time the subject and the object of my own thinking—these three in one. When I cannot as yet hardly comprehend my own imperfection, I will, at least, allow God to exist in a perfection which passes my knowledge; and if revelation leads me to worship Him as a unity, complete in Himself, and not as a mere lonely, loveless unit, that needs something else to make it blessed, surely it is a better wisdom to believe in, though we can but dimly comprehend, the unity of three eternal distinctions in the ineffable society of one blessed God. 2. But my

main object is to remind you, by these questionings, of what our errand in this life really is. (1) It is very evident that the deep things of God are intended for finite minds to search. God has given us great problems for our mental exercise, and we have found out a vast deal. Truth opens new vistas to us at every turn. (2) But it is just as clear that to gain knowledge is not our chief errand here. This mortal stage is arranged for scenes of probation; it is fitted out for the formation of character. Our object is salvation. And so God follows through all man's history this supreme moral purpose, and to this end everything else in His providence seems to have been subordinated. This appears clearly enough from the reflections which we have just been pursuing; for God gratifies our love for knowledge only in so far as it seems to be for our moral good. How easy it would have been for Him to have granted us revelations of some of these mysteries! Let us remember, however, that while the shadows lie over many a field of knowledge, the light does fall directly over the narrow path of duty; and though we may not see far into the shadows of the forest on either side, yet, if we will, we can keep with resolute feet the narrow path of duty, and that is the path which leads up into the open day. Conclusion: Let us remember, then, that the great duties of life are the illuminated texts of Scripture: "Repent," "Believe," "Be converted," "Strive," "Pray," "Have the Spirit of Christ," "Set your affections on things above." These commandments of the Lord are "plain, enlightening the eyes" of whosoever wishes to see. There are many things which, as Jesus said, we shall know hereafter. (*Newman Smyth, D.D.*) *The deep things of God are*:—1. Unfathomable in their nature. 2. Comprehended only by the Spirit of God. 3. Partially revealed to us. (*J. Lyth, D.D*) *The gospel school*:—Here the student is—I. INSTRUCTED IN THE SUBLIMEST REALITIES. "Deep things of God." Things, not words, not theories, "deep things," deep because undiscoverable by human reason, and deep because they come from the fathomless ocean of Divine love. They are the primary elements of the gospel, and the necessary condition of soul restoration, and are—1. The free gifts of heaven. "Freely given to us of God." 2. Freely given to be communicated. "Which things also we speak," &c. He who gets these things into his mind and heart is bound to tell them to others. II. TAUGHT BY THE GREATEST TEACHER. "The Spirit of God." This teacher—1. Has infinite knowledge. "The Spirit searcheth all things." "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." He knows them in their essence, number, issues, bearings, relations, &c. 2. Is no other than God Himself (ver. 11). The implication is that this Spirit is as truly God as man's mind is mind. III. MUST DEVELOP HIS HIGHER NATURE (ver. 14). Man has a threefold nature—body, soul and spirit. The first is the animal, the second is the mental, and the third, the moral or spiritual. This is the conscience with its intuitions and sympathies, and this is the chief part of man, nay, the man himself. Now this part of the man alone can receive the "things of the Spirit of God." Set these things before the "natural man," his mere body, they are no more to him than Euclid to a brute. Set them before the mere psychical or intellectual man, and they are "foolishness unto him." Sheer intellect cannot understand love nor appreciate right. It concerns itself with the truth or falsehood of propositions, and the advantages and disadvantages of conduct, nothing more. Moral love only can interpret and feel the things of moral love, the "deep things of God." Hence this spiritual nature must be roused from its dormancy, and become the ascendant nature before the "things of the Spirit" can be "discerned," and then the man shall judge all spiritual things, whilst he himself will not be judged rightly by any "natural man" (ver. 16). Who thus uninstructed can "know the mind of the Lord"? (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 11, 12. **For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.**—*The narrow limits of human comprehension in spiritual matters*:—I. WITHOUT HELP MAN KNOWS—1. Very little of himself. 2. Still less of his fellow-man. 3. Least of all about God. II. THIS SHOULD TEACH HIM—1. Modesty in his judgments. 2. Humility in his inquiries. 3. Confidence in the Word of God, for the Spirit knoweth all things. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The imperfection of human insight and sympathy*:—1. There is an outer world in which all of us are living: and so far as regards that world, one human being may know "the things of other." Indeed, in a quiet country town it is a proverb that everybody knows the things of everybody else. In such a place it is all but impossible for any one to keep anything about himself a

secret. 2. But under this outward living another and a deeper being lies. Those around you may know just as well as you do, the externalities of your life, and yet be profoundly ignorant about all that concerns your real, inward life. And it was of this inner world that St. Paul was thinking. In one short solitary walk, just think how many thoughts pass through your minds of which your nearest and dearest can never know. And nothing more illustrates the truth of the text than to think how differently the same scene may affect different persons, according to the associations linked with it. 3. This great ignorance of the inner life of those around us—I. SHOULD TEACH US TO BE CHARITABLE IN OUR JUDGMENTS AND ESTIMATES OF THOSE AROUND US. You cannot penetrate into the soul of your fellow-sinner, and know for certain what is passing there. Beware, then, how you think or say concerning him what may be cruel injustice. Let us think the best we can of our brethren in sin and sorrow. II. SHOULD COMFORT THOSE WHO MOURN THE LOSS OF FRIENDS. It is sometimes a cause of grief and anxiety to the relatives of the dying, that they will not be brought to speak of their religious faith and feelings in that frank way which some would wish. Ah, you do not know what solemn thoughts pass in the unseen world within your departing friend's breast. Where a Christian profession gives good hope of a Christian end, you may well use this text as it were to eke out the humble trust of the happiness of one departed which you may fail to derive from his own brief and reserved words. III. SHOULD TEACH US OUR GREAT NEED TO HAVE CHRIST FOR OUR FRIEND. For the text suggests to us the very awful thought that each one of us, by our make and nature, is a solitary being. Even in the case of those who know us best, there is a most imperfect knowledge day by day of our most real life. Our awful gift of personality parts us off from all created beings. Our spirits live each in its own sphere: and we cannot explain to one another. Do you want a friend, who, without your needing to tell him, will know your every shade of thought, of anxiety, of weakness, of sorrow, and who will discern the heartiness that glows through your every prayer, your every act of faith and love, the sincerity of your every struggle with temptation, the thousand things which you could not if you would confide to those you love best, and which if you could you would not. If you want all this—and every Christian does want all this—then come to Jesus. (*A. H. K. Boyd, D.D.*)

The personality of life:—The consciousness of another is impenetrable. We cannot reach it; we cannot even conceive of it. But in our own is our existence; our existence and our personality are the same; and, therefore, we shrink from the extinction of our personality, because it implies the extinction of our existence. Christianity teaches, in a variety of ways, the doctrine of a strict spiritual personality. It is not the least remarkable characteristic of Christianity that, being of all religions the most social, it is likewise, of all religions, the most individualising. We shall look at this Christian doctrine, concerning the personality of life, in a variety of aspects. The spirit of the doctrine we take from the gospel; illustrations of it we shall seek everywhere. If we look into life, in itself as each of us finds it circumscribed in his individual consciousness, we become aware of a principle in our being by which we are separate from the universe, and separate from one another. We become aware that, by the power of this principle, we draw all the influences which act on us into our personality, and that, only as thus infused, do they constitute any portion of our inward life. It is by the power of this principle, which is, properly, myself, modifying all that is not myself, that I live, and that my life is independently my own. But some say that man has no inherent spirituality, no spontaneous energy, no sovereign capacity. Such say that man is never the master, but always the creature of circumstances. These are assertions to which no logic can be applied, and if a man, on consulting his own soul, is not convinced of their falsehood, there is no other method of conviction. No matter what may appear to be the external slavery, we still feel that we have a principle, an individuality of life, that is separate from our circumstances and above them. Take this feeling once away, and we are no longer rational, and we are no longer persons. We do not, certainly, deny the influence of circumstances. In a great degree, circumstances are the materials out of which the life is made; and the quality of the materials must, of course, influence more or less the character of the life. But the influence of circumstances on life does not loosen the inviolability of its interior consciousness. This doctrine of circumstances affords no aid even for the interpretation of that in life which may be interpreted; because for a true interpretation you should know all the circumstances that acted on the life, and you should know in what manner they acted. But who knows this of any one?

Who knows it of one with whom he has been longest and nearest? Who can know the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? Race, country, era, creed, institutions, family, education, social station, employment, friend, companions, these are but vague data when a soul is to be judged; and, be it only a judgment on the merest externals of character, such data afford, even for this, but uncertain inference. Perhaps things of which no one takes heed are the most important. A word heard in childhood, a kind or cruel look felt in youth, a tune, a picture, a prospect, a short visit, an accident, a casual acquaintance, these, and a thousand like, may be the chief constituents of many an impulse that begins a destiny. We behold the streams of individual life as they bubble out upon the surface, but we do not see the fountains whence they spring. Every life has combinations of experience, of which another has not an idea, or the means of forming an idea. Every life has treasures of which others know not, out of which, and often when least expected, it can bring things new and old. How is it that events, incidents, objects, changes, alike in outward semblance, enter into millions of minds, and in every one of them assimilate with a different individuality. How one man is a poet, where another man is a sot; how one man is in raptures, where another is asleep; how one man is improved, where another is corrupted. Thus, whatever the visible appearances, within them there is a central self, in which the essence of the man abides. Your life is yours, it is not mine. My life is mine and not another's. Human faculties are common, but that which converges these faculties into my identity, separates me from every other man. That other man cannot think my thoughts, he cannot speak my words, he cannot do my works. He cannot have my sins, I cannot have his virtues. Each must feel, therefore, that his life must be his own. 1. Life is first unfolded through outward nature. In that rudest state of humanity, which seems almost instinctive, we might imagine individuality as nearly impossible, but so it is not; and monotonous as the ideas and experience may appear, they become incorporated with a distinct life, in the personality of each soul. But does not outward nature afford manifest evidence that it is intended to unfold life through higher feelings than sensation? Is there no other purpose for sight than discernment of our position and our way? Is there no other purpose for hearing than the simple perception of sound? Why are there flowers in the field? Why are blossoms on the trees? Why is the rainbow painted with hues so inimitable? Or, why, also, do the waves make music with the shore? These are not necessary to feed, or lodge, or clothe us; they are not necessary to mere labour or mere intercourse. They afford nutriment to the inherent life of rational creatures. The life is indeed but narrowly unfolded in which the sense of beauty in outward nature is dull or wanting. Not to mark the seasons, except by the profit or the loss they bring; to think of days and nights as mere alternations of toil and sleep; to discern in the river only its adaptation for factories; to be blind, and deaf, and callous, to all but the hardest uses of creation, is to leave out of conscious being whatever gives the universe its most vital reality. Such a life may be called a prudent life, and, for its object, it may be an eminently successful life; but its object is paltry, and its success on the level of its object. Not that men are expected to be poets or artists, or to have the peculiar temperaments that characterise poets or artists. Not that men are expected to talk of their experience of enjoyment in nature, or to affect it if they have it not. I merely insist that the sensibilities be open to every influence of natural beauty; and I hold that if these sensibilities belong not to the individual constitution, there is a deficit in it. If the world has deadened them, the world has done the being a serious injury; if education or religious culture has not been such as to incite them, each has failed in one of the most vital offices of a true spiritual culture. Outward nature, also, unfolds life by exercising thought; not thought which is busied only about wants, but thought which delights to seek the end of creation's laws and mysteries. But life is unfolded in its loftiest capacities when everywhere in outward nature the soul is conscious of God's pervading presence; when it sees the goodness of God in all that is lovely, and the wisdom of God in all that is true. Every man, whether he knows it or not, is an incarnation of the immortal; and through his immortality all things that connect themselves with his soul are immortal. In every loving soul, therefore, according to the measure of its power, God re-constructs the heavens and the earth. 2. The individual being of man is also unfolded by society. It is born into society, and by society it lives. Existing at first in passive and unconscious instincts, it finds protection in the care of intelligent affections. The home, therefore, is the first circle within which

personality opens, and it is always the nearest. Beyond this, the individual is surrounded with circumstances more complex. He is cast among persons whose wills are not only different from his own, but constantly antagonistic to it. And thus in society, as in nature, the unfolding of his being will be by resistance as well as by affinity. The most self-complete personality can have no development but by means of society. Intellect works by means of society. Thinkers the most abstract have not all their materials of reflection in themselves. The studies that belong purely to the mind as well as those that belong to matter, and to the active relations of life, require observation, comparison, sagacity, variety of acquisition, and experience. No man can be a thinker by mere self-contemplation. He might as well expect to become a physiognomist by always gazing in a mirror, or to become a geographer by measuring the dimensions of his chamber. A man is revealed even to himself by the action on him of external things, and of other minds. Imagination works by means of society. For society it builds and sculptures, paints, forms its concords of sweet sounds, and puts its dreams into melody and measure. But for society, virtue could neither have existence nor a name. Society, by its occupations and injunctions, by the contact in which it places will to will, by its excitements and its sympathies, elicits the power of the moral nature: society it is that trains this power, tries it, strengthens it, matures it; is the arena of its contest, is the field of its victories. But if in society the moral nature has its contests, in society also it has its charities. But while society, whether in calm or conflict, unfolds life, to this its agency should be bounded. It should not be allowed to absorb the individual life, or to crush it. With the strength, the freedom, the integrity of thought and conscience; with honest and unoffending idiosyncrasies, it has no claim to interfere. Men in our age live gregariously; and if the aggregation were for exertion and for work, this might be a benefit; but men think, men feel conventionally, and this is an evil. It enfeebles, it impoverishes the life; it depresses, nay, it denounces originality, it takes away all stimulus to meditation, reflection, or any strong mental effort. I do not impeach the value of public opinion, but I do not bow to it as an authority, nor accept it as a guide. Life in our age is too much in the mass for any thorough spiritual culture; and life is too much in the outward for any intensity of individual character. If those who use efforts for others, and use them seriously, would first use them to the utmost on their own spirits, society would advance more quickly towards regeneration. There is a mawkish tendency in some to charge their failings on this or that cause out of themselves. They were tempted, the evil was placed in their way, and they could neither pass by it nor bound over it. This is a cowardly spirit which, after all, absolves not from the transgression, while it pulls down the soul into the deepest pit of degradation. It is just as far from genuine repentance and humility as it is from honesty and heroism. When we judge others we must make every merciful allowance; but we must not teach themselves to do so; nor must we do so when we judge ourselves. I have said that we should hold every man's personality sacred, as well as our own, and I repeat it. Why should I wish to compel any man, if such were possible, to live my life, think my thoughts, accept my opinions, believe my creed, worship at my altar. If such desire were not utterly foolish, would it not be the climax of presumption? Some one may object that the personality which I defend is an obstinate egotism. Not at all. Nor is it combative or exacting, but charitable and liberal. The absence of a true individuality produces many of the gloomiest evils with which society is deformed. Why else do people consider the meat as more than the life, and the raiment more than the body? Why else do they so esteem that which is not their being, and so little that which is? Why else do people ape the talents of others, and neglect those which are their own? Why do they so abortively attempt the work they cannot do, and overlook the work they can? Let a man be satisfied to be himself, and he will not be dissatisfied because he is not another. He will not, then, be hostile to that other for being what he is; nay, he will rejoice in all by which that other is ennobled; he will lament for all by which he is degraded. For a man, therefore, to be himself, fully, honestly, completely, does not circumscribe his communion, it makes it wider. But a man should not be content to be only roughly himself. A man ought to labour to beautify and harmonise in his interior personality; and if that be done, there will be no confusion in his exterior relationships. And what a glorious work is this! If the sculptor spends years in toil to shape hard marble into grace, and then dies contented, what should not a man be willing to bear and do, when it is a deathless spirit that he forms to immortal loveliness? After all,

there is much of one's life that is not unfolded; much that remains uncommunicated, or that is incommunicable. The very medium, language, by which spirit holds converse with spirit, is inadequate to transmit the plainest thought as it is in the mind of the speaker. Language is not representative, but suggestive, and no merely spiritual idea is exactly the same in any two minds. How much of life passes within us, that we make no attempt to impart, that we have no opportunity to impart. If we find such to be our ordinary experience in life, what shall we say of its more solemn passages? Can any man, and let him be of surpassing eloquence, communicate an absorbing thought, and the interest with which it fills him? No; we try in vain to express an overflowing joy; as vainly do we attempt to put into utterance a deeply-seated grief. Even bodily pain we cannot make the most sympathising understand. And then death—death always in shadow, always in silence, always absolute in isolation! Who, then, can know the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in him? What misgivings, what memories, what darkening fears, what dawning hopes, may then agitate the breast, and none can know, and none can share them! We shall not seek to pierce the mystery. These solemn isolations we ought not to forget; they must, sooner or later, come to us all, and it is but common prudence to gather strength to meet them. The view that I have given in this discourse of life, some, I doubt not, will consider lonely. A great part of life must indeed be lonely. In a pure and reflective loneliness there is strength, and there is depth in it. There is great enrichment in it. To get at the meanings and mysteries of things we must converse with them alone. So the thinker is lonely; the poet is lonely; the hero is lonely; the saint is lonely; the martyr is lonely. Social affection has, indeed, great beauty; public spirit much worth: energetic talents have abundant utility; but it is by habits of independent and solitary meditation that they are matured, deepened, and consolidated. (*H. Giles.*) *The perfect knowledge of God*:—I. HOW IT IS POSSIBLE. 1. Only the spirit of man knows what is in man. 2. So the Spirit of God only knows the things of God. 3. Hence the things of God can only be known by him who has the Spirit. II. HOW IT IS OBTAINABLE. 1. Not by him who has the spirit of the world. 2. But by him who receives the Spirit by a new birth, and consequently by the Spirit understands the things that God has freely given in His Word. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The indwelling Spirit*:—1. There are certain instincts in our common humanity by which every man has a sympathy with his fellow-man. No other creature but man can possess it. Mind strangely echoes mind. 2. Again every one is conscious of secret thoughts and depths in his own soul which only himself can fathom. He has feelings within feelings, which no other person can ever thoroughly understand, but which, to his own consciousness, make his individuality and his whole being. 3. Put these two truths together, and you arrive at a double analogy. As only "man" knows "man," and as only one's self knows one's self, "even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." I. Only God knows God. The Holy Ghost is God. Therefore the Holy Ghost "knows God." But he WHO IS "BORN OF GOD" HAS THE HOLY GHOST IN HIM, AND HE, AND HE ONLY, CAN "KNOW GOD." It is not your reading, reasoning, listening, philosophy, piety, or prayers that will enable you to know God, but only the Holy Ghost in you. We live in the midst of two worlds, equally real, equally definite. The one is that material universe which we see, and feel, and touch. The other is—1. A veiled world till a touch of Omnipotence opens it. You may walk in the midst of it all your life, and yet never know that it is there. To another—at your very side—these things are, at this moment, more real and more distinct than your world is to you. 2. A spiritual world, made up of spiritual pleasures, pains, conflicts, tastes, friendships, services. It is here. But it wants a new faculty to see it. Suppose, at this moment, another bodily sense were added to your five senses, what new channels of thought and enjoyment that sixth sense would add to you! And this unseen system requires a new sense before it can be perceived. 3. A much higher world. The natural world is very lovely; but it is only the shadow of that spiritual world. What if you should find, at last, that all along you have been contented with the shadow, and that you have never grasped the substance of life, because your eyes were never opened to see it? II. IF, THEN, EVERYTHING IN SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE DEPENDS ON THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY GHOST, THE GREAT QUESTION IS, HOW CAN I ENJOY IT? Only by union with Christ. Only the grafted branch can get the sap. Only the united member partakes of the life's blood. The first act of union takes place by the free working of the grace of God. This is conversion; the new life. After that, many things will promote its increase—specially the Word of God, and

prayer, and good works. Then, through union, comes the Holy Ghost; through the Holy Ghost, the knowledge of God; through the knowledge of God, the image of God; through the image of God, God; and through God, heaven. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The necessity of the Spirit to the understanding of the things of God*:—The Scripture cannot be perfectly understood except by the guidance of the same mind that inspired it. It is an outward revelation, and we need, in order to make it plain, an inward revelation also. It resembles a sundial, which is in itself perfect, but the indispensable condition of whose usefulness is light. The Scripture is the chart to glory, on which everything necessary is marked with unerring accuracy; but the one indispensable condition of its answering its end is that the Spirit, while we read it, shall be shining upon it (Psa. xliii. 3). Or to put the matter in another way: Without some kind of sympathy with the mind of a poet, without the poetical turn, it would be impossible to appreciate poetry. And each distinct species of poetry can only be so far understood as the reader finds in himself some taste for it. The literature may stimulate the taste, but there must be the taste in the first instance. So then it would not be consonant even with reason that Holy Scripture should be exempted from the operation of a law which applies to poetry, and indeed every class of literature; that it should be feasible to enter into its significance, without having inherited their spirit. (*Dean Goulburn.*) **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.**—*The spirit of the world and the Spirit of God*:—The Spirit of God is—I. A Spirit of TRUTH. By witnessing to the truth He condemns—1. The errors of the world. 2. The hypocrisies of the world. 3. The false judgments of the world. II. A Spirit of LOVE. He inspires—1. Love to God. Gratitude takes the place of cold thoughtlessness, sympathy with the redeeming work of Jesus takes the place of selfish isolation. 2. Love to our neighbour. One great form in which the world's selfishness finds expression is covetousness. The Spirit of God destroys it, and fills the heart with its opposite, benevolence. III. A Spirit of ZEAL. His descent was accompanied with mighty rushing winds and cloven tongues of fire. These manifested—1. The mystery of His nature. 2. The efficacy of His grace. 3. The majesty of His presence. 4. The facility and promptitude of His operations. 5. The impression which He would make upon the apostles. He came to change the whole aspect of society. The world was absorbed in love of the visible, occupied in things present, was indifferent to the future. The darkness of superstition and infidelity had again covered the face of the deep. The disciples, timid, feeble, and unlettered men, when inspired of God, became courageous, powerful and victorious. The Spirit of God inspires us with zeal—(1) To confess our religion. (2) To practise it. (*Bp. Adam Flechier.*) *The two kinds of spirit*:—The spirit of anything is that vital principle which sets it a-going; which keeps it in motion; which gives it its form and distinguishing qualities. The spirit of the world is that principle which gives a determination to the character, and a form to the life of the man of the earth; the spirit which is of God is that vital principle which gives a determination to the character, and a form to the life of the citizen of heaven. One of these spirits actuates all mankind. 1. The spirit of the world is mean and grovelling; the spirit which is of God is noble and elevated. The man of the earth, making himself the object of all his actions, and having his own interest perpetually in view, conducts his life by maxims of utility alone. The citizen of heaven scorns the vile arts, and the low cunning, employed by the man of the earth. He condescends, indeed, to every gentle office of kindness and humanity. But there is a difference between condescending and descending from the dignity of character. From that he never descends. 2. The spirit of the world is a spirit of falsehood, dissimulation, and hypocrisy: the spirit that is of God is a spirit of truth, sincerity, and openness. The life which the man of the earth leads is a scene of imposture and delusion. Show without substance; appearance without reality; professions of friendship which signify nothing; and promises which are never meant to be performed, fill up a life which is all outside. The citizen of heaven esteems truth as sacred, and holds sincerity to be the first of the virtues. He has no secret doctrines to communicate. He needs no chosen confidents to whom he may impart his favourite notions. What he avows to God, he avows to man. He expresseth with his tongue what he thinketh with his heart. 3. The spirit of the world is a timid spirit; the spirit which is of God is a bold and manly spirit. Actuated by selfish principles, and pursuing his own interest, the man of the earth is afraid to offend. He accommodates himself to the manners that prevail, and courts the favour of the world by the most insinuating of all kinds

of flattery by following its example. He is a mere creature of the times; a mirror to reflect every vice of the vicious, and every vanity of the vain. He is timid because he has reason to be so. Wickedness, condemned by its own vileness, is timorous, and forecasteth grievous things. There is a dignity in virtue which keeps him at a distance; he feels how awful goodness is, and in the presence of a virtuous man he shrinks into his own insignificance. On the other hand, the righteous is bold as a lion. With God for his protector, and with innocence for his shield, he walks through the world with a face that looks upwards. He despises a fool, though he were possessed of all the gold of Ophir, and scorns a vile man, though a minister of state. 4. The spirit of the world is an interested spirit; the spirit which is of God is a generous spirit. The man of the earth has no feeling but for himself. That generosity of sentiment which expands the soul; that charming sensibility of heart which makes us glow for the good of others; that diffusive benevolence, reduced to a principle of action, which makes the human nature approach to the Divine, he considers as the dreams of a visionary head, as the figments of a romantic mind that knows not the world. But the spirit which is of God is as generous as the spirit of the world is sordid. One of the chief duties in the spiritual life is to deny itself. Christianity is founded upon the most astonishing instance of generosity and love that ever was exhibited to the world; and they have no pretensions to the Christian character who feel not the truth of what their Master said, "That it is more blessed to give than to receive." (*J. Logan.*) *Spiritual qualification for the reception of the spiritual*:—There are many free gifts which one man seeks to present to another, which the other cannot receive without spiritual sympathy with the giver. Sometimes the recipient has no spirit to understand the kindness that has dictated it, or to appreciate the gift itself; and so the gift is thrown away. I. THERE ARE MANY THINGS FREELY GIVEN TO US BY GOD. "The great things of His law" are "free gifts." Pardon, holiness, "heaven upon earth," are free gifts. Christ is "the unspeakable gift," and "eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." II. THESE FREE GIFTS MUST BE KNOWN AND APPRECIATED, OR THEY WILL NOT BE RECEIVED BY US. Allowing that some free gifts of Providence can be physically received by the thankless and fleshly mind, they are only partially received by such. If I do not understand, or appreciate, the labour of the artist, he may have given me some sheets of canvas and some ounces of paint, but he cannot give me his picture. The musician may freely give me the treasures that have enriched his soul, and yet my inner self, through my lack of knowledge, fail to receive a single emotion: so, the Divine Harmonist may freely give the harmony of heaven, but these joys are only received by those who know them. "This is life eternal, that they may know Thee," &c. "We know that the Son of God is come." III. THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S FREE GIFT IS DEPENDENT ON THE SPIRIT THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED. It depends on the spirit of a man what is the truth that is forced upon him. Imagine the truths conveyed to a group of men before any given scene. There are the scientific spirit, the spirit of the historian, of the politician, of the artist, of the soldier, of the philanthropist; each receives different things, because perceiving different objects. The same thing occurs in respect of spiritual life. If our spirit is haughty or selfish, how can we know, or receive, free gifts that require for their appreciation self-condemnation and self-forgetfulness? If our spirit is false, how can we receive, or know, that which depends on the faithfulness and truthfulness of God? "The natural man receiveth not," &c. If there is no spirit of self-dissatisfaction, how can we appreciate the promise of pardon and life? The spirit of a man is open to influences from other spirits. One man may pour his spirit into another's, communicate it to society, enshrine it in the common motives and aspirations of the race. And, just as every man has a spirit of his own, so societies, communities, nations, the world itself, may have a spirit which reacts upon the individual spirits which compose them. We speak correctly of the spirit of the age, of a system, of a class, and of the world. IV. THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD IS UTTERLY INSUFFICIENT FOR THE PURPOSE HERE INDICATED. This spirit has differed at different times in the world's history. Some day the spirit of the world will be the Spirit of God. Ignorance identifies them now, and philosophy tries to prove it. The apostle was not deluded by the false philosophy of Greece. We must not be deceived by the dicta of either France or Germany. Note some characteristics of this spirit in the days of Paul. 1. Sensuality. If not sensual now, still it is sensuous and materialistic. But the things given by God are spiritual and eternal. "Therefore," &c. 2. Selfishness. This blinds the eye to God's gifts. We suffer as much from the

selfishness of trade, politics, religion, art, and even philanthropy, as Paul did, though it may be more subtle in its manifestations. "Therefore," &c. 3. Cruelty. The harsh repression of natural instincts—parental, filial, conjugal; *e.g.*, the amphitheatre, modes of warfare, court intrigues. The spirit of the world is materially changed in this respect, but its traces are still to be seen, and they war with God's free gifts. 4. The love and lust of conquest. 5. The love of money. 6. Enterprise. But in all these respects, in proportion as we catch and embody the spirit of the world, we incapacitate ourselves for knowing or receiving the things freely given to us of God. V. THE RECEPTION OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD WILL STRIKE A RELATION AT ONCE BETWEEN OUR UNDERSTANDING AND THE TRUTH—between our hearts and the Divine appeals to our feelings—between our wills and the calls of duty and self-sacrifice. "The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God." We may have this Spirit if we will; we have quenched and resisted more of this Spirit than is enough to do for us all we want. Receive the Spirit. Pray for an abundance of it. "If ye, being evil," &c. (*H. R. Reynolds, D.D.*) *The peculiar spirit of Christians*:—I. THE PECULIAR SPIRIT WHICH GOD HAS GIVEN TO CHRISTIANS. He has not given it to the world, and it is directly opposite to the spirit. If the latter is selfish, then the former must be benevolent. And according to the Scriptures, the spirit which God gives is the spirit of benevolence, which is the moral image of the Deity. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And the reason is, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." And that spirit which is the fruit of the Spirit is love. "Love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God." II. THIS PECULIAR SPIRIT GIVES CHRISTIANS A PECULIAR KNOWLEDGE OF SPIRITUAL AND DIVINE THINGS. "That we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." 1. The spirit of love which Christians receive from God removes that ignorance of spiritual and Divine things which is peculiar to sinners. As the removal of scales from a blind man's eyes will remove all the blindness, so love must certainly remove all that blindness or ignorance which arises from selfishness (vers. 14, 15; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4, 6, iii. 14–18). 2. The way in which God enlightens the minds of men in the peculiar knowledge of Himself is by changing their hearts, or giving them a pure, benevolent spirit. "I will give them an heart to know Me." As their ignorance of God arose from the blindness of their hearts, so in order to remove that kind of ignorance, He determined to give them a wise and understanding heart, or a spirit of true benevolence. 3. There is no other possible way by which God can give Christians the knowledge of Himself and Divine objects, but by giving to them His own Spirit, or shedding abroad His love in their hearts. He cannot convey this peculiar spiritual knowledge by mere inspiration. He inspired Saul, Balaam, Caiaphas, but this did not remove the blindness of their hearts. And Paul supposes a man may have the gift of prophecy, &c., and yet be totally destitute of the true love and knowledge of God. Inspiration has no tendency to change the heart, but only to convey knowledge to the understanding. For the same reason, God cannot give men this knowledge of Himself by moral suasion, or the mere exhibition of Divine truth, nor by mere convictions of guilt, fears of punishment, or hopes of happiness; the only way in which He can give it is by giving them a benevolent heart. For—(1) By exercising benevolence themselves, they know how all benevolent beings feel—God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, angels, &c. So the apostle argues in the text and context. As one man knows what his rational faculties are, or what his own selfish feelings are, so he knows what another man's are. Just so, says the apostle, we who have received the Spirit which is God, know the things of God. (2) The peculiar spirit which they have. (3) This spirit necessarily gives Christians a peculiar knowledge of the distinguishing truths of the gospel. The whole scheme of the gospel was devised and adopted in, is carried on, and will be completed by benevolence. Benevolence, therefore, prepares Christians to understand it (Eph. iii. 17–19). Conclusion: If the peculiar knowledge which Christians have of God and of Divine things arises from benevolence, then—1. There is nothing mysterious in experimental religion. Christians have experienced no other change, but from sin to holiness, or from selfishness to benevolence. There is nothing more mysterious in loving God than in hating Him. The men of the world love to hear experimental religion represented as mysterious, because they are ready to conclude that they are excusable for not understanding it. All experimental religion consists in disinterested benevolence. And is this a mystery which sinners cannot understand? By no means; they can fully understand and oppose it. 2. There is no superstition or

enthusiasm in vital piety, or experimental religion, for benevolence leads those who possess it to hate and oppose all superstition and enthusiasm. 3. They who are real Christians may know that they are such. The Spirit which they have received from God, bears witness with their spirit that they are the children of God. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." 4. They may always be able to give a reason of the hope that is in them, though unable to exhibit all the external evidences of the Divinity of the gospel. They know the gospel is Divine, by the Divine effects it has produced in their hearts. 5. Sinners may know that they are sinners, by the spirit of the world, which reigns within them, and governs all their conduct. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *Apostolic inspiration*:—I. NOT THE INSPIRATION OF THIS WORLD. 1. Learning. 2. Reason. 3. Genius. II. BUT THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. 1. Divinely communicated. 2. Divinely acting upon their minds. 3. And thus enabling them to know the things freely given them of God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Paul's protest against worldliness*:—I. THE CURSE OF THE CHURCH. The spirit of the world. This worldly spirit had wrought terrible mischief at Corinth. It is—1. The evil element that surrounds the Church. 2. The insinuating guile that ensnares it. 3. The espionage that betrays it; like Delilah, it ensnares with flattery and song, deprives of the secret all strength, and delights in the discovered weakness. II. THE CURE OF THE CHURCH. The Spirit which is of God. 1. It is found in a Divine gift. The Holy Spirit that enlightens, regenerates, sanctifies, comforts, and strengthens, is received as a supernatural deposit by every one who repents of sin, believes in Christ, and practises holiness. 2. This is the royal amulet of the Church. It protects the Church with the "love of the Spirit." It conducts the Church by "the Spirit of truth." It commends the Church by the Spirit of purity. 3. It is the infinite resource of the Church; obtained by the intercession of Christ it is to "abide with us for ever." III. THE CROWN OF THE CHURCH. The highest point of Church life—"that we might know the things," &c. (*J. Odell.*) *The efficient minister*:—I. WHENCE HE DERIVES HIS KNOWLEDGE. 1. Not from worldly sources. 2. But from the Spirit of God. 3. Through the medium of the Word of God. II. HOW HE IMPARTS IT. 1. Not according to human wisdom. 2. But in dependence upon the Spirit of God. 3. Comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Spiritual knowledge attained*:—I. THE THINGS TO WHICH IT REFERS. These are expressed under a variety of names (vers. 9, 10, 11, 14). They are—1. Spiritual in their nature (ver. 13). They relate to God, who is a Spirit; to the soul and its spiritual concerns; to heaven, its society, employments, and pleasures, which are purely spiritual. 2. Divine in their origin: "given to us of God." All the great and good things of the gospel are in Him and come from Him. 3. Free in their communication; clearly made known, but "freely given to us." They flow to men, irrespective of human worthiness; communicated "without money and without price." II. THE KNOWLEDGE OF THESE THINGS IS—1. Personal. In order to its answering any useful end we must have it for ourselves. 2. Scriptural. Our acquaintance with "the things freely given to us of God" must be according to the truer nature of these things; it must agree with the gospel. 3. Accompanied with faith. Let his views be ever so Scriptural and correct, they are of no saving worth unless he give credit to them with his whole soul. 4. Productive of fruit. Faith is known by its fruit, and the value of knowledge is determined by its influence and effects. III. THE WAY IN WHICH THIS KNOWLEDGE IS ATTAINED. "We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God." 1. What this spirit was not. The spirit of the wise of the world was not friendly to the gospel. It was a spirit of pride, of self-sufficiency, of prejudice, and conceit. The spirit of the world is—(1) "The spirit of error." It cannot therefore be friendly to our knowledge of the truth. (2) "The spirit that lusteth to envy." (3) "The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." If we are true Christians we have not received but have renounced this spirit. It is "from beneath." 2. Who this Spirit was—"the Spirit which is of God." This is a good Spirit, the reverse of that which we have noticed and producing opposite effects. Observe—(1) His names: The Holy Spirit and Spirit of holiness; the Spirit of wisdom, of grace, of truth, of Christ. (2) His offices—to teach, guide, enlighten, enliven, comfort, purify. The text suggests His office as a Teacher; for He is received "that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God." The Father teaches by the Spirit; and His teaching invariably leads to faith and hope and rest in the Lord Jesus Christ (John xvi. 13, 14). Conclusion: What is the knowledge which you are seeking? Is it, or is it not, the knowledge of "the things which are freely given to us of God"?

Acquaintance with other things is lawful and proper, but what can compensate for ignorance of the things which belong to our peace? The season of youth is most friendly to the acquisition of knowledge; and this applies to the knowledge of the gospel; but how rarely are young persons in earnest in this concern! 2. What is the proficiency which you are making? This question particularly concerns aged professors. You have long been planted in the house of the Lord, but what is your growth? Does your progress keep pace with your years? 3. What is the spirit which you have, and under which you live? Is it "the spirit of the world" or "the Spirit which is of God"? (*T. Kidd.*) *Divine knowledge*:—I. Its source. 1. The Word of God—2. Which contains a revelation of Divine truth. 3. Freely given. 4. Of God. II. Its means. 1. The Scriptures are to be understood not by the help of mere learning or criticism—2. But by the assistance of the Holy Spirit—3. Which we receive by faith and prayer. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Divine benefactions*:—I. The gifts. "Things." 1. Real, not ideal; not to be imagined, admired, but "known." The gospel scheme is of surpassing beauty, but its aim is not to enchant the fancy, but to enrich the experience. 2. Many and various "things" not single or stereotyped. Our Father has more than our blessing for His children, and those blessings differ according to the object to which, or the circumstances under which, they are given. 3. Practical, not speculative. True, there are "things which angels desire to look into" in the gospel; but in the main it is not a thing to be reasoned about but to be enjoyed in the heart and exhibited to the life. 4. Divine not human. Man never saw, heard, or imagined them, much less invented or created them. II. The Giver—"God." 1. Infinite in resources, and therefore "able to do exceeding abundantly." "Enough for all, enough for each," &c. 2. Loving in disposition, and therefore willing and ready to supply all our need. 3. Wise in administration, and therefore suiting the gift exactly according to the requirements of the recipients, and so augmenting their values. III. The manner. "Freely." 1. Without restriction. The gifts are needed by all, and are therefore given without respect to nation, class, rank, &c. 2. Without cost. The water of life is offered freely because none could purchase it. 2. Without regard to merit, because above all merit. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Spiritual things*:—I. Their reality. It is remarkable how often the word "things" occurs in this chapter. This gives reality and something like shape and touchableness to the spiritual world. Thing is a wide word; it is the short way of saying thinking; thinkings are the true things; things visible are valuable only as they express thought. Thus the universe is the thinking (or thing) of God; every star is an expression of His mind. We must indeed stand back, nor come too near. When I was a child I thought as a child, foolishly supposing that he who gave me a penny gave me something real, and that he who gave me a thought had simply given me nothing. But now I am a man I see that to think is to have. Had I known it properly the penny actually was a thought, a thought of love or care. The picture was a thought before it was a mystery of colour. The cathedral was a thought before it rose to heaven in tower or pinnacle or swelling dome. The book was a thought before it was embodied in paper or ink and binding. Go back from shapes and colours and find your way into things, thinkings—in the beginning was the Word! When you are told that this is practical and that is metaphysical or even sentimental, what is meant by the definition? It is equal to saying, this is the outside and that is the inside—no more! It is unhappily quite possible for a man to be satisfied with the outside, and, indeed, to contend there is nothing but outside. He forgets that the tabernacle was built for the ark; that the outward exists for the sake of the inward. Suppose a child so demented as to be satisfied with the outside of his father's house, to say, "When I have discussed every mystery connected with the stone, the wood, the glass which I do see, it will be time enough to open the door and pry into the unknown and the unthinkable. They tell me that is my father's face at the window, but let me settle the mystery of the window before troubling myself with the mystery of the face. They say he wants me; when I have settled the geology of the doorstep, I may pay some attention to the fanatics who suppose that my father is so idling away his time." We should see the lunacy and impiety of this, and it is possible to repeat this substantially in the concerns which lie between God and the soul of man. II. Their freeness. They are given lavishly, abundantly, and without price or tax, so that the poorest may have equal chances with the rich. Every man may find a hundred ways leading straight into the King's presence; the grassy way, open to humblest men; the starry way, trodden by loftier minds; the providential way, studied by the patient in their retirement and suffering, so that neither the blind

nor the weak shall be lost for want of an open road to heaven. This is Godlike. "He that spared not His own Son," &c. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." God giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not. But here is a peculiar temptation. The very largeness of the inheritance is a temptation to neglect or extravagance. Let us watch ourselves, or we may turn the bounty of God into an occasion of sin. III. THEIR REVELATION (ver. 10). Even the things that are seen require to be made clear by revelation. How much more the testimony which is addressed to an understanding perverted and a heart poisoned by sin? The Bible is revelation, but the revelation itself needs to be revealed. "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." "Then opened He their understandings that they might understand the scriptures." The inspiring Spirit must make plain the book He hath inspired or it will be a letter hard, cold, friendless: but with the Spirit it will show you its beauty, its unsearchable riches. Is it enough to snatch it up and hastily peruse the dead print? Not so did the saints of old study the lively oracles. "O how I love Thy law, it is my meditation all the day." IV. THE DISADVANTAGE OF HAVING TO PUT THEM INTO HUMAN WORDS (ver. 13). To show our own cleverness in the use of words has been at once the temptation and the curse of Christendom. Fewer words, plainer words, the better; more thought, more feeling, more devotion, that is what we want (ver. 1). All the Christian preachers whose fame is immortal in England at least have been, from a scholastic point of view, more or less rude in expression, so that in their case it was not by might nor by power, but by God's Spirit, that the great victories for Christ were won. Worldly wisdom is the curse of preaching. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Capacity of regenerate men to understand the Scriptures*:—In regeneration men become able to understand and appreciate the Holy Scriptures. Of course this proposition implies that unrenewed men are incapable of a true knowledge of Divine truth. The things of the Spirit of God are beyond the reach of the natural man; he cannot know them because they are spiritually discerned. The history of the world, using both terms history and world in their broadest sense, has two aspects. We will endeavour to discern between them, and to point out their true, mutual relations. That view of the world which is almost universally taken may be designated as the natural one, in opposition to the spiritual one. The world is contemplated as a vast system of causes and effects curiously linked in together, and susceptible of analysis into distinct series and orders, emanating perhaps in the first place from an intelligent, holy, and benevolent first cause, and pointing to some indefinable harmony and concentration far off in the future. It is the work of science to perform this analysis. The plain matter-of-fact man sows and reaps, buys and sells, manufactures and operates, produces and consumes, untroubled by matters in which he has no direct concern. The shaking of kingdoms affects him only as it affects his markets. Or if he is aroused to a momentary excitement, he never forgets the main chance. If his plans succeed he magnifies his own wisdom and skill, and rejoices that the sun shone, and the rain fell, and the winds blew all in their season. Or if his plans fail, he regrets his undertaking and laments over the occurrence of unfavourable events. Everything is material and according to sense. The more reflecting and philosophic men of the world entertain essentially the same views, only refined, and generalised, and lifted above the grossness of mere appetite and calculation. In their silent retreats or their dignified assemblies they theorise, and speculate, and affect to decide upon the past and prophesy concerning the future, while the multitude, with little reflection, does the acting that is the counterpart and occasion of their thinking. They discover and announce the laws of moral, and intellectual, and natural science as they are gathered from history, and observation, and consciousness. But after all, something is wanting of which science gives no account. What she has told us is of the earth and has an earthly savour. It may be true, but it is not all the truth. No scientific man however skilful, no philosopher however profound, ever get beyond the world and above it. Their views are sensuous; such as they might entertain were there no Bible; such as they do entertain with the Bible but without the enlightening Spirit of God. Now there is another view of the world which we may call spiritual in distinction from natural. It includes the natural, the whole of it. It discards no genuine science. It rejects no philosophy that is not falsely so called. It interferes with no personal, domestic, or social duties. It is ready to investigate all the processes of matter and of mind. It will dig with the geologist into the bowels of the earth, and with the astronomer scan, through the telescope, the nebulae that whitens the heavens. It will discuss the law of nations with the statesman, and

urge the individual and the community to personal and social reform as boldly and zealously as any reformer of them all. It is a view of the world as a whole and in all its parts; omitting nothing, and unjustly condemning nothing. But it is not a view of the world alone; as if the object of its creation, and the assurance of its continuance were in itself. It sees something before the world, out of which it came; and something after it to which it tends. It sees a harmony between this beginning and end, that is unbroken by the intermediate time. Nay, it sees in time but the confluence of the eternities, and in matter and sense the vesture and energetic working of the Infinite Spirit. It sees the world as it is. And, what is the world? Why was it made? Why is it continued? What is the motive power of all this vast and varied machinery? Whence these compensating forces that keep the solid globe and its sister planets balanced and moving in their orbits? What keeps the river channels full, and agitates the restless sea, and stirs the viewless winds, and brings out from the unpromising soil the tinted flower, and the leafy oak, and the nutritious grain? What is the meaning of history? What intend all these records that are carved on the mural faces of mountains, or deposited in the strata that compose the earth's crust, and scattered everywhere both on and beneath the earth's surface? What may we learn from the annals of our race imperfectly kept though they have been? What will become of Europe? What will become of the Jew, and what of the Gentile? How will the connection between them result? Such questions as these suggest themselves in numbers without number. We want an answer disclosing the spiritual and true idea of the world and of human affairs. And there is an answer to them. The mystery of life has its solution. The confused and jarring course of events has its order, and has had from the beginning. There is one grand idea, one primal truth, that pervades the entire system of the universe. Every thing, every event, every mode of existence, refer directly or indirectly to it. This truth is the truth of Christ. Of Him and for Him are all things; by Him they were created, by Him they stand, and to the manifestation of His glory they tend. No man is a scholar who does not study Christ as the essence of all knowledge, and the embodiment of all truth. All history is the revelation of Christ; and all histories which do not present this fact are partial and inconsequent. The age to come is the Christian age; and whoever puts a sensuous and worldly interpretation on prophecy, or ventures with uninspired lips to predict a state of society and the introduction of a new era, in which Christ shall not be all in all, will find his prediction falsified and his interpretation scattered like chaff before the wind. It is in Christ, then, that we find all the strange and complicate phenomena of the world resolved. There is no other light than that. The light of nature, the light of science, the light of reason, the dim light of antiquity and the glare of modern times are illusory and vain, mere *ignes fatui*, will-o'-the-wisps that lead those who follow them ever deeper and deeper into the mire. This Divine light shines only from the Word of God. What is the Bible to an unbeliever? Perhaps a moral treatise; perhaps a story, or a song, or the rhapsody of an enthusiast; perhaps a treasure-house locked up and barred, in which he knows there is treasure, but to which he has no key. But it is no word of Christ, condemning, convincing, converting, sanctifying, saving. It is not the truth, living and brilliant, and able to raise the dead. In his unbelief he seeks no life there, but hunts for it in the weak and beggarly elements of this world. What is the Bible to the believer? It is his all. It is light in darkness, joy in sorrow, life in death. It is the communication, the embodying of the Holy Ghost, proceeding forth from the Father and the Son. It is the touchstone of all wisdom. Tell me, does not regeneration teach men that Word which is the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation? And can any one who has not tasted of this good Word, and been enlightened by the Spirit of God, attain this knowledge? Does any such one believe in Christ? Does not every unregenerate man believe in the world, and in himself, and in his personal experience, and in his reason, and in his arithmetic, and his science, and his philosophy, and refuse to believe in Christ and the Scriptures which testify of Christ? And in conclusion, let me ask you, do you sufficiently appreciate your privilege of knowing the Word of God? Do you subordinate all other knowledge to this, and regulate all other knowledge by this? The Bible must be everything or nothing. It is the chart of redemption, and everything in creation and providence is subservient to redemption. It is the inspired record of Christ; of what He was, and is, and will be. Let it dwell in your hearts. Let it control your lives. Let it animate your affections. Let it stimulate your devotion. (*J. King Lord.*)

The things freely given us by God:—I. THE DOCTRINE contained in the words,

"freely iven to us," and "we have received." Whatsoever we have is of God's free gift; and as in the department of nature it is the Lord that giveth life, and all things, so in the department of grace it is the Lord that blesseth us with every spiritual blessing. 1. Let us observe the simple word "given," a word so simple that one would think it impossible to be mistaken. (1) Let it stand by the side of the word "offer." For there are some that say God merely offers grace and salvation in the gospel. But God says that He gives grace and salvation. The offer only comes half way, and there stops, but the gift comes home. So it is in the things of God. When God intends grace for any poor soul, He does not stop half way and wait for our closing with His offer, but He comes home to our very soul, and makes a sure lodgment of the blessing. (2) Further, if to give means to offer, it certainly means much more than to sell; for there be some who tell us that God gives upon conditions, or, in other words, sells grace; into which error they have been drawn by their inability to perceive that the "ifs" of the New Testament are not conditional, but evidential. I know of no other condition on which sinners are saved but the death of the Son of God. 2. Lest we should make a mistake concerning the matter or manner of God's giving, He hath added another word here to clear it up; we read of the things "freely" given to us of God. We know the miserly disposition of some men, who in order to preserve a decent appearance in the world lay out some of their money in charity, yet have so niggardly a way of doing it, and such an ungracious manner in bestowing it, that an honest man would rather go without than accept anything at their hands. Now, God would have us know that He is not one of these niggardly people, and therefore tells us that what He gives, He also freely gives. But in order to constitute it a free gift two things are necessary; it must be done without compulsion, and without condition; either of these destroy the freeness here spoken of. 3. Again, let us remark how God's free giving is further illustrated by another word which stands contrasted with it in the sentence: "We have received." Now this expression takes away all idea of any merit, power, or wisdom in the favoured objects of God's bounty, as completely as does the former; and when both are viewed together, they give a twofold testimony to the truth of the grace of God. II. THE THINGS THEMSELVES WHICH ARE FREELY GIVEN TO US OF GOD. What is there which God hath not given us? for the apostle in the next chapter tells the believers in Jesus, "All things are yours," &c. But sweet as this description is, what would all this be, what would heaven be to him that loves God in His beloved Son, if the object of that love formed no part of the heavenly enjoyment? Therefore also God hath abundantly revealed it to us, that of these "all things" we speak of, He hath given Himself both as the cause and the substance; so that we may know that as all blessings come from God, so all blessedness is centred in God. Now to show this from Scripture that God gives Himself to us, we may observe that single sentence more than ten times repeated in the Bible, "I will be their God!" There is a twofold meaning in these words. First, I will give Myself over to them in covenant characters. All this is expressed in those words of Hosea (chap. ii. 19, 20). Having thus made Himself over to us, He becomes bound to us to deal with us in lovingkindness and tender mercies. But there is another meaning of it which comes nearer to the point. God gives us Himself most truly when He gives us His Christ, for He is over all God blessed for ever, Amen. God in Christ, and Christ in God, shall be the Sun of heaven; a Sun that shall no more go down. If God thus makes over Himself for our eternal consolation and blessedness, how can we doubt whether or no He hath also given all things together with Him. Having given the greater, how could He withhold the less? (Rom. viii. 39). So, then, we need argue that matter no further; but of the "all things" here spoken of I would merely select one as being most important to be known, which is our complete justification, called by the apostle the gift of righteousness (Heb. ix. 26). Now a word or two more shall be added to show that we are really righteous before God by the presence of righteousness. And, first, it will appear from many parts of Scripture, that where there is an absence of sin, there is and must be the presence of righteousness; in short, that one cannot be without the other. This is shown plainly by Dan. ix. 24, where he enumerates the blessings to be brought upon the Church by the advent of Messiah, at the expiration of the seventy weeks; for He was not only to "finish transgression," and make "an end of sin," but to bring in "everlasting righteousness." Here both the one and the other are attributed to the same event; and therefore he that believeth in that Messiah hath not only his sins put off, but an everlasting righteousness put on. Again, David saith (Psa. xxxii. 1). But what is the Holy Ghost's comment on those

words by the pen of Paul? David, says he, "describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works" (Rom. iv. 6): so, then, what can be clearer than this, that where sin is not imputed righteousness is imputed, and this makes the believer doubly blessed. Again, this truth may be made to appear yet more clearly by comparison. There are some things in nature so completely contrary that the one cannot exist where the other is, and the absence of the one plainly indicates the presence of the other. The absence of sickness is health; the absence of darkness is light; the absence of filth is cleanliness. So in like manner the absence of sin is righteousness. Now observe how it is, that of sick, filthy, and dark sinners, we become healthy, and clean, and saints of light. 1. "By His stripes we are healed" (Isa. liii. 5). Here is our sickness gone, and health established. 2. "The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). Here is filthiness abolished, and cleanliness in its place. 3. "Ye were once darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord" (Eph. v. 8). Here "the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." III. "WE KNOW THE THINGS THAT ARE FREELY GIVEN TO US OF GOD," AND THAT, NOT BY THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD, BUT BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD. Could we tell the world no more than what we have already considered we should have told them great things; for the love of the Father, and the Son, eternal and unfathomable, are therein revealed; but we have some of the Spirit's love yet to declare, who giveth us the most comfortable knowledge of these things. We grant, indeed, that with our bodily eyes we have never seen Christ Jesus the Lord; but the Lord giveth to His children an eye even to see clearly things in themselves invisible. But if it be asked, How do we arrive at this most excellent and comfortable knowledge? The words of the text plainly answers, "We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." By the spirit of the world is here peculiarly meant worldly wisdom, which in the preceding chapter he has shown to be utterly unprofitable in order to teach us the deep things of God. But that which maketh us wise unto salvation, and teacheth us that we are sinners saved by Christ's blood, is the wisdom which cometh from above, the gift of the Spirit of God. No man is possessed of this heavenly wisdom except he be a heavenly man, that is, except he be born from above. (*H. B. Bulteel, M.A.*)

Vers. 13–14. **Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth.**—*The true evangelical preacher speaks*:—I. UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. 1. He has received the Spirit. 2. Is instructed by the Spirit. 3. Speaks with the demonstration of the Spirit. II. AFTER CAREFUL STUDY OF GOD'S WORD. Comparing, selecting, with much humility and prayer. III. HE CANNOT, THEREFORE, ACCOMMODATE HIMSELF TO THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD—1. Either by modifying his doctrine to please worldly men—2. Or adopting a worldly method of address. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The illumination of the Holy Spirit*:—To teach, to enlighten, and to illuminate, have equivalent meanings. I. ITS NEED. The natural condition of the mind is spiritual darkness: hence illumination is necessary to the apprehension of spiritual things (Luke xi. 36; 1 Cor. ii. 9–14; Eph. i. 18). II. ITS AUTHOR. It is ascribed to each person of the Trinity. 1. God (2 Cor. iv. 6). 2. The Son (John i. 9; 1 Cor. iv. 5). 3. The Holy Spirit (John xiv. 26). III. ITS INSTRUMENT. The revealed Word of God (Psa. cxix. 105). IV. ITS AGENCY. The ministry of reconciliation. Preaching may awake men to their need of spiritual illumination (Eph. iii. 9). V. HOW OBTAINED. 4. By the careful reading of the Word. 2. By prayer (Psa. cxix. 18). (*L. O. Thompson.*) *The dispensation of spiritual truth*:—I. HOW SPIRITUAL THINGS ARE TO BE DISPENSED. 1. Not according to human rules. 2. But under the teaching of the Spirit. 3. In conformity with the Word of God. II. BY WHOM THEY ARE TO BE DISPENSED. 1. Not by unconverted men, for they cannot understand them. 2. But by those who are spiritual, who are indifferent to the judgment of man, and have the mind of Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Comparing spiritual things with spiritual.**—Various meanings have been attached to this expression. I. ADAPTING SPIRITUAL WORDS TO SPIRITUAL THINGS, and not language incongruous, as we should be doing if we spoke the things of God in words taught by human wisdom. But the apostle has already said this in effect, and according to this view there is a play on the word "spiritual" which is not in his manner; for "spiritual words" can only mean words taught by the Spirit (Eph. v. 19), but "spiritual things" must mean things that reveal God. II. ADAPTING SPIRITUAL THINGS TO SPIRITUAL MEN. But this is the direct opposite of what Paul declares, that spiritual men understand spiritual

things, so that no adaptation of them to their capacity is needed. III. INTERPRETING SPIRITUAL THINGS TO SPIRITUAL MEN. But it is only in reference to dreams and visions that the word *συγκρίνω* means "to interpret," and that with few exceptions in the LXX. In no passage are the things of God represented as dreams to be interpreted, or allegories of which the apostles have the key. IV. INTERPRETING SPIRITUAL THINGS BY SPIRITUAL WORDS is open to the same objection. V. PROVING THE TRUTH OF SPIRITUAL THINGS (whether Old Testament types or the teaching of the Spirit) BY THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT. But the word does not elsewhere signify "to prove." VI. COMPARING SPIRITUAL THINGS WITH SPIRITUAL is satisfactory. Christianity is a Divine wisdom. But this means from the side of teacher and of learner that revealed truths are combined so as to form a consistent and well-proportioned system of truth in their correlation. The higher Christian training resembles Plato's criterion of dialectical power, the faculty to see the relation of the sciences to one another and to true being. (*Principal Edwards.*) *The Spirit's work*:—The Holy Spirit is the source and standard of all spiritual things. Wherever found, in heaven or in earth, in time or eternity, they all come first from the Spirit of Life. In the New Testament sense, spiritual things are just the things of God; does that convey any thought to you? These are altogether different things from those we have been born into, live in, and take to so naturally. This is our misery, that we are antagonistic to the things of the spiritual world. No one had so much of God's Spirit as our Lord; and there is nothing so suited to receive the Spirit as the soul of man. No spirit was more receptive than Christ's. His heart was full of the Holy Ghost; and His words and works were less from Him than from the Spirit. The next best example of the Holy Ghost's workmanship is the Bible. All parts are not equally full of Him; Job is not so full as John, nor Ruth as Romans; but he who is most spiritual will dwell most in those parts which reveal most of the mind of the Spirit of God. The Old Testament is penetrated with the Spirit even in its most secular and legal parts; and the spiritual mind can find spiritual meaning even in its laws, ordinances and ceremonies. But as Christ was most spirit-filled, so the New Testament is richer, and those books are most to be prized which hold most to New Testament doctrines. A preacher should be much in the New Testament, and if he is led into the Old he should always take the New back with him. His people have not a thousand years to spend in discovering its meaning, and it is not fair to keep them always in the elements, to the retarding of spiritual growth. Could you tell why you are a member of your Church, or are you ashamed to tell the reason? Did spiritual reasons take you there, and are spiritual results coming from the change? There is nothing we do on earth so spiritual and which demands so much spirituality as prayer. (*A. Whyte, D.D.*) **But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, . . . because they are spiritually discerned.**—*St. Paul's trichotomy*:—This may be roughly compared to a cathedral: the body corresponds to the nave, the spirit to the chancel, the soul, which divides and unites the body and the spirit, to the transept, which divides and unites the nave and the chancel. The cathedral is one consecrated building with three main compartments, and man is one person in three natures, all consecrated in baptism to the Triune God. Furthermore, the human spirit is the highest and noblest of the three natures, and akin to the Divine, and therefore that which is immediately controlled by the Holy Spirit, who through it acts upon the soul, and through the soul upon the body. In like manner the chancel is the highest and holiest compartment of the cathedral, in which also is the altar or table of the Divine Presence. This illustration must not be pressed, but it may serve to smooth the way for some apprehension of the difficult question of man's trichotomy. A *psychical* man, the mere soul-man—*animalis* (Vulgate) from *anima*, not *animosus* "full of spirit" from *animus*—is one in whom the *psyche*, or lower principle of life dominates. He moves not in the sphere of Divine light and truth, but in the world of sense. If he is intellectual, he delights in a mental activity purely human, and exerted on objects merely mundane, and is attracted by worldly philosophies that fail utterly to lead the mind up to the high truth of God. The mental side of the psychic man comes to view in this text; the intellectual rather than the ethical, not to the exclusion however of the latter, for between the moral and the mental there is a mutual relation and interaction. In this *homo animalis* the higher principle of life, the human spirit illuminated and quickened intellectually and morally, does not dominate, has no activity, is dormant. He is one, as St. Jude says, "not having [in his own consciousness] spirit." Such a one does not receive, indeed cannot admit into—that which he has not—a prepared spirit any-

thing that is of the Spirit of God. He is psychic, not pneumatic: how can he entertain truths that are purely pneumatic? They are an absurdity to him. His habits of mind, modes and centres of thought, aims in life, lust of fame, pride of intellect, are all soul-like and sensuous, all *of* the cosmos and *to* the cosmos. Thus he is simply incompetent to apprehend what is extra mundane and supernal; indeed, he is not in a position to do so, for there must always be a correlation and mutual congruity between that which perceives and that which is perceived. Wherefore spiritual truths are "foolishness unto him," because they are spiritually estimated, *i.e.*, are tested and sifted by a process spiritual in the court of the human spirit, enlightened by the Divine, and there subjected to an *anacrisis*, or preliminary scrutiny ere they are admitted. (*Canon Evans.*) *The natural man*:—I. HIS CHARACTER DESCRIBED. Assumes three phases: 1. The prejudiced, who oppose the truth. 2. The indifferent, who do not trouble about it. 3. The unenlightened, who cannot understand it. II. HIS SAD CONDITION. Naturally without—1. Knowledge. 2. Concern. 3. Hope. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The natural man*:—I. HERE ARE TWO OBJECTS SET BEFORE US. 1. The natural man in contrast with the spiritual man. Note Paul's classification. (1) The carnal man "lives after the flesh." His whole nature is the servant of sin. (2) In the natural man the ethical element may be predominant. He may be a man of culture, sympathy, and a believer in the objective facts and formal sanctities of religion; and yet so long as he is only all that, he "cannot discern the things of the spirit." (3) The spiritual man is such by virtue of a new creation. He has "put off the old man and his deeds." 2. "The things of the spirit." (1) They are spiritual things. Religion deals with supernatural objects—God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, &c. These are spiritually discerned. There are windows in the soul of the spiritual man through which he looks into the mystery of invisible worlds. "The Spirit searched," &c. "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." (2) They are revealed to faith. They occupy a sphere and deal with realities which "eye hath not seen," &c. They are emphasised as "the things of God," they are the product and expression of His thought. We have no faculties by which to apprehend a Being whose attributes are infinity and eternity. But what cannot be discerned may be revealed. That is what has taken place, and the verifying power of this revelation is a spiritual discernment, a faculty of faith, inwrought by the Spirit in the soul; and "the eyes of the understanding being enlightened," we "know what is," &c. (3) They become real in the consciousness of the believing man, who is translated into a new order of being, is born again. God and the soul touch. II. SOME ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE APOSTLE'S TEACHING. 1. There is a class of outward things which we can only know by the senses. There is no rainbow to the blind man, no music to the deaf. So it is with the things of the spirit. 2. The senses bring in their report of things, but they know nothing of the science or philosophy of things. This is the work of trained intellect. (1) To the ordinary man nature looks like a jumble of accidents; to the scientific there is a place for everything and everything is in its place, from the atom to the sun. To ninety men out of a hundred the pebble, or bit of coal or chalk, is merely a thing for use; to the trained eye it is a revelation of cycles of duration, in which now vanished dynasties of animated beings sported. Nature is a book of hieroglyphics which only science can interpret—it is scientifically discerned. (2) Look at the Bible, at the seemingly discordant but really concatenated departments of revealed truth. But the Bible as a harmonious whole only yields itself up to the discipline and culture of the student. 3. Another class of realities we can know only as they come through experience. They are, in the strictest sense, "spiritual things" (ver. 11). (1) The things of a man—his joys, hopes, fears, griefs, &c.—what man can know these, save the spirit of a man that is in him? Language is a system of signs for the expression of "unknown things"; but there are things of which it can be neither the sign nor the expression. Thoughts lie deeper than speech, feelings than thoughts: consciousness the deepest of all, is the only witness of what passes in the mysterious world of mind. Sin, remorse, &c., have no sign and can never be interpreted but by the reality which calls them forth. (2) So the things of God can be known only by the consciousness created by the Spirit of God. Coleridge speaks of a philosophical consciousness lying behind the ordinary consciousness before he can be a philosopher. To know what the reality of life is, we must live, not dissect it. To feel the bitterness of sin we must repent, not speculate about it. To taste the sweetness and power of Christ's forgiveness we must believe in Christ, not just catalogue or canonise His virtues. These things

belong to the "new name written, which no man knoweth," &c. (3) Hence the reason why so many unspiritual though gifted minds miss the entrance to the kingdom of God. They are "natural men" and "cannot discern," &c. They are as blind men groping in the dark. Let us be consistent. I, as a non-scientific Christian, am warned off the ground of scientific induction as a territory on which I have no factor of investigation. My religion is not the organ of physical discovery. Very well: the scientist is warned off the ground of spiritual consciousness as a territory on which he is equally at fault. Conclusion: Note—1. The limit which these considerations set to the possibilities of mental culture, and the rebuke which they administer to the audacity and irreverence of the unsanctified intellect. 2. The need of regeneration. 3. "If any man will do God's will he shall know of the doctrine." (*J. Burton.*) *The natural man:*—I. HIS CHARACTER. 1. Earthly. 2. Sensual. 3. Devilish. II. HIS SPIRITUAL OBLIQUITY. 1. Moral. "He receiveth not." 2. Intellectual. "He cannot know." III. HIS HOPELESS CONDITION WITHOUT DIVINE HELP. The things of God—1. Are foolishness to him. 2. Must be spiritually discerned. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *A natural man's ignorance of spiritual things:*—I. THE CHARACTER OF THE UNRENEWED MAN. 1. He follows the dictates of his own appetites. 2. He is under the control of his passions. 3. Being chiefly occupied about the perishing things of this world, he is dead to a future state. 4. Though man too much resembles the animal in many things, yet in this he differs widely from every other creature—he will be responsible for his conduct at the judgment-seat of Christ. Whatever be the sinner's moral inability, his natural powers qualify him to serve God; and it is sin only that prevents him from using those natural powers in a manner in which he would please God. While the natural powers remain, though the inclination be absent, his accountability is continued. "We say, God actually treats the want of disposition, not as an excuse, but as a sin; and we take it for granted that what God does is right, whether we can comprehend it or not. Howbeit, in this case, it happens that with the testimonies of God accord those of conscience and common sense. Every man's conscience 'finds fault' with him for the evils which he commits willingly, or of choice; and, instead of making any allowance for any previous aversion, nothing more is necessary to rivet the charge. And with respect to the common sense of mankind in their treatment of one another, what judge, or what jury, ever took into consideration the previous aversion of a traitor or a murderer, with a view to the diminishing of his guilt?" II. THE DISPOSITIONS OF THE SINNER'S MIND TOWARDS GOD. He does not receive the things of the Spirit. 1. What the Spirit reveals. These things are found in the Holy Scriptures, which are the "lively oracles of God." If the Spirit had made known a plan of salvation which had flattered the pride of the human heart, his testimony would have been cheerfully received. 2. What the Spirit imparts. Man, as a fallen creature, requires something done in him as well as for him. How much soever men may boast of their reason, their intellect, and their discernment, they must be Divinely illuminated before they can rightly understand the things which the Spirit either reveals or imparts. The natural man does not believe this. If you were to examine the opinions of a very large majority of those who are called Christians, they are either careless about the renovation of their own hearts, or they reject the doctrine altogether as a useless, unmeaning dogma. They fancy themselves virtuous and good, and that they are capable of making some amends for their disobedience of the law of God; they think that they will at some future time do some good thing that they may inherit eternal life, though their conscience often reproves them, after their best efforts, till they are ready to believe themselves but unprofitable servants. 3. What the Spirit requires. He requires of all men "to turn from darkness to light, from the power of sin and Satan unto God." The animal man may love his sin and persist in committing it, but this he cannot do with impunity, for God will bring him into judgment! There is a method by which that sin can be forgiven, its dominion destroyed, and its love eradicated from the soul; and that is by the atonement of Christ. If he refuse this means of repentance and sanctification he must die in his sins; there remains no other sacrifice for sins. The Spirit requires that men should receive Christ. All the information which He imparts to the mind concerning the purity, spirituality, and extent of the holy law of God; every conception which He enables the mind to form of the holiness of God, exhibited in that law; and all the humbling convictions which He produces upon the soul in a state of penitence, are intended by the Holy Spirit to prepare the sinner for the reception of Christ as a suitable and all-sufficient Saviour. The natural

man does not receive these "things of the Spirit of God." He does not believe them. He calls them the words of God; but it is the language of the lip, not of the heart. III. THE REASON WHICH THE APOSTLE ASSIGNS. "They are foolishness unto him." What dreadful havoc sin has made of the human soul! What haughty conduct towards God! How proud, how ignorant, and how unfeeling is the heart of man! This revelation was given to him for his instruction, to correct his errors and to remove his ignorance. After the divinity of this revelation had been fully and rationally ascertained, it was the duty of this rational being to submit to its teaching and decisions, without hesitation, thankful that God would condescend to instruct the undeserving and the sinner. The Spirit has revealed the infinite perfections of the Deity, so far as that revelation was connected with man's duty and happiness, in a manner likely to excite him to fear, venerate, love, and worship Him as the ever-blessed God. What the Spirit has revealed must limit his inquiries and check his presumption. Let him regard what the Spirit of the Lord declares in His Word, and seek an experimental knowledge of those "heavenly blessings" which are provided in the new covenant for the penitent and believing. He does not understand them because they are "spiritually discerned." But the Spirit can and will restore the spiritual faculty if he will ask Him. Let him not call them "foolishness"; for the preparation of them was the highest manifestation of the wisdom and love of God. His not perceiving them is not to be considered as a reason why they are not good in themselves and suited to relieve his misery. This is to be traced to his want of spiritual vision, "for sin has blinded his mind!" (*Wm. Jones.*) *The natural man blind to the things of the Spirit of God:*—Set a man down on one of the jutting crags of the Andes, and with the shadows of midnight or the scarf of a morning mist hanging around him he sees nothing of the shaggy fantastic grandeur with which he is environed. He stands on one of the "altar thrones" of creation, with the sweep of the firmament above him, and the jewelled earth beneath him; but until the sunshine sifts its radiance on his sightless eyeballs, darkness confused and confusing shuts him in on every side. So with the spirit world in its relation to the natural man. That world envelopes him like an atmosphere or sea of life, touching him at every avenue of soul and sense with its glory; but the perceptive faculty is wanting and he cannot behold it. The flashing skies are dark to his closed eyes. Neither can the dark mind see God. (*J. Burton.*) *The ignorance of the natural man:*—I. EXPLAIN THE TRUTH AFFIRMED. 1. Who is the natural man? 2. What are the things he cannot receive nor know? 3. Whence his incapacity? II. CONFIRM IT. 1. It was so in our Lord's day. 2. In the times of the apostles. 3. Is so now. III. IMPROVE IT. Learn—1. To appreciate Divine knowledge. 2. How to seek it. 3. How to employ it. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Natural or spiritual:*—The apostle knows of only two classes of men—natural and spiritual. Under "natural," he includes all who are not partakers of the Spirit of God, no matter how excellent they may be. On the other hand, all into whom the Spirit of God has come he calls spiritual men. I. THE NATURAL MAN RECEIVES NOT THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD, BUT COUNTS THEM FOOLISH. 1. Some oppose them violently, and do their best to put down such folly. 2. A greater proportion secretly despise and condemn. They dare say that religion is a good thing for old women, &c., but utterly repudiate it as a thing worthy the attention of wise men. 3. The great mass are indifferent. "For forms of faith let graceless zealots fight, he can't be wrong whose life is in the right." II. THERE IS NOTHING WHATEVER IN THE THINGS THEMSELVES TO JUSTIFY SUCH AN ESTIMATION. You do not know what you say when you declare that the gospel of Christ is absurd. It is generally pretty safe to ask a man who rails at the Bible, "Did you ever read it?" These learned gentlemen are like those critics who, when they meet with a new volume, take the knife and cut the first page, smell it, and then condemn or praise. The mightiest intellects confess that the truths of this book are above their highest flights. Even Newton said there were depths here which no mortal could fathom. As these things of the Spirit of God are wise and profound, so they are most important, and if not received, it is not because they are uncongenial with our necessities. There are some speculations which a man need not enter upon, but the doctrines of God teach you your relationship to your Maker; your condition before Him; how He can be just to man, and yet be gracious; how you can approach Him, and become His child; how you may be conformed to His image, and made a partaker of His glory. III. THE REASON FOR THE REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL. 1. Want of taste. You have sometimes seen an artist standing before a splendid

picture. "What a fine conception!" says he, "I could stand a week and admire that." Some bumpkin, however, says, "It looks to me to be an old decayed piece of canvas that wants cleaning." Then leaving the gallery, he notices on the wall outside a picture of an elephant standing on his head, and a clown performing in some circus, and he says, "That's more to my taste." Just so is it with the natural man. Give him some work of fiction—a daub upon the wall—and he is satisfied. But he has no taste for the things of God. 2. Want of organs. Just as a blind man cannot appreciate a landscape nor a deaf man music; so the natural man lacking the eye and ear of faith cannot appreciate the beauties and music of the gospel. 3. Want of nature. The brute cannot appreciate the studies of the astronomer because he lacks an intellectual nature; and so the mere man of intellect cannot appreciate the things of the Spirit because he lacks a spiritual nature. IV. THE PRACTICAL TRUTHS WHICH FLOW FROM THIS GREAT THOUGH SORROWFUL FACT. 1. The absolute necessity for regeneration, or the work of the Spirit. You may educate a nature up to its highest point, but you cannot educate an old nature into a new one. You may educate a horse, but you cannot educate it into a man. You may by your own efforts make yourselves the best of natural men, but still at your very best there is a division wide as eternity between you and the regenerate man. And no man can help us out of such a nature into a state of grace. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 2. If any of us have received the things of the Spirit, we ought to look upon that as comfortable evidence that we have been born again. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Man's moral inability to understand the things of the Spirit:*—Note—I. SOME OF THOSE SUBLIME AND INTERESTING TRUTHS WHICH THE NATURAL MAN DOES NOT RECEIVE. 1. The equity and goodness of the law of God, and the evil and desert of every transgression of it. 2. The suitableness and excellency of the method of redemption by Jesus Christ. 3. The necessity of union to Christ by faith as the source of holiness and strength. 4. The necessity of reconciliation to God and conformity to the Divine image to all true happiness both here and hereafter. II. THE ALARMING EXTENT TO WHICH THIS WANT OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT PREVAILS, AND THE INADEQUACY OF THE HIGHEST ADVANTAGES TO COMMUNICATE IT. 1. We see some men endowed with great strength of mind, and their natural powers much improved by a liberal education, but they do not receive the things of the Spirit of God. 2. We observe other men who have great discernment and assiduity in the concerns of this life, and who discover a particular tact in the management of business, and considerable ability in improving the advantages afforded them of amassing wealth, but they receive not the things of the Spirit of God. 3. We see other persons favoured with the advantages of a religious education, but they have not received the things of the Spirit of God. 4. Some men have an undoubted conviction of the truth of the gospel, and their passions are occasionally moved with its important discoveries. Still, except a Divine change takes place in the heart, they do not receive the things of the Spirit of God. III. THE IMPORTANT REFLECTION WHICH THE SUBJECT SUGGESTS. 1. That the disaffection of man to God is not accidental, or the result of some circumstances in which he is placed, but is an evil principle, natural to the whole species, and the consequence of the fall. 2. The great gratitude we owe to God for the gospel of His Son, as a discovery of enlightening and renewing grace, as well as of pardoning mercy. 3. The indispensable necessity of Divine influence in general, and in respect to our own personal experience in particular. 4. The importance of accompanying the means of grace with humble and earnest prayer. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) *Spiritual discernment:*—Not only have excellent photographs of the heavenly bodies been obtained, and an absolutely accurate picture of the skies obtained for permanent examination, but it has been found that the camera reveals stars invisible even with the aid of the most powerful telescope in existence. This is due to the fact that the camera is able by continued exposure to obtain an image of an object which may be so faint that a shorter exposure would give no image. This, of course, is a power the eye does not possess. It is equivalent to being able to see plainly by long gazing what cannot be seen at all by a brief inspection. A notable instance of this power is seen in photographs of the Pleiades, the group of stars mentioned in Job xxxvi. 31. Here a nebula is shown in the photograph which the eye cannot perceive in the sky, but which undoubtedly exists. Astronomers believe in the revelations of the camera, though they are not confirmed by actual observation. Their example may be commended to men who reject the inspired revelation of the Bible, and refuse to exercise faith when they are asked to accept spiritual truth not perceptible to the senses. (*New York Sun.*)

Spiritual discernment:—I. THERE IS NOTHING HERE WHICH IS NOT ACKNOWLEDGED AND INSISTED ON IN EVERY-DAY LIFE. There are things that are only instrumentally discerned. 1. Here is a large brilliant diamond, and you pronounce it to be without fault; but the lapidary gives you a magnifying glass of great power, and bids you look at the centre of the stone; and there sure enough you see a black spot. The lapidary says the naked eye can neither receive it nor know it because it is microscopically discerned. And nobody arises to say, "Sir, you have introduced a painful mystery into human thought and inquiry." People are rather glad that a medium has been supplied by which the hidden truth may be brought to light. 2. Yonder are two shining surfaces, and you say there must be a great fire there. The scientist who overhears you, however, says, "One of those surfaces has no light at all." "But can't I believe my own eyes?" "No," he says, "just look through this instrument"—the polariscope—and now you see that the one surface was primary light and the other but reflected. The naked eye can neither receive nor know it because it is polariscopically discerned. And you thank him for the information. 3. Yonder are two men who have undertaken a mineral survey. One is a mineralogist, the other a man who believes that if he cannot find things out with his naked eyes and fingers that nothing can or shall be found out. The former walks slowly over the ground holding in his hand a little crystal box, watching the instrument within. Presently the needle dips, and he says, "There is iron here." Can you see it, touch it? No. But the scientific man digs for iron and finds it, and then turns round to hear what the other has to say, and remarks, "The senses cannot receive or know it, for it is magnetically discerned," and then receives the confidence he deserves. 4. Look at this ruddy-faced boy. You cannot walk out with him, but he challenges you to leap a five-barred gate; and you say, "What a vigorous lad! There will be a long life and a happy one." A physician, however, drops in on your return, and hearing your verdict, applies an instrument to the region of the boy's heart, and then, taking you aside, says, "He will never see five-and-twenty. He has had rheumatic fever and contracted valvular affection of the heart." The untrained ear can neither receive it nor know it because it is stethoscopically discerned. Now in all these things we confess our need of instruments. Suppose that everything were taken away that cannot be discovered or read by the naked eye! Shut up the heavens, for astronomy must go; cover up the fields, for botany tells little to the naked eye. All science indeed would be impoverished and degraded. Yet the man who cannot read his own mother's letter without an eyeglass insists upon reading the infinite and eternal God by his unassisted powers. 5. The same principle holds good in spheres where instruments are not required. (1) Here are two men listening to the same piece of music. The one is inspired, enraptured, and says, "I would this might go on for ever." The other says, "I wonder when they will be done." The best ear cannot receive these things or know them, for they are musically discerned. The one man would be tormented if one note were the thousandth part of a shade wrong; but all the notes might be wrong so far as the other man knew. (2) Here are two men looking at the same picture. The one is chained to the spot; the other, with a thick shilling catalogue, does not see much in that, and hastens on to something that has superficies, no matter what the superficies may be: only let it be extensive enough. Paint for such men with a broom. II. THE APPLICATION OF THESE THINGS IS TO THE THINGS OF GOD AS ACCESSIBLE TO THE SPIRIT OF MAN. There are blind minds as well as blind eyes. "Except a man be born again he cannot see." 1. As ministers, therefore, we are not to be discouraged because some people cannot understand us. There will always be men to whom the best preaching will be foolishness, because they have not the spiritual faculty. 2. Do we wish for this discernment? "If ye being evil," &c. "If any man lack wisdom," &c. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Spiritual insight impossible to unspiritual men*:—1. No painter was ever yet so unwise as to submit his work to the criticism of a committee of blind men, however learned such men might have been in history, logic, or law. Nor has any company of blind men assumed to sit in judgment upon Murillo, Raphael, or Titian; still less that they have fallen to raving because their censorship in art had not been accepted as final. The men in the Patent Office in Washington, who examine the thousand models that yearly come to them, are men who have an eye for machinery. Men who did not know a wheelbarrow from a spinning-wheel could scarcely get an appointment to such a place. In general it matters not how much a man may know nor how keen his power of discernment in some other line of human thought or knowledge, men give little heed to his talk unless he has capacity and culture in the very things of which he assumes to be a

critic and a judge. 2. The elements of our complex nature are many; and a man may be strong in some things and weak in others. Lord Macaulay was almost a blockhead in mathematics. Sir Isaac Newton had hardly patience enough to read the "Paradise Lost" and only asked contemptuously, "What does it prove?" Milton might very likely have asked the same of the "Principia." Many a great scientist has never been able to distinguish between the highest strains of music and any mere jargon of discordant sounds. Eminent lawyers and judges have been utterly blind to the beauties of the most perfect machinery, and many an inventive genius would have been utterly swamped in the commentaries of Blackstone. 3. Why, then, should it be thought any argument against the reality of spiritual things that here and there a man—with large genius for invention; for oratory; for science; for philosophy; for music; for art—has no appreciation for things unseen and eternal? It weighs less than a feather to him who revels in the demonstrations of geometry to know that hundreds of college students have never fully comprehended a single demonstration! "Poor fellows!" is all he can say, "I pity their obtuseness!" In like manner it weighs less than a milligramme to any Christian believer, whose soul has been illuminated from on high, that Darwin lived and died blind as a bat to all the glories of the spiritual universe. But unlike many another blind man, Darwin did, in a measure, realise his condition. He recognised the fact that his spiritual nature had died out! He calls it "atrophy." In his boyhood he had a consciously religious nature; in later years it was starved to death! He tells us, also, that in early life he had a poetical nature. That, too, had been famished. His soul had died—"at the top!" Alas! how many another soul has died in the same way! Shall the Christian believer find his faith disturbed because of these great men whose souls have been lopped off? No! He still knows in whom he has believed. A blind man may tell me that he sees nothing in the glory of the evening sunset, or in Raphael's Transfiguration. "Poor man!" I say, with deepest pity; that's all. I do not forthwith put out my own eyes, because he has put his out; or, peradventure, may have been born blind. God forbid! I only cherish my eyesight with the more thankfulness and care. When even Humboldt, Darwin, Ingersoll, and Renan tell me that they see nothing of the spiritual and Divine in this revelation of the Divine life and glory of the Christ of God among the sons of men—Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, Paul, John, and Luther, Knox, Wesley, Bunyan, and the unnumbered hosts of the Lord Almighty, will still continue to enjoy the seraphic vision and know whom they have believed. 4. A legislator may wisely study the Bible to help him in making laws. The historian may ponder its incomparable histories. The sociologist may turn over its leaves to find the profoundest teachings known to the world in his department. The lover of sublime and beautiful poetry may discover here some of the rarest gems that can be gathered from all the seas and from all the lands. But only the spiritual man can discern within these lids their choicest treasures of spiritual truth, and it would be passing strange if it were otherwise. What would your five-year-old boy think of conic sections, or your ten-months-old baby of a treatise on optics? "I wonder what grandfather can find in that old book!—it's a very dull book to me." So said a young man just entering college many years ago. But when the Spirit of God had opened his eyes, the young man marvelled no more at the absorption of his grandsire in the study of the old book, and himself lived to revel in its pages more than in all things else. Had sin never come, our vision had been clear. Oh, that every soul might cry out as Bartimeus, "Lord, that I may receive my sight!" 5. "What is the Bible?" Only Christian experience can fit any person to answer that question. I see a cherub of three short years over the way, and I ask, "What is that child?" The analytic chemist will tell me how much oxygen, and hydrogen, and nitrogen, and phosphorus enter into the forty pounds of avoirdupois of that beautiful form. The anatomist will tell me the number of bones and muscles and the names of them all that enter into her perfect body. But you are the child's mother. And I ask you to tell me what she is. While I speak the angel of death has come, and she lies by your side a corpse. Her sweet face has a heavenly smile upon it, for she has had a vision of the Son of God, who has taken her into His arms. "What is that child?" You need the gift of tongues to tell me. The lips cannot utter it; your tears even can scarcely suggest it. The love of father and mother alone can conceive the answer. "What is the Bible?" Only he who has learned to love the Christ that shines through it can answer that question. And then his answer will grow as he grows, through all his years. He will find more in it as his experience deepens. The only proper test of the gospel of Christ is the trial of it. No soul

was ever yet made worse by believing it. No Christian ever yet, as he came near to death, regretted his faith or recanted his trust in Christ. (*E. R. Fairfield, D.D.*) *Unsanctified men cannot read the Bible to profit*:—If you bring me a basket full of minerals from California, and I take them and look at them, I shall know that this specimen has gold in it, because I see there little points of yellow gold, but I shall not know what the white and the dark points are that I see. But let a metallurgist look at it, and he will see that it contains not only gold, but silver, and lead, and iron, and he will single them out. To me it is a mere stone, with only here and there a hint of gold, but to him it is a combination of various metals. Now take the Word of God, that is filled with precious stones and metals, and let one instructed in spiritual insight go through it, and he will discover all these treasures; while, if you let a man uninstructed in spiritual insight go through it, he will discover those things that are outside and apparent, but those things that make God and man friends, and that have to do with the immortality of the soul in heaven, escape his notice. No man can know these things unless the Spirit of God has taught him to discern them. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The ignorance of the natural man*:—"Suppose," says an old divine, "a geometrician should be drawing outlines and figures, and there should come in a silly, ignorant fellow, who, seeing him thus employed, should laugh at him; would the artist, think you, leave off his employment because of his derision? Surely not; for he knows that his laughter is but the fruit of his ignorance, as not knowing his art, and the ground upon which it goes: and therefore he holds on drawing, though the fellow should hold on laughing." *The natural man's view*:—One may be a diligent student of science and have a large acquaintance with the facts and forces, processes and laws of the physical universe, and yet be insensible to all by which its higher meanings are revealed. The man of this spirit may cultivate his fields with judicious husbandry, but all the harvest goes into the barn, or to market; none is for the soul. He may note the season's circling course, but finds no meaning in their storied succession, save calls to a varied round of toil and use; no pulsings of a life Divine, no ebb and flow of supernal tides, bearing outward the flow of a Divine energy, and then with refluent flood coursing backward to the infinite deeps. He may view the stars, perhaps know their names, orders, distances, and seasons, but catches no glimpse of the Hand that moves them, nor hears the resonances of their silent song. He may climb the mountains, but it is only as tourist, or engineer, not as worshipper, or to find the uplands of God. (*J. W. Earnshaw.*) *Spiritual discernment impaired*:—Darwin gives an account of two blind men with whom he was in the habit of conversing for some years. They both told him that "they never remembered having dreamed of visible objects after they became totally blind." So, when men give themselves to lower and meaner things, the higher and nobler faculties of the soul come in to trouble them less and less. By and by the spiritual and the unseen is to them as though it were not. *The natural versus the spiritual man*:—Different persons shall stand before that Nature's wonder of wonders, the mighty cataract of Niagara, and how differently they will regard it and be affected by it! To one it will be simply an immense volume of water rushing down swift rapids and leaping a tremendous precipice, with stunning effect to the observant senses, but with no glory in its gliding, gleaming, plunging mass, and no music or meaning in its rhythmic roar. Another will be mainly impressed with the probable energy of the descending mass, and occupied with the problem of its utilisation. He will measure it according to the principles of hydro-dynamic science, and estimate what engines it would move, what machinery impel, and what work perform, if properly yoked, or what cities it would illumine, if converted into electricity, but find in it no power to draw the soul to God. Another, bringing to it a more æsthetic sensibility, will be impressed with its beauty and grandeur; but the beauty will be soulless, the grandeur only that of physical magnificence. But another shall bring to it a true spiritual sensibility, and to him it will open all its meaning, and become a wondrous revelation of the mighty power, grand designs, and sovereign laws of the infinite Creator, an apocalypse, through Nature transfigured in her own process, of Him who is Nature's God and soul; and awed into silence, or thrilled with adoring wonder, he will stand as before the Holy of holies of Nature's vast and solemn temple. The difference of impression and effect appears not only in relation to Nature's more majestic scenes, but to all, from the greatest and rarest to the lowliest and most common. Dull sensibility passes unheeding, but to a Cowper, a Wordsworth, a Bryant, or a Ruskin, the very heath hath a voice, and the desert shrub becomes aflame with God. And so, too, with those works of art in which God

speaks to us as it were by an interpreter. Different persons shall view some masterpiece of painting. To one it will be but a representation of sensible forms, beautiful or unbeautiful as the case may be, and with pleasant or gruesome effect according to the subject. Another shall note its fidelity to nature or history, and feel the charm, life, and dramatic movement of the piece. But another shall catch the very meaning and spirit of the work, and see what the artist has not painted yet could not but represent; could not treat his subject faithfully and not bring into view the great white throne. And so with a poem, a piece of music, or a sermon. One shall catch but the thunder of the sound and sensuous effect. To another it shall have a certain articulate coherence, as it were the voice of an angel, sweet perhaps, perhaps sublime, but its meaning unresolved. While to yet another it shall penetrate the soul as a voice from the unseen, holy, touching responsive chords of spiritual sensibility, and quickening, uplifting, and purifying the very inmost life of the soul. (*J. W. Earnshaw.*)

Vers. 15, 16. **But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.**—*The spiritual man*:—I. HIS CHARACTER. 1. Enlightened. 2. Born of God. 3. Endued with the Spirit. II. HIS PRIVILEGES. 1. He judges all things. 2. Is exalted above the judgment of others. III. THE SOURCE AND SECURITY OF HIS HAPPINESS. 1. Not natural. 2. But Divine. He has the mind of Christ. (*J. Lyth D.D.*) *The spiritual man*:—I. HIS CONDITION. "Spiritual." II. HIS DISCERNMENT. 1. Wherein it consists. 2. To what it extends. III. HIS IMMUNITY from the judgment of others; because natural men—1. Cannot appreciate Divine things. 2. Are incompetent to form a correct judgment upon them. (*Ibid.*) *The spiritual man*:—I. HIS POWER TO JUDGE—1. Arises out of an enlightened understanding. 2. Extends to all matters affecting his religious well-being. 3. And if not infallible, is guarded by the disposition to prove all things and hold fast that which is good. 4. Hence he is preserved from all serious error. II. His IMMUNITY FROM JUDGMENT. He can despise the judgment of worldly men because they have no spiritual apprehension and their decisions are worthless, being overruled by the testimony of the Spirit within him. (*Ibid.*) *Authority in matters of religion*:—The religious or spiritual man, then, is characterised not by taking his religion from other men, not by living on a decision formed by others, but by a personal, private judgment of his own. Religious truth, like other truth, nay, much more than other truth, is a personal conviction, and not merely a conviction, but a judgment, part of man's own rational being—the very life of his rational being—that in which he looks out upon and judges of men and things, when he is most conscious of exercising his own faculties. Nay, more than this, he holds this truth, not merely on his personal private judgment, but with a certain strenuous insistence upon its independence in the face of other men, even within the Christian society. 1. What is the antithesis to this tenure in conscious, personal, and rational judgment of religious truth? It cannot be what is impossible—that we should hold a body of truth on the external authority of the Church, while it does not commend itself to our own deliberate judgment. We cannot disbelieve a thing in our own mind and accept it on an authority external to us. The most that is possible is that a man should take a body of truth as summarised in Church formulas, and without letting his mind work upon it at all, simply passively accept it, and externally laud it and conform to it. And no man can for a moment suppose that such an attitude towards religious truth is the attitude of the Christian. No religious truth, then, is held rightly "as a spiritual man" should hold it, which is held as a mere external dogma positively accepted. It is held only then in a way worthy of our personal responsibility when it is held with active personal apprehension, as that which is an indelible and irrefutable part of our own deliberate conviction, in the light of all the facts of experience. 2. But it is only in our shallowest moments that we shall suppose this repudiation of absolute and unconditional authority, which leaves room for an exercise of our judgment, to involve in any sense the repudiation of authority at all, or the denial that truth should be held finally on mere external authority, to involve the rejection of external authority from its proper place in the formation of our mind. Indeed, those portions of the truth which do not come under the verification of our own faculties, must permanently be held on external authority, but the authority itself must then come under verification. In no part of our life do we live so much by authority and legitimately in its own sphere as in scientific matters. I accept, for example, with no hesitation, a body of truths in physics which are considered well established,

the evidence for which I not only could not produce myself, but though I believe it exists, I am, through want of sufficient training and capacity in mathematics, incapable even of understanding and appreciating. But I accept the results because on other grounds where scientific reliability is put to a test intelligible to the uninitiated, I am able to verify it. The verifications general and particular open to ordinary men appear to be quite as valid of their kind in the sphere of religion as in the sphere of science. But in religion, as in science, the authority verified in general must cover particulars beyond the scope of our personal verification. It is, for example, only reason to take on the authority of Christ truths about the future which cannot come under our present cognisance, if we have reason to believe that they come under His. But the true relation of authority and private judgment, in matters of religion, appears more clearly on a more cognate subject, the subject of morals. In morals there is a commonly recognised standard from which a man could not differ without being looked upon with almost universal suspicion—say, on the subject of personal purity and truthfulness. We hold up before each generation as it rises this authoritative standard, this "norma" of moral truth. We do not tell a man as he grows up not to think on moral subjects, not to exercise his own private judgment, but we do tell him that if he exercises it in every way aright he will arrive at an agreement with the authoritative "norma," though the norma is a very old one, which has not materially varied since Christianity first illuminated the moral conscience of mankind, and though on non-theological ground, the basis of this moral dogma is not easily formed and stated—and if a man comes to a conclusion on morals counter to the established dogmas of purity and truth, we condemn him, not for having exercised his private judgment, but for having exercised it wrongly, conformity to the highest standard of mankind on a particular subject being taken as the test of right thinking on that subject. Indeed, unless we are prepared to identify self-will with the exercise of will, and license with liberty, and eccentricity with strength of character, we have no justification at all for putting private judgment as a contradiction to orthodoxy. The place of authority, then, is primarily and mainly in helping us to form our own judgment. We ought to bring our thoughts and feelings, our desires, into the light of the established and recognised authority, which may provisionally, and in the light of common experience, be regarded as expressing the collective wisdom, and setting the standard on the subject, whether of taste, knowledge, or religion. Our judgment ought not to be formed in an isolated, individualistic manner. It is out of committing ourselves to authority that right reason normally and naturally grows. Behind holy teachers, behind our mother's influence, there should be the great mother, the "mother of us all." To receive in the Church of Christ in earliest years—in education, at the time of our confirmation—a body of truth, a system of practice emphasising and embodying holiness of life, to receive it on her loving authority, and to grow up, as our faculty develops, into the intellectual recognition of her truths and practices on our own judgment—this is the moral growth of man. 3. The general principle of authority admits of a great variety of applications in matters of religion. Let us apply it to one particular state of mind. There is a very widely spread fear of committing oneself in matters of religion. A man is often deeply impressed with the need of religion. He has little doubt that the Christian life is what he wants, and to his practical judgment it appears reasonably clear that the Christian life is indissolubly bound up with the Christian motives, and that Christian motives derive their only force from positive and supernatural facts. Why, indeed, should anybody deem that the life can be severed from the truth which has moulded the life? Christian holiness has reigned supreme and final in the world of morals since its origin. And it has come down indissolubly bound up with its environment of doctrines, sacraments, ministries in the Christian society. In the strength, more or less, of these thoughts, there is many and many a man who feels the attraction of the Christian Church: its appeal. It seems the true home of what is best in him and those about him. But it is so much to commit oneself to—is it all true?—*Crede ut intelligas* is the Church's reply. The understanding of spiritual things can result only from experience, and experience involves faith as its basis. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." The self-committal of faith must precede and be the basis of the satisfaction of the intellect. Well, is this unreasonable? Does it not appear on a little reflection that taking things on trust does in every department of life precede verification? The pure Pyrrhonist who professes to regard certainty about anything as unreasonable is the only person in theory who rejects the ultimate basis of faith. In the commonest know-

ledge of external nature is involved the taking on trust an objective reality which corresponds to the imitations of sensation. "It was pointed out," Mr. Spencer says, "when treating of the data of philosophy, that we cannot take even a first step (in knowledge) without making assumptions, and that the only course is to proceed with them as provisional, until they are proved true by the congruity of all the results reached. Apply this principle to the sphere of religion, where its application is more complete, and it gives just what we want, the *credo ut intelligas*. And do we suppose that we are in danger of really dwarfing our capacities for originality, our faculties of criticism, by such temporary suppression of them? On the contrary, is not the principle which Hegel used to inculcate in regard to education profoundly true—that we empoverish and reduce our faculties by a premature exercise of criticism, judgment, originality? Will, not intellect, is the basis of life. Self-conscious intellect belongs to the second stage, not the first. Faith is as legitimate a faculty of man as intelligence. It has its special exercise in realising man's moral and spiritual being. Why should we be ashamed of it? Why should it be apologised for? Thou shalt understand, but thou must first believe. 4. The scheme of Christian truth coheres. To a Christian believer who has advanced to any measure of understanding the whole is one and indissoluble. He recognises that it would be unreasonable to pick and choose; he recognises the coherence of the same sort of means by which we recognise the similar connection, far beyond our personal knowledge, in the department of science. Thus he abides under the shelter of the whole creed. He takes it on trust as a whole. The Christian Church seems to his spiritual faculties eminently trustworthy. He waits while the "Spirit leads him into all the truth." That is, he waits while in the growing experience of life, in the vicissitudes of failure and success, of joy and suffering, of growth and manhood, point by point, the truth becomes realised to his experience and his understanding. What was obscure is cleared up. What might have seemed at one time unnecessary is seen to have been wanted. If anything remains yet outside the sphere of his own personal verification, the processes of his past life warrant him in believing that the future will give it its place. There comes to hand—at this moment in a recent biography—a beautiful instance of the way in which one who stood wholly outside the Christian creed, and, as far as can be judged, by little or no fault of her own, came gradually within the bosom of the Church of Christ, and knew her Lord. Ellen Watson was a brilliant mathematician. When at the age of twenty she was a pupil of Professor Clifford, at University College, in London, and loved with the deepest respect and affection to speak of him as "the Master," he in his turn had a high admiration of her abilities, "believing," as we are told, "that she possessed the rare faculty for doing original work in his science; indeed, he even looked forward to her becoming known some day as a discoverer or originator in mathematics." Her position in regard to religion at that time is thus described: "The one absorbing passion of her mind was the love of positive truth, and this love was guarded by an almost severe morality of the intellect, which made her fear, above all things, every kind of illusion and self-deception. She dreaded, as an intellectual sin, the giving to a wish or a hope or a dream of the imagination the subject and influence of a conviction. Mathematics, by its strictly logical conclusions, and natural science, by its severe experimental tests, commended themselves to her high intellectual integrity as the greatest and best of all teaching, while at the same time they best satisfied the craving for positive truth which filled her soul, so that she delighted in resting on their conclusions as on an immovable basis. 'I do not need religion,' she often said at that time; 'science thoroughly satisfies me.' For, judged only as to the satisfaction afforded to the reason, religion appeared, by the side of positive science, as a collection of dim, uncertain facts mixed with conceptions of the imagination." The certainty of science "gave peace to her intellectual conscience; all else seemed misty—delusive." Within five years she died at Grahamstown, but with words very different on her lips, the words of triumphant faith and praise which make up the Church's "Gloria in excelsis," and with the Church's viaticum for her journey into the unseen world. The biography is mainly an account of the converson of her mind. It was a progress without a break. She lost nothing she had ever had. No part of her hold on scientific truth, her trust in scientific method, ever vanished. She did but, as she described it, gradually wake up in a larger world and found that the spiritual truths which she held by faith, though reached, it is true, by a different process, were still the "crowning knowledge of all that she had won before, perfecting and completing what was otherwise rudimentary and broken." The premature death of her master,

Clifford, and the discipline of sorrow and suffering, rudely shattered the completeness which she had at first assigned to the life in the mere visible world. The imperious exigencies of an awakened spirit forced her into the sphere of spiritual and supernatural facts. The recognition of the Divine Fatherhood came slowly but surely upon the mind. Through Divine Fatherhood came the belief in the Divine Sonship manifested in Christ, and while she was yet far off any clear grasp of the accuracies of the Christian faith, the Christian Church presented itself to her as embodying the truth, and satisfying man's obvious need for order, for spiritual shelter, for unity. She had none of that intellectual vanity which keeps clever people from confessing themselves wrong; none of that pride which makes us preserve our isolation. She desired to have perfect fellowship with the common Christian life. She accepted the Church in practice. She presented herself for confirmation. She sought and found in South Africa the fellowship of the saints in the Church. Authority presented itself to her, and was accepted by her just in the shape of something which embodied what her soul wanted. She recognised the truth, so hard to the natural will, that we must surrender ourselves, merge ourselves, if we are to find our true selves. (*C. Gore, M.A.*) *Spiritual judgment*:—The epithet *pneumatikos* as applied to believers is significant and comprehensive. It does not mean rational as opposed to sensual. It is the indwelling of the Spirit that gives character to the believer. The Spirit has an illuminating power, so that new discernment is imparted to the soul. This does not arise from light shed on the object, but from the effect produced on the mind. Its faculty of vision is restored; its eyes are opened. Before it was blind—not rationally so as not to perceive truth in its logical relations, nor morally so as to be insensible to moral distinctions, but spiritually so that it cannot discern the things of the Spirit. The case of the Jews in their judgment concerning Christ is an example. They saw that He was a wise man, that He was just, benevolent, and kind. They understood His words, but had no such discernment of His character as enabled them to see the glory of God as it shone in Him. The effect, therefore, produced in the mind is the ability to discern the things of the Spirit. Hence—I. THERE IS A COINCIDENCE OF JUDGMENT BETWEEN THE BELIEVER AND GOD. What God declares to be true the believer sees to be true. He acquiesces in the judgment of God as to sin, the method of salvation, the person of Christ, the doctrines of grace, the reality and importance of eternal things. So in his judgments of men. Those whom God approves the believer approves. This is the ground—1. Of the unity of faith among believers. 2. Of the unity of fellowship; so that all Christians recognise each other. 3. Of the authority of the Church, and of the only legitimate authority of tradition. 4. Why schism is a sin. II. THERE IS ALSO A COINCIDENCE OF FEELING, *i.e.*, the spiritual love what and whom God loves, and hate what and whom God hates. The friends of God are their friends. This is the reason why they have a common experience, and why they love each other as brethren. III. THERE IS A CONFORMITY IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER WITH THE WILL OF GOD. He does what is in accordance with the mind of the Spirit. This is the ground of the community of worship. They all walk by the same rule and worship the same God and Saviour. IV. ALL BELIEVERS ARE UNITED SO AS TO FORM ONE BODY. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Spiritual judgment*:—ITS RANGE. I. "He that is spiritual judgeth all things." 1. It is not said that he judges all men, or any man; he has his opinion as to their views; but in regard to their persons, "to their own Master they stand or fall." "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Spiritual judgment, then, has to do not with persons, but with things. Still, does it absolutely judge all things? It is clear that it will not make a man acquainted with the truths of science, or the facts of history, or the details of business. Many a great statesman has had very little spiritual judgment. It will not make a man a skilful Biblical critic, nor a profound theologian. 2. Paul speaks of those things which come within the sphere of the spiritual nature. The Spirit of God reveals to the soul a world which lies both within the present and outside it. It is in a hidden chamber whose existence we dimly felt, but which God's Spirit makes known to us; and this chamber has in it a window which looks out on a new and infinite universe. We do not know ourselves, our fall and possible rise, our sin and salvation, until we are taken in there. This world may seem to those who have not been in it a narrow and poor and almost non-existent thing. But to those who have lived in it, it grows in certainty as its life grows, and it deepens and expands and rises, until it penetrates and comprehends the natural world on every side. II. ITS INDEPENDENCE—"he himself is judged of no one." 1. This does not mean that the

spiritual man is beyond the judgment of others when he has contravened human law. Nor is he exempt from judgment in his spiritual life. He can never be freed from the judgment of God, and his fellow-Christians may have it in their power to instruct and correct his judgment. And then, again, any man of the world can judge a Christian man's conduct, so far as it comes before the outward eye; he can approve it or he can condemn it, and he has a right to do so. 2. What, then, is meant by "he is judged of no man"? (1) The apostle is speaking of an inward, spiritual region into which the Christian man has been introduced by God's Spirit, and of the judgments which natural men, who have no experience of it, may form of it, and of him as he lives in it. (2) Perhaps the best way of illustrating this is to take Paul himself, and see how he had a whole world within him removed from the judgment of natural men around. Take (*a*) the great truth of salvation by grace without the works of the law. It was looked on by many then and since as an immoral doctrine. But they could not understand that in receiving this free grace there is a new nature received, the motions of which are always saying, "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (*b*) Neither could he be judged as to the way his new life was supported. Men saw the persecutions, &c., to which he was exposed. The world could not understand how the spirit in him was sustained, and rose up in fresh flames of consuming zeal. (*c*) The mere natural man could not understand the happiness of his life. Let us only think of this chain which begins with hope and ends with it, like two golden nails fixed to the gate of heaven, while the links hang down into all the trials of life, which are touched and turned to gold by their Divine fastenings (Rom. v. 2–5). Now this was not peculiar to the apostle. The experience of most Christian men will fall very far short of that of the apostle, but it is the same in kind; and they have a right to set this inner world, in which their spirit is living and moving, against all the arguments which the outer can advance. III. ITS GUIDANCE AND TESTS. 1. It must never separate itself from its source—God's Spirit acting through God's Word. The spiritual judgment, if it is to be sound, can never be cut off from this fountain-head. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple," &c. But in order to this there are two things to be observed. (1) We must not form our judgment on single texts, but on the breadth of Scripture—the letter may kill, the spirit gives life; and I know no better way of reaching the breadth of Scripture than by carrying it up in its final issue to the Lord Jesus Christ. Many things that are doubtful become simple when we ask, What would the example and spirit of Christ lead us in this case to say and do? (2) We must ask the guidance of the Spirit which gave the Word, and which kindled any light in us that we may possess. To ask the Author of the book to explain it is the true way of being guided aright (Psa. xxv. 6). 2. After this guidance from the Source, there is that which we may receive from the new nature formed within, and from the growth of it in obedience to God's will. (*J. Ker, D.D.*) *The spiritual man unknown to the world*:—We have here—I. A SPIRITUAL CHARACTER. The "natural man" is man in his unregenerate state, under the power and influence of those principles and affections which are natural; the spiritual man is man renewed by the Spirit of God. 1. Spiritual men have—(1) Spiritual appetites: they hunger and thirst after righteousness. (2) Spiritual senses, which are exercised to discern good and evil; spiritual eyes—they can see Him on His throne; spiritual ears—they can hear His voice. (3) Spiritual lips—they show forth His praise. (4) A spiritual taste—and therefore they can savour the things of God. 2. Let us particularise, and lay down a few tests by which the spiritual may be known. As regards—(1) The thoughts. They cluster around the Cross. Evil thoughts may enter, but they enter either by fraud or force. But they enter the mind of the natural man as friends and acquaintances. (2) The desires. "There be many that say, Who will show us any good?" They seek their happiness in the things of time and sense only. But "the spiritual" pray, "Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon me." These desires in the Christian may not arise so high as he could wish; but this is the current in which they flow, the end to which they move. (3) Gratitude. If ever a natural man feels anything like gratitude it is for some temporal favour. Now a spiritual man overlooks none of God's mercies. He blesses Him for his daily bread, but much more for heavenly bread. He blesses God for his civil freedom, but above all for the freedom with which the Son hath made him free. (4) The use of creature possessions. A natural man only uses them as bodily gratification; or, if mentally, as objects of curiosity and science. But a spiritual man sees God in everything. (5) Association. While here, we

must have to do with the world; otherwise we must needs go out of it. But a spiritual man, when he is entirely free, will say with David, "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that love Thy name." (6) Conversation. Spiritual discourse to a natural man is always uninviting, and even irksome. But the spiritual man encourages it and is at home in it. (7) Devotional exercises. The spiritual man does not draw nigh to God with his lips while his heart is far from Him. II. AN ATTRIBUTE ATTACHED TO THIS CHARACTER. "The spiritual judgeth" (*i.e.*, discerns) "all things." This must be qualified by being taken with four limitations. "All things" mean religious things, and apply—1. To religious things only. True religion tends to make men wiser in other things—by arousing their faculties, by exciting their energies, by inducing them to redeem their time; but Paul does not refer here to the knowledge of nature, arts, science, &c., but to "the things of the Spirit," "the things which are of God." 2. Only to religious things that are revealed. "Secret things belong to God," &c. 3. To religious things only of importance. Everything in religion is not equally momentous, though it is equally true. What you are required to know is not the decrees of God, but His commands; His promises, rather than His prophecies. A man may be spiritual and yet not able to judge what kind of creature the leviathan was; or know where is the locality of Ophir, or the length of a Jewish cubit. A man may be able to open the seals and blow the trumpets—that is, in his own imagination—and be no nearer to the kingdom of God than before. 4. Only to the knowledge of these comparatively; not absolutely and completely. For who by searching can find out God—who can find out the Almighty to perfection? Paul, after knowing so much of Christ for so many years, says, "That I may know Him." (See also Eph. iii. 18, 19.) III. A DISTINCTION. "Yet he himself is judged of no man." 1. This distinction must be exemplified. (1) You have, perhaps, acquired a certain art, and a person, ignorant of the art, calls in question your proficiency in it, and you say, "I am not to be judged of by such as you." How could Handel be judged of properly by a novice in the principles of music? How could a statesman, in executing the complex concerns of a whole nation, be judged of by a man not able to manage his own family, or even himself? (2) It is always difficult to judge a man religiously. For we are ignorant of the heart and of a thousand things which may tend either to extenuate or condemn. For a man may be conscientious in certain things in which he is condemned. Therefore our Saviour says, "Judge not," and afterwards applauds judgment. "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." (3) But the spiritual is absolutely inexplicable to the natural man. "He is a new creature," and not, therefore, to be judged of by the old rules and principles of natural men. He knows them, but they know not Him! He has been in their condition, but they have not been in His! 2. The spiritual are, therefore, said to be "men wondered at." (1) Others may think it strange that we "run not with them to the same excess of riot"; but they know not what it is that has weaned us from it all, viz., the discovery of something infinitely superior. (2) They wonder that you should find such delight in the exercises of the Lord's day. While they say, "What a weariness it is!—when will it be over?" you are "made joyful in the house of prayer." (3) Their experience under affliction often perplexes the people of the world. They see their afflictions, but they do not see their consolations. (4) Their conduct is often equally puzzling to them. They wonder to see them following a course which exposes them to endure reproach and self-denial. They know not the lever that moves them, and are unacquainted with the machine—the love of Christ—that sets all in motion. (5) Neither can they judge of the system of doctrine which they hold. It may seem to them as though they may "continue in sin that grace may abound." But no, they hate the very "appearance of evil." "How can we who are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Conclusion: 1. Our subject accounts for Christians not being very ready to communicate to men of the world of their religion and experience. They would not understand it. David said, "Come and hear, *all ye that fear God*, and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul." They could relish it, but others could not. 2. Christ accounts for the divers misrepresentations of Christians by men of the world. "The world knoweth them not," although they are very free in speaking of them. Let us learn, then, to be indifferent as to the judgment of the world. 3. But is there nothing by which the people of the world may judge you who are spiritual? Yes. They can judge of—(1) Your talents. They may, perhaps, be able to say to you, "You think more highly of yourself than you ought to think." (2) Your outward condition, and know that

you live above your income, and that you had better lower some of your sails. (3) Your consistency as professors of religion. "What do ye more than others?" You profess more than others, and you are to be judged of by your own pretensions. (4) The moral and practical effects of your feelings and experience. You should, therefore, seek to abound in all the fruits of righteousness, and to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. (*W. Jay.*) *The spiritual faculty*:—Nothing seems at first sight more reasonable than to expect that a revelation which is intended for all mankind should rest on such evidence as can be appreciated by all men. How otherwise can it be universal? Surely the evidence ought to be such as to bear the fullest and strictest investigation by all sound intellects; it ought to be impossible for any one who reasons exactly to fail to reach the right conclusion. Nay, there seems to be not only truth but justice in this claim. The revelation professes to be made not to perfect but imperfect men, not to the holy but to the sinful. To send such a revelation to men who have some peculiar power of appreciating the evidence for it, and to make the reception of it depend on their exercise of that power, seems to contradict not only rational expectation but the demands of equity. How are sinners to be saved if the means of their salvation cannot reach them on account of something in the very sinfulness from which it is the purpose to deliver them? Ought not religious knowledge to be treated as all other knowledge is treated? Ought it not to be considered a branch, in fact, of natural science? Ought not its evidence to be subjected to the same kind of investigation; ought not its basis to be observed facts, handled by strict reasoning; ought not its truth or falsehood to be decided in precisely the same way as the truth or falsehood of any other assertions. Nevertheless, in spite of all this, which is undeniably weighty, we find the revelation which we have received distinctly declining to submit its claims for recognition to these conditions. It appeals to a distinct faculty from those which decide on the truth or falsehood of assertions concerning the laws of nature. It insists that the spiritual man who accepts its teaching, while still keeping all his natural faculties and capable as ever of judging all questions which those natural faculties can handle and determine, has in him a faculty of judging of spiritual truth which is either wanting or dormant or possibly dead in others. It declares with St. Paul that if the gospel be hid it is hid to those who are blinded. How, then, can we call this reasonable or fair? Now, as regards the reasonableness, it must be plain that even in regard to natural phenomena there is a vast difference between one observer and another, and that not only as between the trained observer and the untrained, but between the capacity of one man for being trained and the capacity of another. There are men who cannot see for themselves the facts on which the inferences of science are based, and some cannot even see them when aided by having them pointed out by men of clearer sight than themselves. The conclusions rest on observations in the making of which men differ in power from one another, and, nevertheless, no man is allowed to plead that because his faculties cannot discern the fact, therefore the fact is no fact at all. Now, the same thing is unquestionably true as regards the fundamental facts of all real religion. The claim that the intellect and not the spiritual faculty shall judge of the truth or falsehood of a religious revelation is a claim that bad men and good men, men with aspirations to holiness and men content with their own moral and spiritual condition and desiring nothing higher, shall be on precisely the same level. And this is not so, and never can be so. The man who hungers and thirsts after righteousness sees truths which are not seen by men who have no such hunger nor thirst. He not only knows better what is meant by the beauty of self-sacrifice, of holiness, of unearthliness, but he knows too and sees as others do not see the eternity and supremacy of these things. And the perception of these facts makes an enormous difference in the inferences which he perpetually draws from the sum total of the facts before him. He draws different inferences because he takes into account different premises. He sees that the inferences drawn from the partial premises which alone are within the reach of bodily observation are of necessity incomplete, and he cannot be content with them. The question, whether there is a God at all, whether the Bible comes from Him, whether the history told in the New Testament is a true history, have to be determined with due regard to the insight which he ever has within himself into the eternal nature, into the absolute sovereignty, into the more silent but imperative command of the great law of duty. This will demonstrate to him the existence of God; this will largely determine his judgment on the true nature of the Bible; this will never be for-

gotten in his estimate of the historical truth of the New Testament. The value which he attaches to particular human testimony, the degree in which he will allow the possibility of exceptions to those generalisations which we call the laws of nature, but which after all are nothing but generalisations, must be and must rightly be gravely affected by his looking at the evidence taken as a whole from the point of view which belongs to his spiritual character. If his premises are different, it is inevitable that his conclusions must be different also. So true is this and so sure is the operation of the spiritual character upon the hold that a man has on religious truth, that we can trace it not only in the decision of the great question of all, Shall we believe in a God or not? but in the acceptance of particular doctrines contained in the revelation we have received. Thus, for instance, the doctrine of our Lord's Atonement is grasped with a strength by some Christians which is not to be traced in the convictions of others. And if we search for the reason we always find it in the conflict which these men have had to pass through which others have not known. St. Paul, from the agony of his struggle with his own lower nature, came to the Cross with a passionate conviction of his need of a Saviour which we cannot find expressed with the same fervour in any other writings than his. The man whose inner life has been comparatively calm and who has known nothing of such violence of battle, will not see with the same vividness that the Cross of Christ is his one hope, and while accepting the doctrine will not place it at the very height of all his faith. The varying spiritual characters give an insight into varying aspects of spiritual truth, but without the spiritual character such insight cannot be. When, therefore, it is seen that religious men decide differently from other men questions which have to be decided on evidence, there is nothing in this that is contrary to reasonable expectation. They are, of course, liable to make mistakes in the inferences, just as all men are liable to make mistakes. But the difference in their conclusion is not due to the fact that they reason differently from others, and set aside the ordinary canons of inference. It is due to their taking into account certain premises which others disregard and cannot help disregarding. But to deal with the other demand, namely, that a revelation to sinners ought to be appreciable to sinners: it is to be observed that the revelation was never intended to work mechanically without any demand on the moral action of those to whom it was made. It was intended to be effectual on those who were willing to use it, and, therefore, it was made to be appreciated in accordance with that willingness. It was offered to all, but it was offered without relieving or being intended to relieve any from responsibility for his own life. The responsibility of every individual moral being is a fundamental religious truth, never to be set aside. And in order that this responsibility may be complete, it must extend not only to action in obedience to revelation when accepted, but to the act of acceptance itself. Men shall not be prevented from accepting it because they have sinned; provided there still remain the power of longing for higher things, even though that longing be of the faintest and the feeblest. The revelation of God meets the aspiration of man. Where there is the upward spring of the soul, even though that soul be in the very blackest depths of evil, there shall penetrate the power of the voice of God, and shall give force to the effort, and shall touch the heart, and shall clear the insight, and shall revive the conscience, and shall make the will the master of the life, to go on ever and to go on upwards, in spite of falls and failures many, to the very presence of God Himself. But if now it be asked what judgment can be formed of those who, notwithstanding, have come to the conclusion that the revelation is not true, the answer is plain, no judgment can be formed by us. We are speaking all this time not of the application of the laws of the spiritual world to individual men, but of the laws as they are in themselves. It is conceivable that a man's spiritual faculty may be palsied by the concentration of his mind on the phenomena of sensible things. The possibilities travel beyond our conceptions, and leave us unable to say what exceptions to His general rules our heavenly Father may make. Of this we are sure, to begin with, that His justice is absolute, and we are told expressly that when all secrets are revealed this also shall be plainly seen. But until that day we must be content, in spite of apparent contradictions, to leave all judgment on men's souls absolutely to Him. These arguments are not to enable us to judge others, but to enable us with strong certainty to live in our own faith, and to show us in what direction we are to seek for that which will confirm that faith in us and aid the formation of that faith in others. There is nothing which will help either others or ourselves more than the perpetual reiteration of the majesty, of the

eternity, of the supremacy of that which is the very essence of the nature of God Himself, the law of duty. (*Bishop Temple.*) **For who hath known the mind of the Lord? . . . But we have the mind of Christ.**—*The mind of God is*—I. UNFATHOMABLE. His thoughts are—1. Vast. 2. Unsearchable. 3. Unbiased. II. DISCLOSED TO HIS SERVANTS. 1. In Christ. 2. By His Spirit. 3. Through faith. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The mind of Christ*:—We may have the mind of Christ—1. Representatively. The minds of great men represent themselves—(1) Through the character of their disciples. Jesus put His disciples in possession of His mind—both its great ideas and governing sympathies. They faithfully represented His mind to others. They died; but their followers, in their turn, transmitted the mind which they received. We look at the true Church, and we can see in it the mind of Christ. (2) Through literature. A man's book is a kind of second incarnation of himself. Thus the mind of Jesus has come down to us in the New Testament. (3) In their historic influence. Christ's mind has come down to us in this way. 2. Personally. Christ has distinctly assured us that He—not His mere influence, but Himself—is with His Church always, even unto the end, to enlighten, sanctify, guard, and strengthen it. This fact gives the Bible a wonderful advantage over other books. I take up the work of a departed author, and I find many things which I cannot understand, but I have no help. But when I take up the Bible—though it has been written for centuries—its Author is by my side. If we have the mind of Christ, then—I. WHETHER WE RIGHTLY ACT IN RELATION TO THAT MIND OR NOT, OUR OBLIGATION IS IMMENSE. Our obligation is ever regulated according to the powers and privileges with which Heaven has endowed us. "Unto whom much is given, of them much will be required." In connection with this principle note—1. That the most precious thing in the universe is mind. Matter, in all its forms of life and beauty, is but the creature, symbol, and servant of mind. One human soul, though tabernacling in poverty, is of more essential worth than the sun. The sun has no feeling, thought, volition; it can neither form an idea of itself, nor of its Author. But the feeblest moral mind has all this, and can do all this. 2. That the most precious mind in the universe is the mind of Christ. (1) All human minds are not of the same relative value. The minds of such men as Newton, Bacon, Milton are worth the aggregate mind of their age. But he who is instrumental in restoring one soul to moral truth and God, may do a greater work for the universe than he who corrects a hundred inferior minds. But the most majestic intellects bear no comparison with the mind of Christ; His mind was "the image of the invisible God." (2) Now nothing enhances our responsibility so much as connection with minds of a high and holy order. But contact with the mind of Christ enhances our responsibility a thousandfold. "If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin," &c. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world," &c. II. IF WE ACT RIGHTLY IN RELATION TO THAT MIND, THE EFFECTS ON OUR CHARACTER WILL BE MOST GLORIOUS. There are three great blessings which will result. 1. Mental vivacity. Mind is the quickener and developer of mind. The amount of vital energy and impulse, however, which one mind is capable of imparting to another will, perhaps, generally depend upon two conditions. (1) The character of the subjects of intercourse. Where they are tame commonplaces or vague abstractions, but a small amount of impulse will be imparted; but where they are of an opposite character, a powerful effect may be expected. (2) The native vigour of the mind that presents these subjects. The most moving subjects will produce little effect when presented by a lifeless mind; but where there is great native energy in the soul of the communicator, in any case, there must be a powerful effect. Now you have just these two conditions in the highest form in connection with the mind of Christ. His mind is life and light—condensed energy and focal flame. His mind broke the mental slumbers of humanity, put the world in action, and gave it an impulse that shall go on accumulating for ever. He, therefore, who is rightly connected with the mind of Christ must be a man of mental earnestness. A sleepy-minded Christian is a solecism—a contradiction. 2. Moral assimilation. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise." Fellowship with a pre-eminently spiritual, holy, humble, benevolent, and devout mind is eternally incompatible with worldliness, impurity, pride, selfishness, and impiety. 3. True happiness. Christ's mind does two things towards human happiness. (1) It removes all obstructions. Sin is the great obstruction, and the great work of Christ is "to put away sin"; to put it away in its—(*a*) Idea form—the intellectual errors of men are sources of misery. (*b*) Disposition form—the wrong and conflicting dispositions

of men are sources of misery. (c) Guilt form—the sense of guilt upon the conscience is a sore element of distress. (2) It supplies the necessary condition of happiness. A suitable object of supreme love. Our supreme affection is the fountain of our happiness; but for the supreme affection to yield perfect happiness it must be free from all moral defects, capable of helping us in all the contingencies of our being, ever reciprocating our affections, and one which will continue with us for ever. In Christ we have all this, and nowhere else. If, then, we are in right connection with the mind of Christ, we are happy. Melancholy and gloom are foreign to Christianity. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) "*The mind of Christ*":—A wonderful property, even for an apostle! And if it is within our reach that man must be a fool who does not give his mind to consider what it is, and how it is to be obtained. The expression is a full one—for you may take the words and actions of a man, and still fall short of his mind. For that is his spirit, the motive which actuates him, the feeling which moulds his conduct, the inner life which gives tone and character to his outer being. So you might copy Christ's example, and speak and act like Christ—but all the while be unable to say, "I have the mind of Christ." Note—I. WHAT THE CONSTITUTION OF "THE MIND OF CHRIST" WAS. 1. It was altogether human. It is an idle thought that the body of Christ was human, but the spirit or mind of Christ was Divine. That which is Divine, being always infinite, is incapable of any growth or increase. But Christ "increased in wisdom." So complete was Christ's emptying of Himself here for our sakes that His mind became subject to all the laws by which our intellect is governed. 2. This is necessary for the truth of the history, to the integrity of His humanity, for the perfectness of His sympathy and power, for His being an exemplar that we may imitate. II. HOW DID THE HUMAN MIND OF JESUS BECOME THAT SUBLIME AND PERFECT THING IT WAS? He had "the Spirit without measure." 1. This thought is the connecting link which unites our little minds with His. For this is exactly Paul's reasoning. "The spirit which is of God" is identified with the mind of Christ. That soul of Jesus, then, infinitely stored with the Holy Spirit, becomes a fountain from whence that Spirit is always pouring out into His own people; so that "out of His fulness have all we received." And this it is which makes a gift of the Spirit so very sweet to a Christian. 2. And, as that process goes on, every fresh communication of the Holy Ghost, passing as it does from the bosom of Jesus, enables us to say with greater and greater truth, "We have the mind of Christ." III. THE ADVANTAGES WHICH BELONG TO THOSE WHO HAVE "THE MIND OF CHRIST." 1. As respects that great search after truth, no man can really understand the Bible who does not bring to the study of it "the mind of Christ." Now mark the apostle's reasoning. He says, no man can tell what is passing in any man's mind except that man himself. In like manner he says, no one can know what is passing in the mind of God but God only. But if only God knows God, how can we know God? By having "the mind of Christ." Thus, then, it is, by bringing "the mind of Christ" in our souls to "the mind of Christ" in the Bible that we can understand the mind of God. 2. The possession of "the mind of Christ" is a wonderful clue to the intricate windings of the labyrinth of life. There are thousands of points which require instantaneous decision. The juncture gives little space to go to some friend, or even to the Bible. At such moments a rapid perception of the right is an inestimable gift, and we shall have that if we have "the mind of Christ." 3. They have the benefit of "the mind of Christ" who wish to pray rightly. God has given us the license to "ask what we will, and it shall be done." But may not a man inadvertently ask and obtain a curse? Our security in that dangerous privilege is in the knowledge of the Bible—an acquaintance with God's promises. But we want something quicker. Those who bring Christ in them to their knees, having "the mind of Christ" in asking, know what is "the mind of Christ" in giving. And it is surprising to what an extent this may control and guide prayer. The Syrophenician woman had it, when she would not cease till she had obtained what she wanted. Abraham had it equally when he stayed his supplication for Sodom at "the ten." And doubtless Paul also, when he ceased to deprecate "the thorn" at the third petition. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The Christly spirit* (Phil. ii. 5, and text):—Let the thought, the aim, the spirit of Christ be in you and be yours. All that He did, wills, approves, and blesses, even in the details of every-day life. Observe here the Christly spirit—I. URGED AS THE SUPREME PATTERN OF SELF-RENUNCIATION. Mark—1. Voluntary humiliation. "He emptied Himself," "became obedient unto death." He who would study the grand pattern for the Christly life must begin in the valley of humiliation. 2. Absolute surrender for others—the per-

fection of self-sacrifice. "He came not to be ministered unto," &c. 3. Disinterestedness in benevolence—"Looking to the things of others." 4. The grand law of Christian discipleship. Though we may never be able to equal the incomparable humility, gentleness, and self-sacrifice of Christ, yet we may follow His example. II. POSSESSED—AS THE DIVINEST INSPIRATION TO THE HIGHER LIFE. No man that would ascend to the loftiest moral excellence but must possess "the mind of Christ." By the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ there is imparted into us—1. Strength to fight against sin and to achieve a victory. 2. Inspiration to spiritual power, beauty, excellence, and holiness. 3. Harmony of heart with the heart of God. III. REALISED—AS THE CROWNING ENDOWMENT FOR THE NOBLEST SERVICE. "We have the mind of Christ." The conscious possession of the mind of Christ has led thousands to make the highest sacrifice and to render the noblest service—Luther to attempt the Reformation; Robert Raikes to establish the Sunday-schools; Charles of Bala to originate the British and Foreign Bible Society, &c. Lessons: The attainment is—1. Possible. 2. Certain. "We have." 3. Let us all seek it afresh, for the glory of God, for the good of others, and our own happiness. (*J. Harries.*) *The certainty and solidity of the experience of Christian believers:*—I. WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST. 1. Enlightening the understanding. 2. Assuring the conscience. 3. Informing the judgment. 4. Renewing the heart. II. WE ARE THUS FORTIFIED AGAINST THE OBJECTIONS OF ALL UNBELIEVERS. Because—1. They do not know the mind of God. 2. Are incompetent to judge of spiritual things. 3. Much more to offer any instruction to those who have the Spirit of God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

CHAPTER III.

VERS. 1–12. **And I . . . could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal . . . babes in Christ.**—*Incapacity in hearers:*—I. THAT THE IGNORANCE AND SINFULNESS OF A PEOPLE ARE A JUST CAUSE WHY FAITHFUL AND WISE MINISTERS OF THE WORD DO NOT SOMETIMES PREACH OF THE MORE SUBLIME AND EXCELLENT POINTS IN CHRISTIANITY. Paul desired not only to lay a good foundation, but also to build an excellent superstructure, but the ignorance of his hearers restrained him. Even as the husbandman does not sow his best seed, wheat, and the like, because his ground is so barren that it will not bear it. As the schoolmaster teacheth not his choicest notions, because the scholar cannot receive them. To open the doctrine, consider that in Christianity, and so in our preaching, there is a twofold kind of matter. 1. That which is fundamental, plain, necessary, and easy, being the first principles of religion, the total ignorance whereof damneth. 2. There are admirable consequences and conclusions to be deduced from and improved out of these, unto which the godly are to grow, not resting in the former, but greedily desiring the latter. This is to show you that Christ's school hath many forms, and it is a sin and a shame to be always in the alphabet. For further prosecuting the doctrine, consider, first, how ignorance doth restrain the minister's abilities. And ignorance is an impediment to our preaching, in these particulars: first, the more eminent and sublime mysteries of the gospel about Christ and His righteousness we cannot so frequently preach upon, but these things which may be known of God by the natural light of conscience and by the works of creation. There are things known of God partly by natural light of conscience, especially if furthered with education, and things by supernatural revelation and authority of the Scripture merely; such is the old doctrine about Christ and His offices. Now this later sort of matter, which is the marrow and life of all preaching, many of our congregations, as they now stand corrupted with blindness and ignorance, are not prepared to receive it. Secondly, as those sublime mysteries cannot be often preached on (though sometimes we must, because we are debtors to the wise as well as the foolish, and there are spiritual as well as carnal in our congregations), so likewise that growth in knowledge, and increase more and more in heavenly light and knowledge, cannot be pressed where gross ignorance is. Can we expect any increase or fruit when men are not so much as plants planted by God? Alas! the ministers of God have far higher and larger degrees of knowledge and grace to press you to if once the foundation were laid. Thirdly, there are many choice

and excellent duties in the exercise whereof a Christian would have much joy and bring much glory to God; but the ignorance of a people makes the minister not so frequently urge those, because other things must be done first. The duties are these: Let the Word of God dwell plentifully in you, teaching and admonishing one another (Col. iii. 6). Fourthly, the ignorance of a people restraineth the ministers of God, that they cannot so powerfully press at first the pure and sincere worship of God, and the leaving of all superstitious and traditional ways of worship; but they must by degrees, here a little, and there a little, as they are able to bear it. Thus much for ignorance. Then the sinfulness of people makes them incapable of many precious truths in religion. As, first, the minister's labour is most spent in discovering the damnable nature of gross sins, taking them off from their brutish ways; and as for spiritual sins, unbelief, diffidence in the promises, carnal confidence in themselves, &c. These they cannot so much press against, because such auditors come far short of civility, and therefore much less reach to piety. Secondly, to a people living in gross sins we cannot so frequently and gloriously preach Jesus Christ in the offices of a Mediator. We cannot make it our work to set forth the promise of the gospel in its glory. We cannot preach of joy and peace in believing. Thirdly, the performing of duties in a spiritual and gracious manner, so as to have communion with God and to enjoy Him. This also is too high for wicked men. Use: To awaken people out of their ignorance and sinfulness. If Aristotle thought a young man no fit auditor for his morals because he was subject to unruly affections, how fit can people blind in mind, corrupt in affections, be to receive the truths of God! How much of the study, labour, parts, and godliness of a minister may be lost through the indocibleness of hearers! Though we preach not Latin, yet the matter we preach may be so spiritual, heavenly, that it may be as unintelligible as an unknown tongue. II. THAT EVEN AMONG THOSE WHO ARE TRULY AND INDEED OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH OF GOD, THERE IS A VAST DIFFERENCE; SOME ARE SPIRITUAL, SOME ARE CARNAL, SOME ARE MEN, SOME ARE BABES. Though God created Adam and Eve in their full perfection, yet He doth not regenerate us into a full stature in Christ. The apostle in the text speaks of two degrees only amongst the godly—the spiritual and the carnal, the men and the babes. These Corinthians are said to abound in all utterance, and they came behind no Church in any gift; yet no Church so carnal. Here were gross heresies, divisions, and several gross practices; so that a spiritual people is not a people of parts and knowledge and abilities only, but of grace and raised sanctification also. Now as there are these degrees in the truly godly, so there are peculiar duties required of them. The spiritual man is, first, to be charitable and indulgent to those that are weaker, not to despise them. Secondly, the spiritual man is to walk humbly, and to be always in an holy fear and trembling. Thirdly, the spiritual man is to consider God requireth more of him than of others; his account will be the more terrible. Then as for the carnal or babes, two things belong to them. First, that they be not dejected, or quite out of hopes, because they are babes. Fathers have naturally tender affections to those children that are most infirm and weak. Secondly, take heed of resting in low things. To be always weak, to be always carnal, doth highly provoke God and grieve a faithful ministry; to grow in grace and bring forth much fruit are made necessary to our continuance in the state of grace. Use 1. To confute that proud and arrogant doctrine that will have none members of a Church but who are perfect, and those also who arrogate perfection to themselves. Where can such be found? Use 2. If those that are truly godly, yet imperfect, retaining some ignorance and some infirmities on them, are such a trouble unto the godly ministers, how unsufferable then are such as are altogether carnal! If wheat, because of some blemish in it, be to be blamed, what then is cockle and plain weeds? If imperfect fruit displease the gardener, what then do brambles and weeds? (*A. Burgess.*) *The comparative carnality of Christians*:—I. CHRISTIANS ARE DECIDEDLY, THOUGH NOT WHOLLY, SPIRITUAL. The marks of their spirituality are these:—1. A freedom from wilful and habitual subjection to any sin. 2. The measurement of their obedience by the perfect law. 3. The ascribing of all the excellences attained by them to a Divine source. 4. Union among themselves. II. BUT THEY HAVE THE REMAINS OF AN OPPOSITE CHARACTER STILL EXISTING WITHIN THEM, IN THE MIDST OF WHICH THIS NEW ONE HAS SPRUNG UP. They remain too much carnal and become too little spiritual. 1. They bear not affliction well. 2. Their behaviour in the Church is not good; they quarrel and contend. 3. They pay too much attention to the pomp of this world. This state must be altered. Be no longer carnal, but walk ye in the Spirit.

(*J. Leifchild, D.D.*) *Reflections for Churches*:—I. THE GRADUATING METHOD OF TEACHING (vers. 1, 2). Truth is to be administered with regard to the receptive powers of the student, just as the administration of bodily food must have regard to the digestive capacities of those who need it. Though men might live on milk, strong meat would kill children. There are truths in the gospel of such an elevated character, requiring so much intellect and culture to appreciate them, that to enforce them on the attention of mental and moral children would be positively to injure them. Christ practised this method of teaching. He had many things to say which His disciples could not bear. This method of teaching shows—1. That a minister that may be useful to one class of men may be unprofitable to another. 2. The necessity of all who would enjoy the higher teaching to cultivate their mental and moral powers. II. THE CARNALITY OF CHURCHISMS (vers. 3, 4). By churchisms I mean sectarianisms, denominationalisms, &c. Paul says this is "carnal." Carnal because it engrosses the soul—1. In the human rather than the Divine. 2. In the personal rather than in the universal. 3. In the selfish rather than in the self-denying. 4. In the transitory rather than in the permanent. III. THE UNITY OF ALL TRUE MINISTERS (vers. 5–8). 1. One, notwithstanding the diversity of talents and kinds of labour. 2. One in grand practical aim. What were they working for? The spiritual cultivation of mankind. One planting, another watering, &c. Different kinds of labour, but still one. 3. One in their connection with God. (1) Whilst all depended on God for success, God gave the "increase." (2) All were co-workers with Him. "Labourers together with God." 4. One in their ultimate reward (ver. 8). Each from the same God, each according to his work. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *St. Paul's spiritual treatment of the Church whilst in a state of faction*:—Note—I. HIS ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT OF TRUTH. Economy in a household means frugality in opposition to extravagance. In the dispensation of truth it means that prudent distribution which does not squander it uselessly, but which apportions to each age and capacity the amount it can turn to good account. For different ages, different kinds of food. For childhood, or "babes in Christ," milk, &c.; but reverse this, and what is strength to the man is injury to the child—it cannot bear it. 1. The doctrine which the apostle calls "strong meat," if taught at first, would deter from further discipleship. "No man putteth a piece of new cloth into an old garment, &c. Now "strong meat" does not mean high doctrine, such as election, regeneration, justification by faith, but strong demands on self, a severe, noble life. St. Paul taught the Corinthians all the doctrine he had to teach, but not all the conceptions of the blessed life which he knew of. He showed them that, leaving the principles of doctrine, they were to grow up unto Christ in all things, but by degrees. From a child we must not ask sublime forgiveness of injuries. That which would be glorious in a man might be pusillanimity in a boy. You must content yourself at first with prohibiting tyranny. Do not ask of your child to sacrifice all enjoyment for the sake of others; but let him learn first not to enjoy at the expense of another. 2. Another reason for this is the danger of familiarising the mind with high spiritual doctrines to which the heart is a stranger, and thus engendering hypocrisy—*e.g.*, self-sacrifice, self-denial, are words easily got by rote; and while fluently talking of these high-sounding words, and of man's or woman's mission and influence, it never occurs to us that as yet we have not power to live them out. Let us avoid such language, and avoid supposing that we have attained such states. It is good to be temperate; but if you are temperate, do not mistake that for self-sacrifice. It is good to be honest; but when you are simply doing your duty, do not talk of a noble life. The danger of extreme demands made on hearts unprepared for such is seen in the case of Ananias. These demands were not, as we see, made by the apostles; but public opinion, which had made sacrifice fashionable, demanded it. And it was a demand like strong meat to the weak, for Ananias was "unable to bear it." II. HIS DEPRECIATION OF THE PART PLAYED BY MAN IN THE GREAT WORK OF PROGRESS, AND HIS EXHIBITION OF THE PART OF GOD (ver. 5). 1. In all periods of great social activity there is a tendency to exalt persons and means of progress. Hence, in turn, kings, statesmen, parliaments: and then education, science, machinery, and the press. Here, at Corinth, was "minister-worship." 2. St. Paul's remedy was to point out God's part and ours. "Ye are God's husbandry," we are only labourers. We execute a plan which we only slightly understand—nay, not at all, till it is completed, like workmen in a tubular bridge, or men employed in Gobelin tapestry, who cannot see the pattern of their work until the whole is executed. Conceive the labourer saying of some glorious piece of architecture: "Behold my

work!" or some poet, king, or priest, in view of some progress of the race: "See what I have done!" Who is Paul, but a servant of higher plans than he knows? (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *The ministerial office*:—As their dissensions had reference to their religious teachers, the apostle endeavours to correct the evil by presenting the ministerial office in its true light. I. MINISTERS WERE NOT HEADS OF SCHOOLS or rival sects, as were the Grecian philosophers, BUT MERE SERVANTS, without any authority or power of their own. One may plant, and another water, but the whole increase is of God (vers. 5–7). II. MINISTERS ARE ONE. They have one Master and one work. They may have different departments in that great work, but they are like fellow-labourers on the same farm, or fellow-builders on the same temple (vers. 8, 9). III. IN THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR RESPECTIVE DUTIES THEY INCUR A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY. If they attempt to build up the temple of God with the rubbish of their own wisdom, they will be severely punished. If they employ the materials which God has furnished, they will be rewarded (vers. 10–15). The Church is the temple of God, and ministers will be held to strict account for the doctrines which they preach and for the way in which they execute their office (vers. 16, 17). IV. NO MINISTER NEED DECEIVE HIMSELF IN THIS MATTER. He cannot preach a higher wisdom than the wisdom of God; and to learn that wisdom he must renounce his own (vers. 18–20). V. THEREFORE THE PEOPLE SHOULD NOT PLACE THEIR CONFIDENCE IN MINISTERS, who belong to the Church, and not the Church to them. To the interests and consummation of the Church all things, visible and invisible, are made subservient (vers. 21–23). (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Paul an example to Christian ministers*:—I. HIS WISDOM. 1. He discriminates the spiritual condition of his charge. 2. Unfolds it. 3. Adapts himself to it. II. HIS HUMILITY. 1. He repudiates all the glory of his success. 2. Claims no superiority over his brethren. 3. Ascribes all honour to God. III. HIS EXALTED VIEWS OF HIS WORK 1. Co-operation with God. 2. God's husbandry. 3. God's building. IV. HIS DEEP SENSE OF HIS RESPONSIBILITY. 1. He would build on the right foundation. 2. With solid material. 3. Under the solemn conviction that his work must be tried by fire. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **I have fed you with milk and not with meat.**—*Milk for babes*:—This second verse is a further amplification of Paul's complaint: they were babes, and not strong men. Wherein did this appear? By the meat he did provide for them. He compareth himself to a nurse, who does not provide strong meat, but milk for babes; for that were to kill them rather than to nourish them. Now this action of Paul's does denote the great skill and prudence which the apostle used, considering what was fit for his hearers, and condescending thereunto. He that was rapt up into the third heavens, what sublime mysteries might he have preached upon! But he preaches not to show his learning, but to do good to them. I. THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF PRUDENCE AND WISDOM REQUIRED IN THE MINISTERS OF GOD SO TO PREACH AS THAT IT MAY BE PROFITABLE TO THE HEARERS. The nurse is carefully to observe what meat the child may eat; the shepherd, what are the fit pastures for to lead his sheep into; the husbandman, what is the proper seed for such ground; the physician, what is the proper physic for such constitutions. To open this doctrine, consider that a minister's duty of feeding his flock lies in two things—his teaching of them and his governing of them—and both these require great prudence. If Solomon, above all things, prayed for wisdom to govern the people in civil things, how much more have we cause to pray for wisdom in the administration of spiritual things? How easily may we give you poison for bread without wisdom! 1. For information. There is required judgment and a sound mind to separate truth from falsehood; to know which is gold and precious stone, and which is hay and stubble; to winnow the chaff from the wheat. 2. As wisdom is required to choose out true and sound matter, so to proportion it to the capacity of the hearers. (1) To preach the nature of God and His attributes; of original sin, of conversion, of justification; as also about Christ and His offices. (2) To preach comfort, and dispense the grace of God in the gospel. But here is much wisdom required that he doth it not to impenitent sinners. (3) To rebuke and reprove for sin. Now how great a skill is it wisely to reprove, to have zeal and knowledge together! Some must be reproved sharply (Titus i. 13), cuttingly. We must not spare. Thus John called some a generation of vipers (Matt. iii. 7), and our Saviour, "Woe to you, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites," many times repeating that, upbraiding of them. Others, again, are tender, tractable; meekness will do more than austerity. As for Church government, the wise management of that is far more difficult than political. Let us consider the reason why this doctrinal feeding requireth such skill and prudence. First, because

Divine truths are not to be managed by human, worldly wisdom, but by spiritual wisdom. As it is God that teacheth people to profit (Isa. xlviii. 17), so it is God that teacheth the minister to preach profitably. Secondly, therefore, is wisdom necessary in our preaching of Divine things, because the miscarriage of these precious truths is a far greater loss than any earthly loss. It is pity for want of skill in any calling to miscarry in a man's worldly affairs, but much more in heavenly; there needs not only faithfulness, but wisdom. Thirdly, therefore is wisdom necessary, because of the untowardness and unteachableness of people which have sundry humours, sundry appetites, sundry affections and desires. Use: To show people's duty, how much they are to pray unto God for their teachers, that they may be directed into all good thoughts for their soul's good. The second doctrine remaineth to be amplified, which is—II. THAT IT IS VERY NECESSARY TO HAVE A PEOPLE INSTRUCTED WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION BEFORE THEY MAKE FURTHER PROGRESS IN RELIGION. Consider, first, and bewail the miserable atheism, ignorance, and blindness that every man naturally is born in about religion and Divine truths. Darkness covers our congregations, as it did the chaos at first. Secondly, as people are thus naturally ignorant of Divine truths, so also their wilful slothfulness about them is much more damnable. Thirdly, because naturally we are thus like a wilderness full of briars, therefore God hath strictly commanded this duty of instructing and informing those that are rude and ignorant in the ways of God. Fourthly, the two principles of religion are reduced to several heads, and are both short and easy, but necessary to be known. The doctrine about God, and Christ, and ourselves, which is the Credendum; the doctrine about faith and repentance, which is the Agendum; and about things to come, which is the Sperandum. But now, when we say these Divine principles are easy, you must take heed of two mistakes. 1. We do not mean that the Divine faith and belief of them is easy to flesh and blood. No; but they are easy supposing the grace of God in respect of other particulars in religion. The principles of religion are easy and plain to the mind enlightened, but they are either foolishness or absurdities to the greatest scholar, that is, if his heart be not opened. 2. We do not mean that the bare saying of the principles of religion by heart and rote is the true believing and knowing of them. As the child is not said to be fed with milk unless it swallow it down and be nourished by it, so neither can they be said to believe the principles of religion unless they do with understanding apply them and receive them into their hearts. Now the grounds for instruction in these principles are, first, because God accounts of no zeal nor devout affections if they be not the fruit of knowledge. Thus Christ told the woman that was so zealous for her Father's worship, "Ye worship ye know not what" (John iv. 22). Secondly, the principles are foundations, and are the root. Now, he would be an unwise artificer that should intend to rear up a house and lay no foundation. So that, so long as we preach to a people ignorant of these, we have no bottom to stand upon. Thirdly, without this good foundation laid, no preaching or duties can have any spiritual effect. Fourthly, conversion cannot be wrought without some knowledge of the principles. We cannot believe in Him we do not know. We cannot love Him we do not know. Fifthly, the knowledge of these principles is necessary to salvation. You that are ignorant totally of them cannot upon any just grounds hope for salvation. "This is eternal life, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent (John xvii. 2). "They are a people of no understanding, therefore He that made them will not save them" (Isa. xxvii. 11). God would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth (2 Tim. iii. 7). Sixthly, none can pretend excuses for their ignorance herein. That it is a great sin and just reproach to a people that have lived long under the means of grace if they have not got the true profit by it. The Word preached is commended in Scripture for several and Divine operations. Now if thou hast many years been under these droppings, and yet art a dry wilderness, how unsufferable is it! In other things of the world you think it not to be endured. I. For opening this, let us consider WHAT ARE THOSE CHOICE AND NOBLE EFFECTS OF THE MINISTRY FOR THE DEFECT WHEREOF A PEOPLE MAY BE SEVERELY BLAMED. First, illumination and enlightening of the understanding to believe the first principles and foundations of religion. Every science, and so that of Divinity, hath its first principles, which are easy and plain. They shine with their own light, as the sun shineth with its own light; you need not another sun to see it. So, though the sun be never so visible, if the eye be not prepared all is in vain to a blind man. What do such bats and owls in the sunshine of the gospel? Oh, if thou hadst lived in Sodom or

Egypt, it had not been such a wonder; but in Jerusalem to be so blind argueth thy case damnable! Secondly, the Word preached expects this effect, not only to lay a foundation, but to build upwards; not only to plant, but to grow. Thus Eph. iv. 13, the offices in the Church are to bring us to a full stature in Christ. Where God gives talents, He looks for increase. The ministry is a talent of which God will require a strict account. As Paul doth sharply reprove the Hebrews for this want of growth (Heb. vi.). Oh, then, sit not down at the lower round in the ladder, stay not at the bottom of the hill! Christianity is a race. There is work, and work enough for thee. Let all the world see there is a vast difference between living under no ministry, or a negligent ministry, and an instructing one. If corn should grow no better in improved grounds than in the barren heath it would be very strange. To a blind man the day and night is all one; he seeth as well at one time as another. Oh, fear thyself in a state of blindness, to whom preaching and no preaching, the ministry and no ministry, is all one; for thou makest no more progress! Thirdly, a third effect of the ministry is to establish and settle in the truth, to give a sound mind. For through men's corruptions, pride, and vain-glory, the ministry, as it may increase men's parts, so accidentally increase their errors. As April showers that make the flowers fresh and sweet, so cause many croaking frogs also. Lastly, it is a shame to a people living under the ministry of the gospel a long while if they are not thereby furnished with abilities for those several personal duties that God requireth of them. Oh, the many duties God looks for at your hands which will not be expected from others! II. In the next place, LET US OBSERVE WHAT A SIN IT IS IF PEOPLE ARE NOT ABLE TO BEAR OR RECEIVE THE PRACTICAL OPERATIONS OF THE WORD. For all knowledge, if it be not after godliness, is a tinkling cymbal. The Word is not only the tree of knowledge, but the tree of life also. If ye would receive the Word in the light and efficacy of it, keep not any compliance with carnal lusts. The truth is above your natural understanding, and the duties above your corrupt lives and affections. Sore eyes cannot bear the light. Festered wounds cannot bear salt; and yet the ministry is both light and salt. (*A. Burgess.*) *The distinction between milk and meat*:—I. NEGATIVELY. This distinction is not—1. That between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God. Paul did not preach the wisdom of the world to babes in Christ, and the wisdom of God to advanced Christians. 2. Not that between the *Disciplina Arcani*, or doctrine of the hidden essence of Christianity, which was introduced in later times. For the sake either of conciliating the heathen, or of preventing beginners from forming false notions of the gospel, it became common deliberately to conceal the truth. This is the foundation of the Romish doctrine of reserve—inculcating a blind faith and keeping the people in ignorance. 3. That which prevailed in the early Church between truth as the object of faith and as the object of knowledge. This is a distinction true in itself, but, as then understood, it meant nothing less than the difference between the doctrines of the Bible and the speculations of men. Philosophers of our own and of every other age have been willing to allow the people the truth as presented in the Scriptures, provided they themselves were allowed to explain them away into philosophic formulas. The true nature of the distinction is to be learnt—II. POSITIVELY. 1. From the import of the figure, which leads to the conclusion that the difference is rather in the mode of instruction than in the things taught. The same truth in one form is milk, in another strong meat. "Christ," says Calvin, "is milk for babes, and strong meat for men." Every doctrine which can be taught to theologians is taught to children. We teach a child that God is a Spirit, everywhere present and knowing all things, and he understands it. We tell him that Christ is God and man in two distinct natures and one person for ever. This to the child is milk, but it contains food for angels. The truth expressed in these propositions may be expanded indefinitely, and furnish nourishment for the highest intellects to eternity. The difference between milk and strong meat, according to this view, is simply the difference between the more or less perfect development of the things taught. 2. From parallel passages. In Heb. v. 11–14 the reference is to the distinction between the simple doctrine of the priesthood of Christ and the full development of that doctrine. The important truth is that there are not two sets of doctrine, a higher and a lower form of faith, one for the learned and the other for the unlearned; there is no part of the gospel which we are authorised to keep back from the people. Everything which God has revealed is to be taught to every one just so fast and so far as he has the capacity to receive it. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *The doctrines of the gospel the food of Christians*:—I. WHAT DOCTRINES THE APOSTLE

PREACHED TO THE CORINTHIANS. In all teaching it is necessary to begin with essential and fundamental principles. The same holds good in preaching the gospel to those who never heard it, and chaps. ii. 2, iii. 10 show that this was the apostle's practice in Corinth, and the contents of his two Epistles bear this out. 1. The moral depravity of man lies at the foundation of the gospel, otherwise he would not need that salvation which it offers. Accordingly we find the apostle bringing this into view (chap. ii. 14). 2. This sentiment is intimately connected with regeneration. For if natural men are under the dominion of sin, then their hearts must be renewed before they can become heirs of the kingdom of heaven (2 Cor. iv. 6, v. 5). 3. The immediate effect of regeneration is love, which is the essence of all true religion (chap. xiii.). Love to God produces love to Christ; and love to Christ is the very essence of that faith, which is connected with eternal life. Accordingly the apostle exhorted the Corinthians to embrace Christ as the only ground of salvation (2 Cor. v. 18–21). 4. After men have become reconciled to God, they still need the Spirit of promise to carry on a work of sanctification in their hearts (2 Cor. iii. 18). 5. The doctrine of perseverance is a consequence of sanctification (2 Cor. i. 22, v. 1, 5, 8). 6. As God begins and carries on a good work in whom He pleases, so Divine sovereignty is an essential doctrine of the gospel (ver. 6). Which leads up to the doctrine of the Trinity (2 Cor. xiii. 14). II. WHY HE CALLED THESE DOCTRINES MILK. Heb. v. 12–14 throws light upon the metaphor. The doctrines which Paul preached to the Corinthians may properly be called milk, because—1. They are easy to be understood. Milk is much easier to digest than meat. So the first principles of the oracles of God are plain to the lowest capacity. They require attention rather than deep penetration. 2. They are highly pleasing to the pious heart. Peter represents all Christians as "new born babes" who "desire the sincere milk of the word." 3. They are nourishing. The converts at Corinth made swift advances in knowledge and holiness, while they were fed by the doctrines according to godliness (chap. i. 4-7). III. WHY THE APOSTLE PREACHED SUCH PLAIN AND PRACTICAL DOCTRINES RATHER THAN ANY OTHERS. 1. Their internal state required such plain preaching. They were Gentiles who had never been favoured with the knowledge of Divine revelation (chap. i. 21). 2. Their external state required the same mode of preaching. The heathen philosophers opposed the pure truths of the gospel, and endeavoured to persuade the Christians to renounce them and return to their former superstition. Nor were they altogether unsuccessful, for they overthrew the faith of some. By clearly unfolding the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, the apostle took the best method to guard them against the plausible arguments of infidels. IV. IMPROVEMENT. 1. If the metaphor of milk has been properly explained, then by meat Paul means some other sentiments less plain and necessary to be known by common Christians. Such as—(1) The rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation. We can hardly suppose that he would teach the Gentile Corinthians these dark things, because they were not prepared to understand them. (2) The types and predictions respecting the character and coming of Christ. It would have been very difficult to explain these things intelligibly to a people who were without the Old Testament. (3) The predictions in the New Testament concerning the great apostacy; the rise and fall of the man of sin; the calling in of the Jews; the millennium; and the state of things to the end of the world. 2. It appears from what has been said, that Paul's doctrines have been greatly misrepresented. How many ministers have quoted his own words against himself, and employed the text to justify themselves, not only in neglecting to preach the doctrines which he preached, but in stigmatising those doctrines! 3. This subject affords an infallible criterion, by which to determine who are the plainest preachers in point of sentiment. Those who preach the doctrines which Paul called milk are the plainest preachers, and the easiest to be understood by every class of hearers. There never was, and there never can be, any false scheme of religion so easy to explain and understand as that which Paul taught. 4. If the foregoing observations are just, then there is no reason to think that any people are unable to bear the doctrines which Paul preached to the Corinthians. The inability lies in the heart, and not in the understanding. 5. It also appears that now is a proper time for ministers to feed their people with milk, and not with meat. Our congregations, in general, are in a situation very similar to that of the Corinthians. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) **For ye are yet carnal . . . and walk as men.**—*Carnality*:—The two ideas of the text are—Men, as men, are carnal; Christians, as Christians, ought not to be carnal. Note—I. WHAT IT IS TO BE CARNAL, AND HOW FAR THE CHARGE MAY BE MADE GOOD AGAINST HUMANITY. 1. The

word is of the same kindred as "flesh," "fleshly," &c. Flesh, however, is sometimes used in a good sense, as "the heart of flesh," and sometimes in an indifferent sense, as "all flesh is grass." Mostly, however, it expresses what is bad. Perhaps the terms "carnal" and "fleshly" have become the equivalents of depraved humanity from the fact of man's being in the body, and therefore from the evil in him being more openly manifested by the lustings and corruptions of the animal appetites. There might have been sin without the body, but in that case men would not have been stigmatised as carnal. Having thus got the identity of "carnal" and "fleshly," observe the kinds and gradations of their manifestation. (1) The first sphere is that known as "fleshly lusts"—irregular animal appetites. Everything that partakes of brute impulse; gluttony, drunkenness, lust. (2) "Fleshly wisdom," by which is meant not only falsehood and cunning to gain one's own ends, but thought which has no regard for God or duty, but which may be quite moral. (3) The "fleshly mind"—the actings of the intellect and heart in relation to truth and love which are irregular or defective. Note the forms in which it displays itself. (*a*) The form in which the intellect rejects truth altogether and turns away from God's revelations in nature and the Bible, to its own systems and philosophies. (*b*) Or the revelations may be admitted, but so corrupted by hypotheses as to make the Divine in nature and the Bible merely the occasion for filling the invisible with monstrous creations, turning the truth of God into a lie. (*c*) There may be a holding of the truth simply and uncorrupted; but they who hold it may be so little instructed in it as to know nothing but its first elements, and remain babes. 2. To be carnal in any of these forms is characteristic of man as man. In illustration take—(1) The history of man as connected with civilisation. Begin with a nation in a state of barbarism and we see disgusting outbreaks of appetite and lust. Elevate them a stage. Let the nation rise into a really civilised society, and understand the nature of prosperity, social comforts, arts, arms, science and commerce; when all the energies look no further than the present life. You know what develops then—pride of prosperity, graspings of avarice, lust of power. Then, when things have advanced further, and minds appear with high spiritual capacity, they surround themselves with forms of beauty, and school themselves in philosophy. But speculation runs rampant, "professing themselves wise they become fools." They are as far from God as when given up to the gratification of animal passion. (2) Sacred history. Soon after the Fall, with abundant testimonies of God's character before it, the world got so corrupted that it had to be purified by the flood. The little church preserved in the ark had a fresh earth to begin upon, and erected its first altar to the true God. But in a very short time all was wrong again. Next, for the maintenance of the Divine idea, out of the mass of idolaters one man was taken, and Abraham's seed were separated from the world and shielded from corruption. Alas! their constant effort was to break away and get back to the carnal. And when by afflictions and successive revelations the national mind was improved carnality broke out in Sadduceeism and Pharisaism. Then, when Jesus appeared and revealed His truth and established His Church, came the man of sin, and all men worshipped him. (3) The history of the individual. He begins as the slave of his appetites. By and by he awakes as if another soul were given him, and becomes respectable; he now serves his passions instead of his appetites: a mere man instead of an animal. But some go farther. They get tired of their passions, as they did of their appetites, and take themselves to philosophy, taste, and science, vainly puffed up with their fleshly mind. (4) Society and literature for the last two hundred years. At the close of the seventeenth century English literature and manners were licentious in the extreme. The latter part of the eighteenth century was an improvement; people got prudent, calculating, and respectable. Their understanding was developed; but there was a want of all high perception of the spiritual and the Divine. To come to the present day, men talk differently from the moralists of the last century. They speak of the Divine and of the vast things for which man was made, and there is a warmth and grandeur about their speculations. But, with all their grand thoughts, and their respect for Christianity and Christ, they have no idea of sitting at the feet of Jesus. It is just the worship of taste, beauty, and mind. II. THE REASONS INHERENT IN CHRISTIANITY WHY CHRISTIANS ARE NOT TO BE CARNAL. Because—1. Christianity claims to be a system of supernatural dogmatic truth. The gospel meets man at the highest point in the development of the carnal mind, asking, "What am I, whence and whither?" and says, "I can tell you; I can discover to you the unseen and the eternal. Listen to me with unhesitating faith." All who will do this will find there is not a single

question respecting God, man, wants, duties, prospects, which it cannot answer, and by answering put an end to the intrusions of the fleshly mind. 2. The truth thus revealed aims at the purification of our spiritual nature, and must necessarily counteract carnality. It is "the grace of God which bringeth salvation," and under it men "live soberly," putting away carnality from the body, the first sphere of its manifestation; "righteously," putting it away from social life—the second sphere; and "godly," putting it away from the spirit—the third sphere. 3. Christianity as a system of influence forbids it. (1) It is contained in a Book. I come to that Book that it may meet me in my spiritual condition as a sinner and teach me how to be reconciled to God; and if rightly studied it will be the instrument of constant development of intellectual and moral strength. (2) It employs, in addition, the preacher, whose office it is to cause men to grow in righteousness and true holiness. (3) It is a system of worship. Christians approach the Infinite. What an influence for purifying the heart, raising man above the carnal, inspiring him with the Divine. (4) And all are under the influence of the Holy Spirit. 4. The opposite of this—the temper and habits of a spiritual life are essential to their character and preparation for a life to come. 5. They cannot give any other satisfactory evidence of their being Christians. 6. The work they have to do forbids it. They are "the light of the world," "the salt of the earth." The tendency of man as man is to darkness and corruption, which have to be counteracted by the strenuous efforts of the life of faith and spirituality. III. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS. 1. Christianity, whether true or false, contains those things which, carried out, would cure all the disorders of the world, and make society everywhere virtuous and healthy. There can be no question that carnality in its grosser forms is the enemy of all purity, health, and joy; and in its higher manifestation tends to degrade and disorganise humanity. 2. The nature of Christianity demonstrates its truth. It would be a greater miracle for "carnal" man to have been its creator, than for it to be the supernatural thing it is. 3. He that hath this hope purifies himself even as Christ is pure. (*T. Binney.*) *The remains of corruption in the regenerate*:—I. THAT THE RELICS OF CORRUPTION, WHICH DO ABIDE IN THE GODLY, OUGHT TO BE A HEAVY BURDEN TO THEM, AGAINST WHICH THEY ARE DAILY TO STRIVE AND COMBAT. Though the tree be cut down, yet here is the stump and root in the godly. To open this, consider—1. That even the most spiritual that are, the Christians of the first magnitude, even those that shine like suns in the world, have yet blemishes in them. But the best gold will have some dross; the best garden will have some weeds. 2. Yet there are other Christians who have sin more prevalent over them, and are easier overcome, and these deserve more to be called carnal than the former, their corruptions are more visible than their grace. Oh, take heed that thy life be not as the sluggard's field, all grown over with briers and thorns. 3. As corruption doth thus abide in all the godly, and worketh differently, so it doth sometimes flame out into open fire; so that it is no longer the lust and motions of sin within, but the gross operations without. In Peter you see what a leak there was ready to drown the whole ship. II. WHENCE IT IS THAT THE GODLY DO NOT FULLY CONQUER SIN. For if you respect Christ He is greater than the devil; and if you respect grace, that is more efficacious than sin. How, then, should any lusts, passions, or motions abide in us? Now the efficient grounds are these: and then the final grounds shall be mentioned afterwards. 1. The efficient, because original corruption, which is the fountain of those streams, is not wholly dried up. So that there cannot but be those sinful affections and corrupt desires stirring in thee; these noisome vapours cannot but exhale as long as that filthy lake or bog is within thee. 2. The Spirit of God by which we come to mortify these corruptions doth not put forth its full power. 3. Therefore doth corruption remain, because the instrument of sanctification and mortification, that also is imperfect and weak. Faith purifieth the heart (Rom. 11). So that if our faith be weak, the effects of it also will be weak. Lastly, therefore doth corruption abide in us, because the Law of God is spiritual, pure, and exact. This is not an efficient ground, so much as occasional, to discover and manifest that this sour leaven still is in us. In the next place, observe the final grounds. 1. Because God intends in this life to glorify evangelical grace, and the righteousness of the gospel by faith, as the Epistles of Paul abundantly witness. Take the advantage to glorify the grace of the gospel; say thou needest Christ's robes all the day long for thy nakedness. 2. God suffers these relics in us, that there may be daily exercise for faith, patience, and other graces, so that these are left to increase the

crown of glory, not to diminish it. Tempests and winds discover the skill of the mariner. Thou mayest turn these clods of earth into chains of pearl. 3. That we might not be puffed up in ourselves, nor others lift up by admiration. Lastly, These thorns are still in thy side, that heaven may be the sweeter. Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh. (*A. Burgess.*) **For whereas there is among you envying, strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal?**—*Envying*:—The apostle generally declared the ground of their incapacity of heavenly truths. Now he enumerates the particulars, whereof envy stands in the front. I. THAT ENVYING, WHERESOEVER IT IS, IS A FRUIT OF THE FLESH, AND SUCH A SIN THAT A GODLY MAN SHOULD ESPECIALLY WATCH AGAINST. Are ye not carnal because of this envying? To open this doctrine, consider—1. That the original and fountain of this envy is the same with the other great impieties that are committed in the world, viz., the flesh, or corrupt part in a man. So Gal. v. and James iv. 2. This sin of envy may either be in the full predominancy of it, or only in motions and combats; or if breaking out into act, bewailed and repented of. In the former manner it is in wicked men; in the latter sort it may be even in the godly. The Church of God would always abide like an ark, compacted so close together that no waters could enter in; did not envyings and evil eyes upon one another dissolve the cement and soldering whereby they are united. We shall find the disciples of John and of Christ, even those sweet roses, to have these worms breed in them. 3. Consider that envy is accompanied with a grief and a trouble, that others are indeed, or in an apprehension, in a better condition than themselves. Now, the good that is in others, for which this envy may work, may be of several natures. As—1. Because of the riches, power, greatness, and outward prosperity of others. And shalt thou be bad to thy own soul because God is good to others? 2. It may be because of the applause and honour, or esteem others have. 3. It may be still higher because of the parts and abilities that others have better than theirs. And it is a greater sin to envy others because of their religious parts and abilities than for any outward mercy, because these are the free gift of God's Spirit. Now for this were the great envyings amongst the Corinthians. It is far more happy to have sanctifying graces than enlarged gifts; far more glorious to have love than large knowledge. Lastly, that is the highest wickedness that can be in envy, viz., when it is for the graces and godliness of others. How many men are reproached, envied by their neighbours and others, merely for their godliness! Thus much for the object of envy. In the next place let us consider the subject, who are prone to it and—1. Those that are of weak, ignorant, and narrow spirits (Job v. 21). Envy slayeth the silly one. It is the fruit of weakness in a man, his very envy betrayeth his thoughts, that he thinks others are above him. 2. Those are subject to this sin of envy, who are in a similitude of condition, estate, trade, or profession, or where there is any competition for one thing, and both cannot have it. One tradesman envieth another of the same trade. These were teachers, and they thought Paul like themselves, ambitious of glory. 3. Such are subject to envy who, because they cannot abide the good of others, they therefore study all the ways to disparage, and obscure the name and excellency of such. Thus where charity covereth a multitude of sin envy covereth a multitude of graces. (1) Of all envyings take heed of that which is against men, because they are godly, because they live more holily than thou dost. (2) You that are godly especially take heed of this. How contrary is this spirit of envy to that love Christ hath put into you! Let us, in the next place, consider the aggravation of this sin. 1. The wickedness of this sin may be excellently illustrated by that admirable good it is opposite to; for this is a rule, that privation is the worst whose habit is the best, that is the greatest evil which is opposite to the greatest good. 2. It opposeth that admirable goodness in Christ. Oh, come with admiration, and read, and consider the life of Christ and His death, and you will see envy is as direct contrary to Him as the serpent to the dove. 1. The grace of love and charity is often prayed for, and that by Christ Himself, that His people might have it. He prayeth for nothing so earnestly as that. It is made the sign of Christ's disciples, not by miracles, not by prophecies, but by love, shall all men know Christ's disciples. 2. There is still further abomination in this sin; for it is the very lively image of the devil. 3. This sin of envy is a mother-sin, a fountain-sin. There is no wickedness in the world but this sin will conceive it and bring it forth. 4. This sin is a just torment to him that commits it. 5. This sin of envy doth deprive Christians of all exercise and comfort of common graces. Lastly, it is a tenacious inbred sin. These worms will breed in the sweetest roses; these moths in the

finest garments. So that the more contumacious and inherent this sin is, the greater cause to be afraid of it. Well, if it be so dangerous a sin, what remedies may be used against it? 1. Turn envy into pity; and this is an excellent cure. Nothing breaketh envy so soon as pity. He hath received more talents, and so greater increase is expected; so that he is more to be prayed for. He having a greater treasure is more obnoxious to thefts and dangers. 2. Consider that if instead of envy thou wouldst bless and praise God for the gifts and graces bestowed upon others, they would thereby be made thine. Lastly, be contented with thy condition. Envy commonly comes from discontent at what is ours. (*Ibid.*)

Strife.—*Contentions*:—We are come to the second sign specified. This thorn argued them to be brambles, not figs. In a great measure carnal, not spiritual. Observe that strifes and quarrelling contentions among Christians argue them to be so far carnal. Consider—1. That the true ground of all love and peace, all concord and agreement, can only be upon a motive of godliness and honesty. Only godly men can truly love one another, because the motive of it is the image of God. The cause of it is God's command, and the end of it is to do good, temporal and spiritual, to one another. Hence this is called love in the faith (Tit. iii. 15), and in the Spirit (Col. i. 8). And therefore, if the people of God at any time quarrel, and strive with one another, there is so much manifestation that their love was not because they were godly, but for other ends. In the second place, take notice there is a twofold striving or contention. 1. That which is good and laudable. Thus Jude commands to contend for the faith once delivered. To be in an agony for it (ver. 4). 2. There is a sinful and ungodly striving. And that may be about a twofold object. Either in civil worldly things quarrelling and wrangling about them, or in religious matters. (1) Show the sinfulness of the causes. (2) The effects wherein they manifest themselves, and—(3) The aggravation of the sin. The cause in the general is that bitter poisonous fountain of corruption within every man. Man by nature is a spider, a toad. He can spit nothing but venom. He is a bramble that tears every one that cometh near him. Thus Gal. v.; strifes and contentions are made the manifest works of the flesh. But the particular lusts are—1. Pride. Where pride is there is contention (Prov. xiii. 10). A proud man, he cannot but strive, no more than fire cannot but set all on a flame where it is. The chimney that is higher than other parts of the house, puts out all the smoke and dark vapours; and those sometimes that would exalt themselves above others, they must needs evaporate their loathsome stomach against others. 2. Ambition and vain-glory, which comes near to pride. Absalom's ambition for the kingdom, what a terrible shake did it make in Israel! 3. Malicious froward dispositions. There are some of that rancorous, turbulent nature that they cannot be quiet but in the disturbing of others. Salamanders that can live nowhere but in fire, never at rest but when they are in brawlings or contentions. 4. Covetousness and sinful love to the things of the world that makes men quarrel and brawl. Lastly, impatience, when men know not how with patience and godly wisdom to pass by many injuries and wrongs. Now the sinful effects—1. Of striving about worldly things is discovered—(1) In passionate and railing speeches. Let all clamour and evil speaking be laid aside (Eph. iv. 31; Matt. v. 22). (2) It is seen in backbiting, slandering, inventing of lies against others, whispering, and secretly reproaching of others where they are not present to justify themselves. (3) A delight to go to law, and to implead others at the courts of judicature (chap. vi.). (4) Lastly, this civil or uncivil contention, rather, is seen in the procuring of all that hurt and mischief to others we can, either in name or estate. 2. As for striving in religious matters, that is seen two ways. (1) When men are given to cavil and contradict the truth, though never so evidently discovered, especially because of the purity of it, because it convinceth and arraigneth thy lusts, greatly condemning them. (2) When men dote about questions and disputes that have no profit, or if profit, yet attend not to them in their place (Titus iii. 9). 3. I come to the aggravation of this sin of contention. (1) This striving temper is directly opposite to many commands that vehemently press love, brotherly kindness, peaceableness (Rom. xii. 18; 1 Pet. iii. 8). (2) These strifes and quarrellings make all our prayers and religion in vain. (3) The relation we are in commands peace and unity. There is one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one baptism (Eph. iv. 5). (*Ibid.*)

Divisions.—*Discord*:—That divisions and factions do quickly creep into the best and purest Churches. This Church of Corinth was a garden planted by Paul, and, notwithstanding all his care, his constant inspection, yet these weeds grow up in it. 1. Divisions or factions may be either—(1) Civil

or ecclesiastical. Civil are all those rents and ruptures that are made by the lusts of men in a commonwealth. Thus Jeroboam made a division, he rent ten tribes from the other two. The other divisions are in the Church, and they are of two sorts, either when different doctrines or opinions are maintained, and these are called heresies. Or when there is a soundness of doctrine, yet men break the bonds of love, and live in malice and uncharitableness, and this is called schism. (2) Factions or divisions are either personal, between godly men particularly, or more public between societies and societies, Churches and Churches. Between persons. Thus Paul and Barnabas, they were in a bitter dissention one with another (Acts xv. 39). So Paul and Peter; Paul reproved Peter, and withstood him to the face (Gal. i.). Or more public. Thus many Jews that believed raised great dissensions about circumcision, and the retaining of the customs of the law. 2. In the next place, what makes division or faction? And—(1) That is, when men promote any false or wicked way against truth and godliness. (2) Faction and division is seen when though the matter be true or good they strive for, yet they do it not in a godly, orderly way. A good intention, even in a good matter without good order, is not warrantable. (3) A third thing in division is when men do not keep to their proper places, to their offices. (4) Thus it is division and faction when the affections and passions of men are embittered with any carnal distempers; so that this sin doth affect the heart and spirit of a man, and then it breaks out into actions. 3. In the next place, what are the causes that make these the efficient causes? (1) The ignorance of men, as long as men know but in part, have not perfection in the understanding; and this breedeth difference of opinions, and difference of opinions difference of affections. (2) Self-confidence and arrogancy. (3) The last efficient are worldly hopes and desires of carnal advantages. (4) Lastly, there is an occasional cause, but not efficient, and that hath been the tyranny and scandalous lives of Church officers. This hath many times made sad rents. (*Ibid.*) **And walk as men.**—*Walking as men*:—The apostle in this phrase, "To live as men," or, "According to man," may imply these things. 1. Mere men have no Divine faith in the matters of religion, wrought in them by the Spirit of God, but walk according to the natural dictates of conscience and education, and so are for that religion which they have been brought up in and accustomed to, whether it be right or wrong, whether good or bad. This our Saviour cleareth, when Peter made that excellent confession of faith, that Christ was the Son of God. Our Saviour graciously accepts of it, and tells him, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this to him" (Matt. xvi. 17). 2. To walk as a mere man is to propound some outward inferior comforts as the ultimate end and chief felicity of our souls. Take a man, as a mere man, and the utmost end for which he labours and strives in this world is some earthly advantages. Oh, but what saith the apostle of true Christians? "We walk not by sense, but by faith" (2 Cor. v. 7). 3. To walk as mere men is to put confidence and hope only in second causes and visible instruments, not trusting the promise of God or believing His power, that He reigneth and ruleth in heaven and earth, doing what He pleaseth. 4. To walk like men is to be full of falsehood, deceitfulness, or hypocrisy, to have no truth in heart or word one to another. 5. To walk as men is here in the text to be in anger, hatred, and revengeful thoughts one against another; whereas all beasts agree among themselves, even the savage bears and tigers, yea, the devils are not divided one against another. Man naturally finds nothing so sweet as revenge upon others. 6. To walk as men is to make a man's self the Alpha and Omega, the centre wherein all the lines must meet. "All seek their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ" (Phil. ii. 21). 7. Lastly, to walk as man is to commit any sin rather than to be persecuted for the truth of God. To swear, or foreswear, to turn into all shapes, to avoid danger. How are all our congregations? How live they? How walk they? Do they not live as men? Yea, how many like brute beasts? (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 4–8. **For while one saith, I am of Paul . . . are ye not carnal?**—*The carnality of Churchisms*:—In the Church at Corinth there was a variety of elements; the Roman democratic — independent in thought and action; the Greek—cultured, philosophic, and æsthetic; the Jewish—craving for signs and wonders. Here consequently there was diversity of thought, and discussions which would lead to divisions. The Corinthian Christians, therefore, instead of being united by having Christ as the supreme object of thought and love, were divided by certain forms of religious thought. No two men will have exactly the same views on the same subject. Paul would not give out the same views in the same way as

Apollos or Peter, and their auditors would therefore have their preferences. Herein we have the philosophy of existence of various Churches. Note—I. THE NATURE OF CHURCHISM. The Corinthians who said, "I am of Paul," "I am of Apollos," had such an exaggerated estimate of their particular favourites as led them to depreciate the merits of the others. To the Paulites there was no teacher equal to him, &c. This I call Churchism. To become members of institutions called Churches, and advocate the peculiar views they represent, may be right and useful. It affords opportunities for mutual counselling and spiritual stimulation. But when our communion becomes the centre and circumference of our souls it is sectarianism. One says, I am of the Catholic Church; another, I am of the Greek; another, I am of the English, &c. There is only one true Church, and that is composed of those only who have a vital and practical faith in Christ Himself. "I determined," says Paul, "to know nothing amongst men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." II. THE DEPRAVITY OF CHURCHISM. "Are ye not carnal?" This bodily part of man's being possesses desires, tendencies, and appetites, which our corrupt imaginations nurture and inspire with sinful propensities. Hence to this Paul seems to trace nearly all immoral conduct (ver. 3). That man is carnal who allows his mind to be engrossed—1. In the human rather than in the Divine. The walk of the spiritual man is with God, he sees Him who is invisible; the "carnal" man lives in the human, never rises above the cloudy atmosphere of human opinions. How some men are chained to their little sects! With them it is all "our Church," "our body," "our principles." Instead of climbing up the breezy heights of Divine ideas, they live down in sectarian glens, breathing the fog of human crotchets, and with souls half suffocated, they exclaim, "I am a Churchman," "I am a Nonconformist," &c. 2. In the selfish rather than in the benevolent. The spiritual man lives not to himself, but to God, and for others; to the "carnal" man self is the object of his supreme interest and aim. Churchism often cuts the soul away from all but the members of its own little community. 3. In the transitory rather than the permanent? The spiritual man labours not supremely for the bread which perishes, but is ever more in quest of eternal life or eternal goodness. Not so the "carnal" man, he is ever in pursuit of temporary pleasures, possessions. Now Churchism lives in the temporary. "Our little systems have their day, they have their day and pass away." Human thoughts, even the best of them, are only as the "grass that withereth," God's thoughts alone endure, the "word of the Lord shall stand for ever." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Partisanship in the Church*:—I. ITS PHASES. 1. Undue partiality for certain ministers. 2. The offensive exaltation of party names. II. ITS EVILS. 1. It does dishonour to God. 2. Occasions strife in the Church. 3. Damages God's servants. 4. Neutralises their work. III. ITS OCCASION—carnality of heart—consequently implies a weak, babyish (ver. 1) Christianity. (*J. Lyth.*) *Thinking too much of ministers*:—The apostle's scope is to repress the pride and contentions that were in the Church of Corinth. That although it is the duty of people to have a great and high esteem of the ministers of the gospel, yet they are not sinfully and inordinately to admire or rest merely upon any man's person. I. THAT GREAT AND HIGH RESPECT IS TO BE SHOWED TO THE FAITHFUL MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL. 1. Highly to account of the office and the work of the ministry as being the Divine institution and appointment of Christ in His Church. Thus the apostle—"Let a man account of us as the stewards of Christ" (chap. iv. 1). 2. Your spiritual respect lieth in the hearing of the Word preached and the receiving the Word with all gladness of heart. Thus Christ saith, "He that heareth you heareth Me" (Luke x. 16), and therefore they are compared to ambassadors, that do in Christ's stead entreat you to be reconciled unto God (2 Cor. v. 20). 3. You are not only to give them respectful hearing and diligent waiting upon their ministry, but to obey and submit unto that work of the Lord, which they enjoin you out of God's Word. 4. All this hearing, love, and obedience, must be to them for the work's sake. This the apostle urgeth, and there is a greater matter in that: "Have them in all respect for their work sake" (1 Thess. v. 13). 5. You ought to show your spiritual respect and entertainment to the ministry, in avoiding all those evil and wicked ways which may grieve and make sad the hearts of godly ministers. When Jeremiah saw his people walk so disobediently, he said his soul should mourn in secret for them (Jer. xiii. 17). Did not Christ weep over Jerusalem? II. Now let us consider WHEN THIS RESPECT MAY DEGENERATE INTO SINFUL ADMIRATION. 1. When we set up the gifts and persons of men, so as to neglect Christ working in and by them. If it be so

great a sin in temporal and outward things to take of the glory due to God, and attribute it to instruments, how much more is this in spiritual things. 2. Then men sinfully admire when they set up the gifts and abilities of one to the contempt of others. 3. Then men sinfully admire when their failings and errors they will follow and defend. If these Corinthians that were for Peter should have been led aside, as he did many to circumcision, this was their infirmity. (*A. Burgess.*) That it is not lawful for Christians to call themselves by the name of any men, though never so eminent, so as to build on them. Christ and His truth are the foundation we must build upon. The apostles, indeed, are called the foundations (Rev. xxii. 14), but they were immediately inspired; and they were but secondary foundations. So that we are not believers in Paul or Peter. We are not the apostles' believers, much less the fathers', or any doctors and teachers in the world. For the opening of this, let us consider, first, the names that Christians have had in the New Testament, and afterwards in the Church. For by wise names we come to know the nature of things. 1. Christ did often call those that followed Him His disciples. Thus, he that would be His disciple must hate father and mother for His sake. Lean not to thy own understanding. Lean not to others; for only Christ is Truth. Another name, and that most frequent, was believers. Christians are often called by this title; none more frequent. And this also doth difference Christians from all other sects in the world. All the philosophers they affected to be knowing men, not believing. Faith of assent would breed faith of fiducial adherence. Another name often attributed to Christians is saints. "The saints at Corinth," and in many places. But the most famous and distinguishing name of the people of God is Christians. There are pregnant reasons for this. 1. Because as our faith in regard of the efficient cause is the gift of God, so the object and motive of it must be God's authority, because He speaks and revealeth such things. Human faith is because a man saith such a thing; Divine faith, because God saith so. Now see how careful the apostle was that the Church's faith should not be in human wisdom, but in the mighty power of God. 2. Therefore we may not be called after men, to build on them, because we are not baptized into any man's name; and we are only to possess those whose name we are baptized into (chap. i. 13). 3. The apostle presseth another argument: "Was Paul crucified for you? Did Paul die for you" (chap. i. 13)? His meaning is, In Him only are we to believe who is able to make our reconciliation with God, who hath wrought our redemption for us. 4. Our apostle urgeth a further argument in the same chapter, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord; and Christ is made unto us wisdom. So all boasting in men is to be excluded, as well as boasting in works. 5. The Scripture makes it a great sin in matters of religion and the worship of God to be servants of men (chap. vii. 23). 6. The ministers of God, though never so eminent, have been afraid of this, they have prohibited such restings upon them. That it is the property of godly ministers not to bring men to themselves, but to Christ. (*Ibid.*) *Partiality for preachers to be avoided:*—A Christian hearer, meeting an acquaintance who had been to hear a sermon, said, "Well, I hope you have been gratified." "Indeed I have," replied the other; "I wish I could have prevailed on you to have heard him. I am sure you would never afterwards have liked any other preacher." "Then," replied the wiser man, "I never will hear him; for I only wish to hear ministers who show so high an esteem for the Word of God, that their hearers shall love it, hear it from whom they may. For 'who is Paul, or who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?'" **Who then is Paul?**—*Party spirit unbecoming and injurious:*—Note—I. SOME OF THOSE CASES IN WHICH PARTY SPIRIT IS BLAMABLE. 1. The case of those who look on their connection with particular parties as serving of itself to insure their salvation. No party distinction can assure any man of God's favour, or heaven. It is not Church membership, but union with Christ that warrants the hope of salvation. "Neither circumcision availeth anything," &c. 2. The case of those who confine their attachment to particular ministers, and think more highly of them than they ought to think. Not that hearers are wrong in feeling for their own ministers more esteem than for others (1 Thess. v. 12), nor in esteeming those most through whom they receive most benefit. But blamable they are when even to these they confine their attachment, and when they do not sincerely esteem all whose preaching and practice prove that they are the servants of Christ. II. THAT MINISTERS CAN ONLY BE USEFUL AND SUCCESSFUL SO FAR AS GOD BLESSES THE MEANS THEY EMPLOY. 1. Paul here speaks of means being used. In allusion to husbandry he speaks both of planting and of water-

ing as preceding the increase; and, indeed, without both, the hope of an increase would not be authorised. Now, does this not teach that unless we be diligent in using the means we cannot expect to be instruments of good? 2. But means, although of God's appointment and furnishing, can only by Himself be rendered effectual. (1) In the nature of things it cannot be otherwise. If, in reference to the body, God only can open the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf, loose the tongues of the dumb, how can it be supposed that any less power than the power of God is sufficient to effect such changes as these with respect to the soul? With counsels the most friendly, warnings the most solemn, arguments the most persuasive, we may labour to reclaim men. But although we had the zeal and learning of Paul, and besides the eloquence of Apollos, yet sinners will remain in the gall of bitterness, unless, as accompanied with the blessing of God, the efforts we make be crowned with success. And it is no less evident that of God only is also the progressive improvement of the saints. If the life of the body be dependent on God, how can any but God preserve and nourish the life of the soul? (2) I may also appeal in evidence of this to your own observation. It cannot but be obvious—(*a*) That the means and instruments most likely to be useful often fail, while good is often done by means and instruments which are known to be far less promising. (*b*) That persons most likely to be profited by ministers, not unfrequently remain unedified; while those who are less likely to be profited by them often make much improvement. (*c*) That effects, too wonderful to be the effects of mere human power, are often produced by the ministry of the gospel. (3) Nor is it more confirmed by observation than it is by experience, that Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God alone who giveth the increase. (4) Turning to this blessed book, how plainly do we find this doctrine uniformly taught by the sacred writers! It is said of Lydia that "her heart the Lord opened in attending to the things which were spoken by Paul." It is said of the converts in the house of Cornelius, "Then hath God also unto the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." It is said of the Ephesians, "You hath He quickened, you who were dead in trespasses and sins." "No man," says the Saviour, "can come unto Me, except the Father who hath sent Me draw him." And the regenerate are "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." III. IMPROVEMENT. Is it so that the success of ministerial labours is wholly of God?—then—1. Ministers should look upon themselves as only instrumental in the doing of good. Melancthon, when he was converted, thought he should be able to make people soon see what he saw, and feel what he felt; but the want of success soon led him to say that he found old Adam too powerful for young Melancthon. 2. That God should be viewed by the hearers of the gospel as He who alone can effectually profit them. 3. Ministers and hearers ought to pray to God for His effectual blessing. (*A. Telfer, A.M.*) *Undue partiality to God's ministers*:—I. IGNORES THEIR TRUE CHARACTER. 1. As mere instruments. 2. Possessing different qualifications. 3. Yet all used of God. 4. For the benefit of them that believe. II. DISHONOURS GOD—because it—1. Transfers to man the honour due to Him alone. 2. Puts contempt on some of the instruments whom He has chosen. 3. Refuses the benefit which might be received through them. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The true estimate of the ministers of Christ*:—I. THEIR OFFICE—all alike instruments in the hands of God. 1. He chooses them. 2. Qualifies them for some special department of toil. 3. Gives them success. 4. Rewards them, each according to his own labour. II. THEIR WORK—co-workers with God. 1. The sphere, ye are God's husbandry, God's building. 2. Their separate departments, one lays the foundation, another builds. 3. Their particular duty to work in harmony with God's plan. III. THEIR SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY. 1. In the selection of material. 2. Every man's work must be tested by fire in that day, and abide the issue. (*Ibid.*) *Unprofitable hearing*—its cause:—A lady who was present at the Lord's Supper, where the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine was assisting, was much impressed with his discourse. She went again the next Sabbath to hear him. But she felt none of those strong impressions she experienced on the former occasion. Wondering at this, she called on Mr. Erskine and asked him if he could account for it. He replied, "Madam, the reason is this—last Sabbath you went to hear Jesus Christ; but to-day you have come to hear Ebenezer Erskine." (*W. Baxendale.*) *The success of the gospel entirely of God*:—I. GOD NOT ONLY SENDS AND EMPLOYS, BUT QUALIFIES ALL WHOM HE EMPLOYS FOR PROMOTING HIS SERVICE. From this it is evident that the glory of the whole work, and the success of every particular servant, is entirely owing to their great Lord and Master (1 Cor. iv. 7). 1. All the endowments of

mind which fit a man for common or special service are the gift of God. He only endows them with knowledge and comprehension to understand His sacred truths, and enables them to communicate their knowledge to others in an acceptable manner (Exod. iv. 11, 12). Further, as it is the inspiration of the Almighty that giveth understanding, so the improvement of natural parts by acquired learning is no less to be ascribed to Him. As He gives the disposition and ability, so it is He who, by the course of His providence, furnishes the means and presents the opportunity of making progress. Let human efforts be what they will, if God do not smile upon them they will infallibly be blasted. 2. It is God who endows His ministers with holy and gracious dispositions, which serve to turn their other talents into the proper channel, and to give them force and influence (2 Cor. iv. 5, 6). II. GOD GIVES EFFICACY TO THE INSTRUCTIONS EVEN OF THE MOST EMINENT AND BEST QUALIFIED MINISTERS, BY THE IMMEDIATE SUPERNATURAL OPERATION OF HIS SPIRIT AND GRACE. With every other advantage they shall not be able to make one sincere convert, unless Almighty God be pleased to open the way by His Divine grace into the heart and conscience of the sinner. The husbandman may manure and dig the soil, and sow his seed with the greatest diligence and care; but he hath not so much as begun the great process of growth. How many things must necessarily concur which are beyond the reach of his power! The enlivening heat of the sun, the refreshing dews and rain, are wholly under the direction and disposal of the omnipotent Jehovah. Just so in spiritual husbandry. "So then neither is he that planteth anything," &c. III. GOD EXERCISES MUCH OF HIS OWN SOVEREIGNTY IN THE MANNER OF BESTOWING SUCCESS. He takes care to show that it is from Himself, by the measure in which He proportions the success to the nature and sufficiency of the means He sees proper to employ. But when there is a regular proportion always observed between the means and the end, men are ready to overlook or forget the great and first cause of all. For this reason He sees it often meet to work without means, or by the weakest means, or even contrary to means, and blasting the effect of those that were most excellent and promising in human judgment. When the gospel was first preached, the apostles were indeed fully furnished for their work, but it was by a miracle. They were originally poor illiterate fishermen, quite unequal in themselves to their astonishing undertaking. But that proper respect might still be had to the qualifications of ministers, and that none might be justified in pouring contempt on human science, the Apostle Paul was the most active, useful, and successful of all the apostles. At the same time there were such circumstances in his calling as made him one of the most illustrious monuments of the sovereignty and riches of Divine grace that any age has produced. IV. IMPROVEMENT. 1. A deep and lively impression of this truth will be to those who preach the gospel an excellent preservative from many temptations. It will preserve them from trusting in themselves, it will engage them to maintain a continual intercourse with the Father of lights, and the author of every good and perfect gift. It will also particularly be an excellent mean of preserving them from the dangerous extremes of ostentation and sloth. 2. A deep impression of this truth will be an excellent preservative to the hearers of the gospel from many temptations which often render their attendance on ordinances as fruitless as pernicious. It will purify their views and motives in attending on ordinances. It will deliver them from a sinful attachment to men, and carry them more immediately into the presence of the living God. It will preserve them from hearing the gospel merely as critics, in order to pass their judgment on the soundness or ability of their teachers. It will settle their esteem of and attachment to their pastors upon the best and most immovable foundation. It will make them in a great measure lose view of the creature, and hear the gospel, not "as the word of man, but as it is indeed, and in truth, the Word of God." 3. Let me intreat the prayers of this congregation, that we may be abundantly qualified for the discharge of our important trust in all its parts. The Apostle Paul never fails to ask the prayers and intercessions of the faithful in his behalf (Eph. vi. 19). (*J. Witherspoon, D.D.*) *Preachers in their relations*:—In these verses the apostle gives a fourfold view of evangelical preachers. I. TO THE PEOPLE (ver. 5). As against the foolish and heedless cry raised by the Corinthians, "I am of Paul," &c., the apostle raises this pertinent question: Who are these men? &c. 1. Ministers. At the root of the word there lies the idea of voluntary and responsible service. We have in St. Paul's own writings a full answer to his own question: "Who then is Paul . . . but ministers?" Ministers of what? (1) "Of the New Testament" (2 Cor. iii. 5, 6). (2) Of "the gospel" (Col. i. 23). (3) Of "the mystery of Christ" (Eph. ii.

4–7). (4) Of "the Church" (Col. i. 24, 25). (5) "Of Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 23). (6) "Of God" (2 Cor. vi. 4). 2. "Ministers by whom ye believed." When the Corinthians believed, there were three factors directly contributing to that result: the minister of God, the Spirit of God, and the Son of God. And so it is still; the minister sets forth the need and the nature of faith in Christ; the Holy Ghost applies the truth and inspires trust; the Lord Jesus is Himself the Object of saving faith. Ministers are instrumental in bringing together the sinner and the Saviour, even as men brought Bartimæus to Jesus. They could not give sight to the blind man, but they led him unto One who said, "Receive thy sight." II. To EACH OTHER (ver. 8). The Corinthians had spoken of the apostles as rivals. The apostle shows that Paul and Apollos are one, and illustrates the oneness of the workers by the unity of the work. Through the circling seasons there runs a notable unity in all the operations of husbandry. As soon as the harvest is gathered in, preparations for the next are commenced. In the time between the first plough's entering the field and the last waggon's leaving it, many hands are at work—men, women, lads; and many kinds of work were done, skilled and unskilled; but it is all for one master, and all for one end. He that plougheth and he that soweth and he that reapeth are one. And this oneness among farm-workers is never felt so keenly as when the last sheaf is pitched, and the cry is raised of "harvest-home!" A Christian Church is made and maintained on this same principle: manifold operations and many workers. In carrying on this spiritual husbandry, ministers are not alone in the field. We look to Sunday-school workers, to local preachers, &c., and say, "We are labourers together." It is a partnership in holy toil. The farm-servant who guides the reaping-machine in the harvest-field does not disown his fellow-servants who, in the chilly days of later autumn, did the ploughing and the sowing. He knows that, but for their work, he would not have found any employment in reaping. And those who reap in the Church thankfully recognise as fellow-labourers the men who broke up the fallow-ground, and put in the seed-corn, and cared for the crop in early spring. III. To PRESENT SUCCESS (ver. 6). "I have planted"; this lies at the root of all good. Paul must plant before there can be anything for Apollos to water; and until man put in something, God cannot give increase. But while recognising this fact he says, We are nothing. That which the two apostles contributed toward success was labour. They had, so to speak, no capital. The very truth they taught was not their own; it was the truth of God. That mysterious force which we call growth belongeth only unto God; and were it not for the secret influence of His Spirit, the good seed of the kingdom scattered broadcast would in no case take root and spring up. Increase is of God, and wholly of Him. IV. PREACHERS IN RELATION TO FINAL REWARD (ver. 8). True, he that planteth and he that watereth are one; but "every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." In order to reward, there must be not only work, but labour, and every man shall receive his own reward not according to—1. His success. Visible and numerical success is not always in proportion to labour. 2. His reputation. Whilst some sermons win for the preacher a name and a place in public opinion beyond their merit, there are others which are too full of thought to be appreciated by the many; and so it comes to pass that, now and then, a preacher's reputation is in inverse proportion to the quality of his preaching. 3. His position. For a time the position of a man in the ministry may be above his deserts, or below. A good place may be secured by favouring incident, and a lowly one through inadvertence. 4. His gifts or talents. We are not responsible for the number of talents given to us; and God does not make our reward depend upon a circumstance over which we had no control. 5. But every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. (*J. Bush.*) *God's husbandry and building:*—I. OUR PRAISE FOR ANY GOOD WE HAVE RECEIVED SHOULD BE GIVEN, NOT SOLELY TO MEN, BUT MAINLY TO GOD. The Corinthians felt that gratitude was due somewhere, but Paul was afraid lest they should give it to himself and Apollos instead of to God. II. IT IS TO GOD WE MUST LOOK FOR ALL FURTHER GROWTH. We must conscientiously employ such means of grace as our circumstances permit; but, above all, we must ask God to give the increase. III. IF WE ARE GOD'S HUSBANDRY AND BUILDING, LET US REVERENCE GOD'S WORK IN OURSELVES. 1. It may seem a very rickety and insecure structure that is rising within us, a very sickly and unpromising plant; and we are tempted to be disappointed at the slow progress the new man makes in us. But different thoughts possess us when we remember that this transformation is not a thing to be accomplished only by ourselves through a judicious choice and a persevering use of fit

means, but is God's work. 2. For the same reason we must hope for others as for ourselves. It is the foundation of all hope to know that God has always been inclining men to righteousness and will always do so. IV. But Paul's chief inference is THE GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY OF THOSE WHO LABOUR FOR GOD IN THIS WORK. 1. As for Paul's own part in the work, the laying of the foundation, he says that was comparatively easy. "Other foundation," &c. Any teacher who professes to lay another foundation thereby gives up his claim to be a Christian teacher. He who uses the Christian pulpit for the propagation of political or socialist ideas may be a sound and useful teacher; but his proper place is the platform or the House of Commons. The question at present, says Paul, is not what other institutions you may profitably found in the world, but how this institution of the Church, already founded, is to be completed. Other foundation no Christian teacher is proposing to lay; but on this foundation very various and questionable material is being built. In Corinth itself huge slabs of costly and carefully chiselled stone lay stable as the rock on which they rested, but now the glory of such foundations was dishonoured by squalid superstructures. The picture in Paul's mind's eye of the Corinthian Church vividly suggested what he had seen while walking among those heterogeneous buildings. The foundation, he knows, is the same; but he sees the teachers bringing, with great appearance of diligence, the merest rubbish, apparently unconscious of the incongruity of their material with the foundation they build upon. What would Paul say did he now see the superstructure which eighteen hundred years have raised on the one foundation? How obviously unworthy of it is much that has been built upon it; how many teachers have laboured all their days at erecting what has already been proved a mere house of cards; and how many persons have been built into the living temple who have brought no stability or beauty to the building. How careless often have the builders been, anxious only to have quantity to show, regardless of quality. As in any building, so in the Church, additional size is additional danger if the material be not sound. 2. The soundness of the material which has been built upon the foundation of Christ will, like all things else, be tested. The Corinthians knew what a trial by fire meant. They knew how the flames had travelled over their own city, consuming all that fire could kindle on, and leaving of the slightly built houses nothing but charred timber, while the massive marbles stood erect among the ruins; and the precious metals, even though molten, were prized by the conqueror. Against the fire no prayer, no appeal, prevailed. Its judgment and decisions were irreversible: wood, hay, stubble, disappeared: only what was solid and valuable remained. By such irreversible judgment are we and our work to be judged. Fire simply burns up all that will burn and leaves what will not. So shall the new life we are to pass into absolutely annihilate what is not in keeping with it, and leave only what is useful and congruous. The work that has been well and wisely done will stand; foolish, vain, and selfish work will go. 3. Paul accepts it as a very possible contingency that a Christian man may do poor work. In that case, he says, the man will be in the position of a man whose house has been burnt. He may have received no bodily injury, but he is so stripped that he scarcely knows himself, and the whole thought and toil of his life seem to have gone for nothing. To many Christians it seems enough that they be doing something. If only they are decently active, it concerns them little that their work is really effecting no good. Work done for this world must be such as will stand inspection and actually do the thing required. Christian work should not be less, but more, thorough. 4. There is a degree of carelessness or malignity to be found in some Christian teachers which Paul does not hesitate to doom (ver. 17). A teacher may in various ways incur this doom. (1) He may in guiding some one to Christ fit him obliquely to the foundation, so that firm rest in Christ is never attained; but the man remains like a loose stone in a wall, unsettled himself and unsettling all around him. Any doctrine which turns the grace of God into licence incurs this doom. (2) To lift stones from the mire they have been lying in and fit them into the temple is good and right, but to leave them uncleansed and unpolished to disfigure the temple. 5. But we are responsible as well as our teachers for the appearance we present in God's temple. Would it not make a very obvious change in the appearance and strength of the Church if every member of it were at pains to set himself absolutely true to Christ? Some persons are prevented from resting satisfactorily on Christ because some pet theory or crotchet has possessed the mind and keeps them unsettled. Some will not rest on Christ until they have such repentance as they judge sufficient; others so rest on Him that they have no repentance. But, alas! with some it is some

worldly purpose or some entangling and deeply cherished sin. One sin consciously retained, one command or expression of Christ's will unresponded to, makes our whole connection with Him unsettled and insecure. 6. And more must be done even after we are securely fitted into our place. Stones often look well enough when first built in, but soon lose their colour; and their surface and fine edges crumble and shale off. So do the stones in God's temple get tarnished by exposure. One sin after another is allowed to stain the conscience; one little corruption after another settles on the character, and eats out its fineness, and when once the fair, clean stone is no longer unsullied, we think it of little consequence to be scrupulous. Then the weather tells upon us: the ordinary atmosphere of this life, with its constant damp of worldly care and its occasional storms of loss, and disappointment, and social collisions, and domestic embroilment, eats out the heavenly temper from our character, and leaves its edges ragged; and the man becomes soured and irritable, and the surface of him, all that meets the casual eye, is rough and broken. 7. Above all, do not many seem to think it enough to have attained a place in the building, and take no step onwards during the whole remainder of their lives? But it is in God's building as in highly ornamented buildings generally. The stones are not all sculptured before they are fitted into their places; but they are built in rough-hewn, so that the building may proceed: and then at leisure the device proper to each is carved upon it. This is the manner of God's building. Long after a man has been set in the Church of Christ, God hews and carves him to the shape He designs; but we, being not dead, but living, stones, have it in our power to mar the beauty of God's design, and indeed so distort it that the result is a grotesque and hideous monster, belonging to no world, neither of God nor of man. (*M. Dods, D.D.*) **I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.**—*Gospel planting*:—That it is God's unspeakable goodness sometimes to send His Word and plant His gospel among a people that never heard or knew anything of it before. To amplify this doctrine many things are observable. First, That when the apostle saith that he planted the gospel, it doth suppose all people to be a wild, barbarous people till the gospel both civilised and sanctified them. To plant is properly of orchards, and gardens, and vineyards, and supposeth the great care and skill of him that plants. Thus God is said to plant Eden (Gen. ii. 8). It is a great mercy to be born in such times, in such an age, and in such places, where the name of Christ is published; for this is wholly in God's disposal; He hath determined to all men the times of their life and habitations. Secondly, That in the Old Testament God did limit His gracious preference to the Jews only. Thirdly, Therefore, that there might be spiritual plantations and holy colonies, the Lord Christ appointed extraordinary officers, furnished with extraordinary abilities, to propagate the gospel. Fourthly, God's severity and mercy hath been observable about the first planting of the gospel. For when a people have lived rebelliously under it a long time, then He takes it away and gives it to another nation. Fifthly, In planting of Churches, commonly their infancy and beginning hath been more pure and godly than the successive ages. Lastly, Because of that proneness to degenerate, and from gold to become dross. (*A. Burgess.*) *Spiritual watering*:—I. Let us consider WHEREIN THIS SPIRITUAL WATERING CONSISTS. First, It lieth in a more explicit and distinct instruction about the principles of religion already received. Secondly, This watering lieth not only in advancing our knowledge, but in giving further and clearer arguments to confirm our faith and to make us unshaken and steadfast. Thirdly, This watering containeth direction about the beauty and order of Churches in the government thereof when once planted. Fourthly, This watering lieth in the stirring up of men to fruitfulness in their places and relations. The end of watering is to make fruitful; and thus all the spiritual plants in God's garden, though they have deep root, yet need this outward watering. II. Let us consider WHY THERE IS SUCH DAILY NEED OF THESE QUICKENING MEANS OF GRACE. First, It doth arise from the heart, which is an unnatural soil to grace and supernatural things. Secondly, The temptations that are so frequent and many do likewise wonderfully destroy and wither all if this constant watering be not. As there are Pauls to plant and Apollos to water, so there are also the devil to plant and his instruments to water men in wickedness. Thirdly, There needs watering because of that indispensable duty to grow. (*Ibid.*) *Spiritual increase*:—Consider—First, That though God only gives the increase, yet it is only in and through the ministry. We must not make such cavils: What use is there of preaching? Secondly, As God giveth the increase only, so the time when, and the persons on whom, is wholly at His good pleasure. Now let us consider why God

only giveth the increase; and then the ends that God hath in this. First, God only can give the increase, because He only hath a sovereignty and power over the heart. No potentate, no emperor, can say, I will give a man another heart. He may force the body, but not change the heart. Hence it is that the Scripture attributes all the work of grace; to believe, to repent only to God. Oh, then, lift up your hearts on high in every sermon! Secondly, God only can give the increase, because the increase is of spiritual and supernatural consideration. It is altogether heavenly. Now there is no proportion between human abilities and heavenly graces. Thirdly, Therefore God only giveth the increase because of the deep pollution that is in every man, who is not only blind and deaf, but dead. Now to what purpose is an eloquent pathetical oration to a dead man? Let us consider the ends, why all increase must be of God only, and that is, to preach humility both to the preacher and to the people. The apostle carrieth it wholly for this end, that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord. And that no flesh should glory in His presence. First, the minister. That Peter, who had so many thousands converted by his sermon, that Paul, who was so exalted by God that he might not be lifted up above measure. For, alas! what have they done? It is God that gives the increase. Secondly, It teacheth the people also to glorify God, not to rest in the parts and gifts of men. As Michal said, "Now God will bless me, because I have a Levite in the house." So we are apt to say, "Now we shall go to heaven; now we shall have salvation, because we have such preaching." It is not enough to be affected with and admire the gifts of ministers. Thirdly, Therefore God only gives the success that so we may seek and pray to Him and do all those things that God may be pleased with. Now, that God may give increase, do these things. First, Bewail bypast unthankfulness and unfruitfulness. O Lord, how often have I been a hearer! Yet what a barren wilderness is my heart! Secondly, Love that preaching which will more discover thyself to thyself. Which will acquaint thee with thy own deformities. As sore eyes are afraid of the light, so many men have so much guilt within and live in so many secret corruptions that they dare not have the Word come with all its might upon them. No wonder then if God bless it not with increase when thou lovest it not and bringest it not home to thee. Thirdly, If thou wouldst have God give the increase come not prepossessed with thine own righteousness, with thine own good heart. Our Saviour's preaching had no such, though in Him were the treasures of all wisdom, because His hearers were those that justified themselves. Use 1. Is it God that giveth the increase? Then we ministers are not to be inordinately cast down if people receive no Divine stamp on them. Use 2. To the people. Sigh and mourn unto God in earnest prayers for this increase. How terrible will it be if the want of profiting be in yourselves! You do not what God would have you. If the patient distemper himself wilfully all the physic in the world cannot cure him. To clear this, consider—Wherein this work of God to give increase doth consist. And first, In that spiritual revelation and illumination or opening of the eyes whereby the mind understands and perceiveth the things of God. The Word is compared to light, only God by this works above all light. For the sun, though it gives light, yet it doth not give a blind man eyes. Secondly, God's giving increase lieth in removing the negative incapacity and the positive contrariety in all men's heart to the word preached. As the husbandman, he first prepareth the ground by stocking up all those briers and thorns and removing all the stones that lie in the way which would hinder the corn's growth. So it is here. God takes away all that cursed and serpentine nature which is in thee. Thirdly, God giveth the increase when He makes the Word preached to take root and settling in men's hearts. Fourthly, God giveth increase when He makes this rooted word to grow. For as there is in corn, first the blade and then the ear, it comes to perfection by degrees. Now this growth that God giveth it may be either intensive or extensive. Intensive so God giveth increase when those graces that are already planted in the soul are made more lively and fervent. This may be called a particular, personal increase. Art thou made more believing, more holy, more humble than before? Oh it is a sad thing to see the decays and abatements that are even of godly men's graces! When God is the same God, the Word is the same Word, there is as much cause to grow as ever. Now the grounds why God only giveth increase may be, first, Because even in natural blessings and outward mercies success is attributed to God, not to men, much more in spirituals. Thus the Psalmist attributes to God that the ridges are full of corn, that cattle are fruitful and do not miscarry. God, He keeps the key of heaven and gives earthly blessings as He pleaseth (Prov. x. 22). Secondly, God only can give increase,

because He only hath the supreme power and dominion over men's hearts. We are teachers to the ear, God is a teacher of the heart. Object: But you may say, If God gave the increase, why then doth not the Word bear fruit in every place? Are any hearts too strong for the Lord? I answer, a people by their sins may provoke God to depart from His ordinances. Secondly, You may ask, If God only gives increase, what means may we take to have God bless us in this manner? (*Ibid.*) *Farm labourers*:—I. THE CHURCH IS GOD'S FARM. 1. The Lord has made the Church His own. (1) By His sovereign choice. (2) By purchase. It is God's freehold, and He holds its title deeds. (3) By enclosure. It lay exposed aforetime as part of an open common, covered with thorns and thistles, and the haunt of every wild beast. Hath not the Lord declared that He hath chosen His vineyard and fenced it? (4) By cultivation. What more could He have done for His farm? He has totally changed the nature of the soil: from being barren He hath made it a fruitful land. 2. This farm is preserved by the Lord's continual protection. "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." If it were not for this her hedges would soon be thrown down, and wild beasts would devour her fields. 3. Inasmuch as the Church is God's own farm, He expects to receive a harvest from it. Barrenness suits the moorland, but to a farm it would be a great discredit. Love looks for returns of love; grace given demands gracious fruit. Ought not the Lord to have a harvest of obedience, of holiness, of usefulness, of praise? 4. See, then, the injustice of allowing any of the labourers to call even a part of the estate his own. When a great man has a large farm of his own, what would he think if Hodge the ploughman should say, "Look here, I plough this farm, and therefore it is mine: I shall call this field Hodge's Acres." "No," says Hobbs, "I reaped that land last harvest, and therefore it is mine, and I shall call it Hobbs's Field." What if all the other labourers became Hodgeites and Hobbsites, and so parcelled out the farm among them? I think the landlord would soon eject the lot. The farm belongs to its owner, and let it be called by his name. Remember how Paul put it: "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos?" II. THE GREAT HUSBANDMAN EMPLOYS LABOURERS. 1. By human agency God ordinarily works out His designs. He can, if He pleases, by His Holy Spirit get directly at the hearts of men, but that is His business, and not ours; we have to do with such words as these: "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The Master's commission is not, "Sit still and see the Spirit of God convert the nations"; but, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Observe God's method in supplying the race with food. 2. Our Great Master means that every labourer on His farm should receive some benefit from it, for He never muzzles the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn (ver. 8). 3. The labourers employed by God are all occupied upon needful work. Notice: "I have planted, Apollos watered." On God's farm none are kept for ornamental purposes. I have read some sermons which could only have been meant for show, for there was not a grain of gospel in them. They were ploughs with the share left out, drills with no wheat in the box, clod-crushers made of butter. I do not believe that God will ever pay wages to men who only walk about His grounds to show themselves. Many Christians live as if their only business on the farm was to pluck blackberries or gather wild flowers. They are great at finding fault with other people's ploughing and mowing; but not a hand's turn will they do themselves. Come on! Why stand ye all the day idle? The harvest is plenteous, and the labourers are few. 4. On the Lord's farm there is a division of labour. Even Paul did not say, "I have planted and watered." And Apollos could not say, "I have planted as well as watered." No man has all gifts, and therefore instead of grumbling at the honest ploughman because he did not bring a sickle with him, you ought to have prayed for him that he might have strength to plough deep and break up hard hearts. 5. On God's farm, there is unity of purpose among the labourers. "He that planteth and he that watereth are one." One Master has employed them, and though He may send them out at different times, and to different parts of the farm, yet they are all one in being used for one end, to work for one harvest. Planting needs wisdom, and so does watering, and the piecing of these two works together needs that the labourers should be of one mind. It is a bad thing when labourers are at cross purposes. How can I plant with success if my helper will not water what I have planted; or what is the use of my watering if nothing is planted? 6. All the labourers put together are nothing at all. "Neither is he that planteth anything," &c. The workmen are nothing at all without their master, and all the preachers and Christian workers in

the world can do nothing unless God be with them. 7. The labourers shall be rewarded. God works our good works in us, and then rewards us for them. Here we have mention of a personal service, and a personal reward: "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." The reward is proportionate, not to the success, but to the labour. Many discouraged workers may be comforted by that expression. You are not to be paid by results, but by endeavours. 8. Unitedly the workers have been successful, and that is a great part of their reward. When Paul plants and Apollos waters, God does give the increase. We do not labour in vain. III. GOD HIMSELF IS THE GREAT WORKER. He may use what labourers He pleases, but the increase comes alone from Him. You know it is so in natural things: the most skilful farmer cannot make the wheat germinate. What can you and I do in this matter? We can tell out the truth of God; but to apply that truth to the heart and conscience is quite another thing. Equally it is the Lord's work to keep the seed alive when it springs up. IV. PRACTICAL LESSONS. If the whole farm of the Church belongs exclusively to the Great Master Worker, and the labourers are worth nothing with Him—1. Let this promote unity among all whom He employs. If we are all under one Master, do not let us quarrel. 2. This ought to keep all the labourers very dependent. Man is vanity and his words are wind; to God alone belongeth power and wisdom. 3. This fact ennobles everybody who labours in God's husbandry. We are mere labourers on His farm, and yet labourers with Him. 4. How this should drive us to our knees. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Moral increase:—I. ALL INCREASE IS OF GOD. The nature of the thing, Scripture and Christian experience alike show that God alone can give it. II. THE MORAL INCREASE WHICH HE GIVES IS MOST GLORIOUS in—1. Itself. 2. Its adaptation. 3. Its extent. 4. Its perplexities. 5. Its benevolence. III. HE GIVES IT ALL ON A FIXED PRINCIPLE. There must be—1. Personal. 2. United. 3. Believing. 4. Earnest. 5. Prayerful. 6. Persevering—labour. (*B. Ward.*) **So, then, neither is he that planteth anything . . . but God that giveth the increase.**—*Human instrumentality useless without God:*—I. THIS MAY BE ARGUED FROM—1. The condition of all mankind by nature, viz., dead in trespasses and sins, and therefore moral suasion or education can never reach the evil. 2. The change which is contemplated, which is nothing less than to create man anew, to implant new principles into his soul. 3. The statements of Scripture itself. "Neither is he that planteth anything," &c. 4. The history of the Church in every succeeding age. II. BUT THE LORD AND GIVER OF LIFE ordinarily works by human instrumentality. Would not the husbandman tempt God's providence if he should say, "I need not sow or culture the ground, for I have no power to cause the seed to grow, and therefore I will remain quiet, and leave it to God"? Would he not justly be left without a harvest and suffer for his own folly and madness? And so will it be in grace. Therefore, it is ours to use the means, while we remember that conversion is generally attributable to the Word of God. How fearful, then, the responsibility which attaches to the preaching and hearing of God's holy Word! Conclusion: The subject teaches us—1. That we should regard all human instrumentality in its proper place. 2. That the Word of God, spite of all the opposition that may be made to it by ungodly men, will be the grand instrument of the renovation of our fallen world. 3. That to God we are to ascribe all the praise and all the glory. (*J. Haslegrave, B.A.*)

God the giver of increase:—Christianity had made rapid advances amongst the people of Corinth. Numbers and success had produced the alas! too commonly attendant evils. Party spirit had developed itself. St. Paul writes, seeking to correct all this. He bids them think of the source of the gospel they had received, of the power by which it was propagated, of the life by which it was sustained. They would find all this, not in the wisdom or the eloquence of their teachers, not in the completeness of their Church organisation; but in the presence, the grace, the love of God. God gives the increase. I. WE NATURALLY AND RIGHTLY LOOK FOR INCREASE. We want fruit, as the product of our toil. We all work with a distinct aim (chap. ix. 7). The fact of increase is at once one of the greatest inducements to labour, and one of the greatest rewards of it. Who would continue to work if the work proved altogether barren and resultless? We should look for increase also in higher things. There is the Church with its work. We should desire to see it grow under our fostering care. We should look for growing numbers and increasing usefulness. We should look for increase also in the personal soul. What is our Christianity? Not a creed only, not a theology only, not a piece of social organisation only, but a life. Growth is a characteristic of life. The apostles could say to many of the Christians of their age: "Your faith groweth," "Your love groweth."

Can it be said of us? II. IF WE WANT THE INCREASE, WE MUST TAKE THE PROPER MEANS. This is true, not only of the great matters of which the apostle is speaking, but also of the commonest things of daily life. It is one of the great lessons of the harvest. So is it in business. Sedulous care is one of the secrets of success. So is it in education. There is no royal road to learning for any man. In every domain of life God blesses human forethought, and toil, and faith. God had given the increase in the Church at Corinth. But how earnest had been the labour of which this growth was the reward. St. Paul had planted with all his zeal. Apollos, with his renowned eloquence, had laboured too. These were the antecedent conditions on the human side to which that growth was to be ascribed. III. Paul may plant, Apollos may water, BUT GOD GIVETH THE INCREASE. This is so, even in the commonest things of daily life. Take the ordinary annual produce of the earth. The ultimate causes of productiveness are altogether beyond our power to reach. So is it in business life. Two men start together; the conditions which promise success, such as neighbourhood, the conduct and industry of the men, and so on, seem precisely equal. Yet while one man prospers in largest measure, the other goes his way to poverty. But this only states the fact without explaining it. The question at the root of the matter is: What is it that determines a man's action at the critical moment in his history? What gives the insight and the courage which enable him to grasp the happy chance? What sends him bounding on the flood to fortune? May not this be God, the ruler of all, who "doeth according to His will," who setteth up one and putteth down another? Toil is ours, but increase is in the hands of God. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." God does give the increase in all the many regions of human life. God blesses all honest humble toil. He crowns the ploughing and the sowing with the golden harvest. Study is rewarded with growth both in our stores of knowledge and also in our mental power to grasp the truth. So also all real spiritual work is largely blessed by God. God is ever near. God labours with us. May we ever bear it in mind in all our work. God crowns our work with His all-sufficient blessing. It is true in all ways. In the personal soul our religious acts in public works and in sacraments, as well as in private devotion, are planting and watering; but faithfully used a richer Divine life will possess us, for God will give the increase, and there will be a sure growth in righteousness. (*Ralph Williams.*) *That the best ministry is nothing without God's power giving the increase*:—1. Let us consider—WHAT THE APOSTLE DOTH NOT MEAN IN SAYING THE MINISTRY IS NOTHING. First, he doth not mean as if the officers of the Church were not, in their way and place, necessary; for then the apostle in the same tongue should contradict himself, for he saith, "We are workers together with God" (2. Cor. vi. 1). Secondly, when the apostle calls the ministry nothing, the meaning is not as if it were not sufficient in its kind to work those things for which it is appointed, otherwise this would reflect upon the wisdom of God. Thirdly, when the apostle saith they are nothing, this is to be understood of the ministers of the gospel and preaching of it as well as the ministers of the law and preaching that. What he positively meaneth or inferreth are, first, that it is not in the power or choice of the minister to make it effectual. Secondly, the apostle by this intends that both the ministers and the people should keep themselves in their due bounds. Lastly, in making the ministry nothing and God all, the apostle would have both minister and people in their ministry to have our hearts and eyes up to heaven. But how may we address ourselves to hear and to the ministry so that God may make them something to us? To be made something is when the Word doth greatly wound thy heart or comfort thee. First, make it a real and conscientious matter to pray unto God to give increase. As to the woman our Saviour said, "According to thy faith so be it unto thee," So according to thy prepared prayer, saith God, this sermon and this duty shall be blessed upon you. Secondly, exercise strong and divine acts of faith; this will make the ministry something to thee. The Word profited not, because it was not mingled with faith (Heb. iv. 2). Thirdly, "lay aside all superfluity of naughtiness" (James i. 21). Labour to find the ministry something, some great thing, some terrible thing, some comfortable thing to thee. (*A. Burgess.*) *The success of the ministry owing to a Divine influence*:—I. SUCH IS THE PRESENT DEGENERACY OF HUMAN NATURE, THAT ALL THE MINISTRATIONS OF THE GOSPEL CANNOT REMEDY IT WITHOUT THE CONCURRING EFFICACY OF DIVINE GRACE. The gospel is designed to reclaim men from sin; but they are obstinately set upon it. It is intended to bring apostate rebels back to God and the universal practice of holiness; but we love estrangement from Him, and have no inclination to return. Instruc-

tions may furnish the head with notions, and correct speculative mistakes; but they have no power to sway the will, and sweetly allure it to holiness. Persuasions may prevail to bring men to practise what they had omitted through mistake, carelessness, or a transient dislike; but they have no effect where the heart is full of innate enmity against the things recommended. II. THE PROMISES AND DECLARATIONS OF THE WORD, WHICH APPROPRIATE ALL THE SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL TO GOD ALONE. Jehovah is not fond of ostentation and parade. The doctrine of the necessity of Divine influences to render the administrations of the gospel effectual for saving purposes, is a doctrine familiar to the sacred oracles. III. THAT THE DIFFERENT SUCCESS OF THE SAME MEANS OF GRACE IN DIFFERENT PERIODS OF THE CHURCH, SUFFICIENTLY SHOWS THE NECESSITY OF GRACIOUS ASSISTANCES TO RENDER THEM EFFICACIOUS. We find that religion has flourished or declined, not so much according to external means as according to the degree of Divine influence. Alas! what could Noah, that zealous preacher of righteousness do, during the 120 years of his ministry? He might warn, he might persuade, he might weep over a secure world, in vain: they would rush upon destruction before his eyes. How little could Moses, the favourite messenger of God, prevail to make his people dutiful! Alas! after all the astonishing wonders he wrought before their eyes, they continued obstinate and rebellious; "For the Lord had not given them an heart to understand," &c. (Deut. xxix. 4). What inconsiderable success had that zealous prophet Elijah, the eloquent Isaiah, or that tender-hearted, mourning, weeping prophet, Jeremiah! Surely many feeble servants of Christ, in all respects inferior to them, have been crowned with more extensive success! IV. OUR OWN EXPERIENCE AND OBSERVATION FURNISH US WITH MANY INSTANCES IN WHICH THIS GREAT TRUTH HAS BEEN EXEMPLIFIED. Sometimes a minister who is a universal scholar, a masterly reasoner, and an accomplished orator, and withal sincerely engaged for the conversion of sinners, labours in vain; while another of much inferior accomplishments is the successful instrument of turning many to righteousness. Sometimes we have seen a number of sinners thoroughly awakened and brought to seek the Lord in earnest; while another number, under the very same sermon, and who seemed as open to conviction as the former, have remained thoughtless as usual. And whence could this difference arise but from special grace? Your own experience proves the same thing. Have you not found that the very same things have very different effects upon you at different times? Hence we learn—1. How essential and important the doctrine of Divine influence is to the Church of God. The very life and the whole success of the gospel depend upon it. 2. That when we enjoy the ministrations of the gospel in the greatest purity and plenty, we should not place our trust upon them, but wholly depend on the influence of Divine grace for the success. 3. Hence also we may learn whither we should look for grace to render the gospel successful among us. Let us look up to God. Saints, apply to Him for His influences to quicken your graces and animate you in your Christian course. Sinners, cry to Him for His grace to renew your nature and sanctify you. 4. We observe that whatever excellent outward means and privileges a Church enjoys, it is in a most miserable condition if the Lord has withdrawn His influences from it; and whether this be not too much our own condition I leave you to judge. (*S. Davies, A.M.*) *The Christian hearer's first lesson*:—Let me—I. FOR THE PREVENTING OF ALL MISTAKES, BRIEFLY ILLUSTRATE THE DOCTRINE CONTAINED IN THESE WORDS. But first it will be fit to tell you what is to be taken for granted of the persons here spoken of. 1. That they have a sufficient call to the office of the sacred ministry, and authority to exercise the same. 2. That they be furnished with a competent stock of divine knowledge, and understand the things they are to teach unto others, and are not blind leaders of the blind. 3. That they have at least such a faculty of expression as that they may be understood by those whom they are to instruct. These things supposed, I am now to show—(1) What every minister of the gospel may and ought to do. He may both plant and water, and do the whole work of God, so far as He hath thought fit to entrust man with it, *i.e.*, exercise the whole ministry of reconciliation. (2) What one minister may be able to do more than another. God hath not given to all the same number of talents (chap. xii. 7–11). All the apostles had not St. Peter's quickness of apprehension, forwardness of speech, or zeal; all were not, like James and John, sons of thunder; all had not Paul's learning, or Apollos's eloquence. One minister of Christ may have a more faithful memory, and another a clearer judgment, and a third a more fruitful invention, and a fourth a better elocution. One may be more dexterous at planting, another at watering, a third at weeding, and a fourth at fencing; and another may

exceed all in pruning off the luxuriant branches and cherishing the tender plants. It is no less absurd to expect the same abilities in all ministers than it would be to imagine that all artists, &c., should be of equal skill. (3) That all which the best can do is in itself of no efficacy. Neither is Paul nor Apollos anything, *i.e.*, without the blessing of God. What is it that the ablest ministers can do to make men good Christians? All comes to no more but this: they can declare the doctrine of the gospel; they can exhort, persuade, and pray. None but He whose voice shaketh the heavens and the earth can rend the stony hearts of sinners. (4) That the efficacy of all is of God only. Whoever planteth or watereth, God giveth the increase. He hath put His words into their mouth, and His seed into their hands; but still the seed itself, the skill and activity of the sowers, the goodness of the ground, the warmth and the rain, the growth and harvest, are all of Him. II. FOR THE HELP OF SUCH AS MAY NEED IT, POINT AT SOME OF THE USES WE SHOULD MAKE OF IT. Because we are nothing, and all the increase is of God—1. Let us take heed how we depend so much on the ministry of men as to attend too little in their ministry upon God. Whilst you are pleased to afford us your ear, be sure that you give God your heart. It is a very lamentable thing to see in what extremes we are apt to lose both God and ourselves. Because neither Paul nor Apollos are anything without God, or in comparison of God, therefore—(1) Some rashly conclude that they are nothing at all to them. But though the very best instrument be able to do nothing by itself out of the workman's hands, yet even an indifferent one may do much when managed by the hand of a skilful workman. It is certainly God alone that gives the increase in the field as well as in the Church, and yet men are not so unreasonable as to expect a good harvest from God without the labour of the husbandman. (2) Others make God Himself almost nothing, and the minister all. Such are they who place the greatest part of their religion in hearing many sermons, and when they have heard enough are apt to persuade themselves that they have served God well enough. So our ears be but constantly exercised; a barren heart, which bringeth forth no fruit of righteousness to God or to our neighbour in our life, never troubles us. (3) Others attribute so much to the choice of the preacher, as if they thought that God Himself is like to some workmen who cannot do their work to any purpose unless they have the very best tools to work with. 2. Let us learn how we are to behave ourselves in relation to the ordinances of God administered by men. (1) More generally, let us see that we rightly distinguish between the work of God and the ministry of man, neither expecting from men what God alone can do, nor expecting that God will do that alone which He ordinarily doth by the ministry of men. (2) More particularly, remember—(*a*) That the men who minister to you are still men, and will as long as they live have more or less the infirmities of men. You must therefore be so just as to allow for the common infirmities of human nature, and so charitable, too, as to overlook some personal failings. If the workman build on the right foundation and by his true rule; if he do his work truly, faithfully, and substantially, this ought to satisfy. (*b*) That as they are ministers of Christ they are not to be despised, and as they are no more but ministers they may be too much magnified. If he that glorieth in Apollos had indeed profited by Apollo's preaching, as he ought to have done, he would be very well pleased with Paul. And if he that glorieth in Paul had improved in sincere Christianity by Paul's ministry, he would be well enough pleased with Apollos. I know that it is pleaded by some that they cannot profit by some as by others, and possibly there may be some truth in this, and yet, it may be, the fault doth not always lie where they would have it laid, but where they have no mind at all to find it. However, what is here pleaded deserves to be considered. And first, suppose we that the Word of God, the wholesome food of our souls, is duly and fully administered, there is no room at all for this plea. The same living water coming from the same spring hath the same virtue, through what conduit soever it may pass unto us. The sound we hear is the man's, and that may be less grateful; but still the Word is God's, and should be always welcome. Secondly, the scales, it may be, hang a great deal evener than we yet think they do. As many pious people are edified, for ought we know, by him whom we forsake as are by him we follow. Some persons I have known who, through an unreasonable prejudice, have been even sick at the sight of some meat, whereof they could never be persuaded to taste, and yet, after they have but once or twice been prevailed with to eat of it, have fed upon it with much both delight and benefit. Possibly, then, you may not be edified, not because you cannot, but only because you think so, and will not try. (*C. Elis.*)

Now he that planteth, and he that watereth, are one.—*The unity of Christian*

work:—That, although there is diversity and variety in the gifts of the ministers, yet they all ought to agree in one. The ministry ought to be one. First, in respect of doctrine, and true doctrine, that is the soul and life of all (1 Tim. i. 3). Secondly, there ought to be unity in regard of their end and scope. Thirdly, there should be unity in affections, to love one another, to bless God for the abilities and gifts of one another. Envy and pride is apt to get even amongst the best. First, when the ministry is not one, this is apt in the first place to beget atheism and irreligion in the people. Secondly, where there is not this unity, it doth much grieve and unsettle the hearts of the godly. Thirdly, when there is not this unity, profaneness and ungodliness doth the more increase; godliness doth exceedingly decay in the power of it. 1. Do not thou by thy pragmatical meddling widen the difference and raise more dust. 2. Consider this—that those that are godly do agree in the main fundamental point. 3. Do thou labour to be informed with a true and divine faith out of the Word thine own self. 4. Humble yourselves under these differences, when they go not the same way, when they preach not the same thing. (*A. Burgess.*) **And every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.**—*The reward of the Christian ministry*:—That, according to a man's labour and working for God, he is sure to have a proportionable reward. To clear this, consider—First, that there are no persons, be they never so mean, so poor, so contemptible, but they are in a way and calling to do God's work. Secondly, there is a twofold doing of God's work—either the work of His providence as passive instruments, or the work of His commands as active instruments. In the next place, therefore, let us consider what is the acceptable doing of God's work which will be rewarded? First, that only is God's work which is commanded and willed by Him. We are often commanded to understand the good and acceptable will of God. Many think they are doing God's work when it is the devil's, because they look not for warrant of it in Scripture. Secondly, it is acceptable labouring when it is done in such a manner. 1. It is profitable working when the persons are first made the Lord's, when they are justified and sanctified. Make the tree good, and then the fruit will be good. 2. A reward is due to that work only which is done for God's sake, out of love to Him. 3. That work only will have a reward which is done with that measure and degree of love and fervency that it ought to be. 4. The work to be rewarded is that which is constantly done with perseverance, holding out to the end (Matt. xxiv. 13). 5. The work to be rewarded is that which is done fully and plenarily. Will a good work thus circumstantiated be sure to be rewarded? Then take heed of two contraries to this work of the Lord. (1) Of idleness, unprofitableness, and unfruitfulness. (2) Take heed of the other contrary, upon which the greater wrath of God will fall, and that is, to do the devil's work. Our Saviour told the Pharisees, They are of the devil, and his works they did (John viii. 44). Having considered what the work is, now let us consider and admire at the reward; and before we come to show what reward is, take notice of a distinction or two. First, there is an essential reward, and that is, the enjoyment of God in full assurance and delight. This all that work for God are sure to have. Secondly, there is an accidental reward, and that is, some degrees of glory, because of greater labour and sufferings for Christ one may partake of more glory than another. Thirdly, it is lawful to encourage a man's self in working for God by this, that there is a reward. There is a lawful self-seeking, viz., of immortality, and honour and glory (Rom. ii. 7). Let us consider wherein lieth this reward of working for God, either in this life, or in the life to come. And truly, in this life, if there were no heaven, no happiness, no enjoyment of God, there is enough to put us on it. First, there is a great deal of peace and comfort of conscience in doing what is good. Secondly, when we do God's work, He further rewards with more spiritual strength, and enlargeth our abilities, so that the more we work for God the more we may. Thus in the parable, he that had five, he gained ten (Luke xix. 16). Lastly, they are sure to have God's protection and presence to support them in their labour. In the next place, consider what is the eternal reward, and how eye hath not seen, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. First, it is God Himself communicating His goodness and comfort to him that hath done His work. Secondly, this reward lieth in the full glorification of the soul in all the faculties thereof, and body in all the parts thereof. Thirdly, the eternity of this happiness. Fourthly, the fulness of this happiness—an aggregation of all things that may make happy, either within or without. Fifthly, consider the vast disproportion of this to those works thou dost for God. 1. The one is infinite, and thou art a finite, limited creature. 2. What work thou doest for God, God He first works it in thee,

so that thou labourest for Him of His own, and yet He rewards it. 3. What thou doest for Him, it is accompanied with much evil and many imperfections. 4. Thou hast formerly been a servant to Satan, done his work, so that God might damn thee upon the old score, though thou wert now able to do all things perfectly. 5. Whatsoever thou hast done is but thy duty; God need not reward thee, or might have bestowed a less reward. 6. What work thou doest, it is a due; besides, God doth not need it. It addeth nothing. 7. All that thou doest is for a little time; the reward is for ever. (*Ibid.*) *Rewards proportionable to works*:—The very least share in the glorious inheritance of the saints in light, is sufficient to reconcile a man to the greatest hardships of a virtuous life; but the sure prospect of more abundant glory, as the recompense of a more exalted holiness, must be allowed to carry still greater degrees of encouragement along with it. And it cannot be denied but that the most natural and prevailing motive to make men grow in grace and goodness is a well-grounded confidence that the greatness of their reward will be proportioned to the greatness of their attainments. I. HOW GOOD GROUNDS WE HAVE TO BELIEVE THAT DIFFERENT MEN WILL RECEIVE A DIFFERENT REWARD IN HEAVEN. To confirm us in the belief of this doctrine we may observe that there are several ranks and orders of good men, to whom, in a peculiar manner, more than ordinary degrees of happiness are promised in the Scripture. Of the prophets under the Old Testament we read that "God is not ashamed to be called their God," theirs in a more than ordinary manner, and that "He hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. xi. 16). And to the apostles our blessed Saviour thus addresseth Himself (Luke xxii. 28–30). Now how difficult soever it may be nicely to determine the full meaning of these expressions, yet, certainly, we may very rationally infer from them that there are some particular marks of glory with which the apostles of our Lord will be honoured above other Christians. And to this, it is probable, St. John alludes when, in his description of Jerusalem the holy city, he particularly observes that "the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. xxi. 14). St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Thessalonians, breaks out into joy upon the view of that glory which at the day of judgment would redound to him from the success of his ministry among them (1 Thess. ii. 19). They who come nearest to the apostles in an unshaken faith, and an exemplary holiness, will be next them likewise in happiness and glory. True it is all the blest are alike children of God; but it is as true also that all children have not the same provision, all heirs are not entitled to the same inheritance, all members have not the same honour. II. THIS REWARD WILL BE ALLOTTED TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS OWN LABOUR. It is observable that the apostle doth not here say we shall be rewarded for the sake and on the account of our labour, but "according to it." There is no temptation which doth more frequently overtake us than the fond hope of repenting a little before we go hence, and be no more seen. But if we would seriously consider, that though we were never so sure of time and opportunity and will to repent hereafter, yet we shall by this conduct necessarily fall short of many degrees of glory which we might otherwise have just reason to expect. This consideration, one would think, should be sufficient to convince us of the advantages of an early piety, a universal obedience, an uninterrupted state of happiness. (*Bp. Smalridge.*) *Work and wages*:—I. EVERY MAN IS A WORKER. 1. For a livelihood. "He that will not work neither let him eat." Masters as well as servants, princes as well as peasants, are subject to this great law, and those who strive to evade it are the veriest slaves. 2. To mould the character and life of all among whom we mingle—either for good or evil. 3. At the task of forming our own eternal character, and we are either becoming assimilated to the image of God, or are marring the precious materials of heart, intellect, &c., which we have received from Him. 4. Either aiding or hindering the great moral movements of the day; either making our fellows happier or lending our power to prolong the duration of human darkness, degradation, and woe. Here there is no neutrality. "He who is not for Me is against Me." II. EVERY MAN'S WORK SHALL BE JUDGED OF BY ITSELF. 1. God has created every man complete and responsible in himself. A man is not a mere part of a mass of humanity. He has to deal for himself with the great question of duty, and by himself to answer to the Eternal Judge. 2. This solemn truth—(1) Is frequently forgotten, and more frequently neglected. Men act in masses, and lose the sense of individual responsibility. But this does not lighten its pressure or annihilate it. (2) Involves most important practical consequences. Since I am personally responsible—(*a*) No human priest can come between me and

my Maker. (*b*) Any attempt to deprive me of my liberty of conscience is to be sternly resisted. (*c*) I must not measure my duty by the services of others. (*d*) It is my wisdom to cultivate a solemn sense of my responsibility. III. EVERY MAN'S WORK SHALL RECEIVE ITS DUE WAGES. This is true of—1. The money-maker. He gets what he works for. 2. The pleasure-seeker. 3. The culture worshipper. 4. The Christian, who receives his wages—(1) In the quiet approval of his own heart. (2) In seeing good accomplished by his efforts. (3) In contemplating the final triumph of his cause. (4) In the approval of his Master—"Well done," &c. (*G. D. Macgregor.*)

Ver. 9. **For we are labourers together with God.**—*Labourers together with God*:—I. THE IMMEDIATE APPLICATION OF THE TEXT. 1. Believers though they were, Paul could not address the Corinthians as spiritual persons, for they moved in the lower, earthly region of man's nature, where strife and division have place, and into which it was impossible to introduce exalted subjects. 2. He then proceeds to show on what a mistake this party feeling proceeded. The different teachers were but humble instruments in the hand of one and the same God, who commissioned each with spiritual gifts, and who alone prospered their work. Paul might have taken a different course. He might have urged on his own party to more determined action. But, instead of that, he deprecated the existence of any parties, and bade all rise into that higher region in which they would discern that different spiritual teachers were working together with one God, and for the same spiritual results. 3. Oh, that these words had been heeded by the Church since! They would have rendered impossible most of the divisions which have been, and are still, its weakness and its curse. All of us "labourers together with God!" No thought could be more exalted. Well might anybody who felt it protest against what else might be deemed the honour of leading a party. II. THE WIDER APPLICATION. For is it not profoundly true that, since we are Divinely made, and since we live in a Divine world, all the work we any of us do here is for Divine purposes, and by Divine energy, and so is a "labouring together with God"? 1. It may be said: On this view all other things work for God. True; for "fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind, fulfil His Word." It would be a healthy Christian thing to see God's ministers in all the forces of nature, whether silent, like those at work in an opening flower and decaying leaf, or imposing, like those revealed in earthquakes and volcanoes. It is a deeply Christian and a deeply scientific thought, too, to see God at work in these law-abiding and universal changes; and unchristian and unscientific is the too common thought that, in general, things go on of themselves, but that sometimes, in answer to prayer, God steps in to interfere with them and work special providences. That idea sets God apart from His universe, supposes it can go on without Him, and sees His presence only in irregularities. The other belief supposes God at work always and everywhere, and recognises His intelligence as displayed in the glorious order of His works. The unconscious energies of nature, then, are working together with God. The universe "is God's husbandry and God's building." 2. But, if so, the same may be said, with much higher emphasis, of men. On what a far higher level of being do they live and work, possessed of spiritual faculties resembling those of their Maker, and entrusted by Him with a certain independence in little spheres of activity! So that they can delightfully feel that they are co-operating with Him, or idly neglect to do so, or wilfully oppose His will. The region in which we can help or hinder God's plans is a narrow one indeed; but, to have such a power at all, how wonderful and great! There is work for us to do—no grand, famous work, but sacred daily duty. (*T. M. Herbert, M.A.*) *Labourers together with God*:—I. IN SPIRITUAL HUSBANDRY. Now it is the province of the husbandman to plant and to water, but neither dexterity in planting can ensure the striking of the root, nor diligence in watering command the ripening of the fruit. In the spiritual husbandry of the Church all is God's; the field—the world; the plants—men; the instruments wherewith the clods are broken—the appointed ordinances of grace; the plan for the direct combination of labour—His Word; the water—the purifying influence of His Spirit; the sunbeams—the quickening and cheering manifestations of His love. As in nature the husbandman "waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth, and hath long patience, until he receive the early and latter rain," relying implicitly on the Divine pledge, so the faithful minister of Christ pursues his spiritual husbandry in patience and in faith. II. IN SPIRITUAL BUILDING. Here, too, the labour is of man, but the power of God. In the spiritual temple of the Church the foundation is of God's laying, the material of God's preparing, the plan of God's contriving, the proportions of God's

adjusting; and if ministers of Christ may be said, in the gathering or the raising, in the cementing or compacting, in the edifying or carrying up, in the roofing or covering in, to "build up lively stones into a spiritual temple, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ," yet the quickening, pervading power of God is continually recognised throughout. For what could impart life to the stone except a miracle of grace? Conclusion: From this, then, it will follow that while, with St. Paul, we exalt the office of the Christian ministry, at the same time, with St. Paul, we abase the individuals who exercise it. Let them be, like Apollos, "mighty in the Scriptures"; let them be, like St. Paul, mightier still in "signs and wonders," &c., yet, like Paul and Apollos, in themselves they are nothing. (*T. Dale, M.A.*) *Working together with God*:—We are delighted with the sweet invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour," &c. We sometimes forget that the same Saviour invites us also to labour. "Go, work in My vineyard." I. WORK—1. Strengthens faith (John vii. 17). Christian experience fortifies against infidelity. The man of scientific ability cannot convince me, against my years of experience, that water is unwholesome, or that its Creator is a blunderer. 2. Strengthens spiritual life. The little child craves activity quite as much as food. Such a child may be never so well fed, and clothed, and sheltered, yet, if it have not opportunity to exercise, it will be a dwarf. So work is a means of spiritual development and growth to every child of God. 3. Purifies the life. Society is kept pure by activity, just as the ocean and atmosphere are kept pure by the winds and waves. The Church in which all minds and hands are busy planning and executing will not have time to criticise, complain, or gossip. 4. Employment and enjoyment go hand in hand. The working Church is the happy Church, and the happy Church helps to keep members from backsliding. II. TOGETHER. We may say this is the difficult problem. There are so many wills and tastes—so great difference in culture and habit—that "working together" is almost impracticable. 1. And yet when we look at the Christian at the time of surrender, it will not seem so difficult. Every true convert begins the service of the Lord with the question, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and this becomes the first, middle, and ending question of the converted man's life. He becomes a member of the body of which Jesus Christ is head. As the members of a human body are controlled by the will—the head—so must be also the members of Christ's body. No jealousies between such members. No complaining one of another, but each bearing the burden assigned. 2. And then nothing will help to unite workers so much as a high appreciation of the work to be done. One soul is worth more than all the world beside, and millions perish daily for lack of the bread of life. 3. In view of the fact that Jesus prayed that His disciples might be one. III. WITH GOD. No man has a right to engage in a work in which he cannot ask God's presence and blessing. Much more must we realise God's presence and blessing in the advancement of His kingdom. We may be sure that God will not allow the Son's mission to fail. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." (*R. Moffett.*) *God's co-labourers*:—I. THE BASIS OF THIS CO-OPERATION is the high and holy relation between the Christian heart and God. The Christian is united to Him as a child is to a parent, more by affection than by mere external ties. He is united to God, likewise, by a fervent sympathy with the Divine character. God's holiness is exceedingly attractive to him. Besides, a Christian has truly and persistently submitted his will to God's will, feeling that the Divine will includes all that is wisest, purest, noblest. A Christian, furthermore, holds his soul and his thoughts in daily communion with God, so that affections are interchanged with Him. II. ITS NATURE. The Christian accepts—1. The Divine idea of his own development of character, and labours to produce in himself those things which God seeks. 2. The Divine order in this world, and endeavours to secure among men that intelligence and goodness for which God endlessly works, and causes nature to work. 3. All his powers and affections in stewardship, and undertakes to use himself for God's work. His personal influence, his property, his children, his friends—all these he throws in, as it were, to the common stock, and administers them for God, and not for himself. 4. The duty to love all that which God loves, to promote all that God is seeking to promote, to hate what God hates, and to destroy it if he can. III. PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. This view consoles in our conscious weakness. There is no man that, when he looks upon the courses of God in the world; the results that he is to achieve in himself; to seek among his fellows, that does not often come to a consciousness that he is weakness itself. Sometimes it makes one feel utterly worthless, discourages endeavour, and leads one to desire to

fly away and be at rest, because they think it will make no difference whether they live or die. What is a drop of water of itself? What is weaker? But when God has marshalled the sum of the weakness of myriad drops together, they lift the mightiest ship as if it were but a feather, and play with the winds as if they were mere instruments of sport. And yet that very drop is there, and has its part and lot in the might of the whole vast, unbounded sea. 2. He who unites himself to any great truth which God has established may be sure that he will go forth from conquering to conquer; not by reason of any might or skill in himself, but because he is a labourer together with God. The man that adopts any Divinely appointed truth, no matter what the world thinks of it, rides in God's chariot, and has God for his charioteer. He always wins who sides with God. On the other hand, no man in this world is safe or victorious unless he feels that he is going with, and not against God. 3. No life can be barren or insignificant that is a part of God's life. A woman that seemed to be endowed with everything calculated to fit one for the most eminent service, was called, in God's providence, to marry a man that was not her equal. She was placed in an obscure position. While she might have been listening to the chime of the spheres she was occupied with rocking the cradle, darning, sewing, washing, and cooking. And sometimes, perhaps, she thought to herself, "Woe is me! To what end am I living?" Her child developed under her care, and learned to call her mother; and then she thought God spoke, so sweet was its voice to her, and in that child she expected to reap her reward for all that she had done and suffered. But just as he was touching manhood, in a moment the wave closed over him, the labour of her life was ended, and, stranded on the shores of despair, she cried out, "Why was I born? and to what end have I lived?" A hundred had marked her fidelity, and she had been schoolmaster to every one of them. A hundred had witnessed her patience, and all the sermons they had ever heard had not preached such a lesson to them as her silent example. Multitudes that had learned of her, in turn became teachers of others. Her influence spread wider than what she dreamed. It was not until she had gone up to the end of life in obscurity, and God had caused the light of eternity to shine on her work, that she understood how glorious little things might be. The good deeds of this life are dewdrops, innumerable, lying unseen among men; but when God shall pour the revealing light of the other world upon them, how it will kindle them and make them sparkle! Imagine how Solomon's temple was built. In the forest of old Lebanon many and many a day-labourer worked in obscurity, and wondering of what consequence all his work could be. In another place were workers in metal. Some did one thing and some another, but none knew the plan of the temple, none knew what they wrought till on a certain day, when they all trooped to Jerusalem. Then they stood entranced, and wondered that out of things so insignificant in the mountains there should come such glory in Jerusalem. God had sent some to the cedar forest, some to the stone quarry, some to the dark and dank places of this world; but He is collecting materials which will glow with untold splendour in the temple that He is building for the New Jerusalem. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Man a worker with God*:—God a labourer, a labourer with men, God a labourer with men for men, are the facts stated in this passage. I. GOD WORKS ALONE. We are not wont to consider God in His wonderful activities, but more accustomed to think of Him as having created the universe, and complacently beholding its wondrous workings and results. Nevertheless, the God referred to in this passage is not only glorious in holiness, but also a God doing wonders. This activity of the Infinite One is involved in—1. The doctrine of providence. The preservation of the action, harmony, and stability of nature requires His constant oversight and direction and application of nature and of its laws. This is also true of all the beings which God had created. Every one of them lives in Him. The seraph before His throne, and the men upon His footstool, are each of them the objects of His ceaseless care. So is every sun and star as well as every plant and flower. How wondrous, how inconceivably glorious must be the activity of the Divine mind! 2. The doctrine of the final judgment. We shall be summoned to the Divine presence, the Omnipotent Judge, who has known our motives and all the circumstances under which we have acted, and we shall receive from Him, from His personal knowledge, the decisions of that day. How wonderful must be the presence, and perception, and memory of this Infinite God, who is thus our judge! 3. The reception of worship. How necessary, in order that God may properly regard our approaches to Him and our devotion, that He should understand everything that affects thought or feeling at the time that

those services are rendered! And when we consider how great is the number of His worshippers, how wonderful must be the exercise of His intelligence and of His love! There are two things which render it difficult for us to rightly appreciate these activities. (1) The one is that God is invisible. (2) The other is that in most of His works God operates independently of rational agencies. (*a*) In making the universe He employed no agents. On the contrary, He spake and it was done. (*b*) In the conservation of the universe none of the beings that occupy it have an agency in holding it in its orbit. (*c*) In legislating for mankind He has no legislative assembly. The laws by which we are governed emanate from His mind, are promulgated by His authority, and He will execute His own sentence. II. NEVERTHELESS, THERE IS ONE OF THE DIVINE ENTERPRISES IN WHICH GOD IS PLEASED TO ASSOCIATE MEN, and that is the work of human salvation. 1. But there are several departments of it in which God acts alone. (1) This was true in devising this scheme of mercy; there were no consultations. (2) And in making the atonement that was necessary to accomplish this purpose God acted by Himself. He so loved the world, &c. Jesus Christ alone is the Redeemer and Saviour of the children of men. (3) It is equally true that in the transformation of the human soul it is a Divine work; it is the work of the Holy Spirit. 2. Still there are departments in this enterprise in which God has been pleased to employ men. (1) He did this in inaugurating Christianity in the earth. By prophets and priests He prepared the world for the reception of the coming Messiah. (2) And then when the fulness of time was come the shepherds of Bethlehem listened to the announcement of the fact from the heavenly host; wise men from the East came to witness His incarnation. (3) Disciples were with Him during His ministry, and just before His ascension they received from Him His great commission. And on the day of Pentecost they received the power to go forth and preach the gospel which had been committed to them. You will see in every step of its introduction and inauguration it became needful that human instrumentality should be employed. (4) And now that it is inaugurated God requires His people to promulgate it. He has made it the business of the Church to give these Holy Scriptures to all men, and in this there is a very large service to be rendered. When in every community upon the earth there shall be a Christian, a Christian pastor, and Christian disciples, it will be their duty to employ every possible influence and agency to prevail upon men to heed the call of Divine mercy. By our Christian character, our constant watchfulness, and every influence that God gives us, we are to beseech men to be reconciled to God. III. PRACTICAL LESSONS. If our views of this subject are correct, we may infer—1. The greatness of the work of human salvation. It is the only enterprise in which God is engaged in which He has taken into the fellowship of labour with Him either angels or men. 2. The dignity of activity in the cause and for the sake of Christ. We are not acting upon physical, material things; we are not seeking to promote mainly temporal interests or present happiness merely. We are seeking to recover lost spirits, redeemed by Christ, for whose restoration there is provision made by the power of the Spirit. 3. The certainty of success in these spiritual enterprises. If we were to do this work in our own wisdom and strength we might well hesitate and fear as to the result, but if we are labouring with God who can doubt the success? (*Bishop Janes.*) *The work of man and the work of God*:—I. WE ARE GOD'S FELLOW-LABOURERS. 1. Men rush into the ministry or into similar positions without a doubt about their ability. But if they pondered the words, "We are God's fellow-workmen," they might see some reason to question their fitness. Every workman has two things which must not be wanting in God's fellow-workman. (1) An object. This in our case is the final happiness and perfection of each in heaven, and the attraction of each toward that Person who can bring him there. How ought we to ask ourselves whether this is substantially our object! (2) A method. Every artisan not only knows what the particular result he designs is, but he knows also the process by which he must arrive at it. Now we who undertake to teach others ought to be quite sure that the gospel is true in its two great parts, the offer of forgiveness of sins through Christ, and the offer of the Holy Spirit's presence to transform, direct, and sustain: these things we ought to have experience of in ourselves, and so be able to declare, as of our own knowledge, that those who listen to us may attain the great object if they will only use the proper means. 2. It is in carrying on this work in this way that we are God's fellow-workmen. God has the same object that we have, and God is co-operating with us in our endeavours after it. II. YE ARE GOD'S HUSBANDRY, with regard to the state of your hearts and charac-

ters at any particular time. 1. By nature the soil is cold and hard, shallow and barren. It bears some things which look good and beautiful, waiting, as it were, for the Holy Spirit to turn them from natural gifts into spiritual graces; but not yet receiving, because we prefer having them as they are, and shrink back from prayer, which is the connecting link between the soul and God. Now, when we see how slow we all are to take this little step in earnest, we feel that nothing can give us any hope at all but the assurance that God is here engaged, and that He can work with us, preparing the stony ground to receive the good seed of His Word, that it may take deep root and spring up into an abundant harvest. 2. And as it is with the ground, so it is with respect to the weeds which grow so rankly. Long experience teaches us to expect them. We say to ourselves, It must go on so to the end; no care or pains of ours will ever root them up. Perhaps not: and yet it may be not only our duty to labour on as if we might succeed; but more than this: the fault may be in great part ours for not having remembered that we are God's husbandry, and for not having prayed to God more earnestly to do for us that which for ourselves we could not do. III. YE ARE GOD'S BUILDING. 1. This is especially true of young people. Your characters are forming now; soon they will be (what we call) formed: then habits of good or evil will have become a second nature, and change, if it come at all, will be a difficulty beyond anything that you have yet known of. Every day is adding something to the building: something of good, or something of evil, some accession of knowledge, of self-control, of practice of good and conquest of evil, or else of carelessness and indifference, of self-indulgence or vanity or forgetfulness of God. 2. Yet, blessed be God, He has not left us (strictly speaking) to build. Ye are God's building. O how gracious an assurance; that, while that formation of character is going on, to all appearance, so easily and almost casually. Still all the time God is working, God is building; if we will only seek Him and trust Him and not thwart or counteract His work, He is carrying on, in the secret of the soul, a process of formation, and the finished thing will be His own temple, in which He will abide for ever and be satisfied with His travail! But, indeed, we must seek Him. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The union of Divine and human agency in the kingdom of Christ:*—I. WHAT THE WORK INCLUDES IN WHICH GOD AND HIS PEOPLE ARE LABOURERS TOGETHER. 1. The spread of the gospel through the world. 2. The conversion of sinners. 3. The increase and prosperity of the Christian Church. II. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THE WORK UNDER CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE PROSECUTED. In the spirit of—1. Humility. 2. Love to God. 3. Love to men. 4. Holy zeal. 5. Prayer and of faith. (*S. Brawn.*) *Self-creation:*—The Creator does a part, and the chief part, but He kindly gives us a part, as considerate parents let their children join them in their works, though they could often do it better themselves. Creation is not finished, nor ever will be, but is always proceeding. In this progressive system man can put in his hand and make or mar. I. Look at the MATERIAL CREATION. 1. The elements are in a rude state. The rivers run waste to the sea; the ocean rolls a vast desert of waters round the world; the forests grow and decay, and furnish nourishment for new generations of the same species; the fire is a hidden force, and the lightning plays apparently at haphazard among the clouds. But God has delegated to man, as His vicegerent on the earth, the power and skill, within certain limits, of using these unwieldly and fearful agencies, and carrying out the plan of their creation. 2. So with the animals. They are created in kind, but the type may be improved. Man can cross and perfect their breeds. He can tame the wild, multiply their number, and, by better shelter, food, &c., develop new excellences. 3. So flowers, fruits, and vegetables all require to be improved by human skill and ingenuity. Compare the dinner of a savage under his native palm with a horticultural exhibition, and we see the endless room for man to work in, and the effects of his science and experiments. 4. The forests were given to his hands uncut, the ores buried in the earth undug and unworked, the pearls in the sea, the fire in the flint, the steam in the water, the temple and the palace in the quarry. The arts, useful and beautiful, are thus a species of creation. Man was sent, not to destroy, but to fulfil. II. It is a great thing to learn distinctly and impressively this duty of a man to be a co-worker with God. Some nations have not learned it yet. The savage tribes still linger on the animal plane. But even the civilised nations do not yet fully comprehend that a NEW MORAL AND SPIRITUAL, as well as material CREATION, is to be called forth by man. The conquest of matter is not enough, Christianity is to be superadded. Man has not done his work when he has built a house and woven a suit of garments. He

can co-work with God in the building of his body and his mind—a Divine carpentry. 1. Physical education is a part of this sub-creation. The body is to be unfolded, invigorated, and kept as a pure temple for the soul, with nothing to do it sacrilege. 2. Guided by the rules, and animated by the spirit of Christianity, man is to be a co-worker with God in the building of his character. The Creator necessitates no holiness. Even Jesus learned obedience. The materials of this higher architecture are given in abundance. There is reason for the truth, understanding for practical affairs, conscience for the right, love for the good, hope for progress, so that our own nature is a forest, quarry, and mine, containing all the needful means for our great work. But beside these native faculties society and Christianity give us the tools to work with, the motives, books, teachers, to aid us in the sub-creation. We are called to be labourers with God, in no meagre plan and for no trivial results. The plan is Divine and the results are eternal. The problem runs somewhat in this wise: Given, passion, energy; required, a spirited character and an active life. Given, a soft infant; required, a sturdy, well-formed, intelligent, and virtuous man. Given, conscience; required, righteousness. Given, affections: required, love to all in heaven and earth. Given, instinct, reason, the gospel of Jesus; required, a new human race, a new moral and spiritual creation. The end and emphasis of all things is formation of ourselves on God's idea of a human being. The gospel of Jesus is yet but in its infancy in this respect. It has done little compared with what it is to do. It has only begun its work in the soul and among the nations. It is slowly becoming a power in the earth. Conclusion: Let us not forget the lesson and application. This creation is a self-creation, this formation is a self-formation. God gives us means, materials, motives, guidance, and, to let nothing escape us that would be of help, He has presented the exquisite figure and spirit of a Divine Man. The danger is in turning off on some by-path of your own, instead of following the way God has marked out, in fulfilling some little, worthless, and short-lived plan of your passions or pleasures. (*A. A. Livermore, D.D.*) *Co-operation with God*:—One is something overwhelmed by the thought of the manner in which good old honest words occasionally lose their primitive meaning and become attached to some separate part of daily life, and in such a manner as to become terms rather of reproach than anything else. You talk of a labourer in ordinary conversation as a man who is doing day by day unintelligent, mechanical toil; but, after all, labour such as that is the very basis upon which the happiness of the world is built. All labour is Godlike; and the single test which you may apply to see whether labour is successful or not is the test which St. Paul applied in these words when he said, "For we are labourers together with God." I want, then, to look upon the harvest as the fruition of successful labour with God. The fact that harvest comes year by year to a successful result is simply an evidence of the truthfulness of the test which St. Paul applies. Man does his work, then there comes side by side with his work the work of God. His work would altogether fail if it were not labour with God. Now let us suppose for a moment that the husbandman were to labour upon the assumption that he would work by himself and not labour with God. Suppose he said: "I don't believe that the seasons will come round in their accustomed succession, and I will labour as for seasons of my own." Every intelligent man knows the result of labour such as that would be complete disaster so far as the harvest is concerned. For the only way in which the wondrous things in the world of nature are brought to their perfect beauty and fruition is because you have on the one hand the hard toil of the man, and on the other hand the hard, unceasing, unremitting toil of God. Now what is true of the harvest of the earth's fruits is certainly true of every work which man undertakes in daily life. The rule of success is labour with, not labour against, God. The man who has to work can only labour successfully by working with God; and by working with God I mean working just as the husbandman works, in conscious subordination to the law of God. If a man will not obey the law of God his physical work cannot be successful as it might be successful if he worked in subordination to the will of God. If a man breaks down his physical frame by indulging in sin, that man, by disobeying the will of God, is rendering the harvest of his daily work uncertain. It is precisely similar with a man engaged in business. He who will labour with God must labour according to God's law, and where there is that obedience to the will of God there will be ultimate success. The harvest may not come as the harvest of some of the transitory things in nature comes, very quickly, and remain only a short time, but it will be substantial and solid, and will

give perfect happiness and perfect peace, because it will be success which has been honestly won, and prosperity which has been rightly gained. Such a labourer can see, even in the success of his business, his own handiwork co-operating with the handiwork of God, and in all the good fortune which has befallen him he can recognise the directing providence of his Heavenly Father. "Labouring together with God," that is the grand secret of successful work. There is one other thought that I would like to leave with you from the consideration of this truth, and that is this: that just as there is labour with God, and just as the conditions of successful labour are to be with God, so after labour there comes rest, and the conditions of successful rest are also to be found in the rest with God. (*J. R. Diggle, M.A.*) *Workers together with God*:—This ninth verse is a further amplification of Paul's intent, which is to press unity against factions and divisions; and it is a declaration of his argument before, which was "The planters and waterers are one, but God gives the increase." This he further illustrates in the beginning of this verse—"For we are workers together with God." We are all in God's vineyard, and labour unto Him. In what sense they are workers with God; not by immediate producing of any spiritual effects, but by the external application of the ministry to the people. As Gehazi carried his master's staff and touched the child with it, but that did no good till Elijah came himself. In the first place, consider what reasons may be for this, why God will use such workers with Him, He needeth not the parts or gifts of any. First, this is a fit and an accommodated way to our natures. When God sends men of the same mould and subject to the same affections, this may the more easily draw us. When God delivered the law Himself, it was with such terror and majesty, that they desired that God would not Himself speak any more to them, so that mere men would not be able to bear the immediate approaches of the Divine majesty to them. As the fowler catcheth many birds by one decoy a bird of the same feather, thus it becometh us to have such to bring us home unto God, that are affected with our estates, that have the same temptations in them as other men. Hence the more experience God's ministers have of the work of grace, the temptations of Satan, the deceitfulness of sin, the more fit they are to comfort others, or to deliver them out of snares. Secondly, He may do it to oblige us and tie us to His instituted means. It is a great caveat in the Scripture, and frequently urged: "No man must follow the imagination of his own heart." Now God would prevent such loose principles, and bind us up to His instituted way; He will bind us, though He is not bound. Thirdly, hereby God would exercise the humility, meekness, and obedience of men. Oh, it is a great matter for men to submit to God's institution! Fourthly, that men might be the more inexcusable. For if thou art not now turned from thy sin, who shall plead for thee? Fifthly, God will hereby declare His power so much the more. Now to this there needs one caution to be added, viz., that this connection between the labour of the minister and God's working is not natural, necessary, and perpetual. We may work, and yet neither the presence or power of God be therein. It is not here as in the works of nature; there God hath made a perpetual and unalterable decree. Now if you ask when may it fall out that though the ministry laboureth, yet God doth not work with it, reasons may be on God's part, the minister's, and the people's. First, work with God in prayer, that He would work with the ministry. Secondly, take heed of such sins as may provoke God not to be with the ministry. (*A. Burgess.*) **Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.**—*God's husbandry and building*:—The metaphor of the field describes the raw material on which God works; that of the house describes the result of the work. The field represents the individual Christian in his secret power of life and endless growth; the house represents the Church in the unity of plan, in the beauty and strength of its structure. The metaphor of the building lends itself more easily than that of the farm to the apostle's purpose in the subsequent verses, and leads naturally to the highest conception, that of God's temple in ver. 16. (*Principal Edwards.*) *God's husbandry*:—I. THE FIRST CONDITION OF THE SOIL—its wilderness condition—IS NOT WITHOUT GROWTHS. It is overgrown with forests, choked with underbush, and cumbered with falling and decaying materials. The sun is always hidden from its interior. It is apt to be a lair of beasts. This is certainly the state of the human soil before religious culture is applied to it. Men are in a state of wilderness in the beginning. II. THE FIRST STEP OF HUSBANDRY IS TO RELIEVE THE SOIL OF THESE WILD GROWTHS, AND PREPARE IT FOR TILLAGE. The trees are felled and burned, so that the ground may be disencumbered and laid open to the sun. But some, for expedition, are only girdled. All connection

between the sap at the roots and the top is severed by a line of sharp cuts around the trees; and so girdled, they will stand for a while, but they will never leaf again; so that, little by little, more and more ground is susceptible to the plough. The first work of religion is analogous to this. Many of the things which men practise in an unregenerate state are, by the power of God's grace at their conversion, cut down peremptorily and taken out of the way. But there are a great many things which are only girdled, and only little by little brought to the ground. III. When this preliminary process is complete, the pioneer farmer is ready for THE NEXT STAGE, which IS THAT OF SEED-PLANTING. It is not smooth sward that the plough is now to turn; but rough soil, full of the green stumps of trees but just disappeared. And, worse than this, roots are matted all over the ground; but the ground is, at any rate, open to the sun, and every year and every ploughing will rip up and throw out some of these roots. And so it is with men. Their first efforts at goodness are very crooked and shallow. When men first begin to let go the lower forms of wickedness, and to sow the higher seeds of virtue, it is often like the sudden taking away of the forest, and the laying open of the soil to the sun. The first crops are very unsatisfactory; yet these incipient mistakes must be taken, if you are going to have a good farm by and by. IV. HAVING GOT THUS FAR THE HOME-LOT IS CLEARED. The stones are cleared away, the stumps rooted out, and the ground fenced round where his house is to be. Then he gives the ground a more thorough farming, and so the house-lot is got into a better condition. So men usually begin to smooth down those traits of their character which lie next to themselves, as it were, and which are in the family. Then one and another habit is attacked, and trait after trait is added. And so they enlarge, more and more, every year, their husbandry. V. Hitherto the farmer has only sown the grains and roots absolutely needed for sustenance; but NOW A GARDEN AND ORCHARD ARE PLANTED. And so in spiritual life. At first it is a tough, hard fight for life. By and by times of richer gladness come—more liberty, more hope. Prayer grows out of duty into pleasure. God's Word opens, and Christians walk amid beds of flowers. Clusters of fruit are gathered—richer experiences—the fruits of the Spirit. VI. EVENTUALLY IT IS RESOLVED UPON TO BRING IN EVERY ACRE. All outlying lots are to be cleared. So, eminently, is it with advancing Christians. After a time many men experience a second conversion, as it seems to them. They are aroused to a sense of the largeness and symmetry of Christian character. And their purpose is to subdue every thought and every feeling to the will of God. VII. THE FARMER, AS HIS LAST STEP, APPLIES TO HIS SOIL, THUS BROUGHT FORWARD, THE MOST SCIENTIFIC METHODS OF ASCERTAINED HUSBANDRY. He underdrains deep the whole estate; and when all those stagnant pools and chilling springs that deluge the roots of tender-growing plants are carried away, then he subsoils. He puts down the plough as far as iron can go, and mellows the soil and the subsoil down deep in the earth. Then he begins to select better herbs than before. And just so it is with Christians. As they grow in grace, and as God, the great Husbandman, perfects the work of clearing up and bringing into a condition of complete tillage the human heart, the religious feelings grow deeper. Many of those causes which obstructed their growth are now drained and carried off from the soul. Men give themselves more thorough religious cultivation. And the later periods of Christian experience are by far the most assiduous and the most faithful. Conclusions: Note—1. Some practical lessons we may perceive from what has been said. (1) The difference between instantaneous beginnings and gradual developments. No man ever suddenly cleared up forty acres of land. A man may and does begin suddenly, but the doing requires a long period. And so no man ever began to be a Christian without an instantaneous volition; but the mere volition is only a beginning. The evolution of Christian character is gradual. (2) The meaning of succession in Christian experience. We know that in husbandry, until some things are done, other things cannot be reached. And so there must be an order of development in Christian life. We cannot anticipate those graces which come only after the ripening of preceding graces. Graces grow just as grains do; first the sprouting under the ground, &c. (3) That the hardest part in both kinds of husbandry is apt to come at the beginning; but that, if well met then, it grows easier and easier every successive year. How hard was it at first to bring the soil to such a state that you dared to think "plough!" and how hard is it for a man at first to bring himself into such a state that he dares to think "prayer!" How many men who would like to be able to get their graces just as they can get an old, well-cultivated farm; but, though you can do that in natural husbandry, you cannot do it in

spiritual husbandry. 2. The various kinds of spiritual husbandmen and husbandry. (1) There are shiftless and lazy farmers who raise just enough grain to keep them through the year. That is all they ask, and therefore they have no ambition to seek for more. And how many men there are who, after having been in the Church ten or twenty years, are just about where they were when they first entered it! (2) Scheming, changeable farmers who, instead of laying out their strength upon well-ascertained processes, are bewitched with new schemes and experiments. And there are just such spiritual farmers. One is running after new promises, another after a new faith, and another after new solutions of miracles. One has got a new doctrine, another some new idea of Church organisation, and another some new way of putting this or that religious truth. They see their old farms left untilled. (3) Pedigree farmers, whose fruit bears the highest-sounding names, but is the poorest in the neighbourhood. Their oxen are lean, their cows are milkless, but what a line of blood they sprung from! Did you never see just such husbandmen in the Church?—men who had no greater morality, or piety, or spiritual experience, but who went back through a long pedigree. (4) Chaff farmers. Suppose you should find a farmer who said that he was satisfied that farmers had been doing injustice to many kinds of seeds; and that he felt assured that if a man would sow cockle-seeds; and do it sincerely, God would give the increase: so He would—of cockles. Suppose a man should sow that detestable Canada thistle, and say that it was wheat. Would any amount of botanical sincerity on the part of this fool secure to him a harvest of anything better than the seed sown? Now a great many persons say, "Why do you teach us such doctrines? What matter is it whether we believe in the Bible or not, so that we live about right, or that we are sincere? Is not that enough?" No, it is not enough. There is the same connection between spiritual seed and the result. Sincerity is a very good thing, but it cannot make grain out of chaff; neither can it make Christian graces out of worldly affections and worldly estates. (5) Fence farmers. What would you think of a husbandman who neglected everything because he was giving his whole time to the building of his fences? And, oh, such fences! The best and highest that could be built. Oftentimes, when he has got them all built up, he goes to work and pulls them down again. And what for? Why, just so that he can build them up again! And did you never hear of spiritual husbandmen that were for ever defining the great points of doctrine; for ever running boundaries round the kingdom of God; rebuilding the middle walls of partition, but never sowing and never reaping? There never was a fence that would keep vermin out of a man's farm, nor a fence that would keep hawks off from it. The best thing a farmer can do is to take such care of his soil as to have a harvest so rich that he will be able to spare a little to vermin and birds. The only safe way is to have so much spiritual culture in the Church that such minor troubles make little difference with its prosperity. (6) Nimrod farmers—hunting farmers. There are in the Church heresy-hunters. They are searching for foxes, and wolves, and bears, that they suppose are lying waste God's husbandry! They never do anything except fire at other folks. I have no doubt that Nimrod was a very good fellow in his own poor, miserable way; but a Nimrod minister is the meanest of all sorts of hunters! (*H. W. Beecher.*) *God's husbandry*:—The harvest is passed; the corn is housed. Is the farmer's labour done? No, the plough is even now at work again; the seed must soon be sown for next year's crop. So continual is the round. But, as the work of husbandry goes on, is there no lesson to us in these things? Yea, all nature speaks to us if we would hear, and the words of the text call us to listen to its voice. Let these words teach you—I. THE CARE WHICH GOD HAS HAD FOR YOU. 1. In choosing you to be part of His own field—the Church of Christ. You are plants set in the Lord's garden, branches grafted into the living Vine; your heart is the soil on which God deigns to bestow culture, and from which His grace is able to bring forth fruits, meet for the paradise of God. 2. In the price He gave for this field. "Ye are not your own," &c. 3. In enclosing you with the design of making you holy to Himself. Have you ever seen a piece of ground taken in from a common? While all around it is still barren and wild, is not that one spot fair and goodly to the eye? This is what God would have you be in the midst of a world that lieth in wickedness. 4. In that He is ever seeking to improve the ground of your hearts. But, as the farmer does not use the same management to all kinds of soil—the stiff, stubborn clay must not be treated like the light, dry sand—so God now tries to win us by mercies; now to frighten us by judgments. Perhaps your heart clings to the love of this

world; then He shakes it loose by storms of trouble. Perhaps He sees you indulging in sinful pleasures; then He makes you taste their bitterness and gall. 5. By employing labourers in His field, for your sakes. He sends His ministers to labour among you, if, by any means, they may save your souls alive. II. THE RETURN YOU OUGHT TO MAKE TO HIM. What is this? Surely, to take care that you do not receive the grace of God in vain. When a farmer has bestowed much care and management upon a field, does he not expect some increase? How few soils are hopelessly bad, as not to be made better by good management! The earth is no insolvent debtor; you do not put into its bank to receive nought again. Shall the very ground we tread on put us to shame? Ask, then, yourselves, are you bearing fruit to God? (*E. Blencowe, M.A.*) *God, a husbandman*:—As such—I. HE IS THOROUGHLY ACQUAINTED WITH THE SOIL. He knows—1. Its original state; the soul with all its pristine powers. 2. Its present condition; its barren and wilderness state—stony, weedy, and thorny. 3. Its tillable capabilities—what can be made of it. Some can become the majestic cedar, whilst others only the shrub. II. HE HAS ALL NECESSARY INSTRUMENTALITIES. This stony, weedy ground requires certain well-contrived implements to work it into a fruitful condition. There must be the ploughshare, the pruning-hook, &c. He has them. 1. In the events of life. All the dark and painful circumstances in life are His implements to break up the fallow ground. All the pleasant and propitious are instruments for mellowing the soil. 2. In the revelations of truth. There is law and love, Sinai and Calvary. III. HE POSSESSES THE PROPER SEED. His Word is seed in many respects. 1. Vitality. Every seed has life in it. His Word is spirit and life. 2. Completeness. The seed is complete in itself. Nothing can be taken from it, nothing can be added to it, any alteration injures it. 3. Prolificness. One seed in course of time may cover a continent and feed nations. The word of God is wonderfully fruitful. IV. HE COMMANDS THE CULTURING ELEMENTS. The best agriculturists who understand the soil possess the best implements and the best seed, are thwarted in their efforts, because the elements are not propitious. God has command over the elements. The heat, the cold, the dew, the shower, the sunshine, and the air, are all at His disposal. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *God's husbandry*:—The Scripture doth delight to compare the Church to many similitudes, all which show the tender respects it stands in towards God. Sometimes to a wife, sometimes to a body, sometimes to the branches of a vine; at other times to a garden, to a vineyard, and here to a field, and a house. We will first handle these two similitudes jointly, and then severally. Jointly, in that they are God's husbandry and house. It implieth these things—First, the power and goodness of God in making them so. A building is not of itself; everybody that seeth a house, presently concludes the house did not make itself; so if you see a field well husbanded, we all know of itself the earth would not do, but rather its curse is to bring forth briers and thorns. So when you see a people leaving their sins, walking according to the rules revealed in Scripture, you must necessarily conclude, this men have not of themselves, they cannot have this by flesh and blood. Hence, God, speaking of the Church of Israel, said: "He planted a vine" (Jer. ii. 21). Secondly, it doth imply dominion and absolute sovereignty over us. Even as the master that buildeth the house appointeth what customs and orders shall be in the house, the husbandman appointeth what seed he pleaseth for the ground. This point is of great consideration, for how durst men in all ages have brought in such superstition, such heresy, such tyranny in the Church of God, if they had remembered there is but one master in the house of God—one lawgiver. All officers are but servants, and not masters. Thirdly, it denoteth propriety and interest that God hath a right to us, that we are His, and not our own. The house is the owner's, he hath the propriety of it; so that by this means they who are, indeed, of this building, of this field, they are more happy than all others in the world, for God is in covenant with them. To them only God is their God, and they His people. Fourthly, it supposeth care, love, and protection. Propriety causeth care and love among men. What cares a man for another man's field, another man's corn, but he looketh to his own? He weedeth that, he fenceth that, he keepeth that from all violence. It makes for God's praise, that thy heart be a room swept and kept clear for Him to lodge in. Oh, urge this in prayer! O Lord, am I not Thy husbandry? Is not my soul Thy building? Why, then, lieth it thus ruinous? Why is it neglected by Thee? It is not only my comfort, my happiness, but Thy glory and honour is interested in this. Come we in the next place to consider the several similitudes, and—First, ye are God's husbandry.

Take notice that He doth not here speak of the invisible and mystical Church of Christ, but as they were a visible Church at Corinth. This relation of being God's husbandry implieth something on His part, and many things on ours. On His part: First, that He finds all people of themselves like a barren wilderness and fruitless desert. The curse upon the ground is fulfilled in them—to bring forth nothing but briers and thorns. All the things of grace and godliness are not only above our natures, but contrary to them. Secondly, it supposeth that grace and godliness is wholly planted by God in their souls, for this floweth from the other. Seeing we are such a barren wilderness, what fruit can ever be expected from us? Thirdly, this supposeth that God likewise giveth all the seasons and opportunities of growth and fruitfulness. As the gardener, He looketh to His times when He must water the plants, lest they die. The season of the year helpeth to grow, as well as the nature of the soil. Oh, then, know that as the natural seasons and times are of His appointment, so much more the gracious ones. On our parts, who are the field to be tilled, there are these things: First, a willingness to have the Word of God prepare and wound our souls; even tearing our hearts to pieces, that so the Word as seed may fructify. This is what the Scripture calls, "Ploughing up the fallow ground" (Jer. iv. 3). Oh, expect not healing and peace and comfort, till you have been thus disquieted! Do not then quarrel at the Word of God, but rather bless Him for the power of it, when it changeth the whole face of a congregation. Secondly, this implieth that you should answer the satisfaction of that husbandman whose husbandry you are. Who will bear that ground which, after much labour and cost, brings forth no fruit at all? Thirdly, it supposeth a careful improvement of all those means which God useth for our spiritual good. If we be God's husbandry, we are patiently to receive and fruitfully to improve whatsoever may make for our fruitfulness. Now the means are of two sorts, either essential, and entire and perfect, such as the hearing of the Word, praying, godly communion; or, accidental and occasional, such as afflictions, troubles, and persecutions. They need a winter as well as a summer. Lastly, consider how near such a people are to utter ruin; while you are but near it, there is some hope of escaping, if you seek out; who, after all God's husbandry, are the same ignorant and profane people still. Thy soul is God's field. Oh, what fruit, what reformation shouldst thou show forth? Thus, not only the Sabbath day, but every day may be a Sabbath day; every field thou goest into; every goodly crop thou seest on the ground, it may teach and preach unto thee. (*A. Burgess.*) *God's building* is Divine—I. IN ITS PLAN. II. IN ITS STRUCTURE. 1. Christ, the foundation. 2. Living stones, the superstructure. III. IN ITS WORKMANSHIP. Each stone by God is—1. Polished. 2. Adjusted. 3. Cemented. IV. IN ITS PURPOSE. 1. For His glory. 2. For the inhabitation of His Spirit. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *God's building*:—There have been many splendid structures which, in their day, have been the wonder and admiration of the world, but this infinitely transcends them all. The colossal palaces and hanging gardens reared by Nebuchadnezzar must have presented a gorgeous spectacle; while the fame of Solomon's temple has filled the earth in every age. But what is all this material splendour, which has long since passed away, to this temple whose stones are immortal spirits—whose foundation is the rock of ages—whose walls no revolutions can ever shake—whose fair proportions shall be fully developed, amid the ruin of all the mightiest and loveliest works of human ingenuity and power—whose top-stone shall be brought forth with shoutings when the "heavens shall have passed away." In surveying this building, note—I. THE FOUNDATION. This is the most important part; if this be defective, all the cost and labour of the superstructure will be in vain. But the foundation upon which this edifice is built is such as an Omnipotent hand alone could lay, and for which no other can be substituted. Christ is the foundation of the Christian Church, as He is—1. The source of her being. The Church could have no existence but for Him. The spiritual stones that constitute the edifice are sinners ransomed by His blood, and renewed by His Spirit. Were it possible for the connection between the stones and the foundation to be dissolved, the whole edifice would become a heap of ruins. 2. The author of her creed. In regard to her doctrines she rests on no human authority, but takes them as they flow pure from Christ and His inspired apostles. 3. The founder of her discipline. His laws are few, and the principles on which they rest are equity and love. "One is your Master," &c. "A new commandment give I unto you," &c. 4. The guarantee of her stability and perpetuity. "Upon this rock will I build My Church," &c. These were His

words—this was His pledge; and "all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth," in this capacity, and for this very purpose. II. THE MATERIALS. 1. Immortal spirits, redeemed and regenerated men, lively stones, or what Paul denominates "gold, silver, precious stones"; the accredited and the durable materials which ministers are the instruments of placing in the Church. But in the visible Church there are materials of another kind—mere professors, hypocrites, formalists, "the wood, hay, stubble"; but they form no part of the true Church, but shall ultimately be removed from the edifice. 2. Whence are the materials taken? See these "living stones," as in successive courses they rise to constitute and adorn the edifice. They are of various colours—from the white of Europe to the jet of Africa; every rank—from the monarch to the labourer. "They shall come from the east and from the west," &c. "They shall come" from the eastern Brahmins—from the western savages—from the Southern Isles—from the northern Esquimaux; "they shall come" from the patriarchal and the prophetic ages—from the Jewish and the Christian dispensations. David, with the harp, shall be there; and Isaiah, with his evangelic songs; and Ezekiel, with his prophetic visions; mingling with the malefactor from the cross, and the poor beggar from the rich man's gate. "They shall come" from every denomination: the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, &c,; all forgetting, or lamenting, that they should ever have been otherwise than one. III. THE INSTRUMENTALITY AND AGENCY. The instrumentality is human; the agency Divine. Yet the instrumentality is of Divine appointment; and, for the most part, inseparably connected with the agency. Though it is God who "giveth the increase," yet Paul must "plant" and "Apollos water." Ministers are not architects, but simply workmen, employed under the guidance of the Divine architect. Nor can any one stone boast against another in respect of "the rock whence it was hewn," "the hole of the pit whence it was digged," for all alike are hewn out of the quarry of a common depravity. However much as they may vary in other respects, all are on a level here—alike "dead in trespasses and sins"; whilst it is "God who has quickened them together with Christ," &c. I know that it is not with us to "limit the Holy One of Israel," nor to say by what avenues He shall or shall not obtain access to the human heart. It may be affliction, &c.; but the ministry of the gospel is the main and ordinary instrumentality. Was it not by this that Peter "pricked to the heart" three thousand; that Luther shook the throne of papal tyranny; that Whitefield and Wesley aroused the slumbering Churches of Great Britain and America. What is it that has caused the Rose of Sharon to bloom amid the snows of Greenland? What is it that has gathered the savages of Kaffraria and New Zealand around the Cross? It is the preaching of the gospel in its simplicity and purity—and nothing less—that God will own and honour for this great and glorious purpose; Christ, in the sufficiency of His atonement; in the prevalence of His intercession, &c. (*T. Raffles, D.D.*)

God's building:—I. GOD IS OUR BUILDER. If we climb some high hill near the sea on a fine day, we behold on one side hills and valleys; and on the other the tremendous ocean stretching to the horizon. Then we feel that our Father is a grand God to make such things. There are great buildings which men have erected, but there is no building which is so great as the splendid planet on which we live. But far more wonderful than the world is the body of man; but a grander thing still is the soul, which God created to dwell in. It appears as if He had given to the soul of man a portion of His own almighty power. Does not the Scripture say, "Ye fight against God"? We have power to say "No" to the Almighty! But there is something far grander and more precious still—it is the new spirit which is breathed in every man who believes in Christ. This is God-like. II. GOD HAS FURNISHED A PLAN FOR THE BUILDING—the life of Christ. It is the best life and nobody can improve on it. The Lord does not mean us to copy His style of garment, or to eat the same sort of food, or to be put to death on a cross. We are to copy His character. III. GOD HAS ALSO GIVEN A FOUNDATION FOR THE BUILDING. "Christ Jesus." Then, we are to believe His words and to build our actions thereon. Jesus is our foundation for the knowledge—1. That God loves us as our Father. We are to live from day to day feeling certain of that. 2. That Christ lays down His life for us. So we are to rest upon Him for forgiveness. 3. That in Him are all things necessary for our peace. Build on Him, then, for all circumstances of trouble. (*W. Birch.*) *The Church God's building*:—I. THE APOSTLE'S DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH. "Ye are God's building." This building—1. Has a proprietor. God is the proprietor of the site (the world), of

the foundation (Christ), of the materials (sinners), of the builders (ministers), of its privileges here, and its ultimate glory in heaven. 2. Has an architect. Infinite wisdom and power. Before this building was commenced there was intention; it is the result of design. 3. Has a good foundation. Christ, called a "stone," to convey the idea of stability and durability; and a "tried stone," to indicate that it is completely adapted to answer the purpose for which it is laid; "a sure foundation," because no attacks of its enemies, no revolutions of time, no concussions of earth will ever shake or destroy it. 4. Has a grand superstructure. It is composed of materials properly fitted, to occupy a place in the building (1 Pet. ii. 5). The stones once had no connection with the building, deeply imbedded in nature's quarry of guilt; but by the hammer of God's Word and the energy of the Spirit, they have been detached from the rock, brought from darkness to light, &c. By regeneration, by sanctification, they are fitted for a position in the temple. 5. Has workmen—ministers, all Christian workers, missionaries. 6. Has perfect beauty (Psa. xlviii.; Song vi. 4). See the polished stones, bearing the inscription of "Holiness to the Lord." See their love, union, benevolence. They are adorned with the righteousness of Christ, and bear the image of God. II. THE SPECIAL DESIGN OF THE ERECTION. 1. Magnificent. It is "a habitation for God." What a glorious inhabitant! "God is known in her palaces for a refuge." "Behold the heaven of heavens," &c. 2. Gracious (Isa. lxvi. 1). "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion." III. THE BLESSEDNESS OF BEING A PART OF THIS BUILDING. 1. It is honourable. It is the most glorious building that ever was erected. It is to be allied to the glorious Proprietor Himself. 2. It is advantageous. The state of a person is decided; he has realised the Divine power by which he has been fitted into the temple of God. This produces peace, contentment, joy, hope. He has an interest in all the promises and privileges of this house, and is a participant of all its provisions. 3. It is a state of safety. The Proprietor will never suffer this building to be destroyed. He ever watches over and defends it; He is a wall of fire round about it, angels minister to it, all the attributes of God are pledged for its security. (*Homilist.*) *The Church God's building:*—The metaphor describes the work of God as being not the gathering together of certain devout souls wishing to abstract themselves from the corruptions of the heathen around them, and to shape their own lives after a nobler mode. Such persons might have dwelt in Corinth, exciting no remark, creating no enmity; the worst that could have befallen them would have been an idle scoff as enthusiastic strivers after an ideal of unattainable perfection. But by representing the Christian body as a Divinely erected building, he paints at one stroke a picture of tangible social system rising in the midst of the old heathen world like a new sanctuary in the centre of one of its temple-crowned cities, with the Christian community growing up in Corinth, with its groups of little children and its elder men, its ministry and ordinances of worship, its examples of whole households like that of St. Stephanas, enrolled by baptism among its members. This was not a philosophical school created by Pauline teaching, but an all-comprehensive, all-embracing structure, reared by a Divine hand, the abode of supernatural powers and operations, a structure which invited into it through its ever open gates all of every race, and age, and class, the Jew and the Greek, the vast slave population of the old world, as well as its most privileged citizens; and this in order, having gathered them within its walls, to weld them together into a new social system by bonds and principles which soon would supersede existing ties. Nor is this all. A building implies not a sudden emanation of opinion, but a construction of progressive stages, each based upon that which lies below; from the foundation which the earth hides, to the pinnacle which loses itself in the blue air. And so St. Paul speaks of their being "being built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets," coupling together the living and the dead as a substructure of the Church of his day. Yes, even that Church of the first-born, in all the fresh light of its new faith, was to regard itself not as a creature of its own age, although Christ had Himself walked the earth in that age; but it was to know that its foundations went back into the depths of eternity, that its creed, short as it was, "Christ, and Him crucified," gathered up into itself all the past revealings of God. Their legend, St. Paul would tell them, was no system of faith and morals lying on the surface of a single generation; it penetrated into the very secret of them all. The facts were the outcome of God's determinate counsel working gradually century after century up to its accomplishment from the birth of time. Its precepts of love and holiness were not arbitrary precepts, but derived from the very being of God; thus the corner-

stone of the building had been laid before the elder angels began to be. And as God does not create each human being separately, but carries forward His original work continuously, "making of one blood all nations of men," so with the work of salvation, the Lord does not simply join to Himself those that are being saved, but He adds them to the Church, and that by the instrumentality of those who were Christians before them. Thus, you see, every generation of the baptized is bound together by a spiritual consanguinity with the generations which precede it. The creeds which we inherit from ages, the prayers whose solemn tones are prolonged among us from the remotest times, like the long-drawn note of solemn music through a cathedral; the influence of saints and doctors and confessors, indestructible as that influence is, whether men like it or not; all this is but the outward expression of that essential continuity which, through the one baptism and the one Bread of Life, Jesus Christ, has secured to the fellowship of His disciples. (*Bp. Woodford.*) *The spiritual temple*:—I. ITS FOUNDATION. A wise builder is always most attentive to this, because the stability of the structure can only be secured by that of the foundation (Matt. vii. 24). We are thus prepared to find the Church of Christ represented as built upon a rock, *i.e.*, Christ. In His complex nature He becomes, by His obedience and death, the ground on which guilty men are brought to stand and live again in the favour of the Almighty (Acts. iv. 11, 12). II. THE EDIFICE. 1. The Church of Christ is an edifice composed of rational and immortal beings, brought out of a fallen state, to stand in an intimate relation to Him, and to God through Him. They are all united to Him in their hearts by faith, and meet together in that union. This Church hath both an outward form, and an inward grace. The visible Church is composed of all in every place, who make an open profession of faith in Christ. But many of these make this profession in the absence of any Divine principle of faith in their hearts. These are only nominally of the temple of God. They live upon a name. "Thou hast a name, that thou livest, but art dead." The profession of the rest, however, is that which results from the principle within: for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness," &c. These are the true and real temple, "builded together for a habitation of God, through the Spirit." As the practised eye of the jeweller discerns the real gem from the artificial resemblance, and uses means to make the difference manifest, that the precious may be separated from the vile, so does Christ distinguish those in His Church who are really partakers of "like precious faith," from those who have the appearance of it only. 2. Such is the analogy to be traced between the spiritual temple of God upon earth, and a material sacred edifice. As far, however, as heavenly things exceed earthly ones, they are incapable of being fully represented by such, *e.g.*—(1) No stone moves itself to the foundation. It is taken from the quarry and carried to it to be placed upon it, without the possibility of its own concurrence. But here there is a principle of spiritual life, in consequence of which the individual goes to Christ to be redeemed unto God by Him and made to live in His sight. "Unto you that believe, Christ is precious; to whom, coming, as unto a living stone, ye also," &c. (2) Every stone in this Divine fabric is immediately united to the Foundation, and all of them that are equally near to it. This cannot be the case with a material building. But the souls of all believers in Christ are equally intimately united to Him by their own personal faith. (*a*) The faith of the parent cannot save the child, nor that of the husband the wife. (*b*) Neither have we any saving connection with Christ by an outward union to His Church and participation of its ordinances. "Being in the Lord" is a constant phrase of the New Testament in describing a state of salvation. (3) Every portion of spiritual building makes increase of itself and the whole by the addition of other parts. This is out of question with respect to any erection of man. (*J. Leifchild, D.D.*) *Character built bit by bit*:—Remember that the building of a noble and Godlike and God-pleasing character can be erected on the foundation of faith only by constant effort. Growth is not the whole explanation of the process by which a man becomes what God would have him to be. Struggle has to be included as well as growth, and neither growth nor struggle exhaust the New Testament metaphors for progress. This other one of my text is of constant recurrence. It takes the metaphor of a building to suggest the slow, continuous, bit-by-bit effort. You do not rear the fabric of a noble character all at a moment. No man reaches the extremity, either of goodness or baseness, by a leap; you must be content with bit-by-bit work. The christian character is like a mosaic formed of tiny squares in all but infinite numbers, each one of them separately set and bedded in its place. You have to build by a plan; you have to see to it that

each day has its task, each day its growth. You have to be content with one brick at a time. It is a lifelong task, till the whole be finished. And not until we pass from earth to heaven does our building work cease. Continuous effort is the condition of progress. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Soul masonry* :—I. A GOOD PLAN. 1. What is a good plan? (1) A plan adapted to its purpose. If the edifice is intended for study, worship, business, recreation, or residence, the plan, to be good, must be fitted for its purpose. (2) A plan æsthetically pleasing. Nature provides for the æsthetic instinct in boundless varieties of forms and hues. A plan that does not embrace all those lines, and curves, and proportions, and blended shades, that charm the æsthetic instinct, cannot be considered truly good. 2. What is the plan on which moral masonry should proceed? The character of Christ. This ideal has the two grand attributes of architectural excellence, fitness, and beauty. All history shows that such an ideal is to be found nowhere else. Men, alas, are everywhere building character on other plans: some by the plan of sensual pleasure, others by the plan of commercial greed, others by the plan of worldly vanity and ambition. But they are all unsuitable and unlovely. In them the soul is neither happy nor beautiful. II. GOOD MATERIALS. However fitted and beautiful the plan, if the materials are poor, the stones crumbling, the tiles leaking, the timber rotten, the edifice will be anything but perfect. What are the materials with which we are to build up a good character? They are actions. If these are corrupt, the materials are bad; but if good, then the character is all right. Good actions are actions that spring from a supreme sympathy with the supremely good. Such actions are the gold and the silver and the precious stones that will bear the fires at the last day. III. A GOOD FOUNDATION. What is the good foundation of a character? Not conventional mortality, not religious observances, not orthodox creeds; but Christ and Him only. See in Matt. vii., the destinies of the wise man who built his house on a rock, and the foolish man who built on the sand. The one endured through the storm, but the other was swept away in utter ruin. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *God's building* :—Now this comparison of building supposeth these things—First, that a people of themselves are nothing but so much rubbish, and that it is God who makes them this glorious building. That as you see the temple was built by excellent art. The trees in the forest and the stones in the quarry could never have prepared themselves, nor put themselves into so goodly a structure. So it is here. Men by their own power, their own ability and strength, could never become a fit habitation for the Lord to rest in. Secondly, it implieth that the matter of this building should be sound, precious, and substantial. Oh that you would think of this, what ye onght to be! Holiness to the Lord should be writ on your hands, foreheads, and whole conversation. Thirdly, it implies the gracious presence and power of God among His people. A house is the place where a man continually resides; and this is one great reason why God useth this metaphor to show with what rest and delight He will take up His habitation in His Church. Fourthly, this house or building doth imply God to be the Master therein, that He only may prescribe the laws and orders, what shall be done, and what not; He appoints every one his work and his labour. Fifthly, here is this further in this building. It is not an ordinary building, but a sacred and holy one. Therefore they are called the temple of the living God. Now then, what an astonishing consideration is this? Sixthly, it being a house, all within are servants, and so they are to do their Master's work, to live to Him. "Whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31). Thus this health, this wealth, these parts, this time is none of mine; I must improve it for my Master. Seventhly, it supposeth order and government. The Church of God is a house; now that hath domestical laws. Paul did rejoice to see the Church's order, and her faith (Col. ii. 5). Eighthly, unity, love, and concord among those that are in the same house. Oh, let this shame all animosities and quarrellings! Are we not of the same house? (*A. Burgess.*) *The church a building* :—1. It is a spiritual building. What our Lord Jesus say of His kingdom is true of His building, that it is not of this world—*in* it, but not *of* it (John xv. 19). It is a building of souls. 2. It is a spacious building of vast extent. "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude," &c. (Rev. vii. 9). 3. It is a high building. Though part of it be here below, yet the top of it is as high as heaven. There it is that the glorious angels are, and the spirits of just men made perfect; all of this building. 4. It is a holy building (Eph. ii. 21). Holiness to the Lord is written upon the front of this building. 5. It is a living building. No other is so. The same who are quickened are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. ii. 1. 20). 6. It is a light building. This is one thing that

makes a building pleasant, and comfortable—many and large windows. All the world besides is in darkness; it is the Church only that hath the true light. 7. It is a secure, a safe, building. The Church of God is such a building as the ark was (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21). 8. It is a spreading, growing building. (*Philip Henry.*)

Vers. 10–15. **According to the grace of God . . . as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation. . . . But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.**—*All of grace:*—Now when we say a godly man acknowledgeth all to grace, consider—First, he doth it heartily, seriously. No fountain doth run more sweetly, fully, and purely than he doth. Oh, his heart is a happy spring from whence comes such rivers of living water! Secondly, this acknowledgment is accompanied with a renouncing all his own works. His own strength, his own duties, he doth not so much as think of them, nor mention them. Thirdly, this acknowledging it must be from an inward sense of our own sin and unworthiness, how ill we have deserved at God's hand. No man can ever praise grace that hath not felt the sting of sin, the power of the law. Fourthly, he must wholly and solely acknowledge grace. He must not give some piece to grace and the rest to his own free-will. He must not by grace mean the outward manifestation and revelation of it, but the inward efficacy of it. Lastly, he must set up this grace of God in a Scripture way. Not to oppose godliness or holiness, or to sin more securely and boldly: this is not to acknowledge grace, but to abuse grace. In the next place consider why the godly are so sensible of God's grace. And first, this is the final cause of all the good that God doth enable us unto. This is all He looks for. Secondly, the children of God are endowed with an ingenuous, free, and excellent spirit; therefore they cannot but confess by whom it is they have obtained grace. Thirdly, the real sting, smart, and danger they have been in makes their heart full and mouth full of the grace of God. Fourthly, they are an humble debased people in themselves. They have low thoughts of all that they do. And therefore it is that they are so precious with God. Fifthly, they must needs acknowledge grace, because they have the experience how hard it is to do anything spiritual and upon heavenly grounds. And therefore if they are ever enabled thereunto they cannot but exalt grace. Sixthly, to praise and exalt the grace of God, it is a very profitable and advantageous duty also. It is two ways profitable. 1. It procures more grace and mercies from God: "He giveth grace to the humble" (James iv. 6). 2. This acknowledging of grace will enlarge a man, and make a man more willing and ready in all the ways of God. It is like oil to the wheel; it is like wings to the bird. Duties done with the spirit of praise and thanksgiving have great life and vigour in them. Now I shall add one caution: corrupt doctrines and opinions in religion may much cool this duty of giving thanks. I shall instance some. As first, the denying of original sin is a great engine against the grace of God. Secondly, the maintenance of free-will doth much detract from free grace. Thirdly, that the law is not to be preached; no, not for direction or obligation. Whereas Christ and Paul do often press this. (*A. Burgess.*) *A good foundation:*—This Paul makes the principal part of his wisdom, that he began with a good foundation. The point therefore in hand is of great consequence, both to the preacher and to the auditor, to consider what foundation his religion and godliness is fixed upon. For the opening of this, consider that divines do ordinarily make a twofold foundation. The one they call the foundation of our knowledge and faith in matters of religion; and this is the Scripture only. We can lay no other foundation for the matters of faith but the Word of God. Secondly, there is the foundation of the being, or existence of all our glory and salvation, and that is only Jesus Christ. I shall instance in four unquestionable foundations, which are the four main pillars that support our Christian building, for the necessary things of religion are these four. Either—1. The matters to be believed. 2. The worship and necessary service of God. 3. The spiritual benefits and mercies, justification and salvation. 4. The things to be done by us in our way to salvation. We will begin with the first, the foundation of our faith or Divine assent in matters of religion. What is that which every man must build his faith upon? And that is the Word of God. As God at first put all the light into the sun, and the stars shine by a borrowed light from it, so God hath now put all supernatural light into the Scripture, and all guides are to shine by that. Now that the written Word of God is the only foundation of our Christian faith, appeareth by these reasons—First, a Christian faith ought to be a Divine, supernatural faith, not a bare human faith. Now nothing can be the ground of a

Divine faith but a Divine authority. Secondly, the Scriptures are only the foundation because they are the immediate verity or truth coming from God, who is the first essential truth. They have not only a Divine authority, but evident infallibility. Take a tree from the river side and plant it in a wilderness, what can you expect but withering? And thus it is if you take a man from the Scripture; his seeming faith, graces, godliness will all presently vanish. Thirdly, the Scriptures only are the foundation of faith because they are only immutable and unmovable. They abide always the same, they are not subject to changes, to perturbations of affections, as men are. Councils consisted of men carried by passions and interests. Lastly, the Scripture is only to be laid for a foundation because this only is strong enough to support and bear up in sad hours of temptation and dangerous times of persecutions. Our Saviour quelled Satan's temptations by arrows out of the Scripture quiver. Now for the matter of doctrine to be believed, some men lay four rotten and weak foundations; others may be reduced to this. The first is that of the papist, the authority of the Church and the Pope, being wholly ignorant themselves, but resting all on their authority. The second foundation men lay is the authority of the civil magistrate. This is a mere political faith. The third is private revelation and enthusiasms. Fourthly, another false foundation is mere human reason. (*Ibid.*) *Foundations*:—The foundation therefore of every good duty or work we do hath these parts. First, there is a foundation by way of a direction or rule, to which everything we do must be commensurate, and by which it must be regulated, now that is the Word of God. For God's Word is not only a rule of faith but of manners. And as thou must be of no other religion than the Word directs to, so thou must do no other actions or live any other life than that guides thee too. A second part of that foundation we must lay for the practice of holiness is the justification and reconciliation of our persons with God through Christ. Thirdly, another foundation we must lay is to receive power and strength from Christ only, both in the beginning and progress of all good actions. Fourthly, the last part of this foundation is a renewed and sanctified nature. Now let us consider why we are to be careful about laying this foundation. First, because it is very dangerous, and it is very easy to miscarry in this matter. If the foundation be not well laid thou art undone for ever. In matters of men's estates, or of their bodily life, how careful are they to go upon a sure foundation. Only they wilfully venture their ruin in the matters of their soul. Thou wouldst be unwilling to live in an house whose foundation is rotten! Consider, then, am I in the right? Fear would make thee jealous and suspicious. Secondly, we mistake easily. We see the greatest part of Christians never attend to these things. And withal the difference between true and false foundations is spiritually to be discerned. Oh then say, I do the outward works of religion, I am careful to discharge them! But how easy may I build all upon a false foundation! Thirdly, therefore we must look to our foundation because of the great confusion that will be at last on those who have failed therein. Fourthly, therefore lay a good foundation, for if that be wanting, thou doest nothing but sin in all thou doest. In the third place, let us take notice what are those weak and rotten foundations that many men build upon in regard of their practice. First, a conformity to the life of others; they do as most do, they shall speed as well as they; what would ye have them to be singular, to be different from others? This is a most rotten foundation. Secondly, others build upon a partial practice of good things. The hypocritical Jews they rested upon their temple, their sacrifices, their outward worship of God; in the meanwhile their hands were full of blood, of unrighteousness and injustice. Thirdly, another rotten foundation is the mere work done. They consider no more than the external act of religion, of justice, of charity, and so they think they have obeyed the commandment. This was the Pharisees' foundation. Fourthly, another rotten foundation is the goodness, yea, supposed perfection, of the work they do. (*Ibid.*) *Building on the foundation*:—To amplify this, consider, there may be a twofold building or addition to the Word of God, either destructive and corruptive, such as wholly overthroweth the true meaning and sense of the Holy Ghost. And this is a very dangerous sin. Or else perfective and explicative. Thus the New Testament was added to the Old as a perfective addition, not corruptive; though it could not have been added as Scripture, but that the authors thereof had a Divine infallibility. And now what the ministers of God in their ministerial labours do, it must be an addition explicative of the foundation, though it be not with Divine infallibility. Secondly, the Word of God, which containeth the foundation that the apostles have laid, may be either considered in respect of the words only, or in respect of the

sense clothed with words. In the next place, let us consider why we ought so to take heed, and that is to be manifest in many respects. First, from God Himself, His glory and honour is greatly concerned herein. Secondly, on God's part we are to take heed because He hath so severely threatened all those that add or detract to His Word. Any that shall alter these foundations or change these bounds. Secondly, on the people's part. Therefore we ought greatly to take heed. For—1. The Word of God in the true sense of it is the only food and nourishment of the soul. 2. If we build not on this foundation, the preaching of the Word loseth those glorious and excellent effects for which it is appointed. 3. On the people's part we had need to take heed, because they are more prone and ready to receive any corrupt sense than the pure meaning of the Scripture. Lastly, on the minister's part it is necessary that he should take heed. For—1. He hath not a magistery but a ministry committed to him. 2. He is accountable for all the sin and error people run into through his neglect. 3. He must take heed because, though a man do preach the substantials and the necessary things of salvation purely, yet if he add or mix any corrupt opinions, though of a less nature, that man's salvation is very difficult. (*Ibid.*) *The spiritual foundation* :—I. THE FOUNDATION. 1. Is laid. 2. Is one. 3. Is sure. II. THE SUPERSTRUCTURE. 1. Is in course of erection. 2. Is variable in character. III. THE TEST IS—1. Certain. 2. Severe. 3. Decisive. *The foundation of faith* :—I. THE TEXT ESTABLISHES A DISTINCTION BETWEEN FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE AND THAT WHICH IS NOT FUNDAMENTAL. It speaks of the foundation which must be laid in all Christian teaching. It speaks also of the superstructure, which varies according to the disposition or knowledge of the individual teacher. II. CHRISTIAN TEACHING MAY LEGITIMATELY BE CARRIED BEYOND THE LIMITS OF FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE. There have certainly been seasons in the history of the Church in which its secondary doctrines have usurped the first place. Times of re-action, in which the Christian mind was recalled to the foundation, have in some cases promoted the development of other secondary doctrines, which have overshadowed the foundation no less than those which obtained acceptance before. One phase of the Reformation was a return to the heart of Christianity from the intricate subtleties of scholasticism. Yet Calvinism in its extreme development is at least as barren, and as subversive of all place and keeping in the mutual relation of doctrines, as any part of the scholastic system. It is no wonder that men are tempted from time to time to cast aside all but the most elementary doctrinal teaching, as to content themselves with accepting the bare letter of the Bible, denouncing every inference from it as a corruption of Evangelical simplicity. Far different was the teaching of the apostle. "As a wise master-builder I have laid the foundation," he does not add "Let no man build thereupon;" but "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." While he disparages the "wisdom of this world," he congratulates his converts that they "are enriched . . . in all utterance, and in all knowledge," and declares his intention to "speak the wisdom of God" not indeed to the "carnal babes in Christ," but "among them that are perfect" and able to bear the highest teaching. The Hebrew Christians also are reproved, as those of Corinth are, for their backwardness in the school of Christ (Heb. v. 12, 13). III. "OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO MAN LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST." 1. To preach Christ is the chief office of God's messengers. The leading events of the gospel history, the doctrine of Christ's nature which is a necessary inference from and the only consistent explanation of those events, and the efficacy of His redeeming work which rests on the truth of His nature, make up one complex whole, the due and proportionate exhibition of which is preaching Christ. This is presupposed in all further Christian teaching. 2. All more advanced teaching must rest upon this. (1) It must not be inconsistent with it. For the superstructure may not merely overshadow, it may disturb and destroy the foundation. Doctrine which comes into collision with fundamental doctrine is a virtual denial of the foundation. (2) It must stand in a definite relation to it and grow out of it. Thus the doctrine of the Sacraments cannot be duly taught, except as it is taught in connection with those of the Incarnation and Atonement. IV. "LET EVERY MAN TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDETH THEREUPON." 1. There may be teaching which is not inconsistent with the leading Christian verities, and which nevertheless is false or worthless. Those who promulgate it will have to answer for it before God. "The day shall declare it." Paul was thinking mainly of vain, subtle, and barren questions such as those against which he frequently warns Timothy and Titus (1 Tim. i. 4–7, iv. 7, vi. 3–5; 2 Tim. ii. 16, 23, iv. 4; Titus iii. 9). But the words apply to every form of teaching which is in itself

false and groundless, which is barren and unprofitable, and which ministers questions, rather than godly edifying. 2. If men are answerable for teaching which is not inconsistent with the foundation of the faith, how much more for that which directly or indirectly overthrows it. If vain and unprofitable religious questions cannot be raised with innocence, how can men teach heresy without guilt? If an unwise builder injures the Temple of God by unskilful workmanship, a judgment is pronounced against him: how then shall he escape, who has either never laid the foundation at all, or who (when it has been laid) has succeeded in disturbing it? (*Bp. Basil Jones.*) *Building the true life*:—I. CHRIST IS THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN TRUST AND CHARACTER. No other King and Saviour of men is possible to those who know and understand what He was and taught. Great teachers of religion, and great examples of conduct, have been in the world: but in comparison with Christ, they are but stars in the firmament of the world's night, which become lost to sight when the glorious sun has risen. He stands unique and pre-eminent in all history, the only true Saviour of mankind. A Congregational minister once said to a Unitarian minister, "Can you conceive of anything greater and higher than the life and teaching of Jesus Christ?" and the Unitarian minister frankly answered, "No." "Then what is the difference between your conception of the character of God and the character of Christ?" and he as frankly said again, "That it was a very fine point." The apostle, as a wise master builder, had laid this foundation as the basis of the new life; not himself, or Apollos, or Peter. The Corinthians were to be rooted and built up in Christ, and in no other. But they were to take heed how they built themselves up on Him. II. TWO STRUCTURES ARE POSSIBLE EVEN UPON CHRIST. A Christian life must have Christ as the model as well as the foundation. The gold and silver, and precious stones, that constituted the glory and beauty of Christ's character, must constitute the glory and beauty of theirs. But it was possible for men holding some connection with Christ to build up a pile of perishable rubbish, a hut instead of a temple. They might mingle doctrines and practices which had no necessary connection with Christ and Him crucified; and they were doing it. 1. Some men never think of building up anything, but take life just as it comes. They have no plan of life to work at. Indeed, nothing is so irksome to such men as to live by rule. They live on impulses, come from where they may, from inward passion or from outward circumstances. Dreadful, indeed, is the fate of those who have tried to make this life a holiday. 2. Others live for a purpose; but they are building only for this world, and not for eternity. Their foundation is on the very surface of things, and as the building rises it tapers off into nothingness. A man may bring to it intellect, will, energy; and all for what? Perhaps to have it said of him, "That man started with half-a-crown, and he has made a fortune." But the Divine soul within him has not been built up; his nobler nature has lain despised and neglected; he has been building up his circumstances, but he has not been building up himself. 3. I once watched the building of a new church, and remember what trouble they had in getting a foundation for the tower, and how long they were in reaching down to a solid basis of stone that would bear the immense mass of weight that was to rest upon it. I remembered also when the foundation was laid, how carefully the plan of the building was studied and followed by the workmen; how every principal stone was selected and measured, and chiselled to a nicety. It was all done by faithfully working according to the plans of the architect; and when the building was complete, it was but a transcript of what had been in the architect's mind before a stone had been laid. It was a parable in stone of the manner in which a human life must be built. We must get down beneath the surface and rubble of things before we can reach Christ as our foundation, as the rock upon which our eternity of life is to rest. Hearing and doing His sayings is trusting to Christ; nothing more and nothing less (Matt. vii. 24, &c.). He drew with a Divine hand and an unerring pencil the plan of a human life, not only by His words but by His deeds, to show what God meant in creating man. To believe in Christ is to believe that His plan is to be our plan, faithfully worked out after the living pattern He exhibited. But our mistake and disaster is, that we mix up the wood and the gold, the stubble with the silver, and the hay with the precious stones. One man has great gaps in his character because he thinks God regards faith as the transcendent virtue; and if faith meant the prompt and active loyalty of the mind to all Christ's commandments, he would be right; but if faith is taken to mean an indolent confidence, such a notion will arrest the progress of the building up of the soul. Another man says that prayer is the principal thing. Now, though Christ says

that we ought always to pray and not to faint, He says also that it is he who does His will who is most eminent before God. What would be otherwise gold, becomes wood or stubble when we put it out of its place, and make it a substitute for other equally essential things. The doors of a house are necessary things; but if we put them at the top instead of on the floor, they are useless and absurd. It is this jumbling of things which often makes the spiritual structure of our lives unsightly and unprogressive. We want symmetry. III. IF WE COULD FOLLOW THE DIVINE ORDER IN THE BUILDING OF THE SOUL, HOW BEAUTIFUL OUR LIVES WOULD BE! If the first act of the new life could be an act of faith, grandly receptive and grandly active at the same time; and if to such a faith we could add virtue or mental valour—an enterprise of soul that would launch us forth upon every difficult work with enthusiasm; and if to such valour we could join knowledge, &c., &c. (2 Pet. i. 5, &c.). These are the gold and silver and precious stones of the Christian life, if we could but build them into our characters with symmetry and beauty. IV. WE ARE LIKE MEN WHO ARE BUILDING IN THE NIGHT, WHO CANNOT SEE EXACTLY WHAT THEY ARE DOING, BUT EVERY MAN'S WORK SHALL BE MADE MANIFEST, for the day shall declare it, the full daylight shall show the true value or worthlessness of that which we have been building. A great part of the building that is going on is an unconscious operation, or nearly so. That which we knowingly build into ourselves is but a small part in the structure of our lives. A habit steals upon us with furtive steps, and embraces us with arms which are as soft as velvet but as strong as chains. We forget the work that has been wrought upon us in the past, because we were never distinctly conscious of its kind and extent. And so each man is a mystery to himself, an enigma in his own eyes. He feels that there is in him such a strange mixture that he is doubtful of himself, doubtful whether the gold or the alloy is in the larger proportion. Therefore the apostle exhorts us to take heed, to be vigilant, and as far as possible to know how we are building. For the daylight will break, and this compound structure which we call ourselves shall become more clearly defined by and by. (*C. Short, M.A.*) *Building men*:—St. Paul here calls himself a builder; and nothing could be more significant of the specific end he has in view than this word. The word "build" means work fitted to set up, to strengthen and establish. In this sense we see it illustrated in all the business and varied occupations of human life. The apostle, in his sphere as a preacher, was as much a builder as a carpenter, or a mason; for the work of an apostle was a most assured reality. It implied all the deep intensities of a most zealous soul in order to save and to bless. I. WHAT IS A BUILDER? A builder is one who brings together materials, and adjusts them properly, in order to secure symmetry, strength, coherence, and beauty. A wise master-builder in God's Church seeks soul after soul; its rescue from sin; so that each godly soul may take its proper place in the spiritual temple of the Lord Jesus. This process sets before us the vocation of a spiritual builder. He has two aims before him. His work is first to get hold of souls, and then, second, to fix them, as permanent parts or members of the Church of God. 1. This getting hold of souls is a great work, and success therein in the test of a real builder for God. For so great is the subtilty of Satan, and such is the hardness of the heart of man, that to effectually resist the one and to prevail with the other is the surest proof that the preacher is sent of God. No mere human learning, sense, skilfulness, or eloquence, can make a master-builder for God. No! He must have that spiritual magnetism by which one soul, strong in the might of God, can go out to another soul, and grapple with its guilt and hate, and overcome it by the love of Christ. 2. But souls, when saved, are to be fixed into the temple of God, as permanent parts or members thereof. Thus St. Paul tells the Ephesian Christians: "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of faith; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom," adds the apostle, "all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord." Here we have this permanent abiding of saints, their fixedness in God's Church, graphically set forth. So much, then, with regard to the qualities of a builder. II. Let us now consider WHAT IS THE OBLIGATION OF BEING BUILDERS OF SOULS. Surely, it is to be this, or else to be destroyers! In the universe of God there are two great principles ever antagonistic, one to the other; that which conserves, and that which destroys. And to one of these two classes every one of us belongs. There are, indeed, differences of character and degrees of depravity. See the singular light which comes upon this point from the

narrative of the rich man and Lazarus. When you examine the character of Dives you can discover nothing prodigious in immorality. But during his lifetime he was not a builder for God. Self, and not God, was the mainspring of his being. His life work was not to save and bless. Hence he was ranked with the class of destructives in time, and sent to keep company with them in eternity! It is your duty not to be destroyers, but to be builders, consciously and with purpose. Note here what God is—a Builder; ever since, as a great Architect, he laid the foundations of the universe, and built all the great fabrics of His creation: the globe, beasts, birds, fishes, and man, the crown of all! And if this is the fashion of the Omnipotent being of God, what then should men be, who are His image and likeness? Ought we not to be builders, as God is? How otherwise shall we show our similitude to Him? The new creation, in Christ Jesus, for what is it wrought in us, if not to make us co-workers with Him? Join to this the testimony of your own nature. Look into your spiritual framework, and see that in every way, the soul of man was fitted in every attribute to be a builder of souls. What is the power of thought but a power formative in all its activities? What is reason but a constructive force? What imagination but a creative faculty? Our physical members are also formed for creative action. Take the hand, and mark its wonderful adaptedness to operations creative and fashioning. It can demolish. But every one sees that that is not its special vocation. It was made to construct. Hence, naturally from the functions of the hand have sprung up the divers formative trades of men, in clay, wood, leather, stones, and metals. But the hand of man, of itself, had no skilful cunning, no ingenious art. No more than the claw of a bird, or the foot of a squirrel or a rat. But the hand is the instrument and agent of the soul. And because the soul of man is a builder, therefore it is that there are carpenters and wheelwrights, blacksmiths and machinists, ship-builders, stonemasons and architects, painters and sculptors. But what are all these functions and faculties of men, compared with the grand creative power of God? God made man in His own image. But man fell into ruin; and then God began again the refashioning of humanity out of the ruins of the Fall. And ever since He has been building up man, by all the operations of the kingdom of grace; by the workings of the Spirit. But angels, and men too, are workers together with God, to the same gracious end. Jesus died to build men. For this purpose the Holy Ghost descended on the day of Pentecost. So again, to build men, the ministry was commissioned, and the Scriptures were given. As God is a builder of souls, so are all His disciples. And although ministers are set apart to special duty in this grand work of soul-building, the laity of the Church, in a subordinate way, are likewise called the same solemn vocation. III. And now, lastly, let us consider THE CLASSES OF PERSONS WE SHOULD BUILD UP. 1. First, of course, ourselves. It is a great trust to have souls. Broken and impaired as are the spirits of men, they show, even in fragmentary powers, the skill of a Divine architect. 2. Next to ourselves, are our kinsfolk and relatives to be built up in the faith of Jesus. It is our duty to strive to build up parents and children in the most holy faith; by all the several means of training and teaching, by admonition, by prayer and spiritual example. In the family relation this is, without doubt, the most obvious of all duties to train up our children and servants. Build them! that is the word; not tear them down to ruin by indifference, by carnal indulgence, by foolish vanity! 3. But besides kinsfolk and family, there is a further outer circle of human beings separate from ourselves, for whom it is our duty to live, and our aim to build up in the temple of the Lord. So, then, it seems quite apparent that our life-work among our fellow-men is primarily, constructive and restorative. Christ came to seek and to save the lost. Learn: 1. Do not destroy! Keep from ruining souls for whom Christ died! Do not destroy little children! Do not ruin women! Boys and girls, baptized into Christ, do not destroy! Nay, strive to save other boys and girls. Yea, all of you, do not destroy! Do not destroy by whisky or by wine! Do not destroy by cursing, nor by oaths! Do not destroy by scoffing or by filthy speech, or carousing. 2. Build! Strive to mould, to compact and strengthen the immortal spirits around you, that they may become powerful for Christ. Endeavour to root and ground every soul you meet in the truth. Labour to build men in the knowledge and love of Christ. Make it the aim of your life to strengthen and uphold, and build immortal souls. Build men! by speech, by influence, by godly example. Use every possible instrument and agency, both small and great, at all times, and in all places, in your families, in the world, at the workshop, on the highway or in the street, to save men, and to glorify Christ. (*A. Crummell.*)

Ver. 11. **Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**—*The one foundation:*—I. MEN OFTEN TRY TO LAY ANOTHER FOUNDATION. 1. Reason. 2. Self-righteousness. 3. The goodness of God. II. THEY WILL ALL FAIL. Because—1. Unauthorised. 2. Insufficient. 3. Delusive. III. CHRIST IS THE ONLY FOUNDATION. 1. Divinely laid. 2. Suitable. 3. Strong. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *No other foundation:*—I. IN BUILDING, THE FIRST THING ESSENTIAL IS THE FOUNDATION. 1. A foundation should be broad and deep enough for the structure. 2. God Himself has appointed such a foundation (Isa. xviii. 16). 3. There is but one foundation, and it is laid for all men. II. CHRISTIANITY IS SOMETHING MORE THAN A FOUNDATION—IT IS A BUILDING. 1. Christianity provides for regeneration of character. 2. The building is of gold, silver and precious stones. 3. Or it is of wood, hay and stubble. III. EVERY MAN'S WORK WILL BE TRIED. 1. The trial is to be "as by fire." 2. There will be most astonishing revelations at this time of trial. Some whom you haven't counted as amounting to much in this world—behold how their buildings loom up in the light of that day. Others shall suffer loss—wood, hay, stubble, all consumed. (*G. F. Pentecost, D.D.*) *The one foundation. Christ is the sole foundation:*—I. OF ALL SAVING KNOWLEDGE. II. OF ALL ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD. III. OF ALL HOLY OBEDIENCE. IV. OF ALL TRUE HAPPINESS, and this both in the present world and the future. (*W. Romaine, M.A.*) *The one foundation:*—I. THE FOUNDATION. Christianity stands opposed to every system that has entered into the mind of man. It is an original system founded upon Christ Himself. So distinct is it from all that existed before, that it changed the whole system of public worship, and overthrew the altars of heathen idolatry. And if men deny that it was done by Divine influence, the *onus* rests upon them to show how it was effected. Christianity is intended as that which is to lay at the foundation of all our hopes, to the overthrow of all the imaginations and discoveries of man when left to himself. II. THE LAYING OF THIS FOUNDATION. 1. The public way is to simply lay down the doctrines of salvation. 2. A personal way consists in my bringing Christ, by faith, to my own soul, and saying, with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" III. THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE FOUNDATION. No foundation is laid, if this be omitted; and if this be laid, all the doctrines of the gospel are brought into harmony. Is man a ruined creature? "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Is man enslaved and lost? Jesus Christ is "made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Conscience condemns, and the law aggravates the condemnation; but Christ is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." How many have built their immortal hopes on this foundation, and not one of them has ever sunk! And I appeal to your own experience. Is not this the foundation which has supported, and succoured, and sustained you? IV. THE UNITY OF THE FOUNDATION. It is absolutely indivisible. In vain shall any man attempt to separate it. All the good works of the Christian are the fruits of his union to Christ, the foundation. All "holy desires, good counsels, and just works, proceed" from Him: and it is impossible to mix up anything human with that which is wholly Divine. (*W. B. Collyer, D.D.*) *The one foundation:*—There cannot be two of the kind, for—1. God from all eternity has made His only-begotten Son to be the foundation. Of whom else is it written that verily He was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world? 2. It is Divine, and it is as impossible that there should be two foundations as that there should be two Gods. 3. Otherwise there must be two redemptions. There is—I. No CHURCH BUT WHAT IS BUILT ON CHRIST. Whatever community may call itself a Church, or even *the* Church, if it is not built upon Christ it is not a Church at all. A foundation is—1. The first portion of a building; and so is Jesus first with His Church, for His people were chosen in Him (Eph. i. 4). 2. The support of all, and there is no Church but that which derives all its support from Christ. Call the community a religious club if you like, but it is no Church—(1) Where the atonement is denied or ignored. (2) Which places its dependence for its present power and future progress anywhere but in Christ. If we depend upon the secular power, education, eloquence, prestige, or our own zeal and ardour, we are leaving the rock for the sand. 3. Has the shaping of the building, and the true Church forms itself upon Christ as its ground-plan and outline. His law is the law of the Church. All the decrees of councils, synods, &c., and all the ordinances of men, if they at all differ from the law of Christ, are treasonable insults to the majesty of King Jesus. Steadfast is that Church which carefully follows His guiding line, but that which departs from it has left the foundation, and therein ceased to be a Church. 4. Indispensable.

You could do without certain windows, you might close a door, and remove parts of the roof, and still it might be a house, but you cannot have a house at all if you take away the foundation; and so you cannot have a Church if Christ be not the foundation. If any people find their joy in a teaching which casts the Lord Jesus into the background, they are not His Church. The Church is not formed—(1) By the union of men with men. The best of men may form a league, for good and useful purposes, but they are not a Church unless Christ be the basis upon which they rest. (2) By a mere union to a minister. The Church is not built on Paul, nor upon Apollos; we are not to be believers in Luther, Calvin, or Wesley, but in Christ. (3) By the following of any particular form or rite. II. No GOSPEL BUT WHAT IS BUILT ON JESUS CHRIST. For—1. There is but one Mediator, by whom God speaks words of grace. If, then, any man say, "God hath spoken to me, and bidden me say other than what Christ has said," receive him not. 2. The true gospel has Christ's Divine person as its glory, and there can be no gospel without this. 3. Christ is the essence of the gospel. (1) If, then, you hear a gospel in which free-will, good works, or the forms and ceremonies, are set up as being fundamental things, it is not the good news from heaven. (2) The teaching of doctrines is not the teaching of the gospel if those doctrines be taught apart from Christ. Paul's body of divinity was the life and death of that only embodied divinity, the Lord Jesus (chap. xv. 1–5). (3) Some preach experience, and experience is admirable when Christ is set forth in it; but if you take up an experimental vein of things, whether of human corruption or of human perfection, and Christ is put in the background, you are marring the gospel. (4) So, too, with practice. By all means let us have practical preaching; but merely to denounce vice and to extol virtue is a mission fit enough for Socrates or Plato, but does not well beseem a minister of Christ. His example shames vice and encourages virtue. III. NO HOPE OF SALVATION BUT THAT WHICH IS BUILT UPON CHRIST. Some think it must be well with them because their parents were excellent Christian people. But if this is your only hope you are lost, for "Except a man be born again," &c. "Ay, but," saith another, "I had all the ceremonies of the Church performed upon me." Yes, but they cannot bear the weight of your soul. "Ah," saith another, "but I have diligently performed a great many good works." Abound in good works, but do not trust them. Human merit is a foundation of sand. "But I have had spiritual feelings," says one. Yes, but there is nothing in feelings and excitements which can be a ground of hope. "Why," says another, "it has troubled me that I have not had these feelings." Do not let it trouble you, but go to Jesus Christ and rest in Him. IV. No CHRISTIAN BUT THE MAN BUILT ON JESUS CHRIST. Here is a Christian, and of one thing in him I am sure: I cannot tell whether he is an Arminian or a Calvinist, but if he is a Christian he has no foundation but Christ. Every man to be a Christian must—1. Rest his whole soul upon Christ as to eternal salvation. 2. Have Christ for his model. 3. Grow up in Christ, for the temple of God grows. Nor need we wonder, for it is a living temple. An ordinary, clumsy bit of work displays the mason and the carpenter, but perfect architecture looks as if it grew. But all our up-growing must come out of Christ. 4. Live for Christ. Christ's glory must be the great object of his being. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The one foundation*:—St. Paul had described himself as a master-builder, whose office was the laying of foundations. The Corinthians thought any man could do that; the skill of the architect was shown in the building he raised upon it. A teacher who was fit for them could not be a mere teacher of elements. Those who only spoke of Jesus Christ and Him crucified might be very useful amongst barbarians. Men who had been used to hear the most various wisdom from Pagan professors, were prepared for the most advanced Christian instruction. This opinion probably was not confined to one of the sects into which their Church was divided. Those who called themselves after Apollos supposed that he had brought a lore with him from Alexandria which would fill up the imperfect outline that St. Paul had drawn. Those who used the name of Cephas thought that circumcision would initiate into the highest privileges those who had been made novices by the rite of baptism. And the Pauline school will have indignantly disclaimed that their master preached a simple gospel. Had not he as much Rabbinical knowledge as Peter? Was not he better acquainted with Greek poets and philosophers than Apollos? Did he not make light of ceremonies to which they, in their infantine faith, still clung? Had he not been seeking for deep principles, while they were reverencing forms? The praise of seeking for principles, if it had been accompanied with no disparagement of his fellow-

labourers, St. Paul would not have disclaimed. That was his aim; and therefore he was as much offended with the conceit of his admirers as of those who despised him. They, as well as the others, were missing that which was dearest to all three—that which they most cared to make the Church aware of, a foundation lying far beneath Paul and Cephas and Apollos, to a rock against which the gates of hell could not prevail. St. Paul, therefore, had to persuade these wise Corinthians that they were the stones of a glorious and Divine temple; that God was hewing and shaping them into their fit places in that temple; if they would know whereabouts they stood, they must give up disputing about the theories and opinions of this doctor or of that; they must ask, "What holds us all together?" This being the case, it was necessary for St. Paul to define more carefully than he did, when he was merely speaking of his relation to other teachers, in what sense he called himself a master-builder. He could not lay *the* foundation. All which teachers can do is to say, "There it is." All which believers can do is to recognise it. That Christ, the Son of the Living God, of whom Cephas spoke in his great confession; that Word of God, whom Apollos and the Alexandrians declare to be the Teacher of all; that Jesus, the crucified, whom I have set forth in weakness and death; He it is on whom the edifice rests, by whom it alone consists. St. Paul's conversion cannot be described more accurately than by saying that it consisted in his awaking from ignorance of this foundation to a full, clear apprehension of it. He had thought that there was something of his own which he could stand upon; some wisdom, or righteousness, or exclusive privilege, appertaining to him. That belief made him hard, narrow, savage. But the righteousness and wisdom which became so truly his own when he had renounced his own, this was the foundation which he could tell the Corinthians was lying for them as much as for him, the foundation which they were denying and setting at nought by their Greek factions, as he had denied it through his Jewish pride. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) *The one foundation*:—1. Every wise man should sometimes look at his "foundations," and especially at the "foundation" on which he is building his eternity. 2. Perhaps the chief danger is of treating as "foundations" what are part of the superstructure. And therefore you should take it as a first principle that the "foundation" is nothing which you have laid, or can lay. Your faith, love, change of character, good works, have nothing in the world to do with the "foundation." They may be evidences that there is a foundation, and may be a test of how firmly we are attached to it, but they are not the foundation itself. 3. What, then, may I ask, is at this moment the "foundation" of your hope, of your eternal life? You perhaps say, "The love of God." But that is not all you want. Can you find your foundation in the justice, in the truth of God? Has not God said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!" And love can never cancel truth. 4. Is there, then, a "foundation" deeper and more sound than the love of God? Is there a "foundation" which shall reconcile and combine all the attributes of God? Yes. His love makes Him, as a Father, longing to forgive all His children, and His justice makes it to be unjust to punish what He has already punished in the Substitute. There, then, is safety. 5. But what has led me to that position of safety? Simply the act of believing, and as the Holy Spirit puts it into your heart to believe, we come to our conclusion that our "foundation" lies in the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They are all united to us in Christ. 6. Do any object, "It is too easy?" The grandest things of the universe are always the simplest. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The soul's foundation*:—Christ is the foundation of all—I. GOSPEL DOCTRINE. 1. All gospel doctrines centre in Christ. 2. All the gospel titles are taken from Christ. From—(1) His names. (2) His perfections. (3) His Word. II. EVANGELICAL PREACHING. The object on which every minister—1. Directs the eye. 2. Delights to dwell, must be Christ. III. ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD. Christ is—1. The atonement for our sin. 2. Our only way to God. 3. The remover of sin away from us. IV. EXPERIMENTAL KNOWLEDGE. He is the foundation of both—1. Theoretical; and—2. Experimental, knowledge. V. HOLY PRACTICE. All our holiness is derived from Him. Application: 1. How destructive to the souls of men must those preachers be who lay other foundations than Christ. 2. Rejoice that the foundation of Christ is laid already. 3. Is Christ your foundation? (*J. Sherman.*) *The alone foundation*:—I. THE FOUNDATION. 1. We justify the appellation here given, and the situation thus assigned to Christ by a reference to —1. His precedency. The foundation stone of a building is that which is first laid. Christ is called the "Ancient of Days." In this appointment we have the richest displays of the everlasting love and wisdom and power of Jehovah. 2. His

strength and stability (Isa. xxviii. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 6, 7). 3. The strength which He imparts to His people. That which imparts stability to the superstructure is the foundation, and all the strength which the believer can boast he derives from Christ. It is by virtue of the union between believers, "the lively stones," and Christ, "the foundation," that the Church has, in all ages, been sustained amidst the storm. II. THE LAYING OF THIS FOUNDATION. 1. When was it laid? "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were formed." 2. By whom was it laid? "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone." 3. How is it yet laid? (1) Officially (ver. 10) in the preaching of the gospel. Hence—(*a*) The minister himself must have an experimental acquaintance with the truths he promulgates. How can he recommend to others a "foundation" he has never tested and proved to be secure? (*b*) He must be endued with the Holy Ghost. He may himself be truly established on this "foundation," but this is not sufficient to enable him to lay the same "foundation" in the heart and experience of others. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts!" (2) Personally. This consists in the response which your heart gives to the message which we bring. III. THE EXCLUSIVENESS OF THIS FOUNDATION. 1. Were we to attempt to lay any other among you, how direful the denunciation to which we were exposed (Gal. i. 8, 9)! Laying another foundation, we act as traitors to God, handle the Word of God deceitfully, and basely betray the best interests of those of whom we may receive oversight, professedly in the Lord (Acts xx. 28). 2. And as it is important that your ministers should continually bear this in mind, so it is no less important that you should carefully and habitually examine yourselves as to the ground on which you are resting your faith and hope. Remember, there is no other foundation needed, there is no other appointed. "A Saviour! 'twas all that earth could want, 'twas all that heaven could give!" (*J. Gaskin, M.A.*) *Christ, the only foundation:*—I. UNDER WHAT VIEW JESUS CHRIST IS THE FOUNDATION. 1. It is not His person merely, nor any views of His person abstractly, that constitute the foundation of which Paul speaks. 2. In attending to the subject before us, it is important to inquire who was Jesus Christ? This inquiry the New Testament fully answers. Not because He is God, but because He is the Christ, Jesus is the foundation. 3. It may be asked, Are we then to build our faith and hope upon a mere man? By no means. As it is not as God, neither is it merely as man, that Jesus is the foundation; but as the Christ, the Divinely commissioned messenger of God. 4. That it is as the Christ, as a Divinely commissioned person, Jesus is the foundation, appears from the plain declarations of the New Testament (Matt. xvi. 13–18; Rom. x. 9; 1 John v. 1). 5. Christians are to build on the foundation of what Jesus revealed and taught. We can build upon Jesus Christ, or upon His mission, only so far as we build upon the truth and grace of God which came by Him. 6. But is not the death of Christ, as a satisfaction for sins, the true foundation? However important the death of Christ may be, it is not the foundation; for when Peter confessed the truth which Jesus declared to be the rock on which He would build His Church, He did not know that it would be necessary the Messiah should die. II. HOW GOD HATH LAID THIS FOUNDATION. 1. God laid Him as the foundation in His eternal purpose and counsel. 2. God laid this foundation in His ancient promises and declarations. 3. God laid this foundation by actually raising up Jesus as a teacher and Saviour, by giving Him His Divine mission, and all the qualifications necessary to execute it. 4. This foundation was firmly established by the miracles which God wrought by and in behalf of His Son Jesus, and by the apostles in confirmation of their testimony concerning Him. 5. By raising Him from the dead and exalting Him to glory. 6. In the ministry of the apostles God placed Jesus Christ before Jews and Gentiles, before the whole world, as the foundation on which mercy is built and salvation prepared before the face of all people, on which He will establish the habitation of holiness, that all the earth may be filled with His glory. 7. This foundation was fixed in its place by all the Divine perfections, and hath remained unmoved through all succeeding ages, though exposed to hosts of assailants who sought to remove it. III. OF WHAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE FOUNDATION. 1. Jesus Christ is the foundation of Christian faith. What He taught, His disciples are required to receive; but nothing else ought to be made an article of faith. 2. He is the foundation of Christian privileges. 3. He is the foundation of Christian redemption. His gospel and resurrection are the only ground of an assured hope of redemption from death and the grave. 4. He is the foundation of evangelical righteousness.

He hath furnished the principles and motives which will produce it: and no other principles but those contained in the gospel, nor any weaker motives, can produce true evangelical righteousness. 5. He is the foundation of our hope. 6. God hath laid in His Son Jesus the foundation of universal happiness. IV. LET EVERY MAN TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDETH UPON THIS FOUNDATION. 1. Take heed how and what doctrines you build upon Jesus Christ: that they be not contrary to reason; for to reason, He and His apostles appealed; that they be not inconsistent with the character and perfections of God as plainly revealed in the Scriptures; that they clash not with those plain facts and declarations of the New Testament which compel universal assent. 2. Take heed in what spirit you build upon Christ. You can neither build doctrines nor anything else aright upon Christ, any further than you do it in His disposition in a spirit of seriousness and piety, of meekness and humility, of purity and love. 3. Take heed what life and conduct you build upon this foundation; that it be such as becometh the gospel of Christ. 4. Take heed how you build upon this foundation, because your all is depending; consequences of the utmost moment are involved. A day of fiery trial will come. Try your own work of what sort it is. (*J. Wright.*) *Jesus Christ the foundation*:—I. JESUS CHRIST AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH. II. SOME PECULIARITIES CHARACTERISING THIS FOUNDATION. 1. It is notable for its strength (Psa. xxxi. 2, 3). 2. It is remarkable for its suitability (1 Cor. i. 30). 3. It is renowned for its perpetuity (Heb. xiii. 7, 8). III. THE FOLLY OF ATTEMPTING TO LAY ANY OTHER FOUNDATION. The way wherein other persons attempt to lay unjustifiable foundations are—1. By relying on the directions of carnal reason (1 Cor. ii. 5). 2. By placing affiance in our own righteousness (Rom. ii. 5). 3. By trusting to God's mercy without regarding the Saviour's merits (1 John v. 10). 4. This folly appears from the sufficiency of the foundation laid (Heb. vii. 25). 5. It is a reflection on Jehovah's wisdom and goodness (Rev. vii. 12). 6. It involves the soul in remediless woe, to despise Christ (Acts iv. 12). This foundation then is—1. Invaluable. 2. Necessary. 3. Most costly. 4. And eternally saving. (*T. B. Baker.*) *The gospel the only foundation of religious and moral duty*:—I. Jesus Christ is the foundation on which we are to build, inasmuch as IT IS FROM HIM ALONE THAT WE PROCURE A KNOWLEDGE OF OUR DUTY. Look to the opinions and practices of man not blessed with the light of revelation, and you will perceive how imperfect is the knowledge of duty possessed by the natural man. Not such are the instructions as to the duty of man which are vouchsafed us by the gospel of Jesus Christ. The lives of professors must correspond with Christ's commandments, that the building may be worthy of the foundation! II. "Other foundation can no man lay than Jesus Christ," because BY HIM ALONE ARE WE INSTRUCTED IN THE RIGHT PRINCIPLE ON WHICH OUR DUTY IS TO BE PERFORMED. A sense of affectionate gratitude to God is the principle on which the whole duty of a Christian is established. This is the foundation of His religion: this is no less the foundation of His morality. Can any principle be so firm? can any be so pure? Honour may dazzle, custom may mislead, expediency may perplex us, and neither honour, nor custom, nor expediency will at all times support us in the discharge of our duty: but his "feet are set upon a rock," whose "goings are ordered" by a desire of doing the will of a perfect and unchangeable, of an infinitely wise and holy Being. Again, unlike the principles of the world in another important respect, what motive of human conduct can be so pure as a grateful affection towards God? "God is love." And human nature is never more exalted and improved than when it partakes most largely of the quality which is identified with God, when with the most devout affection "we love Him, because He first loved us." III. Jesus Christ is the only foundation on which we can build, because, as we are indebted to Him for the knowledge both of our duty and of the principle on which it is to be done, so also WE DERIVE FROM HIM THE POWER OF DOING IT. IV. Jesus Christ is the only foundation on which we can build, inasmuch as IT IS HE WHO RENDERS OUR SERVICES ACCEPTABLE TO ALMIGHTY GOD. V. Christ Jesus then being the foundation, the only foundation on which we are to build, let us inquire WHETHER WE BUILD UPON HIM IN THE SEVERAL PARTICULARS THAT HAVE BEEN NOW PASSING UNDER OUR VIEW. 1. Is our practice regulated by that perfect law of religious and moral duty which Christ hath set before us in the gospel? Do we submit ourselves—our souls and bodies—our thoughts, words, and deeds—to the Christian commandments? Do we yield to their authority an unreserved, an unqualified, an universal obedience? 2. What is the principle which we choose as our actuating motive? Is it love for our heavenly Father? 3. In the execution of our duty, on what foundation do we build our hopes that

we shall be able to perform it? Do we rely upon our own imaginary strength to support us in the hour of trial, or do we humbly depend upon the Divine grace? 4. After all that by the grace of God we have been enabled to do, on what foundation do we rest our hopes that our services will be accepted by God? Is it upon any value which those services possess of themselves, or, renouncing all claim to merit on our own parts, do we trust our cause to the perfect righteousness of Christ? (*Bp. Mant.*) *The sure foundation*:—I. THE FOUNDATION. In building, it is essential to begin with a good, solid foundation. If we have not that, we may take ever so much pains afterwards, but our labour will be all in vain. Now, there are many false foundations. Our selection of ground that will give way under the weight of what we put upon it is quite unlimited. But there is only one true foundation. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." All that teachers can do is to say, "There it is!" All that believers can do is to recognise it. It is God Himself who has laid it there for us. Whereseever else than the love of God in Christ we repose our chief confidence and affection, it will sooner or later repent us and shame us, either happily in time while we may yet have recourse to Him, or miserably when it is too late. It is on this present world, on its pleasures, its riches, its honours most men try to rear the fabric of their happiness; but this world and all we can have in it will slip from under our feet like the sand. But let us remember that it will not avail us that a foundation has been laid, or that it has been already pointed out to us, if we do not make choice of it and use it. II. THE SUPERSTRUCTURE, or what is built on the foundation. St. Paul knew that the foundation was most important, and that, save on the one sure foundation, no lasting building could be raised; but he knew also that the foundation was not the house, that the discovery of a good foundation does not dispense a man from the necessity of building his house. We must build. We must not only rest on Christ, and Christ alone, for salvation, but must also "work out our salvation with fear and trembling." We must build, and to build is to labour. If we cannot build even the smallest cottage without the exertion of putting each stone in its proper place, still less can we, without exertion, build up our lives into temples of God. To do so is the grandest of all works, and for that very reason it is one which needs the most thought and trouble. It demands a constant putting in of what is solid and true, and a constant casting out of what is hollow and false. He who would build up his own self, his own mind, and heart and soul gradually into a perfect manhood, must see to it that every day, every hour contributes somewhat towards that result. Some accession of knowledge, of self-control, of practice of good, and conquest of evil. Six kinds of material for building are mentioned in the text, but they may be reduced to two—good materials and bad: those which will stand the fire, and those which will not. Gold, silver, precious stones—the fire will not burn these; wood, hay, stubble—it will burn these. The various good materials may be of very different degrees of goodness. The various bad materials are not equally bad. A house, not so very uncomfortable for a while, may be constructed of wood, but not even a tolerable hut can be made out of hay and stubble. Yet all are bad; for even wood, if fire come near it, will be speedily reduced to ashes. All this is perfectly applicable to our own lives. We may build with different degrees of diligence, and what we do day by day may be most unlike in a thousand respects; but all we build must have its source either in love to God and holiness, or to self and sin, and will either be approven or condemned. The very best of worldly lives will be found then as miserably insufficient as a house of wood, however well built, however commodious, however imposing without, to resist the fury of the flames; and, on the contrary, no life which has been prompted by love to Christ and a sincere endeavour to do the will of God, however far it may have fallen below what it ought to have been, will be proved by the fire to have been other than enduring and precious. Let us live, then, as nobly and sublimely as we can; but, oh, at least let us live sincerely and righteously. III. THE DAY which will try the building of each one of us. "Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." The apostle, I think, refers here in part to any time of peculiar trial, any day of testing. There is many a day of this sort, and they often make strange revelations. Either adversity or prosperity, for instance, may serve to test the work of our lives, and both often find far more wood, hay, and stubble therein than either we or others suspected. Every day of sore affliction is a day of fiery revelation. A man is living altogether for this world, wholly engrossed with his farm or merchandise,

so as to have no thought beyond that; but God lays him on a bed of sickness, brings him to the very verge of eternity, reminds him of his sins and of the condemnation which awaiteth sin, and, oh, how clearly he then sees that he has been living like a fool and judging like a fool, that this world which he thought so real and so important is a shadow and a vanity, while that other world, which he never thought of, is alone substantial and eternal; that he has been preferring wood, hay, and stubble to gold, silver, and precious stones. It is, however, mainly to a greater and more terrible day than any of these that Paul refers; it is mainly to that awful day on which there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known—that day into the light and heat of which no work, however subtle, or obscure, will not be brought, so that its true character may be made manifest—that day which, as we are told by a prophet, will burn like an oven, so that not one wicked life, not even one bad feeling, or one base act, will pass successfully through it. Since there is this day coming, it surely well becomes us to habituate ourselves, to bring our conduct, to bring our most secret feelings to the test of that law by which they will then be judged, and, through the grace God never denies to those who sincerely seek it, conform ourselves to that law now as far as we can, that it may have the less to condemn in us then. (*R. Flint, D.D.*) *The foundations of life*:—I. THE FOUNDATIONS INCLUDE ALMOST ALL THAT WE CALL LIFE, IN A LARGE VIEW. The individual is like an apple-blossom at the top of some tall and spreading monarch of the orchard. The entire tree is to that flower a foundation, out of which the blossom unfolds. The flower cannot change its place, cannot develop into anything but an apple. Its destiny is bounded, its efforts limited to a very narrow place. It is mainly so with a man. He is a consummate flower on the tree of humanity. For his personal development all the foundation facts are inevitable and irrefragable. The physical, intellectual, and moral worlds he cannot alter by the breadth of a hair. He can only build upon them. A century of progress has tended to bewilder some minds into the hope of new foundations. To such men progress seems a thing of changing the bases of life, but it is nothing of the sort. It is simply and only the uncovering of eternal foundations, that we may build more broadly. The widened palaces of civilisation are wider, because we have found more of God's unchangeable foundations. Every improvement, every application of an invention, is made possible by uncovering a little more of the unbreakable rock. Look at social and political changes in the same light. A vast number have been proposed in this century of ours. A few have succeeded, because they struck solid foundation. They rose upon the basal facts in the nature of man and his social and moral conditions. The dreams of idealists and utopians have come to naught, because they had no granite undergirding of eternal law. You might as well try to change the constituents, or their proportions, of water or air, as to attempt to vary by a scruple the moral order of the world. You might as well try to defeat gravitation as try to abolish one jot or tittle of any of the Divine order. Nearly everything is settled. It is ours to find out how it is settled, and to rear our house on that solid ground. We are on a foundation. God's fire, God's waves, God's tempests, will always keep their steady ways: it is ours to make ourselves secure against the fire, the waves, the storm-wind. So is every moral law, every and unchangeable fact in our nature, every invincible barrier in our liberty. We must uncover this bed-rock if we would build securely. II. ALL FORMS OF UNBELIEF RESOLVE THEMSELVES INTO INCREDULITY RESPECTING FUNDAMENTAL LAW. Men are incredulous about law, because a merciful provision postpones the penalty. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, the hearts of the children of men are fully set in them to do evil." Nature seems to the careless to be infinitely tolerant of law-breaking. Her process of punishment, like her processes of growth, are slow, and are so concealed that the children of men are snared as birds are snared. If every carelessly caught cold should kill, consumption would not reap its awful harvests. If one glass of liquor caused death, there could be no alcohol habit. In none of these cases is nature tolerant or indifferent; the penalty is delayed just as the maturity of a fruit is delayed, but it comes in "the evil time." We sin by inches and die by inches, because we refuse to see the penalties of vice, gluttony, carelessness, or drunkenness. Because sentence is not executed speedily, men build cities over the ruins wrought by earthquakes; and the sides of Vesuvius bloom with gardens and are green with olives, and villages sleep in the lava paths below; and on our streams towns sleep in fancied security, where floods work periodical desolation. Men caught in the net of their physical sins are apt to have the courage of confession.

They admit that they ought to have believed in the fundamental law. But when snared in the evil nets of passion or vice, they are apt to regard their conviction and punishment as an accident or injustice. No man violates one of the Ten Commandments with impunity. The very act of sinning inflicts a punishment. III. WE MUST BUILD UPON THE ETERNAL FOUNDATIONS. We cannot build at our caprice the foundations themselves. But it is of much moment to remember that our own work becomes fundamental to further work. On God's rock we lay our own foundations. The walls above are imperilled by the weakness of the walls below. Poor materials in the basement crack the roof overhead. The tall towers rock and reel because the undergirding is unsound. There are gifts of speech which lack the support of the gifts of wisdom. There are capacities for action made useless for lack of capacities for reflection. There are mature manhoods which are inefficient because they are not built upon an industrious youth. There is an old age mourning over a life of neglected opportunities. There are souls that have repented of pleasant vices too late to recover in this world the joys of innocence. IV. THE INDIVIDUAL MAN HAS MORE CONSPICUOUS NEED OF BUILDING ON WHAT IS NOBLEST IN HIS PAST. This personal past is characterised by what we call the law of habit. The thing once done tends to be done again. The good and the bad in the past have a common interest in this foundation. We cannot unmake the law. We are at each new step influenced by the path we have travelled. It has brought us here; it has set up a tendency to go right on. But our past has good to be selected from. If the immediate last steps were wrong, still our feet have known the other path. Some one may ask what I make of that doctrine of grace which lies so close to my text. I reply that grace is as much and as fully a foundation under moral life as gravitation is a foundation of physical life. We do the men of our generation infinite damage when we speak of grace as though it were a matter of Divine caprice. God helps men who seek His help as truly as He helps men who sow and reap. There is no whit of more contingency in the one case than in the other. Grace is the inspiring name for the Divine co-operation with man. V. TO SUGGEST THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING OUR NOBLEST PAST THE MATERIAL FOR BUILDING OUR FUTURE, LET ME CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO OUR PRESENT BUSINESS. In short, we can build. Our building is on God's land and up towards His skies. All that distinguishes our personality comes out of personal aspiration and endeavour. One man's life is a filthy hut, another is a stately palace. The bed-rock below every fixed fact of material or season is the same for both. The builders have made the enormous difference in the results. (*J. Wheeler, D.D.*)

The Christian foundation:—Christ is the foundation of—I. CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE. 1. If it be of man we reason, of his sinfulness, his corruption, his mortality; even here shall our foundation be laid in Jesus Christ. For in His Word is our fall most plainly set down, and by the necessity of His sacrifice is the enormity of our guilt most plainly proved. How deep must be that sinfulness which no less a sacrifice than one so precious could atone for! 2. If it is of God we speak, of His nature, His attributes, His dealings with mankind; here must our foundation still be Christ Jesus (John i. 18). II. HUMAN DUTY. If we consider what line of conduct men ought to pursue, as most tending to their own happiness, either on earth or in heaven; the same reference is made to the will and grace of Christ. In the gospel only can we find any sufficient rule of excellence. There only can we learn how to become pure in heart, lowly, meek, kind, and charitable. There only are we taught sufficient motives for doing what we ought to do, or avoiding what we ought to avoid. III. ETERNAL HOPE. Without His revelation and His merits how dark and dreadful had our future been. Or if aught we could suspect of any further existence, it was an apprehension of punishment. But in the gospel of Christ "life and immortality are brought to light." IV. CHURCH ORDINANCES. If hither you resort to pray remember it is because Christ is in the midst of you (Matt. xviii. 20). If here you offer praise, it must be above all for the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ. If hither you bring your children to be baptized, it is because Jesus Christ ordained this holy rite (see Matt. xxviii. 19). If hither your dead are borne to burial, it is because Christ is the resurrection and the life (John iv. 25). And here also should you apply this rule to the celebration of those holy mysteries, in which Christ is Himself set forth before us, His very body and blood received through faith, and made effectual to the strengthening and refreshing of the soul. (*C. Girdlestone, M.A.*) *Christ the foundation*:—I. THE PROPERTIES OF CHRIST AS A FOUNDATION. 1. He is a laid foundation (Isa. xxviii. 16).

Christ did not take upon Himself this honour. He that could best tell what would best serve pitched upon His own Son for that purpose. 2. A low foundation. Foundations are wont to be laid low, the lower the surer. So the Lord Jesus (Phil. ii. 6–9). There were several steps of His humiliation. (1) Into the human nature. (2) Into subjection under the laws. (3) Into poverty and persecution, contempt and contradiction. (4) To death itself. (5) To the grave. 3. He is a foundation of stone (Isa. xxviii. 16). A stone is the fittest thing for foundation, because it is hard and firm, and yet easily hewn. Now Christ is a rock (chap. x. 4). 4. He is a foundation out of sight. All foundations are so. Christ is out of sight, not below, as He once was, but above, in glory. (1) His person is out of sight, yet we love Him (1 Pet. i. 8). (2) His presence is with us everywhere, especially in His ordinances, but in an invisible way (Matt. xviii. 20, xxviii. 20). (3) His proceedings are invisible—those of His grace within; of His providence without (Psa. lxxvii. ult.). 5. He is a precious foundation (Isa. xxviii. 16). Though all stones in their place be useful, yet they are not all precious stones. Few buildings are built upon precious stones, but the Church is. Christ is precious—(1) In Himself. "The chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." (2) In the account and esteem of His disciples. To others He is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence (1 Pet. ii. 7). 6. He is a permanent foundation (Isa. xxvi. 4)—the rock of ages, from everlasting to everlasting. The saints have been building on Him from the beginning, and will build on Him to the end of time. He is "the same yesterday," &c. His righteousness, His promises are unchangeable. 7. He is an elect, or chosen foundation (Isa. xxviii. 16, xlii. 1). 8. He is an experienced or tried foundation. He was tried—(1) By God, who laid upon Him the iniquities of us all. (2) By men and devils, who did their best against Him, but all to no purpose. (3) By the saints, who have had occasion to make use of Him, and He has never failed them. II. OUR DUTY IN REFERENCE TO THIS FOUNDATION. 1. To believe all this concerning Him. 2. To see our need of Him. We have each of us a building to rear, and what foundation have we? None in ourselves. 3. To renounce all other foundations. They are but sand (Matt. vii. 24). 4. To repair to Him. In the way of faithful and fervent prayer tell Him you are sensible of your need of Him, and that you are undone without Him. 5. To build upon Him. (1) In the great business of justification. (2) In all our perils and dangers (Psa. xlvi. 1, lxii. 1, 2). 6. To beware what we build upon this foundation, in opinion and in practice (chap. iii. 12–15). If we build loose, careless walking, our hopes built will be accordingly wood, hay, stubble, &c. (*Philip Henry.*) *Christ the foundation:*—When the immense stone piers of the East River bridge were begun, some years ago, the builders did not attempt to manufacture a foundation. They simply dug down through the mud and sand, and found the solid bed rock, which the Almighty Creator had laid thousands of years ago. It is a wretched mistake to suppose that you need to construct a foundation. "Other foundation can no man lay than *that is laid*, which is Jesus Christ." Your own merits, however, cemented by good resolutions, will no more answer for a solid base than would a cartload of bricks as the substratum of yonder stupendous bridge. God has provided for you a corner-stone already. (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) *Christ the only foundation:*—I. OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. It was already built upon Him as its historical foundation. He was the reason and account of its existence, so that if He had not lived and died, its existence, as Paul found it, would have been inexplicable. Some hold that Paul, not Christ, was the founder of Christendom—a theory he by anticipation contradicted. "Was Paul crucified for you?" &c. If the Church is built on the labours of apostles, apostles themselves rested on the Chief Corner Stone. II. OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT AND LIFE. 1. Christ Himself is the only foundation on which the soul can build, and not merely—(1) Doctrines about Him. Not that Scripture texts, or the creeds are to be disparaged. We prize both for His sake, but not Him for theirs, and to rest upon them as distinct from Him would be like building on a measuring rule instead of on the granite of which it has given us the dimensions. (2) Feelings about or towards Him. These are great aids to devotion; yet what so fugitive and unreliable. And after all they only point to Christ; their root is in ourselves, and we cannot supply the foundation stone out of the exhausted quarries of unrenewed human nature. (3) His work. For this can only be appreciated in the light of His person. His death is at best heroic self-devotion, if it be so much as that, unless His person is superhuman; and no more reliance can be placed upon it than upon the death of Socrates. (4) His teaching. For the persistent drift of this is to centre thought,

love, adoration on Himself. Relatively to Himself, it is part of the superstructure. His disciples learnt devotion to His person through listening to His words; we believe His words because we know whose words they are. (5) His sacraments. These are only picturesque unrealities, unless He who warrants them lives and is mighty. Apart from Him they have no more validity than our armorial bearing or a rosette. (6) His example. Take only the pattern of humility (Phil. ii.). If He is only the Son of Mary His condescension is but one acceptance of natural circumstances. His example in this and in other respects is only a power on Paul's hypothesis. 2. In modern times an effort has been made to put His power in the shade, as if it did not affect the essence of the gospel. What Christ was, or is, men say cannot matter if we profit by His teaching and example. And that is true, if Christ was merely man. And a high-minded, disinterested man, after doing his best for his fellow-creatures, will withdraw as far as possible from their notice. But we know that Christ imposed His person, and not merely His maxims upon the thought and heart of the world, and this departure from the ordinary instinct of high human goodness must have depended on the fact that such a course was necessary. It implies that Christ's person was in His own deliberate estimate of more importance than His teaching or philanthropy. But all is sufficiently explained, if we believe with Paul that Christ is God. Otherwise to make Him the foundation of the soul's life would be to substitute a creature for the Creator. A purely human Christ might be the architect, and even the scaffolding of the spiritual temple; He could not be its own foundation. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Christ the only foundation* :—I. THE NATURE OF THIS FOUNDATION. It is to the atonement, principally, that the apostle refers. 1. It was prepared from eternity. 2. It was made known by revelation. 3. It was finally laid at the death of Christ. II. ITS PECULIARITY. Christ is the only foundation—1. That God has appointed. 2. That the Scriptures will warrant. 3. That the righteous have in every age relied upon. III. THE ADVANTAGES OF TRUSTING ON IT. 1. It promotes the glory of God. 2. It produces evangelical obedience. 3. It secures safety, honour, and happiness. (1) In the season of adversity. (2) In the hour of dissolution. (3) In the day of judgment. Conclusion: Let us—1. Seek to obtain correct views of our true condition as sinners in the sight of God. 2. Beware of building on any false foundation. 3. Allow nothing to move us from this blessed hope. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) *Christ the sure foundation of*—1. The Church. 2. The Christian congregation. 3. The Christian life. 4. The sinner's hope. 5. The hope of men. (*W. F. Stevenson, D.D.*) *Christ the strong foundation* :—I. THE "FOUNDATION" IS THAT FROM WHICH EVERYTHING SPRINGS, WHILE ITSELF BEARS ALL THE WEIGHT. So from Christ all that is beautiful in the whole structure of the Church starts; and back to Him every part throws its heft and burden. 1. Christ was the "foundation" of the material world. For His sake, chiefly, this world was made—to be the scene of the display of His exceeding power and love to the glory of the Father (Prov. viii. 23–31). 2. So that when this world fell to ruin, there was the eternal Son of God ready to be the beginning of a new and better creation. As the promised Messiah, at the gate of Eden, He stayed the hand of universal death; and this earth and everything that is in it lived on, for "He was before all things, and by Him all things consist," *i.e.*, hold together. 3. After that, all along, underlying the whole Jewish dispensation, there was that expected One, the "foundation" a thought of every Jew till, in due time, He came. And the cradle of Bethlehem was the "foundation" of a throne before which every throne shall crumble into dust—of a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. 4. Of this kingdom of grace and glory the threefold fundamental principal is—(1) The person of Christ, that He is God and man—man to constitute Him a representative; God to give efficacy to the representation. (2) The work of Christ—that He paid the debt of the whole world, and wrought a righteousness which can make the whole world good in a holy Father's sight. (3) The glory of Christ—that He is occupying heaven for us, and there exercises all regal functions for His people's sake. II. FOUNDATION PRESUPPOSES SUPERSTRUCTURE. And with the superstructure you have to do. And the height of the superstructure will be according to the depth of the strength of the "foundation." 1. The foundation of all prayer is the Christ that is in it. Realise that your prayer is made prevalent by His intercession, that whatever you ask in the name of Christ shall be done. 2. Works are good and acceptable to God just according as they proceed from love—the love of God. But you cannot love God till you are in Christ. Good works are sweet evidences; the pinnacles and the decorations of

heavenly architecture; but no foundation. 3. Is there any one in this church who has not peace? It is because Christ is not in His proper place. He is not laid deep enough in that poor heart of yours. Nothing else can bear the weight of that sin of yours. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The true foundation of character*:—I. THERE IS AN ANALOGY BETWEEN THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER AND THE ERECTION OF A BUILDING. 1. In the variety of its materials. Moral character is built up by impressions, the emotions, thoughts, volitions; by all, in fact, that in any way affects us. 2. In the unity of its design. Every building, however varied its materials, is formed on some plan. The master-purpose of the soul, whatever it may be, gives unity to the whole. 3. In the function it fulfils. Buildings are generally residences of some kind or other. The soul lives in the character. In some cases the home is the mere stye of the animal, or the shop of the barterer, or the prison of the guilty, or the temple of the saint. II. CHRIST IS THE ONLY FOUNDATION OF A TRUE CHARACTER. There are sometimes splendid edifices and poor foundations, and the reverse. All characters are based upon some one idea. 1. Some on the sensual idea. Such as that on which the prodigal son started; such as that on which Dives built his all. Millions now do the same. What shall we eat, what shall we drink? is the grand inquiry. 2. Some on the secular idea. On this Judas, the young lawyer, and Demas built; and on this thousands build now. 3. Some on the ambitious idea. Absalom, Haman, Herod, are examples of this. Such, too, are the Alexanders and Napoleons of general history. 4. Some on the Christian idea. Supreme sympathy with God, and this requires Christ for its existence. Christ is its foundation, for He does the two things to generate this sympathy. He—(1) Demonstrates to man the propitiableness of God. (2) Reveals to man the moral loveliness of God. Thus He is the true foundation. III. TO CHRIST AS A FOUNDATION MEN BRING WORTHLESS AS WELL AS VALUABLE MATERIALS. There are edifices—1. Partially formed of "wood, hay, stubble." (1) The mere creedal character is worthless. There are those whose Christianity is a mere thing of idea. (2) Mere sentimental character is worthless. There are those whose Christianity is a mere thing of frames and feelings. (3) Mere ritualistic character is worthless. There are those whose Christianity is a mere matter of form. All these are things of no solidity, value, duration. 2. Entirely formed of valuable materials brought to Christ. They are formed of "gold, silver, precious stones." The heart is in vital sympathy with Christ as the Atoner for sin, the Exemplar of holiness, the Saviour of the world. The profoundest thoughts, the strongest sympathies, the gold and silver of the soul, are connected with Christ. IV. THERE IS AN ERA TO DAWN WHEN ALL THE EDIFICES BUILT ON THIS FOUNDATION SHALL BE TRIED. Individually, it is the day that dawns at the end of our mortal life. Universally, it is the day that dawns at the end of this world's history. The fire of absolute justice and truth will burn to the centre of all souls, consuming all that is worthless. 1. This day will be injurious to those who have built on this foundation with worthless materials. (1) They will suffer loss. There will be the loss of labour, of opportunity, of position. (2) Though they suffer loss they may be saved. Their favourite theories and cherished hopes shall burn like wood and hay, yet they themselves may survive. 2. This day will be advantageous to those who have built on this foundation with right materials. (*D. Thomas. D.D.*) *Fundamental truths explained, and popular errors exposed*:—We have—I. A STRIKING FIGURE. Christ is compared to a foundation. There are four ideas connected with Christ as a foundation. 1. Selection. A foundation stone is not taken at random—wisdom and care are required in the choice of it. The motto inscribed on this stone is, "Chosen of God and precious." When any great building is about to be erected, it is customary for some person of eminence to lay the foundation stone. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone." (1) How striking was the description which represents Him as a "tried stone." He was tried in His humiliation, tried by the lapse of ages, by the malice of devils, by the opposition of His enemies, and in the experience of His friends. 2. Suitableness. The Divine and human natures which meet in Him render Him suitable for the work He undertook. 3. Strength. The Saviour has strength to sustain. He sustains millions who are now in glory, and multitudes who are on their way, and the whole universe cannot furnish one instance of an individual being confounded who reposed here. But there is strength to destroy (Dan. ii. 34, 35; Matt. xxi. 42–44). 4. Stability. This is well represented by a stone; yet, however durable, the elements have power over it. But "time that doth all things else impair," has no power over the foundation of the Church.

Eternity claims it as its own—it shall stand unshaken amidst the shock of judgment—and when all nature shall sink in ruins, "verily the foundation of God standeth sure." II. A SOLEMN FACT. Christ is the only foundation. The apostle plainly intimates that attempts would be made to lay other foundations. Let me take you to three spots where men have tried to build their hopes for eternity. 1. Carnal reason. I mean the reason of man set up in opposition to, and in defiance of revelation. We would not undervalue reason, nor condemn its use in religion, for religion itself is a reasonable service. In all the doctrines of Christianity there is nothing contrary to reason, though there is much that infinitely surpasses it. There must be some standard by which to guide our views and feelings in reference to the interests of the soul, the claim of God and the solemnities of eternity. Where shall we find such a standard? Pride of intellect has set up reason; the wisdom of God revelation; and to make the latter bow to the former would be as preposterous as to make the sun acknowledge his inferiority to the glimmering taper. 2. Self-righteousness. This error assumes a variety of forms all of which are fatal. Here is a benevolent individual who wishes well to all around him. The acts of his liberality we cannot but admire, but we deplore the principles by which he is prompted to do what he does; he prides himself on his generosity, and imagines that God will accept him, though the general tenor of his conduct is opposed to Christianity. Let him come to the temple of Christianity, and read on the stone which unites and sustains the whole—"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Let him enter the building, and there read for himself—"Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor," &c. Here is another individual strictly moral, a respectable and respected member of society, a good husband, a kind father, a generous master, and a sincere friend. Now all this is well and praiseworthy, so far as it goes, but all these excellent traits may be found in their fullest extent while the heart is estranged from God. The man prides himself on his morality, and is attempting to make of it a bridge over which he shall pass to heaven. But here is another individual who makes a considerable profession of religion, his creed is sound, his life regular, his attendance on the means of grace punctual, &c., but he knows nothing of the power of grace or the experience of religion. How many seek to make a ladder of their religious duties that shall reach to heaven! 3. The general goodness of God. Many wish to be saved, but in their own way. They will not comply with the terms proposed in the gospel—they would have salvation, and yet retain their sins—they desire heaven, not because they love holiness, but that they may escape hell. We must take it as a gospel axiom, that if the salvation of Christ is in the soul, the dominion of Christ must be set up in the heart. Conclusion: Let me seriously inquire whether I am building on this foundation. It was laid in the eternal counsels of the Sacred Three—in the fulness of time in the person, work, suffering, and sacrifice of Christ—and is now laid in the preaching of the gospel. (*Ebenezer Temple.*)

Christianity ultimate and absolute truth:—1. What we know of the way of the world hitherto prepares us to believe that a great many things which are now serving their purpose will be superseded. And that we cannot see how, gives us no assurance that certain things shall not be got beyond. In travelling, there may be something beyond railways. In communication, no one can say that the telegraph is the ultimate wonder. And in all the arts and conveniences of life, the case is so too. 2. There is one thing, however, which will never be superseded. The world has seen various religions; but the truth, as it is in Jesus, is absolute and ultimate truth. We may have to learn, perhaps, that things which we think to be part of Christianity, are not, and to give them up as our fathers had. But, in the face of all possibilities, we turn to the comfortable assurance in the text. There is no "Christ that is to be": the One Christ has come, once for all. Among the ultimate and unchangeable truths are—I. THE WAY IN WHICH EACH OF US MUST BE SAVED. A vital thing, which cannot go amid all coming changes, is salvation through the atonement of Christ. We are sure of nothing if we are not sure that "Christ died for our sins." And no theory of the way of salvation but that which is familiar to us can bear being calmly looked at by any man who feels it his duty to accept the Word of God as decisive. We do not think that it is in any way profitable to push revealed doctrine into minute details; but we cannot regard it as other than vital part of that foundation besides which there never can be another, that Christ is a Saviour: that His sufferings were sacrificial, and borne for us: that by His obedience and death He reconciles us to God, satisfies Divine justice, and secures sanctification as well as forgiveness: that His atoning work is

complete, and that its benefits are offered freely to all who will receive them. II. THE RULE OF DUTY AND HELP IN DUTY. 1. You are not more sure of your own existence than that the requirements of Christianity as to duty will never grow less and can never grow greater. You cannot conceive of anything beyond perfection. Nor can you recall anything that lies outside of "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest," &c. And there is set before us for constraining example the life of One who was sinless in humanity, perfect in Godhead; and we are bidden to grow like Him. 2. Then, as for the help for all this there can be no change. As for the grace, guidance, vitality of the Holy Spirit—these, too, will be needed and are guaranteed to the end. Conclusion: There may be other things nearly associated with the scheme of Christian belief which will endure. Christian worship, surely, must always abide, though the accessories may greatly change. Surely there must be prayer, and praise; and even preaching must in some shape last. "Till He come" again, too, the sacramental commemoration of the Great Sacrifice, and the feeding upon it by faith, is appointed to continue. Yet it is rather doctrine than ritual that is pointed to in the text. (*A. K. H. Boyd, D.D.*) *Religion illustrated under the form of a building*:—I. THE FOUNDATION. Christianity is threefold. Its doctrines are the walls which enclose and preserve the interior parts of the building, its duties are the beams and rafters which keep its several parts together, and are its strength and firmness. Its privileges are the furniture placed in this edifice. Now, Christ is undoubtedly the foundation of each. 1. As to doctrines, whether they concern our fall or our recovery, a state of grace here or of glory hereafter, certain it is, Christ is the foundation of them all—not only is He the centre in which all the lines of doctrine meet, but also the fountain from whence they flow. So is He also the one source of all spiritual illumination. From Him all the sacred penmen derived their instruction, and from Him we must receive the ability to understand what they have revealed. So that whoever would build up the walls of Christian doctrine must be careful to erect them on Christ, his Prophet. 2. But Christ is the foundation of Christian privileges, *i.e.*, the blessings procured by Him for men, and bestowed upon all true believers, as the pardon of sin, the favour of God, adoption, the indwelling of His Spirit, the resurrection of the body, and everlasting life. Whosoever, therefore, would enjoy these blessings must build all his confidence and hope respecting them on Christ; and they who look for them in any other way build upon the sand. 3. The duties of Christianity can only be built on the same Rock of Ages. And here I refer to a right temper, as well as a regular behaviour; a pure heart, as well as a holy life. Now Christ's laws enjoin all this, and His Spirit inspires it; from His love it springs, and to His glory it is directed. It derives all its value from His grace, and depends for acceptance upon His mediation. II. ITS SUPERSTRUCTURE (ver. 12). What a glorious temple must that be which is raised upon a solid rock with such costly, splendid, and durable materials as "gold, silver, and precious stones"! And what a glorious spiritual temple must that be which is built on "the Rock of Ages"; of no worse materials than faith, love, and good works! 1. We must build faith upon Christ, or we must build upon Him by faith. Is Christ "a Teacher sent from God," He the High Priest of our profession, He our King? Then we must believe in Him, receiving His doctrines, relying on His promises, and subjecting our hearts and lives to Him. 2. This faith must be followed by love. (1) The love of God, which, as a fruit of faith, must be built upon Christ, is not merely a high esteem of Him, nor a desire after Him as our chief good, but also a complacency and delight of soul in Him as our Father and our Friend, who, in and through Jesus Christ, is become our portion in time and eternity. (2) And as this love is in union with the love of our neighbour which is a resemblance of God's love to mankind. 3. With great propriety are good works compared to precious stones, whether we regard their real worth or apparent beauty. Valuable and costly in themselves, they shall adorn the crowns and beautify the robes of the followers of Jesus in that day when God shall amply reward even "a cup of cold water" given in the name of Christ. Real good works spring from living faith and the love of God shed abroad in the heart; they are done in obedience to the Divine will, and with a view to the glory of God, and hence, be they ever so insignificant as to the outward act, they are truly precious in His sight. 4. But, alas! many begin to build with gold, &c., but by and by build with no better materials than wood, &c. Others never make use of anything better than sapless, combustible wood; the best modes of worship and religious duties, where the Spirit of God is wanting, are no better than mere hay; and the best systems of doctrine, where the gospel does not

come with power, are of no more use than dry straw. III. THE ISSUE OF ALL (ver. 13). "Every man's work shall be made manifest" (Eccles. xii. 14; Matt. x. 26), "for the day shall declare it." 1. The day of trial here will generally discover what character we possess, and if our religion is built up of nothing better than "wood," &c., it will be consumed and vanish. 2. The day of death shall prove a man's faith and piety, as a furnace tries the metals, and those who are mere dross shall be burnt up by it. 3. The day of judgment (Mal. iv. 1; 2 Pet. iii. 10). (*J. Benson.*)

Building for eternity:—I. ALL CHRISTIAN MEN BUILD FOR ETERNITY UPON ONE AND THE SAME FOUNDATION (ver. 11). 1. Sin had laid the world in a state of ruin; and if another temple could be constructed it must have a foundation firmer and broader than that which fallen nature could furnish. Human sagacity might suggest penitence, reformation, suffering. But none of these, nor all united, could answer the purpose. 2. When the incompetency of the law had been demonstrated, God "laid in Zion a foundation"; and "he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded." As Christ is the foundation of the universal temple of God, so is He also the foundation of each believer. It matters not in what clime they have fixed their dwelling, &c. In Christ they are one, and on Him, as their common support, they repose. II. CHRISTIAN MEN GREATLY DIFFER IN THE MATERIALS WHICH THEY USE IN THE ERECTION OF THE BUILDING. 1. Some build "gold, silver, and precious stones." The superstructure which they rear is of a costly and glorious character. The materials are emblematical of preciousness, purity, solidity, and permanency. There are some characters formed of elements as pure and indestructible as the principles upon which they are reared. 2. There are others who build on the same foundation "wood, hay, and stubble"; materials which are perishable, corrupt, and comparatively worthless. III. THERE WILL BE A PERIOD IN WHICH THESE MATERIALS SHALL BE REVEALED IN THEIR TRUE NATURE, AND TRIED BY THE SEVEREST TEST (ver. 13). The day referred to is clearly the day of judgment. Independent of revelation, we have many evidences confirmatory of this truth. 1. Analogy. Everything here tends to a final close. The universe itself is marching on towards dissolution. 2. The aspirations and the forebodings of humanity. The moral character of God. There must be another day in which that which is now wrong and imperfect shall be rectified and completed. IV. THE BUILDING CONSTRUCTED OF PURE MATERIALS WILL ABIDE THE TEST, AND THE BUILDER BE RECOMPENSED (ver. 14). 1. The work of the wise builder is indestructible. As it regards—(1) Himself: his sentiments, feelings, spirit are in harmony with the laws of heaven. (2) Others: the doctrines, &c., are right and Scriptural. As a necessary consequence, the fabric erected of such materials cannot but abide. Having been erected on the same principles which have the throne of the Eternal, their period of duration will be analogous. 2. The builder shall be rewarded. His reward will be a reward of—(1) Grateful recollection. (2) Inward satisfaction. (3) Remunerative labour. (4) Public approval. (5) Divine recompense. 3. The reward shall be in proportion to the work done. "Every man shall receive according to his own labour." Heaven will be what we make it on earth. V. THE BUILDING CONSTRUCTED OF PERISHABLE MATERIALS SHALL BE CONSUMED—THE BUILDER SUSTAIN LOSS, BUT WITH DIFFICULTY SAVED (ver. 15). The very idea of erecting "wood, hay, and stubble" upon an everlasting foundation was highly imprudent. What could be more incongruous, or more indicative of misplaced labour? However, such a building cannot stand; the investigations of the last day are more than it can bear. 1. As a consequence "he shall suffer loss"—(1) Of labour. All that he has done, with one exception, has been done in vain. (2) Of inward satisfaction. He might have reared a durable building; but he wasted his time and energy in another way. (3) Of hope. He expected his labour to be accepted by his Judge and rewarded accordingly. He is now stripped of all such anticipations. (4) Of reward. A reward can never be given but in connection with service rendered. This loss will be everlasting in its effects; it shall be a detriment to him to all eternity. 2. He himself shall be saved. The groundwork abides upon which he has been erecting, and, in virtue of this, he is safe. (*D. Evans.*)

Life as a structure:—I. A FOUNDATION LAID. 1. The idea is the radical one that no one can begin to live rightly and well just as he is. Sin has touched and tainted the deepest things in us. We cannot even begin. And this is not only the Bible teaching, but the conviction of almost the whole world. 2. Immense numbers of men are busy in the vain attempt to lay a foundation of their own. And as builders drive in piles into the marshy ground, and throw in vast loads of earth and stones, making a foundation on which they rear their house to last for its century

or two, so men in imagination carry out of themselves their good deeds, sufferings, penitence, recognitions of Divine mercy, &c., to lay down as a basis on which they may raise the structure of hope and happiness. Vain toils! The gulf is too deep and the materials have no real strength or worth. 3. God, looking down says, in condemnation, yet pity, "Behold, I lay in Zion," &c. Jesus Christ, then, is the foundation. The needed work is done. "It is finished." The gospel is a message, far more than an argument; an announcement of work done, rather than a discussion as to the way of doing it. On this we rest. The foundation of God standeth sure. We are safe, we are strong, if we build on that. There are many mysteries yet unsolved, but this is clear, that God has laid the foundation. II. THERE IS A BUILDING TO BE RAISED. A foundation without a building is a solecism. 1. After laying the foundation God tells us that we *may* build a house, and *ought* to build a temple. "Wood" was used for the posts and doors; "hay," or dried grass mixed with mud, for the walls, and "stubble" or straw for the roof. These are never used for temples. The temples were built of "precious stones," such as granite and marble, and they were adorned with "gold and silver." God stands close by the foundation He has laid, waiting for the builders to come. Come, be a builder. Put your trust in Christ. Faith in Him is the first stone laid on the foundation, and without it no other can be there. A man may be, according to the human judgment, great, and good, and happy, but if he does not believe in God's chosen foundation, his life is essentially defective, and must collapse in the end. 2. But the apostle is speaking to those who have begun, and in effect says, "Having begun, go on. Build diligently, that you may have a completed structure—carefully, that it may be composed of the proper materials." There is a certain kind of Christian teaching and writing which condenses everything in Christian life and experience into faith: "only believe. That is all." No, says the apostle, that is not all. Lay the first stone securely on the foundation which is laid, then add another, and another. Act by act, day after day, let the temple grow. In the compass of three verses four several times the apostle mentions a man's work. Lay the precious stones one upon another. Bring in the gold and silver for the enrichment and adorning of this living temple. (1) And beware lest unwittingly you should be using the wood and the hay and the stubble, which must perish at last. A man, *e.g.*, comes to Christ, he yields to Him, is pardoned, renewed, and rejoices for a while in his complete salvation. For years he keeps his place and builds on. But what is his building? "Wood, hay, stubble," low views, superficial opinions, evil tempers, worldly habits—just such things as irreligious men are building into their lives. Then let us be careful to build with the right materials, and all the more because the wrong ones are so rife and so near. Errors of every kind, but especially religious errors, are very abundant, some of them looking quite like truth. We shall build them up into the system of our faith ere ever we are aware, if we do not give earnest heed. Vices also abound, and some of them are so fair. And a multitude of things are around us which cannot be called either errors or vices, which yet will make very indifferent materials—ways of thinking, speaking, acting; the spirit of the place. (2) But let no man be discouraged, as though there were but little chance of being able to build up his life without large intermixture of such inferior stuff. Good materials are available—truth, virtue, strength, wisdom and love. If we ask them they will be given to us. God has taken care for this. He has filled His Book with truth. He has filled His providence with moral helps. If we diligently study the one and live faithfully amid the scenes of the other, He will fill us with His grace and salvation day by day, so that we shall grow unto an holy temple in the Lord. III. THERE IS A TIME GIVEN TO FINISH THE WORK. And when the limit of that time shall come, not one stone more can be laid. "I must work the work of Him that sent me while it is day," &c. And no man can tell when the night shall come. Look at the tombstones in a graveyard. You will see every age recorded there, and remember, as you read, that every name recorded is the name of a builder who, in the day given to him, began and finished a building that will be tried by fire. 1. Here is a stone that tells that an infant was born, and after wrestling with mortality but for a few days, died and was buried. But that little history was the building of a temple, and when it was finished the angels carried it away. 2. Here is a stone that marks the resting-place of a little worker. Mere shapings and scantlings of work there were—a little serious thought, a little faith and love, some tiny steps of following after the great Master: nothing, as some would say, to make a finished life. You are

mistaken. That little workman will never need to be ashamed. He has finished a temple life. 3. This is a maiden's name. She was looking to the bridal-day, and death came unbidden, but not unwelcome, for He led her up to the higher espousals of heaven. Father, mother, lover have written on the stone that "her sun went down while it was yet day." But the angels have written "eventide"; the Saviour has written "finished." 4. Here lies a merchant who was in the full stretch of his powers. His name was a synonym for truth and honour, and all around are the beginnings he had made. Nothing was finished. Yes, all is finished, and he lies here. 5. And now we come to the grave of the old, old pilgrim. The shock of corn seemed more than ripe. He was blind, deaf, in pain, helpless. Would it not have been better that he had gone some years sooner? No, no. It was the right time. He needed all his days and all his experiences to finish the temple. IV. THE FIRE SHALL TRY EVERY MAN'S WORK OF WHAT SORT IT IS. Our day is now. "The day of the Lord" is coming. Then our day will begin once more beyond, to have no more ending. But there must be judgment before glory. The apostle brings out this idea with truthful and unsparing severity. Again, and again, and again he mentions "the fire"! and how shall I dare try, with my misleading instincts, to quench God's holy fires? They will burn all the same, and be the more consuming the less men expect them. 1. God resolves to take us through that last ordeal, sparing nothing that will burn, and bringing us out, if need be, with nothing left to us of all our sore labour under the sun, that we ourselves may be saved—saved so as by fire. And which is best? Our poor human shrinking and longing, or God's holy will? For would you have "the wood, the hay, the stubble," yonder as well as here—calcined and hardened and preserved by those fires which were too feeble to consume them? Better stand at last in his full and complete salvation, than in any respect or for any length of time come short of it. Day of God! Day of Christ Jesus our Lord, with awful yet with loving desire we would look on to thee! The Lord grant to us that we (whatever may come of many of our works), that we may find mercy of the Lord on that day. 2. But let us, on the other hand, remember that nothing in us, which is truly Christian, can fall in those flames at last. And a little of these things is just as indestructible as much. Good is gold always, and will pass through any fires. If it is mingled with alloy the fire will be its salvation. And you do not know how the little services you are rendering will expand into nobleness, when the spirit and principle of them are known and declared. Not one precious stone which you put into your life will ever crumble, not one particle of gold or silver can perish. He whom you serve will gather up all the fragments so that nothing shall be lost. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *On the Rock*:—One day a female friend called on the late Rev. William Evans, a pious minister in England, and asked how he felt himself. "I am weakness itself," he replied; "but I am on the Rock. I do not experience those transports which some have expressed in the view of death; but my dependence is on the mercy of God in Christ. Here my religion began, and here it must end." *A false foundation*:—One was once brought, in the course of providence, into the company of a young lady who was just recovering from a dangerous illness. Speaking of her illness, among other things, she said, "At one time I sent for my honoured parents, and beloved brothers and sisters, and took, as I thought, my last farewell of them. Both the physicians had given me up, and my friends expected to see me no more." "We seldom meet with a person," said the other, "who has been so near to death as you have been. Pray tell me what were your feelings when you were on the verge of eternity." "I was happy," she replied. "And will you please to tell me what were your prospects?" "I hoped to go to heaven, of course." "Had you no doubts, no fears, no suspicions?" "None." "Perhaps almost all hope to go to heaven; but I fear," said the young man, "there are many who have no good foundation for their hope: pray, on what was your hope founded?" "Founded!" she replied: "why, I have never injured any person, and I had endeavoured to do all the good in my power. Was not this sufficient?" "It is a delightful reflection," said the student, "that you have never injured any person, and it is still more delightful to think that you have done all the good in your power; but this is a poor foundation for a sinner to rest upon. Was this the foundation of your hope?" She seemed quite astonished at the question, and eagerly inquired, "Was not this sufficient?" The student did not give a direct answer; but observed, "I am very thankful that you did not die." "What! do you think I should not have gone to heaven?" "I am sure you could not in the way you mentioned. Do you perceive that, according to your plan,

you were going to heaven without Christ?—a thing which no sinner has done since Adam fell, and which no sinner will be able to do while the world stands. Be very thankful, dear Miss, that you did not go out of life resting on this delusive foundation: for had you done so, the moment that you entered eternity, it would have given way, and you would have fallen through it into the bottomless pit." God carried home this word to her soul: light broke in upon her mind. From that day a decided change took place in the young lady's views; and a corresponding holiness, and love, and zeal, and usefulness, have adorned her life. (*Scripture Doctrines Illustrated.*) *Admonitions to ministers and congregations*:—I. To MINISTERS (ver. 11). 1. Ministers are to preach as the foundation—Christ. Recollect what Paul's own Christianity was: a few facts respecting his Redeemer's life, a few of his Master's precepts out of which he educed all Christian principles, and on which he built all that noble superstructure—his Epistles. Remember how he sums all up (Phil. iii. 10). His life, death, and resurrection, working daily in us, "being made manifest in our body." Christianity is Christ; understand Him, breathe His spirit, comprehend His mind; Christianity is a life, a spirit. Let self die with Christ, and with Him rise to a life of holiness, and then you need not care what discussions may arise; you stand upon a rock. 2. On this foundation we are to build the superstructure. Christianity is a few living pregnant principles, and on these you may construct various buildings. Christianity is capable of endless application to different circumstances, ages and intellects. Now in the words of ver. 12, observe that there are not six kinds of superstructure, but two: gold, silver and precious stones, the materials of the temple; wood, hay and stubble, of a cottage; but in these buildings the materials of each are of various degrees of excellence, and the latter, good, bad and indifferent. Now what do these symbolise? Perhaps doctrines or systems; but more probably persons. Some of straw, utterly worthless; some of silver, sound, good, but not brilliant men; some of gold, characters true to the very centre; some of precious stones, men in whom gifts are so richly mingled with useful qualities that they are as jewels in the Redeemer's crown. And such was the author of this Epistle. 3. Now there follows from all this the doctrine of the rewardableness of work. All were one, on the one foundation; yet they were not one, in such a sense that all their work was equally valuable, for, "every man shall receive his own reward according to his labour." Therefore, Christian men, work on—your work is not in vain. A cup of cold water, given in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward. 4. There is also here a distinction between the truth of work and its sincerity. In that day nothing shall stand but what is true; but the sincere worker, even of untrue work, shall be saved (ver. 15). Sincerity shall save him in that day, but it cannot accredit his work. But what is this day? Generally speaking, time; more particularly the trial day, which every advent is, and especially the last. Nothing gilded or varnished will remain; for just as fire burns straw so must all that is not based on the truth perish. Then elaborate systems of theology shall be tried and found worthless. Then many a Church order, elaborately contrived, shall be found something unnecessarily added to the foundation, and overlying it. And then many a minister, who has prided himself on the number of his listeners, will be stripped of his vain-glory, if that which seems to be souls won for God, turns out to be only hearts won for self. II. To CONGREGATIONS. 1. A warning against all ministers who should so teach as to split the Church into divisions (ver. 21). 2. A warning against sectarianism, on the ground of Christian liberty (ver. 21). Man enters this world, finding himself in the midst of mighty forces of which he seems the sport and prey. But soon Christianity reveals to him God's will, which makes these things co-operate for his good. And so he learns his own free-will, and uses them as the sailor does the winds, which as he uses them become his enemies or his friends. Then it is that he is emancipated from the iron bondage to circumstances: then all things are his—this marvellous life, so full of endless meaning, so pregnant with infinite opportunities. Still more death, which seems to come like a tyrant, to lead him to higher life. Paul is his, to teach him freedom. Apollos his, to animate him with his eloquence. Cephas his, to fire him with his courage. Every author his, to impart to him his treasures. 3. St. Paul refers all this to the universal law of sacrifice: all things are ours on this condition—that we are Christ's. The law which made Christ God's has made us Christ's. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Christ the only foundation*:—First, therefore, He is to be laid down as the only foundation in respect of knowledge and instruction. Secondly, we must preach Christ the

foundation of all strength and power, from whom we receive all ability to do anything that is good. "I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me" (Phil. iv. 3). Thirdly, Christ is preached as a foundation when He is exalted in our ministry to be the Head of the Church and He that governeth all things. Fourthly, Christ is to be set up the only foundation in respect of mediation and intercession with God. Fifthly, from this floweth another necessary way of preaching Christ a foundation, viz. of acceptation of our persons and duties. Sixthly, Christ is to be preached as the foundation of all fulness for all our necessities and spiritual wants. Two or three particulars more we are to instance in by which it may appear in what Christ is laid a foundation. Seventhly, He is to be preached as the Fountain of all the happiness, joy, and spiritual content the godly hearer can have. Eighthly, Christ is to be preached as the Person with whom we are to close in all ordinances. Lastly, we are to preach Christ, not only as the foundation of our approaches to God, but of all God's gracious actions and visitations to us. In the next place let us consider the reasons why we ministers are to lay no other foundation but Christ: to make Him all in all. First, it is the main end and scope of the Scriptures only to exalt Christ, and the end of the ministry should be the same with the end of the Scriptures. Secoudly, as the Scripture, so God's great purpose and counsel from all eternity was, to set up Christ and to have Him glorified. Thirdly, we must preach Christ the foundation, because in Him there is such a treasure of the riches of God's grace and God's love. Fourthly, therefore are we to exalt Christ in our ministry, to lay Him the foundation, because in heaven, though Christ will then lay down the exercise of His mediatory kingdom, yet the glory and honour must be given unto Him for ever. Fifthly, the necessity of preaching Christ the foundation ariseth from the ignorance of people who do grossly err about Christ both doctrinally and practically. Sixthly, the necessity appeareth because of the subtilty and enmity of Satan, who has continually set himself against Christ and His Church. Seventhly, we have the more need to exalt Christ because there is proneness in every man to trust to his own work. (*A. Burgess.*)

Vers. 12–15. **Now if any man build on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble.**—*Classic buildings and their materials:*—In such cities as Ephesus, where this letter was written, or Corinth, to which it was addressed, there was a signal difference (far greater than in modern European cities) between the gorgeous splendour of the great public buildings and the meanness and squalor of those streets where the poor and profligate resided. The former were constructed of marble and granite; the capitals of their columns and their roofs were richly decorated with silver and gold; the latter were mean structures, run up with boards for walls, with straw in the interstices and thatch on the top. This is the contrast on which St. Paul siezes, . . . not, as sometimes the passage is treated, as though the picture presented were that of a dunghill of straw and sticks, with jewels, such as diamonds and emeralds, among the rubbish. He then points out that a day will come when the fire will burn up those wretched edifices of wood and straw, and leave unharmed in their glorious beauty those that were raised of marble and granite and decorated with gold and silver, as the temples of Corinth itself survived the conflagration of Mummius, which burnt the hovels around. (*Dean Howson.*) *The perishable from the imperishable:*—One man writes a big book about baptism, and says it means "immersion," and winds up by thanking God that, whatever other men have thought fit to believe, he has had grace enough to take up his cross and follow Christ! Another man writes another big book and says it is not immersion, and thanks God, if he has only been sprinkled, he is not so uncharitable as some people! And then they read each others' books, and "vain janglings" follow, as the apostle calls them, "whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, and perverse disputings." "Stubble!" Every inch of it. For all purposes of profit to the kingdom of Christ—worthless. The fire shall consume their books and the injury will be, not to Christ, depend upon it, but to themselves. "If any man's work shall be burned he shall suffer loss," &c. I was asked if I thought Roman Catholics would be saved. "Saved!" Assuredly, if they believe Christ died to save them. "But they practise auricular confession; they offer prayers for the dead; they celebrate the mass; they invoke the saints; they pay homage to the Pope." Undoubtedly; and as we believe, unhappily and unlawfully, they do. But if they believe in Christ, is all this to imperil their salvation? Is not this the "wood,

hay, and stubble" of their false systems in God's estimation, and useless for every purpose of progress or consolidation in the operations of the Church? These, with other phases of error—some of them peculiar to Protestantism—the "fire" will reveal; and they shall perish, and their removal will prove them to have been human in their origin, and innovations upon the truth of God. But the "truth," and the one embodiment of that truth as it shall be seen in a purified and finished Church, shall remain unmoved. Gold, silver, precious stones! Faith, love, zeal! No fire shall effect these. They are invulnerable. The removing of those things that are shaken as of things that are made shall prove the strength and solidity of those things which could be shaken and which shall remain. "Therefore, receiving a kingdom which cannot be removed, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." (*S. Holmes.*) *The doctrine and truths of Christ are very precious and excellent:*—To open the doctrine, let us consider, What is implied in this when the truths of Christ are thus called gold and precious stones? First, the preciousness of them is hereby declared. They ought to be esteemed and desired by us as much as the covetous man desires his gold and silver. This made the holy martyrs willingly die for it; they thought it more precious than life. The apostle calls it "that good thing committed to thee." "To you that believe Christ is precious" (1 Pet. ii. 7). Secondly, it doth denote the rarity of it. It is hardly and difficultly obtained. Gold and silver is not so common as the stones of the street. There are but few mines of gold to the mountains of earth. And thus for the most part the Churches of God have been so corrupted with errors that very little gold did appear. It was a rare thing to have any one truth of God made known. In the Old Testament, under many kings, idolatry and superstition had so prevailed that the book of the law of God in Josiah's time was a rare thing; and in Asa's time "they had been without the law and a teaching prophet for a long while" (2 Chron. xv. 3). So that it is not so easy a matter to obtain the truth, that is found out with much prayer, humility, holiness of life, and industrious using of all means appointed by God. So that the Scripture is the mine where all the gold and silver is; there we must dig, thence we must replenish ourselves. Thirdly, there is implied the durableness and constancy of it. Gold will not melt away in the fire or be consumed as hay and stubble will. So that the truths of God are so constant and abiding that when a man comes to be afflicted, to be persecuted, to be undone for the truth of God, this will abide. Fourthly, the truths of Christ are compared to gold and silver because of the solidity and ponderosity of them; they are weighty and heavy; whereas errors are compared to hay and stubble; what is lighter than these? Whatsoever opinion then is accompanied with vanity, levity, and emptiness, it is not solid, grave, and substantial; refuse that. Fifthly, they are compared to gold because of the purity and sincerity of them. The truths of God, they have an holy simplicity and sincerity, and therefore false teachers are said to corrupt the pure Word of God, as hucksters do their wine (2 Cor. ii.). David compareth God's Word to "pure gold, even seven times refined" (Psa. xix.). And hereby it becomes a very dangerous sin for any to counterfeit it or corrupt it. Sixthly, it is compared to gold for the efficacy and choice virtue thereof. Seventhly, they are compared to gold and silver for the usefulness and profitableness to all things. Many outward comforts in this world may be had for gold and silver; you may have friends, food, raiment. The truth of justification by faith in Christ, is not that more worth than the gold of Ophir? What precious and powerful operations hath it upon the hearts of the ungodly? Eighthly, the truths of Christ are compared to gold and precious stones because they are able to enrich a man with all graces. In the second place, to build gold and precious stones on this foundation is not only to preach sound and pure matter, but this matter in a pure and exact way. First, in preaching of them after Scripture authority, when they are conveyed unto you, as having the stamp and authority of God. Secondly, it is to preach them with Scripture gravity and solidity. As the oracles of God (1 Pet. iv. 11). Thirdly, they are to be preached with Scripture simplicity in respect of aims and ends. For though a man should build gold and silver, yet if it be for human glory and earthly greatness he builds hay and stubble, though this be known to God only. But this fire will discover the secrets of men's hearts. With what delight and holy covetousness you should receive the truths of Christ; they are no less worth than gold, than precious stones. The tabernacle was covered all over with gold, and they brought precious stones to it; and thus is the Church of God

still to be built (Rev. xxi. 19). (*A. Burgess.*) *The losses of the saved*:—1. You all hope in some way to be saved at last. The mercy of God is so all but exhaustless; He has such a marvellous variety of saving contrivances; and the thought of being shut out for ever in hell is so horrible, no wonder that you hope to be eventually saved. But hopes amid carelessness, worldliness, or sin are no good sign, for they are hindrances to salvation, and to that fear with which the apostle tells us to work it out. But be it as we wish, viz., that these hopes will not imperil, but secure, our salvation—that will be gain indeed; but be it as we wish, that this hope will not, by the mercy of God, wreck the salvation of any one, it will also be infinite, eternal loss; for it will be a loss of that measure of the capacity of the infinite love of God, which the soul might have gained, but would not. 2. Here we are in the province, not of God's mercy only, but of His justice. It is by His mercy in Christ that we are saved at all; but when we have been saved, the reward is according to our works. What, then, I wish you to dwell upon is not the risk of hell, which a careless or worldly ambitious life involves, but the certain sufferings of the day of judgment to some who shall be saved, and the irremediable loss which they have brought upon themselves. 3. And this pain and loss will not come to us through sins which separate men from Christ. Day by day, and year by year, men will have gone on, laying tier after tier of their spiritual building, which, on account of their real belief and trust in Christ, they thought enduring. They built on and on; whether they had, from time to time, misgivings is not said. But if they had they stifled them. For they builded on unto the end. And they must all the while have been earnest in their way; perhaps they were praised, and the praise blinded them the more. Some of them may "have left names behind them." Oh, if the departed still know of what passes on this our earth, what a hideous mockery must that posthumous fame be when the temple has collapsed in ashes. A life-long labour perished! It is piteous, even when the temporal end, for which a man has toiled all his life, crashes at last. But remediless! And for eternity! Plainly, there must have been self-deceit about it. For not without a man's own will and his own fault would God have allowed such an one to remain so deceived to the end. 4. What, then, are things which shall not be burned—gold, silver, costly stones, which represent something costly and something very pure? They are of different values, but all agree in this, that they are pure. All done for Christ, from the cup of cold water to the martyr's chariot of fire, have their several values; but all spring from the one pure motive, love of Him. What else can we even imagine that God will reward? Why should we look hereafter for a second reward from God for doing what our own natural dispositions prompted us to do, and which brought their own reward? True, all things, even eating and drinking, if done to the glory of God, have their eternal recompense, because in each one of these ordinary things we may please God and gain greater grace and larger capaciousness for His infinite love. But what so common as to have mixed motives for our actions, or, rather, what so rare as to have any one motive for any one action, unless, indeed, it be a lower one? 5. But the day of judgment must clear up all this, and then, as shall be the issue, so "shall every man have praise of God." And since nothing can receive praise from God which is not more or less purely done for God, then the day of judgment will, I fear, to very many of the saved, who now stand well with themselves, be a terrible discovery, how very little, in their whole lives, they have really done for love of God. And this is what the apostle means by those things which shall be burned up. Things they are of different degrees of lightness, by which different minds imposed upon themselves, as though they were of value when they were of none. But the most plausible will not leave a rack behind, more than the most openly worthless. 6. Nothing but a continued active habit of directing our actions to God, such as results from offering them to God, with continuous prayer for grace, will rescue some fragments of our acts from the unclean contact of our besetting faults. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *Loss through little sins*:—You know well what would become of a house of wood or of a rick if fire was kindled around it, on however good and solid a foundation of stone it might be raised. The foundation upon which it was built would not save it. So then there are works, done by those who do not yet forsake Christ, which shall not stand in the fire of the great day. What are they, then? Are they great, deadly sins, such as the apostle elsewhere speaks of, "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, hatred, drunkenness, revelling, and such like"? No. Such works are not and cannot be built upon the foundation; they, as far as in us lies,

destroy the foundation, and the soul itself. They who do these things do not build upon "the Rock which is Christ"; they "build their house on the sand; and the ruin of that house," our Lord says, "is great." What, then, are these things done by a Christian which bring upon him such terrible loss for eternity? They are heaps of little sins; little self-indulgences against the law and will and mind of God, which do not extinguish the love of God in the heart, yet chill it exceedingly; little vanities; little envies; little self-seekings or selfishnesses; little detractions of a neighbour; little unseriousnesses; little contemptuousnesses; idle imaginings; petty angers; little deceitfulnesses or self-praise. Sins they are of which people make very little, because one by one they think them little sins, but which, weighed together, become very heavy. These encrust the soul, as it were, with habits of mind, in thought, word, and deed, with which they cannot enter heaven. In heaven there cannot be the slightest thought of vain-glory; no petty repugnance or mislike of one another; no suspicion; no comparison of ourselves with others; no discontent; no repining; no thought that we are not cared for enough or loved enough; no grudge; no remembrance of unkindness. And if all these things must be left and laid aside at the very portals of heaven; if none of these things can stand the fire of the day of judgment; if the slightest feeling of unlove would be a dark spot, seen through the whole brilliancy of heaven and unbearable in its transparent purity and brightness; what are any of us doing if we are not using our utmost strength, all the power of our souls, to lay them aside now? (*Ibid.*) **Every man's work shall be . . . revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.**—*The revelation and test of fire:*—The nature of every one's work or superstructure shall sooner or later be known; for the great day of the Lord shall dawn in a flood of fire. The house of gold and silver shall be lit up by its dazzling brilliancy; but the house of wood and thatch shall be burnt up. And not only so, but whereas the builder whose house is consumed will lose his reward, having nothing to show, and though he himself, as having built on a true foundation, will be saved, yet he will come out singed and scorched as by an escape out of a burning ruin. It is possible that this whole image may have been suggested or illustrated by the conflagration of Corinth under Mummius; the stately temples standing amidst the universal destruction of the meaner buildings. (*Dean Stanley.*) *That all errors in religion, though not fundamental, are no better than hay and stubble:*—Consider, first, though all errors in opinion and religion have no better a name and no better a nature, yet those that build them do not think so. They judge what they build gold and silver; they think their monsters beautiful and comely. The false prophets in the Old Testament, they would presumptuously call their dreams and imaginations the word of the Lord. Secondly, when the apostle calls these errors hay and stubble, he doth not speak of fundamental errors neither, but such as are consistent with and built on the true foundation. They do not damn the author of them, but they make his salvation difficult. "He shall be saved, but by fire." So that as all sins are not alike, so neither are all errors. As in sickness some are mortal and deprive of life immediately, others are not so. In the second place, let us consider why the apostle calls errors by such names—wood, hay, and stubble. First, because of the vileness and contemptibleness of them. Men, if they understand the Scripture and walk by that rule, would no more regard them than the straw under their feet. Secondly, it is compared to hay and stubble for the levity and uncertainty of it. Now the lightness and uncertainty appeareth in three things. It cannot abide the touchstone; it cannot endure to be tried. Straw cannot endure the fire. Thirdly, errors are compared to hay and stubble for the uselessness and unprofitableness of them. (1) They do not truly inform and enlighten the mind. (2) The truths of Christ are profitable to sanctification and holiness. "Sanctify them by Thy truth" (John xiv.). (3) They are unprofitable for any sound comfort and joy. "That we through the comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. xv. 4). (4) They are not profitable for duration or continuance. This straw will not keep off the rain of God's tempests. To show the folly either of such teachers or hearers that dote on errors, that admire hay and stubble, as if it were gold and precious stones. Oh, try and prove things by the Word ere you rejoice or boast in them! What makes a Church truly glorious, even when it is pure from errors and heresies? A Church embracing the truth is like a goodly edifice of all beautiful excellencies; but where errors are there is dishonour to it. In all the matters of religion, see what solidity and profit there is in the thing thou believest. (*A. Burgess.*) *That all the ways and works of wickedness, though*

acted in never so secret a manner, shall be made manifest:—I. We shall show WHAT KIND OF HIDDEN WICKEDNESS SHALL BE MADE MANIFEST. First, all the secret and hidden thoughts, affections, and purposes of the heart, God will one day make manifest to the whole world. That as there are a world of flies and motes in the air which we never see till the sunbeams arise, so there are thousands of proud, unclean, covetous, and malicious thoughts and purposes lodging in men's hearts which the world never knows, but God will one day have heaven and earth take notice of them. Oh, then, what a curb should this be to thy heart, to thy thoughts! Secondly, all the impure and unclean works of the flesh committed in secret, these also shall be made manifest. Thirdly, the hidden works of thieving and stealing and unjustly taking away of other men's goods will one day be manifest. Fourthly, there is a hidden work of unrighteousness which is not plain stealing, but it is crafty and artificial cosening in thy trading and commerce with others. Fifthly, carnal and worldly policy to have earthly greatness and power and honour in the world: this is a very deep and secret work, but God will manifest it. Sixthly, dissimulations and inconstancies in matter of religion. II. In the next place, CONSIDER THE AGGRAVATION OF THOSE SINS THAT ARE SECRET AND HIDDEN. 1. It argueth a man hath more consciousness to himself that he doth not well, therefore he would not have the world know. 2. This secret sinning puts far more respect and fear upon men than God. 3. The more secret any wickedness is, it argueth the heart is more studious and industrious about it, how to contrive it, how to bring it about. Take heed of secret hidden sins, God will one day manifest what thou hast been. (*Ibid.*) *That all the hidden and secret ways of false doctrines God will one day make manifest*:—I. GOD WILL MANIFEST ALL THOSE HIDDEN CAUSES AND ENDS OF THY FALSE DOCTRINES. Now the Scripture gives these causes. 1. Pride and self-conceit, or overweening of thy own abilities and sufficiency; such a man is in the highway to all errors: "For the humble and meek God will teach" (Psa. xxv.). The valleys are fruitful when the high mountains are barren. 2. Ignorance and weakness of judgment. And truly this is the most innocent cause of errors when men, through ignorance and weakness, go in a false way; yet this doth not excuse (2 Pet. iii. 16). 3. Hypocrisy. The Scripture brandeth that for a heavy cause sometimes of the errors in religion. 4. Ambition and affectation of high places in the Church of God, and to be above others. This hath made men build hay and stubble. 5. Discontents and impatiencies at some things which have fallen out in the Church hath been a great cause to make divisions and to sow tares amongst the wheat. 6. Envy and sinful emulation to the gifts and abilities of others that have been above them. This hath made men bring in strange doctrines. So then, as some sharp thorny bushes have pleasant blossoms on them, so many specious and fair opinions that are set out with much glory may yet grow upon such thorny and corrupt causes. 7. A contemplative delight in a man's own notions and conceptions he hath. This hath caused more errors than anything, especially in learned men. II. THE NATURE OF EVERY MAN'S DOCTRINE, AND, IF FALSE, THEN THE MASK WILL BE PULLED OFF. It will appear counterfeit coin, and you know to be guilty of that is a capital crime. God's authority and stamp will not be found on it. Rehoboam, when the golden vessels were taken out of the Temple, he put brass ones in the stead. III. God will manifest every man's work IN THE CUNNING SUBTILTY HE HATH MANAGED IT WITH. For the Scripture speaks of the crafty ways men use that they do adulterate the Word of God. For—1. Before hearers are publicly prepared for them, they go privately and secretly vent their wares. They are said to creep into houses (2 Tim. iii.). They are the moles that creep under ground, whereas Christ said He taught nothing but what He did publicly; all did hear. 2. Their craft is seen in mingling some truths with their error, that while we take one we may swallow down the other. 3. This craft is seen either in sweet and winning words, full of love and kindness, or else in pretence to deep and sublime mysteries. 4. Their circumspection to observe the fit seasons to disseminate their errors. Thus, while all were asleep, tares were sown upon the fittest subjects—women, as being more affectionate. "They lead captive silly women" (2 Tim. iii. 6). Take we heed how we build, and that is by avoiding the causes of error, pride, ambition, envy, discontent. Alas! thou hast cause enough to be humbled; the more thou knowest, thou wilt see thy ignorance the more. A poor man thinketh a little sum of money great treasures. (*Ibid.*) *That God hath His time when He will discover the errors of men's doctrines*:—First, in that the Scripture calls the time of manifestation a "day," wherein is light and the sunbeams; it doth excellently imply that all the while

there are corruptions in doctrine and worship that time is a time of darkness. Let them never so much rejoice in them, and count them happy times, yet the Scripture calls them dark times. Secondly, there are no foolish builders that thus deform God's temple but they are by God's permission; in His wrath and anger, because men have abused His truth and waxed wanton under it, therefore hath He sent the spirit of delusion and errors amongst men (2 Thess. ii. 10). Thirdly, as the corrupt errors of men came from God's anger, so in mercy He hath appointed times wherein He will purge and take away their dross. Fourthly, this day of God's revealing may be a long while as to our expectation. You may see only chaff and no wheat; and this may be a long while, so that the ungodly do even languish under their expectations. These things thus explained, let us consider the reasons why God will have a day to declare men's works in matter of false doctrines. And first, because the truth of God is dear and precious to him. Christ Himself makes it one main reason why He came into the world to bear witness to God's truth. Secondly, it is necessary there should be a time, because of the people who belong to God's grace, that they may see their errors and bewail them; that they may redeem the time by pulling down their hay and stubble and building gold and silver. Lastly, in respect of men hardened in their errors, that their obstinacy may appear the more; that when they will not see, though the day appear, who then can justify them? To embrace those days of light and revelation which God brings into the world. (*Ibid.*) *That God useth to bring people out of errors and false ways by His Word and afflictions:*—To understand this, consider that though the Word and afflictions both help to bring a man out of false ways, yet far differently. For, first, the Word of God is of itself sufficient, in a way of light, to inform and instruct, and hath threatenings also to be like a goad in the side; but afflictions of themselves do not inform, do not teach. God's Word is able to reduce without afflictions, but afflictions cannot do anything without God's Word. Secondly, there is a difference between the Word and afflictions, because though afflictions have a voice as well as the Word, and the rod speaks as well as God's Word, yet the Word of God doth it distinctly and plainly, afflictions in a general manner. Thirdly, though the Word of God be thus only able to instruct and convince, being a perfect rule, yet that doth not exclude other helps, especially the ministry; for ministers are called the lights and guides. Let us see how God by the Word reduceth the wandering sheep. First, the Word of God is instrumental to open the eyes, to enlighten the dark understanding. Secondly, the Word of God is fire to try men's works, because it containeth all matter necessary to salvation. Thirdly, the Word of God will be a fire to try, because it doth direct to all those means whereby we may come out of all errors. But you will say, "How is God's Word a fire? How doth that reveal?" Answer 1. The defect is not in the Scripture, but in men themselves. The owl and bat are made blinder by the sunbeams, not through any defect in the sun. Secondly, men swallow down first the sweet poison of errors from false teachers, and then they think every place in the Scripture makes for them. Thirdly, they do not attend to the whole Scripture. Lastly, it is not enough to have Scripture, to have many texts, but we are also to make use of those helps for the understanding of them which God hath appointed. 2. Afflictions are God's fire; they will discover men's works by preparation and fitting the heart to receive. (*Ibid.*) *The test of Christian teaching:*—Many of us have watched that fascinating but awful sight—the progress of a great fire. We have marked how the devouring element masters first one and then another department of the building which is its victim; but especially we have noted what it consumes and what it is forced to spare, the resistless force with which it sweeps through and shrivels up all the slighter materials, and only pauses before the solid barriers of stone or iron, thus trying before our very eyes the builders' work of what sort it is. Now of whom was the apostle thinking when he wrote the warning words about the spiritual builder who employed wood, and hay, and stubble in his work? The eager adherents of Apollos had been powerfully impressed by the brilliant Alexandrian, by his knowledge of what was being said and thought in the Greek world; by his skill in setting out what he had to say to the very best advantage; they were, after the manner of disciples, more eager to imitate their master's methods than careful to be true to the end he had in view. "Take care," St. Paul seems to say to the young men who were trading on the great name and authority of Apollos—"take care what you are doing with those souls at Corinth. Are you only interesting and amusing them for a few of the passing days of time, or are you building up in them

a faith which will enable them to pass death and eternity? What are the materials of the structures within those souls which you are raising? Are they the gold, the silver, the precious stones of the Apostolic faith? No doubt they are; but do they not also include materials of a different kind—less valuable, less durable—wood, hay, and stubble? If this be so, a time is coming when all the precious and worthless alike will be submitted to a serious test. "The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." But He who at the end will judge us once for all is now and always judging us, and His perpetual presence among us as our Judge, constantly probing, trying, saving us, is revealed by events and circumstances which have on our souls the effects of fire—they burn up that which is worthless, they leave that which is solid unscathed. There is the searching, testing power of a new and responsible position, of a situation forcing its occupant to make it a critical choice, or to withstand a strong pressure. Such a new position discovers and burns up all that is weak in a man's faith and character. History is strewn with illustrations of this truth. The virtuous, though weak, emperor, who was floated to power on the surf of revolution, is by no means the only man of whom it might be said that all would have judged him capable of ruling others if only he had never been a ruler. How often does early manhood open with so much that seems promising—with intelligence, courage, attention to duty, unselfishness, what looks like high principle—and then the man is put into a position of authority—it is the fire that tests the work which he has done in his character. Suddenly he betrays some one defect which ruins everything: it may be vanity, it may be envy, it may be a shadow of untruthfulness, it may be some lower fierce passion which emerges suddenly as if unbidden from the depths of the soul, and wins over him a fatal mastery. All is good is turned to ill, all is distorted, discoloured; he might have died a young man amid general lamentations that so promising a life had been cut short. He does die as did Nero or Henry Tudor, amid the loudly-expressed or the muttered thanksgiving of his generation that he has left the world. The fact was, that the position in which he found himself exposed him to a pressure which his character could not bear. You remember how the old Tay Bridge, before that fatal winter night, was believed to be equal to its purpose. It needed, no doubt, a mighty impact, a terrific rush of wind from one particular quarter, in order to show that the genius and audacity of men had presumed too largely on the forbearance of the elements. But the moment came. We many of us remember something of the sense of horror which the tragical catastrophe left on the public mind; the gradual disappearance of the last train as it moved on its wonted way on into darkness, the suddenly observed dislocation and flickering of the distant lights, the faint sound as of a crash rising for a moment even over the din of the storm, and then the utter darkness as all, train and bridge, together sank into the gulph of waters beneath, and one moment of supreme and unimaginable agony was followed by the silence of death. And we see these truths at work in associated as well as in individual human life. Any one will recall the names of empires which have appeared to possess the elements of unconquerable strength until they have been subjected to the test of new conditions—the empire of the Great Alexander, the empire of Attila the Hun, the empire of the first Napoleon. Alexander subdued all the nations which spread from the Adriatic to the Indies. No sooner had he passed away than the unity of his work was shattered by the ambition of three generals. Attila's kingdom at one time reached from the Volga to the Loire; the vast host at his disposal was attended by a bevy of subject kings and chiefs: the emperors of the East and West were both his obsequious tributaries; and the men of his day expressed the terror which his apparently boundless power inspired when they named him "the scourge of God." Yet he had scarcely been discovered dead on his couch after a drunken revel, when his sons, greedy for high place, turned their arms against each other, and so within some fifteen years the Huns had sunk to be the dependents and tributaries of the very race which but now they had ruled. And there is Attila's great counterpart in modern Europe—Napoleon. His vast, motley hosts swept along over much the same ground as Attila's though in an opposite direction. Like Attila's, they passed over ancient and prostrate thrones; like his, too, they went on the errand of an insatiable ambition; but before he died, as we all know, Napoleon's work had been tested with a severity which revealed its weakness, and left behind it nothing but a million of tombs and the dying echoes of a vast catastrophe. And as with States, so with particular branches of the Christian Church. A Church may be, to all appearances, highly favoured; it may have leaders conspicuous for holiness or learning; it may reckon

its multitudes of devout communicants, its flourishing missions at home and abroad, and its many works of benevolence and mercy; and yet it may have admitted to its bosom some false principles, whether of faith or morals, which will find it out in the day of trial. In the early centuries no Church was more highly favoured than that of Northern Africa. It had, it is said, almost innumerable Churches, which produced saints and martyrs; its intellectual and practical activity was tested by the long series of Councils of Carthage; it was the first Church, so far as we know, certainly it was earlier than any in Italy, to translate the New Testament Scriptures into the languages of the West; it held its own in debate with the greatest Churches of Europe, and with Rome itself; but the day of trial came on it with the invasion of the Vandals, as Augustine lay dying in Hippo. It came again, and more decisively, with the Moslem conquest. There are Churches in the East which have suffered as much as or more than the Church of Northern Africa —Churches which have never ceased suffering, yet which in their weakness are still instinct with life and hope; but the Church of Cyprian and Augustine perished out right. We may guess at the cause—we cannot determine; it may have been a general lax morality among its people; it may have been a widespread spirit of paradox among its teachers; it may have been some far-reaching weakness or corruption which the day of account will alone reveal. But there is the fact. No Church in primitive Christendom stood higher than the Church of Africa: none has ever so utterly disappeared. Let us of the Church of to-day be not high-minded, but fear; for if prominence and success do not discover what is weak in faith and character, there is an agent who comes to all sooner or later, and who will surely do so—there is the fire, the searching, testing power of deep affliction. Many a creed that will do for the sunny days of life will not serve us in its deep shadows, much less in the valley of the shadow of death. The truths which strengthen and brace character, and enable it to pass unscathed, like the three holy children through the fiery furnace of deep sorrow, are the great certainties which were ever to the front in the apostle's teaching about God and men, about life and death, about sin and redemption, about nature and grace, and, above all, about the boundless power and love of Jesus Christ our Lord and God. (*Canon Liddon.*)

Two builders on one foundation:—In the vivid imagination of the apostle two workmen are building side by side. One builds a palace, the other a hovel. The materials which one uses are gold and silver for decoration; and for solidity costly stones—not diamonds, emeralds, &c., but valuable building material, such as marbles, granites, and alabaster. The other employs timber, dry reeds, straw. Suddenly there plays around both buildings the fire of the Lord coming to judgment. The marbles gleam the whiter, and the gold and the silver flash the more resplendently; but the straw hovel goes up in a flare! The one man gets wages for work that lasts, the other man gets no pay for what perishes. He is dragged through the smoke, saved by a hair's breath, but sees all his toil lying there in white ashes at his feet. It is a grim picture. Note—I. THE TWO BUILDERS AND THEIR WORK. 1. The wood, &c., are clearly not heresies, for the builder who uses them is on the foundation, and had they been so Paul would have found sharper words of condemnation. They are misplaced learning; speculation; preaching one's self; talking about temporary, trivial things; dealing with the externals of Christianity, and with its morals apart from that one motive of love to a dying Saviour which makes morality a reality. All that kind of teaching, however it may be admired, and thought to be "eloquent," "original," and "on a level with the growing culture of the age," and so on, is flimsy stuff to build upon the foundation of a crucified Saviour. There is no solidity in such work. It will not stand the stress of a gale of wind while it is being built, nor keep out the weather; and it will blaze at last like a thatched roof when "that day" puts a match to it. The solid teaching is the proclamation of Christ and His great salvation. On that rock-fact we calmly repose. In that great truth are wrapped up, as the plant in the seed, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. So let all teachers take the warning that well-meaning men, building on the foundation, may, if they do not take care, be building with rubbish instead of with the indestructible truths of God's Word; and see to it that they do not carry chaff in their seed-baskets, but only the pure seed of the Word of God. 2. But the principle may be extended to the whole Christian life. The life of a Christian man is a building, suggesting slow and continuous progress and a homogeneous result. It is possible for two men, both of them being Christians, to be building two very different structures in their lives. Many a true follower of Christ may pile much upon the foundation

which is unworthy of it. As you may see in the wretched huts in which wandering Arabs house amongst the ruins of some historical city, that half a man's house shall be of fluted marble and the other half shall be of crumbling clay, so, alas! many Christian men and women are building their lives. With what are you building? and what are you building? A palace, a temple, a shop, a place of sinful amusement, a prison—which? We build inconsistently, and in our own persons combine these two builders. Look, then, for yourselves into your building, and see how much, and what, of it is likely to last, and how much of it is sure to be burned up when the fire comes. II. THE TWOFOLD EFFECTS OF THE ONE FIRE. *The* day is the day when Christ shall come. And the fire is but the symbol that always attends the Divine appearance. 1. When Christ comes to judge, light comes with Him, and the light pours in upon the actions of men and reveals them for what they are. The builders have been working, as you see builders sometimes nowadays night-work, with some more or less sufficient illumination. The day dawns, and the building stands out disclosed in all its beauty or deformity. Its true proportions are manifest at last. And how many surprises there will be. Many a man who thought that he was building gold, &c., will find out that he was pleasing himself, and not preaching his Master; that he was talking about trivial, transitory things, and not about eternal truths that nourish and save men's souls. "Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied in Thy name? And He shall say unto them, I never knew you"! Many an humble and timid builder who did not know what he was doing will see that he has built gold, &c., according to that blessed word, "Lord! when saw we Thee . . . in prison and visited Thee? And He shall answer," &c. One of the most precious diamonds in Europe, that blazes now in a king's crown, lay on a stall in a piazza at Rome for months, labelled, "Rock crystal, price one franc." And many of the most noble deeds that ever were done on earth have been passed unrecognised by the crowd that beheld them, and forgotten except by Him. 2. Not only is there this revealing process suggested, but the one class of service, teaching, life, is glorified by the fire, and the other is burned up. The gold, &c., are glorified because revealed, and heightened in beauty by being brought into contact with Christ Himself, as a fair jewel is fairer for its setting, and flashes in the sunshine. And, on the other side, how much of all our lives will be crushed into nonentity, made as if it had never been at all, by the simple revelation of Christ! The selfish, God-forgetting deeds, the lust, the greed, will all vanish and go up in foul-smelling smoke. And what is left will be all holy desires, self-sacrificing service, devout aspirations, and pure Christlike character. III. THE TWOFOLD EFFECTS ON THE BUILDERS. 1. The one gets the consequences of his services. We do not need to shrink from admitting the idea of a reward. Christ perpetually speaks to us about heaven as being, in a very deep sense, a reward; not because men deserve heaven, but because the heaven which they get only by His merits and through faith in Him, is given in the measure of their capacity, which depends on their character, and is largely determined by their habitual conduct. 2. The inconsistent Christian's inconsistencies shall be burned up. Thank God for that! What better could happen to them or for him? Instead of the hovels he may build a palace. The fire of London finished the plague, and statelier streets took the place of the fetid alleys. But still that imperfect Christian "shall suffer loss"—the loss of what he might have gained. He shall lose remembrances which are true wealth. He shall lose, in that he will stand further from the Lord, and possess, because he can contain, less of His glory. His crown is far less resplendent than the others. His seat at Christ's table in the kingdom is far lower. His heaven is narrower and less radiant. These two are like two vessels, one of which comes into harbour with a rich freight and flying colours, and is welcomed with tumult of acclaim. The other strikes on the bar. "Some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship, all come safe to land." But ship and cargo, and profit of the venture, are all lost. "He shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Good qualities seen in the fiery day*:—The best qualities of the Christian—patience, gentleness, and forgiveness of injuries—are written by the Spirit of God in the heart of a Christian, out of the sight of the world, and come only to be seen in the day of fiery affliction and trial, just as words written with invisible ink come only to be read when submitted to the heat of the fire. (*T. H. Leary, D.C.L.*) *Severely tested*:—Call it by what name you please—dream, vision, or reverie—we found ourselves in a large room, the walls of which were concealed by well-packed shelves of books, from the ponderous folio to the minute thirty-two-mo, and in all the variety of

dress which a skilful handicraft could devise. While cursorily gazing on these intellectual stores, our attention was arrested by the entrance of two personages of mild and venerable aspect, who very courteously introduced themselves, and stated the object of their visit. They bore the significant names of Time and Posterity, and intimated that they had come to pay their semi-centennial visit, to weigh the merits of authors, and determine their destiny. The task seemed to us an herculean one, where the volumes were numbered by thousands; and we were curious to know by what process they were to ascertain the character of so many candidates for fame. We might, however, have spared our surprise, had we reflected that Time was a gentleman who had seen much of the world, and professed great experience, and Posterity was no less distinguished for the solidity of his judgment. They were well prepared for an expeditious performance of their work, and, in truth, we felt no small degree of horror in witnessing the results of their essay. By the way, we should have mentioned that they were provided with a capacious crucible, under which was burning a large and steady flame. Into it volume after volume was thrown, and the ordeal through which they had to pass was one of fire. "Goodly volumes, these," said Time, taking up a brace of octavos on metaphysics, "let us test their quality." Placed in the crucible, they were instantly converted into cinders. "Dust and ashes," said Posterity. This was the doom of many an ostentatious volume, whose promising title availed as little as its interior embellishments. Time rather soliloquised than addressed Posterity, while subjecting volume after volume. He would remark, "Deadborn this; its claims for perpetuity died amidst the types." "An old heresy under the slight disguise of a new dress." "Nonsense, fustian, bombast." A whole row of poets succeeded each other in their descent into the heated crucible, with no more sympathy on the part of the executioner than a contemptuous exclamation. What is called "light literature" could scarcely be kept in the crucible long enough to be converted into thin smoke. Whole tons of periodicals and reviews shared the same fate. Occasionally we observed an unscorched leaf or two remained in the crucible, which Posterity carefully gathered and deposited in his *portefeuille*. At intervals, a whole volume would escape—this, however, was very rare; for in the instances in which they preserved their original shape, large portions of these fortunate volumes were burned out. For the most part, the large books fared worse than the smaller ones, from which we were led to infer that facility in writing was quite a different thing from ability, and that a lumbering ship may be dashed on the rocks over which a small boat may safely ride. Whole piles of periodicals (our own did not entirely escape) were soon converted into ashes. "Fabrications," said Time, as he hurled volume after volume of history into the crucible. Some leaves, however, of most of them escaped, out of which Posterity remarked he would make up a small volume of true history worthy of preservation. Many books of religious controversy, and many more of worldly controversies on all subjects went in with the ominously expressed doom, "Dust and ashes," and so they came out. We perceived a most offensive effluvium arise as certain "Philosophical Disquisitions," and "Light of Reason" were submitted to the fiery test. Thus went forward the process, the further details of which might be tedious to enumerate, and in a very brief time the great library had so far disappeared that Posterity carried off what was left in a small but beautiful cabinet, made of enduring materials. (*Presbyterian.*) **If any man's work abide . . . he shall receive a reward.**—*Successful and unsuccessful builders:*—I. THE SUCCESSFUL BUILDER. 1. His work. (1) Well founded. (2) Well built. 2. Its durability. (1) It stands the test of time. (2) Of investigation. (3) Of fire. 3. His reward. (1) In the successful issue of his toil. (2) In the approbation of God. (3) In the abundant recompense. II. THE FOOLISH BUILDER. 1. His folly. (1) He had a right foundation. (2) Selected corruptible materials. 2. His loss. (1) His work consumed. (2) His labour lost. (3) His reward forfeited. 3. His narrow escape. Saved—yet so as by fire. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *God's truths are of a durable nature, notwithstanding trial:*—First, there are Divine truths, such as are revealed in God's Word, most of which human reason could not comprehend; but, as Zacchæus, of a low stature, got up into the tree to see Jesus, so reason, being too low, must ascend up into the Scripture to behold these truths. Now these are more certain and durable than those natural truths. Secondly, this good building of truth doth not only abide the fire, but desireth the fire; it is willing to come to the touchstone. Thirdly, the truths of God, built by a spiritual builder, do not only abide the fiery trial, but they grow more illustrious and glorious thereby. All the heresies and persecutions that ever

have been were like the waters to the ark, they lifted it higher to heaven. The truth about grace had not been so clear had not Pelagius maintained free-will. The Divine nature of Christ had not been so fully evidenced out of Scripture had not the Arrians opposed it. But for the doubt of Thomas Christ's resurrection was more confirmed unto us. Fourthly, not only the truths of God in their nature, but also in the proper and genuine effects upon the hearers, they also abide and will endure the trial. (*A. Burgess.*) **If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.**—*That every man will be altogether a loser in any error or false way that he hath maintained; he shall suffer loss:*—In the first place we shall show wherein they shall be losers. First, if they thought by erroneous ways to better themselves in an outward condition in this world, in this they are sure to lose. Oh, that this were well thought of by those who think to better themselves by those ways that are not of God! Secondly, if they looked for outward honour and dignity, to be applauded and esteemed, this also they shall be losers in. For by the judgment of those Churches or persons that are orthodox they shall fall from all that repute and esteem they had. Thirdly, they lose all their ministerial labour and study they used in building such stubble. And truly this loss should much affect every man whether minister or private Christian. The wise man observeth great vanity in all worldly labour, but especially in matters of religion; to labour in vain, there to lose all thy nights and thy days, and thy study, and thy pains, is beyond expression miserable. Fourthly, they will lose their inward peace and comfort of conscience. Fifthly, they lose, though not the total seed of grace, yet the degree and fervency of it; yea, in regard of outward appearance all seemeth to be lost. They have not that tenderness, that strictness they once had. Yea, lastly, men lose their parts and gifts; they have not that clearness and soundness of understanding as they had. (*Ibid.*) *That every godly man, though never so eminent, yet is with difficulty saved:*—Now the grounds of these truths are—First, from the exactness and strictness that is in the way to heaven. Secondly, the difficulty doth appear from that remainder and relic or corruption that is in every man, which is in danger to break out. Thirdly, there are many afflictions and tribulations which God brings on His people, and they do much endanger. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 16–23. **Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?**—*The two temples:*—Two points comprehend the apostle's teaching in this chapter. 1. The foundation of Christian life and doctrine (ver. 11). 2. The form of Christian life and doctrine built thereon. It is to be worthy of the foundation (vers. 10, 12, &c.). Christian teachers have a covenant engagement—to erect a temple on a previously laid foundation. According to a specification, they are to use "gold," &c. Paul's complaint is, that they appear not to have known the terms of their contract (text), and hence had departed from the true foundation, and consequently had developed a form of Christian life contrary to the form and Spirit of Christ. Note—I. THE DIVINE DWELLING. 1. The Christian heart under the figure of a "temple" points back to God's visible dwelling-place in Jerusalem. (1) The former temple was the dwelling-place of Trinity. In the holy of holies the cloud was the memorial of the enduring mercy of the Father; in the outer courts the sacrifices typified the atonement of the Son, while the incense pointed to the sweet influence of the Spirit. (2) The former temple was the treasury of sacred truth. All that symbolised the religious life of the Jews was kept in the ancient temple—Aaron's rod that budded, indicating the perpetual freshness of the gospel; the golden pot of manna, indicating the nourishing properties of the gospel; the original copy of the law of Moses, indicating that the gospel is our directory. The gospel rod of God's strength is treasured up in the Christian heart. The gospel food of God's providing for the wilderness is received into the soul. The gospel, the perfect law, is hidden in the secret places of the heart. "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage," &c. (3) The former temple was but a partial revelation of the Divine glory. Sin explains all that earlier worship; sin, too, explains all our later worship. And not till sin is destroyed will the Christian heart be a perfect temple, and full revelation of the glory of God. 2. Compare the Christian heart with the future, or heavenly temple. (1) The central figure in the heavenly temple is Christ. The Lamb is in the midst of the throne, is the chief subject of their song, "Worthy is the Lamb." He is the object of their highest worship, "They cast their crowns at His feet." "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" Jesus "in the midst" of

the throne of your affections; Jesus the object of your worship. (2) In that heavenly temple "there shall be no more curse" (Rev. xxii. 3); so in the Christian heart "there is now no condemnation" (Rom. viii. 1). (3) In the heavenly temple there is no particular spot consecrated for worship (Rev. xxi. 22), no set times, but it is all temple; so also in the human heart (John iv. 21). Every place, season, faculty consecrated to worship. II. THE DIVINE INDWELLING. From the figure of the temple the apostle passes to the life of it, that which gives it its vitality. Observe the various methods of the Spirit's manifestations in the Christian heart. 1. He is the Spirit of the new birth (John iii. 6). 2. To the worker in the Kingdom of God He is the Spirit of new strength (Eph. iii. 16, i. 17, 18). 3. To the broken-hearted He is the Spirit, the Comforter. He is the Spirit to seal the covenant of the soul with its God (2 Cor. i. 22). 4. He dwells in us—(1) Through faith. (2) By prayer. "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." (3) By obedience to the Divine will, "He makes us both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (4) By the assurance of faith, "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God." (5) By fruit-bearing, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," &c. Conclusion: 1. The oneness of the Christian Church. Paul in the last chapter complained of divisions. In this he speaks of them all as built on one foundation, and growing up into one temple, having one source of life, &c. 2. Its sacredness (ver. 17). (*D. Y. Currie.*) *Temples of God:*—I. EVERY CHRISTIAN IS A DWELLING-PLACE FOR GOD. That God dwells in us is only possible from His dwelling in Christ, through whom we touch Him. II. CHRISTIANS, AS TEMPLES, ARE TO BE MANIFESTORS OF GOD. The meaning of temple is that there the indwelling Deity shall manifest Himself. God dwelling in our hearts reveals Himself—1. To us ourselves. 2. To others around us by our conduct. III. CHRISTIANS, AS TEMPLES, SHOULD BE PLACES OF SACRIFICE. What is a temple without worship? What is worship without sacrifice? IV. CHRISTIANS, AS TEMPLES, ARE TO BE HOLY. Holiness is separation to God's service—dedication. The idols of covetousness, idolatry, intolerance, drunkenness, &c. When God enters, all Dagons fall to the ground maimed and destroyed. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *God's spiritual temple:*—The ancient temple was not more glorious and admirable to the human eye than such societies should be to the eye of faith. And learned men think that latter part of Ezekiel's prophecy, though very obscure, concerning the measuring of the temple, is nothing but the promise of the building of the Church in the New Testament in an heavenly and glorious manner. First, the materials for the temple were to be polished and fitted by art ere they could be made part of the building. We of ourselves have not faith, have not preparedness for such Church duties, till God doth enable us. Look we, therefore, how we come into the Church of God? How is it brought about that we are so? If there be nothing but nature and custom, or because we are born in such places. Thus it is here, whatsoever our societies and meetings are in reference to God it is wholly of His making. Secondly, the materials of the temple were very excellent and precious, of gold and silver, &c., not hay and stubble. The best stone, the best wood that would not putrify, and all things were covered over with gold, and the gold was to be pure gold; even the very snuffers were to be of gold. Now what did this represent, but to show what kind of people those should be who were of the Church of God? Thirdly, the temple was full of external glory. A magnificent place, admired by heathens. Now the glory of Christians is likewise great, but in a spiritual and heavenly way. The Church is all glorious within (Psa. xlv. 13). The gospel that is preached is styled a glorious gospel (1 Tim. i. 11); and the Spirit of God the Spirit of glory (1 Pet. iv. 14). It is promised that the glory of the second temple should far exceed that of the first (Hag. ii. 9). Now how was that made good? not in any outward glory, but because Christ in a spiritual manner did reform all those corrupt doctrines, and did sit as a refiner to purify the sons of Levi. This was glory to have the spiritual worship of God. Fourthly, the temple was in a peculiar manner holy in respect of other buildings. Now when we say it was holy, we do not mean an holiness inherent, as angels and men are holy, but of dedication and consecration, a relative holiness, being set apart by God's special command to such a use. Fifthly, because of this relative holiness it was a capital crime to defile this temple. There were porters set at the gate to keep out all unclean things (2 Chron. xxiii. 19). Lastly, that which was the glory of the temple and the life of it was God's gracious presence. (*A. Burgess.*) *The Divine Spirit dwelling in the Church:*—I. THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS GOD. II. THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLS IN HIS CHURCH. And now to open this let

us consider—First, what the phrase to dwell in the Church implieth. Now this phrase, to have the Spirit dwell in us, denoteth—First, the propriety that it hath to us, that we are His possession, as an house is a man's own, where He is Lord and Master. And this is worthy of consideration, that we who once were the devil's, he dwelt in us, he ruleth in the hearts of the disobedient (Eph. ii.), have now him expelled from us, and the Spirit of God taken us for His possession. So that herein is a wonderful change when the Spirit of God comes and takes possession of a people who before were captives to Satan, and led aside according to his will (2 Tim. ii. 26). Secondly, when it is said the Spirit of God dwells in a people, it supposeth that He doth fashion and prepare them for Himself. For every lodging is not fit for so noble a guest, but as great men carry their rich furniture with them to have convenient lodgings, so also doth the Spirit of God raise up a people by illumination and sanctification to be a fit habitation for Him. Thirdly, when it is said the Spirit of God dwells in us, it denoteth the familiarity and condescending communion that God vouchsafeth unto His children. Fourthly, in that the Spirit of God is said to dwell, it denoteth a permanent and constant abode in His people. For this you must know, the Spirit of God is many times working where yet He doth not dwell. There is a great difference between transient motions and constant mansions of God's Spirit. Fifthly, the Spirit dwelling in us doth denote the intimateness and inward efficacy it hath. It doth not only dwell with us, but in us, which denoteth great intimateness. III. Now let us proceed to show HOW THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLS IN HIS CHURCH. Now several ways we may consider of the Spirit's dwelling in the people of God. First, there is an essential dwelling, or a gracious dwelling, by a special manifestation of more peculiar favours; we do not speak here of an essential dwelling, for so the Spirit of God is everywhere (Psa. cxxxix. 7). Secondly, when the Spirit of God is said to dwell in His Church, it may not only be understood of the gracious effects thereof, but also of His person likewise. Lastly, the Spirit of God dwells two ways in His Church—1. In respect of wonderful and miraculous operations. 2. In respect of saving and sanctifying graces. IV. In the next place, let us consider THE SPECIAL WORKS AND EFFECTS OF GOD'S SPIRIT IN HIS CHURCH. But to the particulars. First, the Spirit of God dwells in us after a saving manner in the general, by way of sanctification of the spirit, soul, and body, even the whole man (1 Thess. 5). But more particularly, the Spirit of God dwells in a saving manner. First, by illumination, and opening of the dark mind of every man. Secondly, the Spirit of God quickens and reviveth those graces that by regeneration were infused to us. Thirdly, the Spirit of God doth enable us to kill and mortify sin (Rom. viii.). Fourthly, the Spirit of God doth bestow a filial and ingenuous spirit upon believers, whereby they are carried out upon evangelical and gospel grounds in their obedience to God. Fifthly, the Spirit of God works comfort and joy in the hearts of the godly. Hence He is called the Comforter (John xv. 26). Sixthly, that we may have this boldness and joy. The Spirit of God hath another effect, which is, to witness and seal unto our spirits that we are the children of God. Seventhly, the Spirit of God worketh wonderful support, and even glorious rejoicing, in all afflictions and tribulations. Lastly, the Spirit of God doth work the prayers of God's people. (*Ibid.*) *The believer a temple of God*:—Consider—I. THE PEOPLE OF GOD INDWELT BY GOD. "The Spirit of God dwelleth in you." 1. We must accept that as literally true. The Spirit of God is a person, the attributes of personality are ascribed to Him. The Old Testament prepared for this teaching. "I will put My Spirit within you." Then, in the New Testament, our Lord says, "I will pray the Father," &c. As God the Father pardons sin, and God the Son atoned for sin, God the Spirit dwells in us to cleanse from sin. 2. This is granted to the lowliest spiritual condition. Indeed, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." Many spiritual blessings we have to wait and even strive for, but this is given at the beginning. "I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit," and that is the first stage of Christian life. 3. This represents a permanent state. God comes not to tarry for a night, but "This is My rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it." What a vision all this gives of infinite condescension. II. THIS INDWELLING MAKES EACH OF GOD'S PEOPLE A TEMPLE. That implies—1. Divine consecration. Other buildings might be put to other use, but everything under the shadow of the shekinah was inscribed "Holiness unto the Lord." And that is the Divine emblem of the redeemed man; he is to be amongst men like a church in a city, the mirthful tide may beat against its gates, and the stream of business ever pass its doors,

but it were pollution for either to cross its threshold, it and all within are God's. The less distinction we make between the Church and the world the further we go from God's purpose concerning us. 2. Divine testimony. For the temple stands amid the din and strife of the streets a silent witness for God. Such is the Christian amongst men; he is a church in the world. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His," and do you think He can dwell in a soul and the world not know it! 3. Divine revealings. God in the soul. What spiritual visions, what views of the King, what subtle voices, what inward brightness does it not suggest! "The King's daughter is all glorious within." And if He be there, the angels, His attendants, are there; angels of holy thought and affection and desire, making sacred melody, and reverently listening for their Lord's will. III. THE FACT OF THIS INDWELLING IS OFTEN FORGOTTEN BY GOD'S PEOPLE. How often do we need the Divine appeal, "Know ye not," &c. For example—1. When we doubt the Divine care. "What! know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" Will He not care for His own; will He dwell amid our needs and not meet them? 2. When we mourn an absent God. "Know ye not," &c. He has not gone, He is in your soul, you carry within you the "well of water springing up into everlasting life." Only unmourned sin has hindered His manifestation, and that hindrance can be removed and the shining of His face appear again. 3. When we shrink from setting holy example. 4. When we make light of sin. (*C. New.*) *Humanity the temple of God*:—Let us look at man as—I. A DIVINE TEMPLE. A temple is a special—1. Residence of God. God is in all material objects, but especially in moral minds. 2. Manifestation of God. God is seen everywhere, but never so fully as in the mind of man. "We are all His offspring." 3. Meeting place with God. The temple at Jerusalem was specially such. "There will I commune with thee." Man can meet God in nature, but not so fully and consciously as in mind. II. AS A DIVINE TEMPLE THAT MIGHT BE DESTROYED. The destruction of a temple does not mean the destruction of all its parts, but the destruction of its use. Man might live for ever and yet be destroyed as the special residence, manifestation, and meeting-place of God. But this destruction is not by God. "If any *man*." Alas! men are destroying this temple—their natures. An awful work this! III. AS THE DESTROYER OF THAT WHICH WILL BE DESTROYED BY GOD HIMSELF. Destroy, if not his existence, all that makes existence worth having, or even tolerable. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The Christian Church the temple of God the Holy Spirit*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IS GOD'S TEMPLE. 1. The temple of God is a phrase used to signify something dedicated to Jehovah, whether a material or a spiritual building. (1) The temple in Jerusalem. (2) The human nature of Christ (John ii. 19–22; Col. ii. 9). (3) Heaven (Rev. vii. 15). (4) The Christian Church. This is the spiritual house of God, composed of all faithful souls. 2. In writing to the Church at Corinth, the apostle remembered the pride that city had in its temples whose glory fired all its people with delight. All of this grandeur was displayed for what? For senseless idols who could hear no prayer nor impart any blessing. The gospel came to destroy all false systems of religion, and to build up a more glorious temple of God than any heathen or Jewish temple ever was before. 3. Now, if the Christians in Corinth lost much delight and cherished associations in forsaking their temples, if the Jewish converts, too, lost all their pride in the glory departed from their temple, the apostle's argument is that God hath His own glorious temple still on earth. 4. Although this glorious work is sometimes invisible to man's eye, yet it is all comprehended by the Divine mind, and is daily extending in the world. 5. Now this good work is God's and not man's. Human skill may rear classic temples, but no power less than Divine can take a rough block of human sinfulness, purify it from its defilements, and gloriously prepare and polish it for some fitting place in the spiritual temple of the living God. II. THE HOLY SPIRIT DWELLS IN THE CHRISTIAN TEMPLE. Heathen classics believed that their divinities resided in their temples. Advancing a step nearer truth, some of the wise men of old taught that a good man himself was a temple in which the divinity dwelt. Now these were glimmerings of Divine truth. 1. It might well be argued that to dwell in any place denotes a living being and a distinct personality. Man's soul dwells in his body, and this constitutes him a real living person; the Spirit of God dwells in the Christian soul, and animates by Divine power all the living Church. 2. God clearly taught this truth to the Hebrew Church (Ezek. xxxvi. 25–28), though its fulness of blessing was only bestowed in Christian days. If any man of rank or power sat down familiarly in some poor cottage how the world would marvel! Especially if in his condescension he bestowed on it some of his own treasures as gifts of his

power. How much more, then, ought we to be astonished and delighted that God, the Eternal Spirit, visits earth's dwellings of dust. 3. But the infidel theories of the day banish God from all His own works. Yet if I behold some great building, I naturally inquire who was the architect, and who dwells or acts there? Apply this illustration—(1) To creation. Will any man, then, tell me that this glorious temple is the mere work of chance, that no Almighty Spirit regulates or minds it? (2) To a living Church. Can it be possible that this is no work of God? Has not God's Spirit dwelt in it, creating its life, diffusing its light, and commanding its heavenly power, love, peace, and joy, and making it the centre of rich blessing, humanity, charity, and civilisation to the world? (3) To the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Christian soul. III. THE OBLIGATIONS AND BLESSINGS OF THESE IMPORTANT TRUTHS. 1. As you are bought with the price of Christ's blood, and sealed as His by the Holy Spirit, you are called to glorify Him both in body and soul. As Christians are God's temple collectively as "the body of Christ," and individually as "members of Christ," how then ought they to live in holiness, peace, and love! 2. Who can tell the invaluable blessings and gifts of the Holy Spirit thus dwelling in the heart? In short, they are Divine light, guidance, help, and comfort. (*J. G. Angley, M.A.*) *The house beautiful*:—Taking the idea of the text and looking upon the "human form divine" as the "house beautiful," we would remark that—I. THE HOUSE SHOULD GIVE SIGNS OF ITS SUPERIOR OCCUPANT. We judge of the inmate by the residence. If everything around is disorderly, we attribute it to the character of the tenant. If the paths are clean and the flower-beds are trimmed, we know that there is taste and cultivation of the spirit of beauty on the part of the occupier. So we judge regarding the human house. Sin makes its marks upon the countenance. Care traces its wrinkles on the face. The house should be—1. Kept clean. Sanctification is spiritual cleanliness. Christ will cleanse. And the soul made pure will manifest that purity in the outer life. The light of God in the soul will illumine the darkness around. 2. Well furnished. The Christian needs to be ready to account for his faith. He must be furnished for every good word and work. His mind should be stored only with remembrance-pictures upon which he can look with tranquility and delight. II. WE ARE NOT FREEHOLDERS OR ABSOLUTE POSSESSORS OF THAT HOUSE—WE ONLY HAVE IT ON LEASE. It is but a temporary temple. The beams and rafters will be taken down, and the tenant will depart. III. THE TENANT IS MORE PRECIOUS THAN THE HOUSE HE LIVES IN. The soul is of infinitely more worth than the body. Fair though the house may be, more beautiful still is the tenant, radiant with the love that God bestows. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *The nature and offices of the Holy Spirit*:—I. HIS PERSONALITY. To dwell in a temple is a personal act. We understand by person a distinct, subsistent, intelligent being, as distinguished from a mere property or attribute. It is quite necessary to draw this distinction, otherwise we might imagine the Spirit of God to be nothing but a Divine power, virtue, or efficacy, resident in God, or derived from God. There are, certainly, attributed to the Holy Spirit faculties and operations which can only be attributed to a person, and not to a quality. He possesses understanding, "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Affections are ascribed to Him, when we are bidden not to grieve Him, and when the Israelites are said to have provoked Him. He teaches men; guides them into all truth; can be blasphemed, and Christians are baptized into His name equally with that of the Father and the Son, whose personality are not disputed. II. HIS DIVINITY. If it be a personal act to dwell in a temple, there must, it would seem, be Deity in the person who, by His indwelling, makes the temple the temple of God. But we have clear evidence in abundance that He must be actually God. What inherent property and perfection of the Divine nature is there which is not attributed to the Holy Spirit? What operation is there, transcending that of a finite and created thing, which the Spirit is not said to perform? III. HIS OFFICES. If the residence of the Spirit in a man convert him into the temple of God, it is evident that the Spirit must be a renewing and sanctifying agent. Man being naturally inhabited only by what is evil, therefore a work of regeneration must be effected ere he can be dwelt in by One infinitely holy. Here we may observe that the office of the Spirit, in the economy of redemption, is a fresh proof of His Divinity. Man having been "born in sin, and shapen in iniquity," it is the office of the Holy Ghost to effect such a change that the sinner may be described as born again, and made a new man in Christ Jesus. It were even nothing that Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree, if there were no supernatural agency to apply to ourselves the expiatory

virtue of Christ's sacrifice. It is the office of the Spirit to translate us from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God's dear Son; and having once made us fellow-citizens with the saints, He equips us for spiritual conflict, enables us for every spiritual duty, and furnishes us with every spiritual consolation. Indeed, it were little to be brought within the circle of the family of God, if we were not also kept in it by the power through which we were first introduced. But this power never deserts those who give themselves to its guidance. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The Spirit's dwelling*:—I. THE FACT. "Ye are the temple," &c. In three ways—1. By building. No one is by nature a temple. The Holy Ghost quarries the stones, shapes the pillars, constructs the edifice. 2. By furnishing. He supplies the good thoughts, good motives, good principles, which actuate the Christian's life. 3. By inhabiting. The Spirit does not build a house for the devil's home. It is for Himself. II. THE INFERENCES. It is implied that there should be, if we wish the Spirit to continue—1. Fitness. The house must be kept in such a condition as is suitable for His presence. 2. Supremacy. God cannot share the kingdom. 3. Unanimity. How can two dwell together, except they be agreed? (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The indwelling of the Holy Spirit*:—This indwelling is a profound mystery, but it is the characteristic glory of the Christian dispensation. Our Lord distinguishes between the work of the Holy Spirit before and after Pentecost: "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Once He came upon them, now He is in them. And where the Spirit dwells is holy ground. Of that indwelling the temple of Solomon gives us a prophetic glimpse. There shone a heavenly light, the symbol of the Holy Spirit who was to dwell in every true Christian, not as a passing visitor, but as a perpetual guest. And where He comes, He brings a new nature and capacities. He gives a new direction to the heart and will. He opens the understanding, and bestows a new power for holiness and for service. This indwelling is here set forth as an antidote. I. TO PARTY SPIRIT. 1. The love of faction which marked the politics of Corinth had crept into their religion. They nursed a temper of bitterness which hindered true work for God, injured their inner life, and grieved the Holy Spirit. Therefore St. Paul asks with surprise, "Know ye not," &c. Their lack of charity helped to destroy the Church of God. It broke up its unity, it killed its spirituality. It provoked God to judge them. It was a desecration which the Holy God could not ignore. 2. The bane of the Church still is its unhappy divisions. Still Christian scorns Christian in proportion as the differences which divide them are trivial and unimportant. If the remembrance of our great mission fail to move us, at least let the fact that the Spirit of God dwells in us do so. If Moses appealed to the striving Israelites, "Sirs, ye are brethren," may not we appeal, "Sirs, know ye not that ye are a temple of God," &c. II. TO DISLOYALTY TO GOD. 1. Some of the Christians at Corinth knew well the freedom of Christ's gospel. But there was a danger lest they should grow proud of their light and their liberty, and despise every barrier between themselves and sin. Therefore St. Paul sternly calls them to a life of separation from all evil (2 Cor. vi. 14–16). 2. The warning is not unheeded by English Christians. There are forces at work in society not unlike those at Corinth. Our charity is apt to degenerate into indifference. A feeble and uncertain grasp of truth leads too often to acquiescence in a policy or in practices which the conscience condemns. When we are tempted to take as our friend the godless, simply because they are clever or rich; when we are invited to put our hands to any work upon which we cannot ask the blessing of God, or to join any association which may make money at the cost of the character or the well-being of our fellow-men—let us remember that to touch the unclean thing is to defile that temple and to grieve the indwelling Spirit. III. TO IMPURITY. In the foul atmosphere of that heathen city the Christians were exposed to fearful temptations, and needed an adequate motive and a superhuman power, if they were to keep themselves pure. And such they had (chap. vi. 19, 20). There are symptoms in the social life of England which cannot but excite the anxiety of every one who loves his country and is loyal to God. 1. If our literature is free from the coarseness of earlier centuries, it is too often pervaded by a subtle taint which poisons almost imperceptibly the imagination of its readers; while the silent and deadly effect of the publication in our newspapers of things of which it is a shame even to speak in secret, has corrupted the purity of thousands of souls. 2. The fashion of treating marriage flippantly, and the fact that leading reviews insert articles which deliberately question its sanctity, tend to strike at the very root of morality and home life. 3. The growing luxury which has accompanied the accumulation

of wealth, brings with it its own Nemesis in the relaxing of our moral fibre. 4. And, while rejoicing in every honest attempt to remove all the disabilities under which women have suffered, I venture to think that the tendency to destroy the distinction between the sexes must help, in the long run, to rob a woman's life of those graces which have been the secret of her highest influence, and her most invulnerable shield. Now to us, exposed to these dangers, the fact of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, when once realised, becomes a great safeguard, and a mighty incentive to a pure and self-restrained life. (*F. J. Chevasse, M.A.*) *The indwelling of the Spirit*:—He, uncreated love, pours out into our souls all our power of Divine love for Him and for each other. He, uncreated wisdom, orders our thoughts secretly. He, uncreated truth, dissipates from our mind the mist which we have gathered round ourselves. He, uncreated strength, instrengthens us to bear or to overcome all evil, and to will mightily all good. He, uncreated holiness, cleanses by His presence an habitation for Himself, and hallows by His abiding the dwelling-place, which He has repaired, that He might enter in; which He has enlarged, that it might contain Him. He Himself, within us, informs our memory, that we may remember Him, enlightens our minds that we may know Him, moves our wills that we may choose Him and obey Him. He Himself, within us, quickens our diligence that we may seek Him, gives us wisdom that we may find Him, perseverance that we may attain unto Him. Nor is it our spiritual nature only which He so hallows. "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost." Yes, these poor bodies, which hunger and thirst, are heavy and weary; which shall return to corruption, which shall be subject to the dishonour of the grave—these God has chosen to be His dwelling-place; within these He is forming that glorious body which shall be after the resurrection; with these He unites Himself now, that they may be full of His glory hereafter. They shall shine above the glory of the sun, because they shall be filled with the light of His divinity. They shall know no decay; for He shall be their immortality. They shall know no weariness; for He shall be their life. They shall know no suffering; for they shall be made impassible, since He is not subject to suffering. They shall obey, unhindering, every motion of His will, for they shall be spiritual through His indwelling Spirit. How, then, should we reverence this our mysterious being. How should we reverently use the eyes; how keep them from all wrong use and all unlawful sight, which are, through the light of God, to see God! How should we keep the tongue from evil words, which, moved by the Spirit of God, is endlessly to sing the new song! How should we guard the heart from evil affections, which God has claimed as His own, and bidden us to give it wholly to Him; the soul which is capacious enough to "contain God," yet not large enough to contain the world and God! (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) **If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy . . . which temple ye are.**—*The human soul God's truest temple*:—I. THE HUMAN SOUL GOD'S TRUEST TEMPLE. This truth expresses one of the great changes introduced by Christianity. Why has Christianity abolished the one local house and consecrated man himself as the dwelling-place of God? Because—1. God is equally present everywhere. Though recognised in Judaism, this never broke forth into its wonderful glory until Christ appeared. Men feared God, and the shadow of that fear led them to fancy Him far away. The whole tendency of Christ's life was to wear down the barrier between God and man. He showed that nature was but the living work of an ever-present Father. But although equally present, God is not equally manifested everywhere. Thus God is revealed in His worship, but who sees Him? Not the careless or the carnal; but to holy men spiritual emotion has hallowed strange places, and made them temples. To Jacob, the stones became a temple. To Peter, the mountain where Christ's glory shone became the Holy Mount. Nathaniel would never pass the fig-tree without feeling it to be a place of prayer. Perhaps we all have our holy places; the chamber where we first really prayed, &c. These are our earthly temples, because there God has been most clearly manifested to us. 2. God is most clearly manifested in humanity. Christ, pre-eminently, was the glorious temple in which God dwelt, and through whom the Divine glory was revealed to the world. There was the holy of holies; there the altar which made every other altar fire grow pale and expire. II. THE MANNER OF REALISING THIS. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (ver. 16). Assuming that, how may we attain more of the full presence of God in our souls? In man there is a trinity of power, and in order to become a temple all these must be consecrated. 1. Intellect to realise God's presence. To awaken the soul to energy you must think on Him. Go,

then, and stretch every faculty of your souls to realise His glory and His presence. 2. Emotion. Thought is vain apart from this. 3. Action. Thought and feeling are both vain without this. Work from your emotion, and ultimately you may do all from it. Thus man becomes a temple of God—intellect the holy place; the heart's emotions the altar of sacrifice; the actions of life the revelation of both. III. THE RESULTS OF THE REALISATION. 1. God manifested to the world. They say our temples are being deserted; that the young and the labourer are going away. Is not this because we are not temples? It is vain to build stone temples to God unless we become His living ones. 2. Elevation of life above the sinful, trifling, earthly. His is no vain life who has, through the Spirit, become a temple of Jehovah! In the temple at Jerusalem there was a veil; at the death of Christ that veil was rent. In the temple of every human heart there hangs a veil; death will rend it, and will reveal either the glorious image of the Father, or the image of the demon-god for which it has lived. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *Defiling the temple of God*:—Why false doctrines are a defiling. First, from the pure nature of God's truth, and His worship, which falsehoods do stain and take away the glory of. Oh, then, how humble, tender, and careful ought men to be! Are the truths and ordinances of God by institution, and in their original so pure? Come not, then, with thy foul hands to handle such precious things. Secondly, they are called defilements and pollutions, because the truths and Church of God are not only pure, but dedicated and appropriated to Him, as the only object. Thirdly, errors and heresies may well be called defilements, because they are a disease, and so spread over the Church. Fourthly, they are defilements, because they pollute the conscience, mind, and heart, and whole life of a man. Hence you have that phrase, "Men of corrupt minds" (1 Tim. vi. 5; 2 Tim. iii. 8). Lastly, Corrupt doctrines are called defilements, to show how loathsome and abominable they should be to us. We have despatched the sin supposed, we come to the punishment proposed—"Him shall God destroy." Let us consider the aggravation of this destruction. First, it is an eternal destruction; a destruction that is always destroying, and yet the party is not extinguished. Secondly, it is a universal destruction in a moral sense. There is not the least mixture of any joy, of any hope. Thirdly, it is an inevitable destruction. God will destroy; who can stop God's hand? (*A. Burgess.*) *The mystical temple*:—There was, under the law—1. The outward court, where the people did stand, and the inner temple, into which none but the priests did enter. So with a Christian; there is the outward temple of his body (chap. vi. 19), and the holy of holies, his soul, where none but Christ our High Priest must come. I. THE RESEMBLANCES BETWEEN A BELIEVER'S SOUL AND A TEMPLE. 1. All the materials were fitted for the building of the temple: the timber was to be sawn, the stones to be hewn and polished. So by nature we are not qualified for a temple, we are unhewn and unpolished. So far from preparing ourselves for a temple, we indispose ourselves; but God hews us by His prophets (Hos. ii. 5), and cuts and carves us by afflictions, and so makes us meet for a spiritual temple. 2. The temple was very magnificent (1 Kings vi. 32). So the soul of a believer is an illustrious temple. God Himself brings His glory into it (Psa. xlv. 13). Christ never admired the goodly stones of the visible, but admired the glory of the spiritual temple (1 Pet. iii. 4). 3. The temple was a place set apart for God's peculiar worship; it was separated from all other places. So a believer's heart is consecrated ground, and set apart for God's service (Psa. iv. 3; cxix. 38). 4. The temple was a place of God's special presence: He did there command His blessings. So in a spiritual heart God wonderfully manifests His presence: there He gives forth the influences of His grace, the communications of His love. 5. The temple was adorned with curious pictures; so the temple of the heart hath God's image in it (Col. iii. 10); is drawn by the pencil of the Holy Ghost. 6. The temple had a fire burning on the altar; so a believer's heart is the altar on which there is a sacred fire still burning (Rom. xii. 13; Psa. cxix. 97). 7. The temple, being an hallowed place, was to be kept clean (2 Chron. xxix. 15; xxiii. 3). So must this (2 Chron. vii. 1). II. THIS DIVINE TEMPLE OF THE SOUL DIFFERS FROM OTHER TEMPLES, AND HATH A TRANSCENDENT EXCELLENCY ABOVE THEM. 1. Other material temples, though of a beautiful structure, yet have no life in them; but a believer is a living temple (1 Pet. ii. 5). Hypocrites who have only a name to live (Rev. iii. 1), are not temples, but tombs. 2. This is an heavenly temple; other temples are constituted of earthly materials. The believer's soul was breathed from heaven, and that which is in heaven is to be found in Him. In heaven there is—(1) Light (Col. i. 12),

so in a saint there is the light of knowledge (Eph. v. 8). (2) Love (1 John iv. 7), so a saint's heart is a temple of love (John xxi. 15). (3) Joy (Matt. xxv. 23), so a saint hath joy in believing (Rom. xv. 13). 3. He is an everlasting temple; other temples are of a perishable nature. God will not demolish His own temple. Christ's blood cements all the stones together, and as long as the foundation and cement hold, so long this temple shall last, and that is for ever. III. USES. 1. Of information. (1) See the difference between the godly and the wicked: the heart of the godly is a temple; the heart of the wicked is a cage of unclean birds (Rev. xviii. 2). (2) See wherein a great part of the nation's safety lies; namely, in having store of these spiritual temples. In ancient times temples were places of safety. The saints are England's sanctuaries. (3) If the saints are the temples of God, then how dangerous is it for any to abuse and injure them! 2. Of examination. All God's temples are made in some measure like Him. (1) God is a spirit. Are we spiritual? (2) God is pure. Have we holy and chaste affections? (3) God is merciful. What shall we say to them who have no mercy? 3. Of exhortation. You who are the temples of God. (1) Do not defile God's temple (ver. 17). (*a*) By intermixing with the wicked. Bad company is defiling (chap. v. 9). (*b*) By uncleanness. This sin defiles both the outward temple and the inner. (*c*) By error. Heresies are as the leprosy, which defiled the house in which it was (Lev. xiv. 39). (2) Be as temples. (*a*) Do temple work. Offer up spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet. ii. 5)—of prayer; of a broken heart (Psa. li. 17); of praise (Psa. l. 23). (*b*) Study temple purity. The temple was very holy. So Christians. Holiness beautifies God's temples, and is the cherisher of a Christian's peace. 4. Of consolation. (1) Such as are God's spiritual temples shall have much of God's company (2 Cor. vi. 16). (2) Such as are gracious temples shall one day be glorious temples. (*T. Watson.*) *The holiness of God's temple*:—Take the figure in connection with any of the kinds of habitation spoken of in Scripture —1. The home. 2. The tent. 3. The palace. 4. The temple—it exhibits a most comforting truth to us. To be God's home or dwelling, His tent or tabernacle, His royal palace, His chosen temple, of which that on Moriah was a mere shadow, how solemn the admonition as to personal holiness conveyed to us by this! In God's temple there is the blood, the fire, the smoke, the water, the lamps, the incense, the shewbread, the cherubim, the glory —all consecrated things, and all pertaining to what is heavenly! I. WHAT INTIMACY WITH GOD. Acquaintanceship with Him who has made our heart His home is the least which could be expected. He must be no stranger to us. There must not merely be reconciliation—for that may consist with some degree of distance—but intimacy, peaceful friendship, loving acquaintanceship. If God be our inmate, how intimate ought we to be with Him in all respects! Of an old Scotch minister it is said (as the finishing stroke in his character), "He was one very intimate with God." So let it be said of us. II. WHAT CALMNESS OF SPIRIT. In all false religion there is excitement, in true religion calmness. Man is never more truly and deeply calm than when filled with the Spirit of God. The tendency of much that is called religion in our day is to agitation, bustle, noise, unnatural fervour. God keeps His temple in perfect peace. III. WHAT SOLEMNITY OF SOUL. If God be inhabiting us as His temple we ought surely to be solemn men—called to a solemn life, speaking solemn words, manifesting a solemn deportment. Should the world's rude laughter echo through the aisles of the Divine temple? or its uproarious mirth ring through the holy of holies? IV. WHAT RECOLLECTEDNESS OF THOUGHT AND FEELING. With God dwelling in us, shall we allow wandering thoughts or forgetfulness of the Divine presence to prevail. Let us gather up our thoughts and keep them gathered. V. WHAT SPIRITUALITY AND UNWORLDLINESS. "God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." We need the spiritual heart, shutting out the world from a shrine which Jehovah has entered and made His own. If we are temples of the holy Ghost, and if His temples are holy, then are not such things as the following shut out?—1. Vanity. How inconsistent! 2. Pleasure. Can a lover of pleasure be a temple of the Holy Ghost? 3. Politics. What have the poor party politics of this world to do with the worship of this glorious temple? Can the smoke and dust of the world commingle with the incense of the golden altar? 4. Covetousness. Absorption even in lawful business is inconsistent with our being temples of God. Let us not grieve that Spirit whose temple we are. Let us allow Him to fill us wholly, and to cast out all that is unbefitting the holiness and glory of His habitation.

Vers. 18–20. **Let no man deceive himself. If any man . . . seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.**—*How to avoid self-deception*:—I. THE DANGER. 1. Is common. 2. Arises out of ignorance and self-conceit. 3. Leads to the most disastrous results. II. HOW TO AVOID IT. 1. Distrust yourself. 2. Distrust the wisdom of this world. 3. Be content to be thought a fool, that you may be enlightened with the wisdom that cometh from above. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Self-deceit*:—We abhor the character of one who deceives us by fair promises in our ordinary intercourse with the world; but we are not equally prepared against those specious delusions which are cherished in our own breast. It will require all the aids of a power from above to detect the specious illusions which are interwoven with the history of man. I. THE GENERAL CAUSES OF SELF-DECEIT. Had human nature retained its original innocence the love of truth would have been its unvaried feature. But—we are fallen. The faculties of the mind are blinded by prejudice. 1. Hence the treachery of the heart is one of the first causes of self-deceit. The enemy in our own bosom deludes us into a secret approbation of our vices, and flatters us with the hope of eluding any future punishment, or of avoiding a rigorous investigation of our past lives. 2. Another cause of self-deceit is an inordinate love of pleasure. When we rather seek to be amused than to be improved, we can have no leisure for the scrutiny of thought or a proper inquiry into our own character and conduct. 3. Another fruitful source of self-deceit is thinking too highly of ourselves. Flattery blinds the eye of the judgment, and prevents our discovering the errors which we constantly indulge. We cry peace to our souls when there is no peace; and we dream of security amidst the most formidable enemies. 4. We are further exposed to the danger of self-deceit by making too light of sin. He who lessens the claims of virtue must be a stranger to the purifying influence of sanctifying grace—no error will so effectually delude us into a fatal indifference to our own security. 5. A conformity to the world in our manners, maxims, and pursuits, is another prolific source of self-deceit. This is not the school wherein we shall learn to obey the strictness of our holy religion. Outward appearances are more studied than inward piety in this region of gaiety, business, and perpetual delusion. 6. Again a levity of temper that precludes thought is another common occasion of self-deceit. The mind requires a discipline no less regular than the body. 7. Again, this fatal delusion may be often ascribed to ignorance of our fallen condition by nature and practice. Men who are unacquainted with the depravity of their own hearts and the depth of iniquity within, are not aware of the imposing forms which even their vices will assume. 8. Another way in which we deceive ourselves is in calling vices by the name of virtues. Thus the miser veils his avarice under the name of prudence. 9. Many are also deceiving themselves by mistaking a theoretical acquaintance with the doctrines of the gospel for the power of vital godliness. II. THE EXTREME DANGER OF BEING LULLED IN A STATE OF CARNAL SECURITY THROUGH THE IMPOSING INFLUENCE OF SELF-DECEIT. The principal evil is that whilst we are entertaining a high opinion of our own goodness, we are taking no pains to avoid the dangers which are coming on us. We are also apt to think every man our enemy who tells us the truth. In the hurry of business, or in a vortex of pleasure, we have no inclination to pause and consider the end of our ways. No dangers can be so great as those which we take no pains to avoid. They come on us in a way utterly unexpected. The danger of carnal security is great, because we are hereby led to neglect the remedy provided in the gospel. Man has too much at stake to trifle, securely, with his chief interest. III. THE BEST MEANS TO AVOID THE DANGERS OF SELF-DECEIT, WITH THE BENEFITS ATTENDANT ON A PROPER KNOWLEDGE OF OURSELVES. 1. The first step in this important business will be to maintain a holy jealousy over our own hearts. To avoid self-deceit we must beware of self-love, and be on our guard against the natural proneness of our deceitful hearts to excuse our errors and extenuate our vices. We must judge of our own conduct not by the partial opinion of our friends, but by the frequent declarations of our enemies. We must not merely compare our conduct with others, but reflect on what it ought to be when compared with what it is. 2. The benefits attendant on a proper knowledge of ourselves will be humility, under a consciousness of our guilt, and depravity; caution, under a due impression of our weakness; a constant attendance on the means of grace, from a view of the blessings annexed to them; and an anxious solicitude to have a well-grounded interest in Christ, from a thorough persuasion of the dangers that await us. (*J. Grose, A.M.*) *On deceiving ourselves*:—That men should deceive themselves, and still more, that they should use means for that purpose, we should

so in a saint there is the light of knowledge (Eph. v. 8). (2) Love (1 John iv. 7), so a saint's heart is a temple of love (John xxi. 15). (3) Joy (Matt. xxv. 23), so a saint hath joy in believing (Rom. xv. 13). 3. He is an everlasting temple; other temples are of a perishable nature. God will not demolish His own temple. Christ's blood cements all the stones together, and as long as the foundation and cement hold, so long this temple shall last, and that is for ever. III. USES. 1. Of information. (1) See the difference between the godly and the wicked: the heart of the godly is a temple; the heart of the wicked is a cage of unclean birds (Rev. xviii. 2). (2) See wherein a great part of the nation's safety lies; namely, in having store of these spiritual temples. In ancient times temples were places of safety. The saints are England's sanctuaries. (3) If the saints are the temples of God, then how dangerous is it for any to abuse and injure them! 2. Of examination. All God's temples are made in some measure like Him. (1) God is a spirit. Are we spiritual? (2) God is pure. Have we holy and chaste affections? (3) God is merciful. What shall we say to them who have no mercy? 3. Of exhortation. You who are the temples of God. (1) Do not defile God's temple (ver. 17). (*a*) By intermixing with the wicked. Bad company is defiling (chap. v. 9). (*b*) By uncleanness. This sin defiles both the outward temple and the inner. (*c*) By error. Heresies are as the leprosy, which defiled the house in which it was (Lev. xiv. 39). (2) Be as temples. (*a*) Do temple work. Offer up spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet. ii. 5)—of prayer; of a broken heart (Psa. li. 17); of praise (Psa. l. 23). (*b*) Study temple purity. The temple was very holy. So Christians. Holiness beautifies God's temples, and is the cherisher of a Christian's peace. 4. Of consolation. (1) Such as are God's spiritual temples shall have much of God's company (2 Cor. vi. 16). (2) Such as are gracious temples shall one day be glorious temples. (*T. Watson.*) *The holiness of God's temple*:—Take the figure in connection with any of the kinds of habitation spoken of in Scripture—1. The home. 2. The tent. 3. The palace. 4. The temple—it exhibits a most comforting truth to us. To be God's home or dwelling, His tent or tabernacle, His royal palace, His chosen temple, of which that on Moriah was a mere shadow, how solemn the admonition as to personal holiness conveyed to us by this! In God's temple there is the blood, the fire, the smoke, the water, the lamps, the incense, the shewbread, the cherubim, the glory—all consecrated things, and all pertaining to what is heavenly! I. WHAT INTIMACY WITH GOD. Acquaintanceship with Him who has made our heart His home is the least which could be expected. He must be no stranger to us. There must not merely be reconciliation—for that may consist with some degree of distance—but intimacy, peaceful friendship, loving acquaintanceship. If God be our inmate, how intimate ought we to be with Him in all respects! Of an old Scotch minister it is said (as the finishing stroke in his character), "He was one very intimate with God." So let it be said of us. II. WHAT CALMNESS OF SPIRIT. In all false religion there is excitement, in true religion calmness. Man is never more truly and deeply calm than when filled with the Spirit of God. The tendency of much that is called religion in our day is to agitation, bustle, noise, unnatural fervour. God keeps His temple in perfect peace. III. WHAT SOLEMNITY OF SOUL. If God be inhabiting us as His temple we ought surely to be solemn men—called to a solemn life, speaking solemn words, manifesting a solemn deportment. Should the world's rude laughter echo through the aisles of the Divine temple? or its uproarious mirth ring through the holy of holies? IV. WHAT RECOLLECTEDNESS OF THOUGHT AND FEELING. With God dwelling in us, shall we allow wandering thoughts or forgetfulness of the Divine presence to prevail. Let us gather up our thoughts and keep them gathered. V. WHAT SPIRITUALITY AND UNWORLDLINESS. "God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." We need the spiritual heart, shutting out the world from a shrine which Jehovah has entered and made His own. If we are temples of the holy Ghost, and if His temples are holy, then are not such things as the following shut out?—1. Vanity. How inconsistent! 2. Pleasure. Can a lover of pleasure be a temple of the Holy Ghost? 3. Politics. What have the poor party politics of this world to do with the worship of this glorious temple? Can the smoke and dust of the world commingle with the incense of the golden altar? 4. Covetousness. Absorption even in lawful business is inconsistent with our being temples of God. Let us not grieve that Spirit whose temple we are. Let us allow Him to fill us wholly, and to cast out all that is unbefitting the holiness and glory of His habitation.

Vers. 18–20. **Let no man deceive himself. If any man . . . seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.**—*How to avoid self-deception:*—I. THE DANGER. 1. Is common. 2. Arises out of ignorance and self-conceit. 3. Leads to the most disastrous results. II. HOW TO AVOID IT. 1. Distrust yourself. 2. Distrust the wisdom of this world. 3. Be content to be thought a fool, that you may be enlightened with the wisdom that cometh from above. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Self-deceit:*—We abhor the character of one who deceives us by fair promises in our ordinary intercourse with the world; but we are not equally prepared against those specious delusions which are cherished in our own breast. It will require all the aids of a power from above to detect the specious illusions which are interwoven with the history of man. I. THE GENERAL CAUSES OF SELF-DECEIT. Had human nature retained its original innocence the love of truth would have been its unvaried feature. But—we are fallen. The faculties of the mind are blinded by prejudice. 1. Hence the treachery of the heart is one of the first causes of self-deceit. The enemy in our own bosom deludes us into a secret approbation of our vices, and flatters us with the hope of eluding any future punishment, or of avoiding a rigorous investigation of our past lives. 2. Another cause of self-deceit is an inordinate love of pleasure. When we rather seek to be amused than to be improved, we can have no leisure for the scrutiny of thought or a proper inquiry into our own character and conduct. 3. Another fruitful source of self-deceit is thinking too highly of ourselves. Flattery blinds the eye of the judgment, and prevents our discovering the errors which we constantly indulge. We cry peace to our souls when there is no peace; and we dream of security amidst the most formidable enemies. 4. We are further exposed to the danger of self-deceit by making too light of sin. He who lessens the claims of virtue must be a stranger to the purifying influence of sanctifying grace—no error will so effectually delude us into a fatal indifference to our own security. 5. A conformity to the world in our manners, maxims, and pursuits, is another prolific source of self-deceit. This is not the school wherein we shall learn to obey the strictness of our holy religion. Outward appearances are more studied than inward piety in this region of gaiety, business, and perpetual delusion. 6. Again a levity of temper that precludes thought is another common occasion of self-deceit. The mind requires a discipline no less regular than the body. 7. Again, this fatal delusion may be often ascribed to ignorance of our fallen condition by nature and practice. Men who are unacquainted with the depravity of their own hearts and the depth of iniquity within, are not aware of the imposing forms which even their vices will assume. 8. Another way in which we deceive ourselves is in calling vices by the name of virtues. Thus the miser veils his avarice under the name of prudence. 9. Many are also deceiving themselves by mistaking a theoretical acquaintance with the doctrines of the gospel for the power of vital godliness. II. THE EXTREME DANGER OF BEING LULLED IN A STATE OF CARNAL SECURITY THROUGH THE IMPOSING INFLUENCE OF SELF-DECEIT. The principal evil is that whilst we are entertaining a high opinion of our own goodness, we are taking no pains to avoid the dangers which are coming on us. We are also apt to think every man our enemy who tells us the truth. In the hurry of business, or in a vortex of pleasure, we have no inclination to pause and consider the end of our ways. No dangers can be so great as those which we take no pains to avoid. They come on us in a way utterly unexpected. The danger of carnal security is great, because we are hereby led to neglect the remedy provided in the gospel. Man has too much at stake to trifle, securely, with his chief interest. III. THE BEST MEANS TO AVOID THE DANGERS OF SELF-DECEIT, WITH THE BENEFITS ATTENDANT ON A PROPER KNOWLEDGE OF OURSELVES. 1. The first step in this important business will be to maintain a holy jealousy over our own hearts. To avoid self-deceit we must beware of self-love, and be on our guard against the natural proneness of our deceitful hearts to excuse our errors and extenuate our vices. We must judge of our own conduct not by the partial opinion of our friends, but by the frequent declarations of our enemies. We must not merely compare our conduct with others, but reflect on what it ought to be when compared with what it is. 2. The benefits attendant on a proper knowledge of ourselves will be humility, under a consciousness of our guilt, and depravity; caution, under a due impression of our weakness; a constant attendance on the means of grace, from a view of the blessings annexed to them; and an anxious solicitude to have a well-grounded interest in Christ, from a thorough persuasion of the dangers that await us. (*J. Grose, A.M.*) *On deceiving ourselves:*—That men should deceive themselves, and still more, that they should use means for that purpose, we should

believe to have been impossible were it not a fact of daily observation. Several causes lead to this irrational and dangerous practice. The first and most powerful is an inordinate love of ourselves. Pride also often lends its aid to our selfishness. It inspires a contempt of other men and too high an opinion of our own rights. The desire to maintain our own esteem contributes to our self-deception. We have a desire of the approbation of our fellow-creatures, and feel mortified when this approbation is withdrawn. But to appear worthless in our own eyes deprives us not only of the pleasure of conscience, but inflicts the stings of remorse. Such mortifying sentiments must be banished, and our self-esteem in some way must be regained. Hence guilty men have recourse to the artifices of self-deceit. Let us guard against the influence of principles which lead to so fatal a conclusion. And for this purpose let us proceed to consider some of those cases in which self-deceit is most frequently practised. I. The first of these to which I request your attention is that in which OUR SINS ARE MINGLED WITH SOME APPARENT GOOD. Whence, for example, is profusion called generosity, vanity and folly a high and liberal spirit? while, on the other hand, the most narrow selfishness is called prudence; avarice, frugality; the exclusive pursuit of gain, diligent and honest industry? Whence are fraud and low cunning sometimes boasted of as the achievement of superior talent; and crimes fitted only to inspire the deepest disgust are openly related in expectation of applause? Whence is it that restlessness and discontent are confounded with the desire of improvement—subtilty called depth—audacious and hasty decisions, clear and prompt judgments? Whence also do you find blind and intemperate zeal confounded with a supreme love of God; while, on the other hand, insensibility and indifference are honoured with the names of liberality and rational religion? Whence arise these and such-like dangerous perversions of judgment, but from that fatal self-deceit—that unfairness of mind and subserviency of the understanding and the conscience to our passions and indulgences which are so often to be seen in the judgments and conduct of men? II. Another case in which self-deceit is apt to be practised is that in which WE JUDGE OF THOSE DUTIES OR INDULGENCES, THE PROPER BOUNDS OF WHICH CANNOT BE PRECISELY DEFINED. No duty is more obligatory upon Christians than the relief of persons in distress; but you cannot lay down, either for yourselves or others, the time, the occasion, and the extent in which that relief is in every case to be given. Here, then, is a wide field for a dishonest mind to indulge its propensities, and to deceive itself in the formation of its judgments. Similar observations may be made on the neglect of personal devotion. Are there not many who never employ a portion of their time in serious meditation or private prayer? Deeply engaged in the toils and pursuits of business, they find many excuses for their negligence. The fit season, they say, is frequently interrupted by unexpected occurrences. At length a habit of procrastination is formed. The proper season no longer reminds us of our sacred duties. The world now occupies our thoughts and our inclinations. A similar process of self-deception often takes place in reference to pursuits and indulgences which may be innocent in themselves, but which, in special circumstances, or when frequently repeated, become dangerous and guilty. Under this class may be ranked the undue pursuit of the amusements, and what are called the pleasures, of life. They may interfere with that time which belonged to important objects: they may produce such effects on your temper and state of mind as to unfit you for those special duties to which you are dedicated: or they may be unsuitable to your circumstances and condition in life; and may associate with you ideas and feelings which are injurious to your character and usefulness. III. Men are specially liable to self-deceit in those cases WHERE THEY ARE LED TO CONSIDER AND ESTIMATE THEIR OWN GENERAL CHARACTER. It is of the highest importance that we form just notions of ourselves. This would save us from many unwise and ruinous undertakings, and from doing much injury both to ourselves and to our fellow-creatures. The knowledge of ourselves would also render us humble and mild in our intercourse with one another, modest in our judgments, diligent in the means of knowledge and improvement. But I pass from minor considerations to the higher concerns of the soul and our eternal well-being. The foundation of Christianity is laid in a just sense of our ignorance, sinfulness, and lost estate; and till this be in some degree known and felt, we cannot justly estimate the salvation of the gospel. How important, then, is it for us to guard against that self-deceit which conceals from us the knowledge of our own character, and prevents us from seeking reconciliation with God and rising to that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. Behold a man retired into his closet with the professed design of considering

his ways and inquiring into the nature of his character. How astonishing, then, is it to behold this same man using every means to defeat the object of his inquiry. By some sophistical argument he finds that his sins are not so bad nor so dangerous as they have been commonly represented; or he discovers that in the case of persons like him such sins are attended with many circumstances of palliation; they are young, and cannot be expected to have all the wisdom and virtue of age; or they are aged, and being long accustomed to such indulgences, it would be dangerous, perhaps death at their time of life, to reform: or they find that they are peculiarly exposed to temptation, from the nature of their occupations and the persons with whom they are obliged to associate; other men are not better than they, but only not so much exposed to temptation. They rise from their meditations more hardened and ignorant of themselves than before. IV. Similar causes will lead men to deceive themselves in judging of THEIR STATE OF FAVOUR WITH GOD AND THEIR PROSPECT OF FUTURE HAPPINESS. We have seen the manner in which sinful men deceive themselves into false conceptions of their general character: they have only to carry their self-complacency one step farther, and to fix on some tests of an interest in Christ which are agreeable to their own inclinations, in order to persuade themselves that they are in a state of favour with God and secure of future happiness. How many, for example, satisfy themselves with a splendid profession! Another class of self-deceivers lull themselves into a fatal security by the general decency of their lives; while no action, pursuit, or plan, has ever proceeded from Christian principles. Did not the Pharisee whom our Lord contrasts with the humble publican thus deceive himself? But not to men professing some regard for religion is this self-deceit confined. Strange as it may seem, there are men utterly void of the Christian profession who assure themselves of heaven. Their vices have laid asleep their conscience. Their sense of good and evil is lost, and they see not the gulf which lies before them. V. Let me beseech you, then, to GUARD AGAINST AN EVIL SO SUBTILE, SO DANGEROUS, AND TO WHICH WE ARE SO PERPETUALLY EXPOSED. Watch, then, over yourselves; inquire often into the state of your principles and lives; and bring them to the test of the law and the testimony. Turn not away from the consideration of your errors and sins—bear to look at them as they are. Though to probe the wound may be painful, thus only can it be cured. But even in self-examination we are in danger of deceiving ourselves. Lay therefore your hearts before God. (*S. MacGill, D.D.*) *Human wisdom in opposition to the Divine*:—I. HUMAN WISDOM. 1. Is more seeming than real. 2. Is mixed with much of error. 3. Busies itself with matters of temporary importance. 4. Excludes those that are of higher moment, or else judges them by false standards. II. TO ATTAIN TO DIVINE WISDOM. A man must—1. Acknowledge his own ignorance. 2. Become a fool in the eyes of the world. 3. Submit his reason to the teaching of Divine wisdom. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Worldly wisdom*:—The wisdom here referred to is what Paul calls elsewhere "fleshly wisdom," the "wisdom of the world," or of the age (chap. i. 20). It may be regarded as mere intellectual knowledge applied to secular and selfish ends, however vast and varied its attainments. I. IT IS SELF-DELUDING. "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world," &c. This worldly wisdom deceives a man, inasmuch as—1. It leads him to overrate the value of his attainments. He imagines that this kind of knowledge, "wisdom," is everything for a man. Hence the enthusiastic promotion of schools and colleges. But all such knowledge is of no value to man as man, and beyond his brief and uncertain earthly life. 2. It leads him to overrate his own importance. He is "vainly puffed by his earthly mind" (Col. ii. 18). Such a man imagines himself to be very great, he becomes a priggish pedant, he "struts and stares and a' that." II. IT IS SPIRITUALLY WORTHLESS. A man with this worldly wisdom must "become a fool that he may be wise." Two things are here implied. 1. That with all his wisdom he is already really a "fool," for he looks for happiness where it is not to be found. Happiness does not spring from a man's brain, but from his heart; not from his ideas, but from his affections. 2. He is a "fool" because he practically ignores the chief good, which is love for, resemblance to, and fellowship with God. Hence "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." The most illustrious scholar, sage, orator, who is considered by himself and his contemporaries to be a man of wonderful wisdom, to the eye of God is a fool. III. IT IS ULTIMATELY CONFOUNDING. "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." It must confound a man sooner or later either—1. Here in his conversion, or 2. Yonder in his retribution. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Human wisdom*

a hindrance to the things of Christ:—Now the holy and heavenly things of Christ may be reduced unto three heads. In all these you shall see a man with no more than the natural human wisdom to be the greatest adversary thereunto; yea, and the more parts, and the more wisdom he hath, the more indisposed he is to receive or believe supernatural truths. We must not understand to believe, but believe to understand. I. Let us consider WHAT AN ENEMY TO THE DOCTRINE DELIVERED THE FLESHLY, HUMAN WISDOM OF A MAN IS. First, this human wisdom puffeth a man up with pride, that he will not entertain such Divine mysteries. And this swelling or puffing up is immediately contrary to an act of faith; for faith hath an obedientiall assent, namely, because God saith it, let my understanding cavil and argue never so plausibly. So that faith is a kind of mental martyrdom, it puts to death those lofty thoughts men naturally have. Secondly, human wisdom as it doth immediately oppose faith in its obediential assent, so also humility which is the instrumental grace to receive all the mysteries of Christ. Humility is not only a grace itself, but a vessel to receive other graces (Psa. xxv. 9; Matt. xi. 25). The valleys they receive the drops of heaven, and are more fruitful than the mountains, though high but barren. So that human wisdom is as great an hindrance as humility is a furtherance. Thirdly, human conceited wisdom must needs hinder the entertainment of Christ's truth, because it sets itself on the throne to be judge, and to determine truth or falsehood according to her own principles. It makes weights and a standard of its own, and will weigh even what God and the Scripture saith by its own self. It is true a man's reason or wisdom may be considered two ways—(1) As corrupt and darkened through original sin; and in this respect only we speak of it, as such an adversary to the mysteries of religion. (2) As enlightened and sanctified by the Word and the Spirit of God. Now, in this latter respect, though it be not a judge, but is to be judged, yet it is an excellent instrument to faith. When faith had first laid its foundation, then reason is wonderful serviceable for the confirmation of Divine truths. Fourthly, human wisdom is such an opposite to heavenly truth, because of its subtilty to find out cavils and excogitate arguments against the truth. Lastly, the more wisdom and knowledge men have the more busy the devil is to make them on his side. The doctrine observed is, that human and earthly wisdom is a great enemy to the things of God. II. The next thing in order is THE MANNER OF DECLARATION AND PUBLICATION OF IT IN THE SCRIPTURE. And here we shall find worldly wisdom to be a great adversary; but I shall instance in one thing only about that, and that is, the simplicity and plainness of the style. That whereas there are two things that are exceeding apt to take with the world; the one with rational men, the other with affectionate men. The Scripture seemeth to be furnished with neither. For with rational men strong demonstrations and scientifical probations prevail exceedingly. Now, many times men of strong reason are no ways rhetorical, as the earth, where mines of gold are, is barren of grass and flowers. This the Scripture hath not, for that dictateth, not argueth, which is indeed most suitable to the Divine Scripture. Some, then, look for learned demonstrations; others are ravished with the sweet music of human rhetoric. It was the saying of an atheistical critic, that he esteemed one of Pindar's odes before all David's psalms. Thus you see, as it was with Christ Himself, many looked for an outward stately, pompous Messiah; and because He came not in that outward way He was a stumbling-block to many. First, for learned men who expect demonstration, consider, that it being the Word of the most High God, it is most decent and graceful that there should no other argument be used but authority. All scientifical demonstrations are far inferior to Divine authority. Secondly, while learned men seek for such rational demonstrations, let them take heed lest while they seek for reason they lose faith. There is greater reason to believe the Scripture than to assent to any demonstration. So that though faith be not reason, yet there is the greatest reason for faith. And for those who look for rhetorical flourishes and fanciful expressions let them consider. Some places of Scripture have strong and masculine eloquence; not indeed that light and meretricious habit of human oratory, but a grave, matron-like clothing: such is the prophecy of Isaiah and other places. If we have a jewel or precious pearl its own native lustre is better than any painting of it. So Divine matter the more plain and clear it is the more admirable it is. It is the matter, not the words that do convince and convert. Words may please the fancy, but it is matter that woundeth the heart. III. The third remaineth, and that is, EARTHLY WISDOM IS A GREAT ENEMY TO THOSE SPIRITUAL AND PRACTICAL DUTIES THAT GOD REQUIRETH OF US. Practical godliness hath a great deal of seeming foolishness in the eyes

of the world. 1. The whole doctrine of self-denial is a very foolish thing to carnal wisdom. 2. The duty of faith in relying upon Christ only, and renouncing our own righteousness, is the great gospel command, yet nothing is more foolish and absurd to human reason than this. All the philosophers thought of no other righteousness but that of works. 3. The duties of humility and meekness, especially forbearing of one another and loving our enemies, is esteemed high folly in worldly men's esteem. The heathens thought it a very justifiable thing to hate their enemies. (*A. Burgess.*) *Scripture wisdom excels speculative wisdom:*—Let us show wherein the faith of a Christian, commanded by the Scripture, doth far surpass all human knowledge and science which men by nature do glory in. First, faith doth surpass all human sciences in the dignity of the subject. The matter about which a Christian's faith is exercised doth far transcend all that about which human knowledge doth exercise itself; for the highest that they could reach unto is only to the knowledge of natural effects produced by natural causes. And if any could prove these by the former, this they called a demonstration, though some men say no man ever yet gave a demonstration. So, then, all the excellent wisdom of the world hath been only to consider the nature of sublunary things; and if they did arise to consider of a God, the Maker of these, it was in a very uncertain, doubtful way. This is all our human wisdom can help us to, but now by faith we have the supernatural mysteries of salvation revealed unto us. The Scripture tells us of a God in Christ reconciling man to Himself; of man's original misery; of Christ the Mediator. Alas! how poor and contemptible are the highest notions even of Plato, though called Divine, when you come and read Paul! Secondly, faith differs from all their human science in respect of the excellency of the end; for the end of all Scripture wisdom is to bring us to eternal life (2 Tim. iii. 15; John xx. 31). There was never any human knowledge could teach a man to be eternally happy. Plato's divinity and Aristotle's morality, though they have the words of happiness and have large discourses about it, yet wanted the thing itself. Thirdly, faith doth surpass all human knowledge in its certainty and infallibility; for the object of faith being God's testimony and His Divine authority, it is as impossible for faith to be deceived as it is for God to lie. Hence it is called the full assurance of hope (Heb. x. 22). And we believe, therefore we speak (2 Cor. iv. 13). How could the holy martyrs witness those Divine truths even to death, had they not been possessed with sure knowledge of them? Fourthly, faith doth more establish and quiet the heart of men than all human wisdom. Solomon observeth a vanity and vexation of spirit even in all human knowledge; but now faith doth satisfy the soul (Heb. xi. 1). Oh, the anxiety and perplexities that mere human knowledge hath cast men into! Lastly, the Christian faith is above all philosophical knowledge, because of the strong and mighty effects it hath to convert the heart and reform the life (Acts xv. 9). Never did human knowledge make such wonderful converts, and work so great a reformation as the Christian faith had done. In the next place, the moral or practical wisdom of the world cometh far short of Scripture wisdom; for—First, the most knowing men were ignorant of original sin, which yet is the fountain of our calamity. Secondly, all human wisdom and prudence knoweth not how to mortify and forsake sin upon true grounds, because they were ignorant of God's Spirit. Thirdly, all earthly prudence cometh short of this wisdom, because it is circumscribed within the bounds of this world and this life. It looketh out no further, whereas the Scripture giveth directions for the world to come and for eternity. (*Ibid.*) *That true Christian wisdom is nothing but folly in the world's account:*—I. FOR THE THINGS TO BE BELIEVED, there are these seeming follies—First, the very way of Christianity, that it is not a knowledge but believing. Secondly, the matter believed, that hath appeared a great folly to the wisdom of the world is, that God should be made man, that He should die—be crucified—and by this means work salvation for the poor sinner. Thirdly, the manner of propagating and spreading this faith through the whole world was very contemptible and foolish in the world's account, though mighty powerful and confounding the wise things of the world. II. THE MATTER OF A CHRISTIAN'S HOPE, THAT ALSO IS VERY FOOLISH. A man must be the world's fool that doth part with all for this hope, even the resurrection of the dead to eternal glory. III. THE DUTIES REQUIRED BY CHRIST, AND ALL THAT PRACTICAL WAY OF GODLINESS WHICH HE ENJOINETH, CARRIETH WITH IT A GREAT SHOW OF FOLLY. First, Christ requireth of all His disciples to live contrary to the wicked ways of the world. Secondly, it is a folly in the world to be so fervent, zealous, and active in matters of religion. Thirdly, that part of Christianity seemeth a foolish thing, which presseth the life of faith

and not of sense. Lastly, to acknowledge Christ and His ways, though to our outward undoing. This seemeth great folly. (*Ibid.*) *That only in the Church of God, or in Christianity is true wisdom*:—That, therefore, only true wisdom is in the Church of God appeareth several ways—First, here we have the only rule of wisdom which is the Scriptures; so that all people without this sit in darkness, and want the star to bring them to Christ or happiness. Secondly, only in the Church is true wisdom, because this cometh from God above and is by Divine infusion into us. Thirdly, in Christianity there is only true wisdom, because there is only true godliness (Prov. i. 7). Fourthly, Christianity teacheth the true wisdom, because that only instructeth about the true and proper end of all our actions, which is happiness. How did the wise men of the world stagger up and down like giddy men in this point; or, like the blind Sodomites, went groping up and down for the door and could not find it. They knew not where or what blessedness was. And, in Christianity we have not only the true end propounded, but the right means also whereby we may attain it. For prudence lieth in the choosing of fit and conducible means to such an end; as in any art no man can by his art produce artificial operations without fit tools. Fifthly, by Christianity we are only taught to avoid that which causeth repentance and grief of mind after it is done. Oh, then, what happy wisdom is it so to live and so to do, that a man afterwards shall have no cause to roar out for the guilt upon him, that in the time of sickness and hour of death thou mayest not cry out, Oh, foolish and wretched man that I am! Oh, that I had been wiser, but now I fear it is too late! Sixthly, Christianity teacheth this wisdom, not so much to regard the present as to provide for the future, to remember our latter end, to provide for eternity. Seventhly, herein doth Christianity teach us true wisdom, because thereby we are enabled to improve the seasons and opportunities of grace. It is accounted a great piece of worldly wisdom to know the fit seasons of buying and selling. Eighthly, Christian wisdom is seen in caution and circumspection, to refuse all the snares and temptations of sin, and to find out all the devil's methods and subtilties; for there are the depths of Satan and the devices of Satan, and sin hath its pleasant baits and charms. Ninthly, herein Christianity giveth wisdom, because it helps to conquer and overcome all unruly passions which, while they rage, bereave us of all wisdom. Lastly, it is excellent to instruct us to bear afflictions and how to abound. Only by that we can tell how to be rich and how to be poor. (*Ibid.*) *The folly of wisdom*:—I. EVEN TRUTH OR TRUE KNOWLEDGE BECOMES FOLLY, IF EMPLOYED TO ACCOMPLISH AN END FOR WHICH IT IS NOT ADAPTED. If a man attempts to make men holy or happy; if he undertakes to convert the world by mathematics, or metaphysics, or moral philosophy he is foolish, and his wisdom, as a means to that end, is folly. He must renounce all dependence on those means if he would accomplish that end. II. MUCH THAT PASSES FOR WISDOM AMONG MEN IS IN ITSELF, AND NOT MERELY AS A MEANS TO AN END—FOOLISHNESS. Both these ideas are evidently comprehended in the apostle's statement. He means to say that human knowledge is entirely inadequate to save men, because that end can only be accomplished by the gospel. And he means also to brand as folly the speculations of men about "the deep things of God." (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) **For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.**—*The wisdom of this world*:—By this, so called by an Hebraism for "worldly wisdom," is taken in Scripture for—1. That sort of wisdom that consists in speculation called philosophy which, as Stoicism, Epicureanism, &c., was professed for the grand rule of life and certain guide to happiness. But its utter insufficiency is expressed in Col. ii. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 20; 1 Cor. i. 21. It is a wisdom making men accurately and laboriously ignorant of what they were most concerned to know. 2. The policy which consists in a certain dexterity or art of managing business for a man's secular advantage. This is the wisdom here intended in the text; namely, that practical cunning that shows itself in political matters, and has in it really the mystery of a trade or craft. So that God is said to "take the wise in their own craftiness." Note—I. ITS RULES OR PRINCIPLES. 1. That a man must maintain a continued course of dissimulation and profess himself to be what he is not, and employ all the art and industry imaginable to make good the disguise. This dissimulation is the very groundwork of all worldly policy. In the language of the Scripture it is "damnable hypocrisy"; but of those who neither believe Scripture nor damnation it is voted wisdom. It is looked upon as weakness and unfitness for business for a man to be so open as really to think what he says, and when he makes any promise, to have the least intention of performing it. 2. That conscience and religion ought to lay no restraint upon

men when it lies opposite to their interest. The great patron of this tribe, Machiavelli, laid down this for a master rule in his political scheme, That the show of religion was helpful to the politician, but the reality of it hurtful and pernicious. 3. That a man ought to make himself, and not the public, the chief, if not the sole end of all his actions. He is to be his own centre and circumference too, and is not only not to love his neighbour as himself, but to account none for his neighbour but himself. The general interest of the nation is to be nothing to him, but only that portion of it that he either does or would possess. It is not the rain that waters the whole earth, but that which falls into his own cistern that must relieve him: not the common, but the enclosure that must make him rich. Let the public sink or swim, so long as he can hold up his head above water; let the ship be cast away, if he may but have the benefit of the wreck. 4. That in showing kindness, or doing favours, no respect at all is to be had to friendship, gratitude, or sense of honour; but that such favours are to be done only to the rich or potent, from whom a man may receive a further advantage, or to his enemies, from whom he may otherwise fear a mischief. Our politician having baffled his greater conscience must not be nonplussed with inferior obligations; and having leaped over such mountains, at length poorly lie down before a mole-hill; but he must add perfection to perfection; and being past grace, endeavour, if need be, to be past shame too; and accordingly, he looks upon friendship, gratitude, and sense of honour, as terms of art to amuse and impose upon weak, undesigning minds. II. THE FOLLY OF THESE PRINCIPLES IN RELATION TO GOD. Foolishness, being properly a man's deviation from right reason in point of practice, must needs consist in—1. His pitching upon such an end as is unsuitable to his condition. "The wisdom of this world" looks no farther than this world, and if it makes a man rich, potent, and honourable it has its ends and has done its utmost. But now that a man cannot rationally make these things his end will appear from these two considerations—(1) That they reach not the measure of his duration or being; the perpetuity of which surviving this mortal state must needs render a man infinitely miserable and forlorn, if he has no other comforts but what he must leave behind him in this. For nothing can make a man happy, but that which shall last as long as he lasts. And all these enjoyments are much too short for an immortal soul to stretch itself upon, which shall persist in being, not only when profit, pleasure, and honour, but when time itself shall be no more. (2) They fill not the measure of his desires. The foundation of all man's unhappiness here is the great disproportion between his enjoyments and his appetites. Let a man have never so much, he is still desiring something or other more. Alexander was much troubled that there were no more worlds for him to disturb; and, in this respect, every man living has a soul as great as Alexander; and put under the same circumstances would own the very same dissatisfactions. Now in spiritual natures, so much as there is of desire, so much there is also of capacity to receive. Man seems as boundless in his desires as God is in His being; and therefore nothing but God Himself can satisfy him. And then in all these worldly things that a man pursues with such eagerness, he finds not half the pleasure in the possession of them that he proposed to himself in the expectation. 2. His pitching upon means for the acquisition of these enjoyments, that are no ways fit to acquire them, and that upon a double account. (1) That they are in themselves unable and insufficient for them. Let politicians contrive as accurately, and pursue as diligently as possible; yet still the success of all depends upon the favour of an overruling hand (Deut. viii. 18; 1 Sam. ii. 30). And so upon full trial of all the courses that policy could either devise or practise, the most experienced masters of it have been often forced to sit down with that complaint of the disciples, "We have toiled all night, and have caught nothing." For do we not sometimes see that traitors can be out of favour, and knaves be beggars, and lose their estates, and be stripped of their offices, as well as honester men? (2) That they are frequently opposite to the accomplishment of such ends; nothing being more usual than for these unchristian fishers of men to be fatally caught in their own nets; for does not the text expressly say, that "God taketh the wise in their own craftiness"? Haman wanted nothing to complete his greatness but a gallows upon which to hang Mordecai; but it mattered not for whom he provided the gallows, when Providence designed the rope for him. (*R. South, D.D.*) *That all the admired wisdom of a mere worldly man is nothing but contemptible folly before God*:—The world's wise man is God's fool. I shall first begin with that active foolishness, demonstrating by several particulars, that all worldly wisdom is mere

folly. First, that is abundantly seen in all that idolatry and superstition which the wisest of men are prone unto, and wherein they do greatly applaud themselves. Secondly, worldly wisdom is mere foolishness, because such men contrive and plot and think to accomplish all their counsels by their own strength and way. Now this is a very foolish thing, for the thoughts of a man are in some respect from man, but the ordering and disposing of all things is from God (Jer. x. 23). Thirdly, all worldly wisdom is folly, because it is only attentive to get the good things of this world, and never looketh to the world to come. Give them the pleasures, the profits, the contents of this world, and they never regard the world to come. Oh, foolish men and unwise! Will thy wealth avail thee in the day of God's wrath? Fourthly, they are actively foolish, because they are conceited of this wisdom and boast of it. Fifthly, it must needs be folly, because it is directly contrary unto God and His ways, which are only wise (Rom. viii. 7). Sixthly, all human and earthly wisdom is foolishness, because it makes a man a sad loser in the latter end. To pull off that mask or painting which is put upon the wisdom of the world. Is he not a fool that leaveth a treasure of gold for coals? Is not he a fool that forsaketh a fountain to go to a broken cistern? Is not he a fool that would be in great pomp and honour for one day to be a perpetual tormented slave for ever after? Yet thus foolish and unwise are all wicked men. Pray, then, for wisdom from above. You have heard that this worldly wisdom is foolishness actively. I shall now proceed to show its foolishness passively, such which God turneth to folly; so that there are no men whom God doth more set Himself against than such proud, worldly wise men. First, therefore, God makes this wisdom foolishness in a passive sense, in that He did not vouchsafe to use it as an instrument to propagate the gospel. Secondly, herein God makes it foolishness, that as He doth not use it for the enlargement of His gospel, so He taketh very few of such men to bestow on them spiritual and soul-saving graces. Thirdly, herein also God will make it appear to be folly, in that He takes the foolish things of the world and makes them confound the wise things. Fourthly, herein doth God make the wisdom of the world foolishness, because all that wise men do is a vain work. They are not able to accomplish their ends, especially those which are to overthrow the kingdom of Christ and rooting out His Church and people. Fifthly, God makes the wisdom of the world foolishness, because what they work is not only a vain work but a deceitful work. So that the wisdom of man must needs be made great folly, when it shall be forced to bring about those things which it hates so much. Sixthly, herein the wisdom of the world is made foolishness, because it doth not only work a vain deceitful work but also a destructive one to itself; so that all the wisdom they have is only to destroy themselves. Thus, like fools, they run their swords in their own bowels. Seventhly, the wisdom of the world becometh foolishness, because God many times infatuateth and blasteth the parts and abilities of the wise men of the world. He takes away their understanding from them. That as we read of Nebuchadnezzar, God bereaved him of his wisdom and judgment so that he became like a beast. Eighthly, herein God doth also make their wisdom folly, because by their pride and haughtiness they undo themselves. God lets them prosper, and the wisdom of the world seemeth to flourish a great while, but it is that their destruction may be the greater. Use—1. How vain a thing to trust in human policy and worldly wisdom. 2. To judge that wisdom which the wise God judgeth so. (*A. Burgess.*) *The wisdom of this world* is—I. FOOLISH, because—1. Fallible. 2. Partial. 3. Shortsighted. 4. Often built on false premises. 5. The mere offspring of reason. II. VAIN. Often—1. Exploded by time. 2. Exposed by revelation. 3. Overruled and confounded by Divine providence. 4. Fully dissipated by the light of eternity. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The wisdom of the world*:—Wisdom is justly considered as the guide of conduct. If one shall mistake that for wisdom which at bottom is mere folly, such a mistake will pervert the first principles of conduct, and be perpetually misleading a man through the whole of life. I. Let us consider THE NATURE OF THAT WISDOM WHICH IS REPROBATED IN THE TEXT AS FOOLISHNESS WITH GOD. It is styled the wisdom of this world; that is, the wisdom which is most current in this world. Its first and most noted distinction is, that its pursuits are confined entirely to the temporal advantages of the world. Spiritual blessings or moral improvements the man of this spirit rejects as a sort of airy unsubstantial enjoyments; he reckons the only solid goods, the possession of riches and power, together with the pleasures which opulent rank or station can procure. In pursuit of these favourite ends he is not in the least scrupulous as to his choice of means. If he prefer those which are the fairest, it is not because they are fair, but because they seem to him most likely

to prove successful. He is sensible that it is for his interest to preserve decorums, and to stand well in the public opinion. He is, for the most part, composed in his manners and decent in his vices. Let me here remark in passing, that this character is less likely to be reformed than that of those men given to pleasure. With them vice breaks forth in occasional fits and starts; with the other, it grows up into a hardened and confirmed principle. In the midst of the gross irregularities of pleasure, circumstances often force remorse on the sinner's mind. But the cool and temperate plan of iniquity on which the man of worldly wisdom proceeds allows the voice of conscience to be longer silent. The man of the world is always a man of selfish and contracted disposition. Friends, country, duty, honour, all disappear from his view, when his own interest is in question. The more thoroughly that the spirit of the world has taken possession of him the circle of his affections becomes always the narrower. Candour, openness, and simplicity of manners are ridiculed by the man of this description, as implying mere ignorance of the world. Art and address are the qualities on which he values himself. For the most part he would choose to supplant a rival by intrigue rather than to overcome him by fair opposition. Indeed, what men call policy and knowledge of the world is commonly no other thing than dissimulation and insincerity. I have dwelt the more fully on the delineation of this character that each of us might learn whether there be any feature in it that applies to himself. Let me now ask whether such a character as I have described be in any respect an amiable one? Is the man of the world—polished, and plausible, and courtly, as in his behaviour he may be—one whom you would choose for a companion and bosom-friend? Of what real value, then, let me ask, is that boasted wisdom of the world which can neither conciliate love, nor produce trust, nor command inward respect? At the same time, I admit that the man of the world may be a man of very considerable abilities. You see in this instance that the most distinguished human abilities, when they are separated from virtue and moral worth, lose their chief eminence and lustre, and are deprived of all valuable efficacy. They dwindle into despicable talents which have no power to ensure the respect of mankind. Having now considered the nature and effect of worldly wisdom with respect to men let us inquire—II. How it stands with respect to God. It is said in the text to be foolishness with God. It is so in three respects. 1. It is contemptible in God's sight. Pleased and satisfied as the wise man of the world may be with himself, and honoured as he may fancy himself to be by the multitude, let him be mortified with reflecting that, in the eye of Him who is the Supreme Judge of all worth, his character is mean and wretched. That which God declares Himself to love and honour is truth in the inward parts; the fair, sincere, and candid mind. But it is not only from the declarations of the Scripture, but from the whole course of Providence, that we learn the contempt in which God holds the wisdom of the world. Who were they on whom were conferred the highest marks of distinction which ever honoured man, He singled out to be the companions of Christ, the workers of miracles, the publishers of everlasting happiness to mankind? Were they the wise men of the world, the refined, and the political, who were employed as the instruments of God on this great occasion? No; He chose a few plain, simple, undesigning men. To this day God in the course of His Providence bestows those external advantages which the men of the world so earnestly pursue with apparent disregard of worldly wisdom. He allows no fixed connection to subsist between an artful, political conduct, and riches, reputation, or honours; He does not always give the race to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor riches to men of understanding; but, on the contrary, scatters the advantages of fortune with a promiscuous hand; and often allows them to be attained by the vilest and lowest of men, who neither by worldly wisdom, nor any other talent whatever, had the smallest title to deserve them. 2. The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God, because it is baffled by Him. Some triumphs He has occasionally allowed it to gain in order to carry on some special purpose that His Providence had in view. It is true that the justice of heaven is not, in the present state, fully manifested, by rendering to every man according to his deeds. But I believe it will be found by attentive observers that there are two cases in which, perhaps more than in any other, the Divine government has, throughout all ages, rendered itself apparent and sensible to men. These are humbling the high imaginations of the proud, and taking the wise in their own craftiness. As He will not permit any greatness to lift itself up against His power, so neither will He permit any art to prevail against His counsels. While the crafty project many a distant plan, and wind their way most cunningly, as they think, to success, how

often does the Almighty, by means of some slight and seemingly contingent event, stop the wheel at once from farther motion, and leave them to the bitterness of humbling disappointment (Psa. ii. 4, 5). 3. The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God: because, though it should be allowed by Providence to run, without disturbance, its fullest career, and to compass successfully whatever it had projected, yet it can produce nothing in the issue worthy of the pursuit of a truly wise man. It is a wisdom which over-reaches and counteracts itself; and instead of expected happiness ends in misery. If the existence of another world be admitted, can he be accounted wise who frames his conduct solely with a view to this world, and beyond it has nothing to look for but punishment? For what is the amount of all that this wise man hath gained, or can gain, after all the toil he has undergone, and all the sacrifices he has made in order to attain success? But how is all this success enjoyed? With a mind often ill at ease; with a character dubious at the best, suspected by the world in general, seen through by the judicious and discerning. For the man of the world flatters himself in vain, if he imagines that by the plausible appearances of his behaviour he can thoroughly conceal from the world what he is, and keep them ignorant of the hollow principles upon which he has acted. He finds himself embarrassed with cares and fears. He is sensible that by many he is envied and hated; and though surrounded by low flatterers is conscious that he is destitute of real friends. Compute now, O wise man, as thou art! what thou hast acquired by all thy selfish and intricate wisdom, by all thy refined and double conduct, thy dark and designing policy? Canst thou say that thy mind is satisfied with thy past tenour of conduct? Are thy days more cheerful and gay, or are thy nights more calm and free of care than those of the plain and upright man whom thou hast so often treated with scorn? From what has been said of the nature and the effects of worldly wisdom you will now judge how justly it is termed foolishness with God. Opposite to it stands the wisdom that is from above, which is described by an apostle as good, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy (James iii. 15, 17). This, and this only, is that real wisdom which it is both our duty and our interest to cultivate. It carries every character of being far superior to the wisdom of the world. It is masculine and generous; it is magnanimous and brave; it is uniform and consistent. The wise man of the world is obliged to shape his course according to the changing occurrences of the world; he is unsteady and perplexed. But the wise man in God's sight moves in a higher sphere. His integrity directs his course without perplexity or trouble. (*H. Blair, D.D.*) **Taketh the wise in their own craftiness.**—*That God delights to take the earthly wise men of the world in their own craft*:—These spiders are hung in their own webs (see Isa. xix. 13). Now many ways doth God take the wise ones of the world. First, in dissipating their counsels that they cannot attain their ends. They attempt again and again, and are always repulsed. Secondly, God when He doth ruin them He doth it no other way but by their own wisdom, by their own craft. And this is the greatest conquest that can be, when God overcometh them by their own weapon, as it was said of Goliath's sword. None like that, because by that he cut off Goliath's head, whose sword it was. So there are no providences of God so glorious as those which make the very craft and wisdom wicked men have to bring about their confusion. Thirdly, He takes the wise men of the world so that they are entangled in their own counsels, and are brought to such snares that they cannot go forward or backward. There is no great wit without some mixture of madness. I might instance in more particulars, but the next words will have the same occasion; I come to answer an objection. How is this true, you will say, that God taketh the wise in their craft? And doth not the experience of all ages, both in profane and sacred histories, show that earthly, crafty, and wicked policy hath accomplished many destructive things, and that to God's own Church and people? All this must be granted, and yet the observation is true. First, this is many times done, and we, through our ignorance, take no notice thereof. Secondly, we limit God to time and places and persons; and so because He doth not at such a time, in such a way, as we think, therefore we are apt to think God hath forsaken the earth, and regards not what is done below. Thirdly, if God let worldly wisdom prevail and prosper awhile, it is that the overthrow and confusion of it may be greater. As Pharaoh was suffered to go into the sea, and the waters did not immediately overflow. Come we, then, to show the ground why God doth thus delight to infatuate and blast all earthly wisdom. First, it is that hereby His sovereignty and ruling power may be the more manifest. Secondly, God doth it hereby to vindicate His own glory and cause and name; for

all the worldly wisdom that ever was, hath either mediately or immediately set against God. 1. How secure the people and Church of God may be. 2. Not to fear anything but God, for He is the only wise God. (*A. Burgess.*) **The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.**—*That the chiefest and best thoughts of the wisest men are vain:*—We may consider man in a three-fold capacity. 1. Politics, as a political creature endued with civil wisdom, and so is part of a society, and thus his thoughts are vain. 2. Ethics, as he is to walk according to the rules of reason, which sound and rectified nature doth guide a man in, and thus he is vain. 3. Theology, as he is to look up to heaven, to obey God, and to aim at supernatural happiness. And in this sense especially he is a most vain, empty man; and to this the apostle relateth. Let us consider in what sense the Scripture useth the word vain. 1. That is said to be vain which is empty and void of that worth and excellency which ought to be within. Thus a fool is called often a vain person because he is empty of that solid judgment and reason which ought to be in a man. Hence foolish persons are compared to empty straws that are blown up and down with every wind, because they have no weight in them. 2. That is said to be vanity which seemeth to have great happiness and content in it, but indeed it is the clean contrary. A vain thing is that which hath a goodly appearance, but inwardly hath no profit. Thus it is with the best and choicest thoughts and projects of the wisest men; they have a goodly lustre. You would think such wise men could not but be happy; their expectations are raised, but the issue doth deceive them. 3. Vanity in the Scripture is often applied to a lie. Every man speaks vanity to his neighbour, that is a lie (Psa. xii. 2). They are full of falsehood and dissimulation; there is no truth or sincerity in men, as David complaineth (Psa. xii.). 4. Vanity is often in Scripture used for that which is unprofitable, without any benefit or success. Hence is that phrase, To labour in vain. Oh, this is a sad thing to consider, when thou art dying, I have lived in vain, laboured in vain, thought in vain, spoke in vain; I have no true good abiding by me of all that ever I did. 5. Vanity is often used for that which is unstable, uncertain, and fading. And thus the thoughts of wise men are vain, subject to changes, contradictions, and at last vanish into nothing. 6. They are vain because they work nothing but vain and absurd things. What do vain thoughts produce but vain words, vain gestures, vain attire and fashions, vain discourse in communication, vain opinions, and a vain worship. Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts (Matt. xv. 19). They are the first sparks that fly ont of this forge, and from these vain thoughts cometh all the vanity that is in men's words, gestures, apparel, yea, and their religion. Lastly, they are vain because they are wholly wicked. Use of instruction: 1. That God doth not only take notice of vain actions, but vain thoughts. 2. Are all our thoughts vain? Learn, then, Scripture wisdom, get Scripture thoughts. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 21–23. **Therefore let no man glory in man.**—*That it is a great sin to glory in men:*—This sin is not often preached upon, yet no question political and civil idolatry, making men as gods to us, hath done a great deal of hurt, as well as religious idolatry. Now these ways we glory in men. 1. When we join them with Christ as mediators, and make them co-partners, as it were, in spiritual effects as well as temporal. This is to glory in men, even blasphemously. 2. We glory in men when we make our own, or other good works meritorious, and our sufferings satisfactory unto God. This Pharisee is a greater enemy to Christ, and further off from the kingdom of heaven than many publicans. 3. We glory in men when we rejoice in their favour, and are more glad of that than we are of God's favour. 4. We glory in men when we desire to please them, and to accommodate ourselves to their humours more than to please God, and to walk according to His will. This sinful pleasing of men is not consistent with a servant of Christ's (Gal. i. 10; 1 Cor. vii. 13). 5. We, then, glory in men when we put our trust and confidence in them, resting and hoping in them, and not depending on God only. As the ground of Divine faith must be some Divine-testimony and authority, so the motive of a Divine hope must be only the promise and power of God. It is a sin that all are very prone unto, to trust in earthly power and greatness, and not to eye God above all. Lastly, we glory in men when we boast in anything that is human or earthly, anything that belongs to man. Thus to boast of beauty, apparel, riches, nobility, parts, and learning; all this is a vain and sinful boasting (1 Tim. vi. 15; Jer. ix. 23, 24). In the next place, we are not to glory in the doctors and teachers we have, which we do—1. When we are affected more with their parts, and gifts, and

earning, than with the powerful demonstration of God's Spirit in them, and by them. 2. Then we glory in men when we rest on the ministry and their labours, thinking it enough to enjoy them, but never look up to God for success and a blessing. What is Paul or Apollos but ministers by whom ye believe? at the fifth verse. Therefore the principal work is from God. 3. Then we glory in men when we have the persons of some teachers in such admiration, that whatsoever they say or maintain, without any search or dispute, we believe. The disciples of Berea are commended for their noble disposition, that they would search the Scriptures, whether the things were so or not (Acts xvii. 11). 4. Then we glory in men when we prefer one before the other, so as to make differences and schisms in the Church. He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord. Yea, saith Paul, "God forbid I should glory in anything save in the Cross of Christ" (Gal. vi. 14). (*Ibid.*)

For all things are yours.—*All things are yours*:—The one theme of the beginning of this Epistle is man's glorying, lost through sin and recovered in Christ. In chap. i. Paul brings the human race with its wisdom, righteousness, and strength into the presence of the Cross, and shows that its boasting was vain, and bids them take salvation as the free gift of God, and give to Him alone the glory. But he is careful to add that man's ground of boasting is restored to himself: "Let him glory." Whereas before he had denied everything to human nature, now he cries, "All things are yours." Retrieved in Christ, the Church has an unlimited prerogative. I. THE PREROGATIVES OF CHRIST'S PEOPLE ARE BASED UPON THEIR RELATION TO HIM. "All things are yours" because "ye are of Christ." 1. The union between Christ and His people gives the highest illustration of our text. Whatever belongs to the Redeemer belongs to the redeemed. But this requires to be carefully guarded. (1) These words apply only to the mystical company of the faithful, who are united to Christ by faith and have become one Spirit with Him. The spiritual body of Christ is distinguished both from the race and from the individuals of whom it is composed. And it is of the whole company that Paul speaks, not any separate member. It was for that mystical fellowship that our Lord prayed in words that give Paul his argument. "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those," &c. (2) Now to this body united to Himself Christ gives an unlimited interest in all His prerogatives. "All Mine are Thine and Thine are Mine," and for these He prays that "the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them," &c. (John xvii.). The answer to this is our text. As the husband and wife are one flesh and have all things common, so Christ and His Church have one Spirit, &c. 2. Our possession of all things in Christ may be referred to the mediatorial supremacy of the Head of the Church, making all things contribute to our welfare. (1) When the apostle dilates upon the lordship of Christ he brings all the powers of the universe under His sway; sometimes to magnify Christ's glory, but oftener to set forth the absoluteness of His supremacy over all things for the Church. He governs the principalities and powers of the other world for the accomplishment of His designs in this, and they become ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation. The hosts of evil with their prince are governed for our advantage. The world, with all things present, is under His sway for the well-being of His Church. This is the key to all history, and Christ's mysterious but most certain sway is bringing politics, science, civilisation, into subordination to the spread of His kingdom. (2) He is also the Head of a visible community which is governed for the salvation of its spiritual members. "Paul, Apollos, and Cephas"—the organised ministry of the visible Church is the servant of the Church invisible. The order has been inverted. The saints have been brought into bondage to the Church instead of the Church being the servant of the saints; and this error has produced a sad reaction—the visible Church has been sundered from its close connection with the Church invisible. But let both grow together. Believers are of Christ, not of the Church; but calling Him Lord they rejoice in the order and service of His Church as a rich inheritance. 3. All who are Christ's have such a place in His heart, and such an interest in His resources, that in virtue of His special favour they possess all things. (1) "All things are yours" is the charter of personal prerogative. Christ is the personal Friend of those who love Him, and gives the treasures of His grace to every individual believer. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name I will do it." (2) But here is a necessary limitation which only seems to restrict the privilege—the Redeemer reserves to Himself the decision how much of the all things shall be imparted, when the gift shall be bestowed and when desired. The spiritual position He is more willing to give than we are to ask: our other portion may be more slowly bestowed;

reserved from us though our own, for reasons the wisdom of which we cannot always understand. II. THE APOSTLE BLENDS THE HIGH STATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGES WITH THE PRACTICAL EXHORTATION TO REJOICE IN THEM. 1. The starting-point of this exhibition is the warning to glory is nothing but our inheritance in Christ. Once before he had uttered it to claim for the crucified Redeemer His sole honour; now he repeats it to claim for the Christian inheritance its rights. The Son receives us into His Father's house; and to each one He says, "All that I have is thine." Henceforth we are servants to none but Himself in God. This leaves no room for self-complacency, for all is of Christ. 2. Paul literally brings the whole compass of things into the believer's inheritance. (1) Life is ours. In its deepest meaning none live but those who are in Christ. We know, indeed, that our life in the flesh will cease; but it is our own while it lasts, to be spent in the care of our souls and in the discharge of our duties; and then we shall pass into more abundant life. (2) Things present. (*a*) The creaturely world. So long as we are of the world, the world is our master; but when we become Christ's free men, the whole economy of the creature pays us tribute. But possessing all things we must show that we are really masters of the creature, by our temperate, thankful, and spiritual use of all things. (*b*) All the events that make up the course of this world. Not that Christ gives us control of passing affairs. He keeps the direction of our lives in His own hands, and does not always admit us into the reasons of His dealings. But He sanctions our freedom of action, allows large latitude to our prayers, gives us the discretion to make all events contribute to our welfare, and causes all things to work together for our good. (3) Death and things to come. Christ has the keys of the other world, and our eternal destiny is in His ever faithful hands. (*a*) Death, the last enemy, is translated into a ministering angel. (*b*) Things to come—the disembodied waiting for the great day, the day itself, the resurrection, &c. 3. Let us hear the apostle's exhortation, not expressed, but pervading the whole passage—"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *All things are ours*:—It expresses richness—this "All things are yours"; a broad and confident hold on life: a large liberty of mind. To have "all things ours"; to have, as it were, the freedom of the universe; to feel nowhere hemmed in, excluded, limited, whether in the sphere of truth or of sympathy, is a magnificent prospect, a splendid promise. To a great extent, we are compelled to acknowledge, our primary needs are needs of limitation and restraint, and Christianity presents itself as limiting and restraining. We come out to make our way in the world with good intentions, and around us there are ringing in our ears numberless voices—theories of life—denunciations—schemes—hopes—fears—doctrines—denials—doubts, and we feel anything but the consciousness that "all things are ours." We feel no sense of mastery, only of bewilderment. To be free—to give our sympathies on all sides—to trust all voices alike, is to leave our moorings, to be free to wander on a shoreless sea. Or again, careless indiscriminate sympathy, fellowship with human life in all its forms, may present itself to us as an ideal of conduct, "Homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto." But there is that at once must give us pause. For humanity as it is is a strangely mixed thing. To say that my pulses beat in sympathy with all that is human is to state a fact of my being, but it is a fact suggestive as much of horror as of self-congratulation. For it means that there is no disordered passion, however vile, of which I cannot trace at least in some horrible moment the capacity in my own blood; no craft, no guile to which I can claim to be by nature utterly a stranger. Thus out of the surging sea of conflicting theories—out of the seething of this common manhood which I cannot trust—out of this indiscriminate life which might indeed master me, but which certainly I do not master—in which certainly "all things are not mine," I look up for some Hand from above to lift, some Voice to guide, some standard and criterion of life. And lo! there is One who knows life's secret, One who loves my humanity, who believes in its capacities as none else ever did, and yet distrusts its impulses. One who in our flesh, "in the likeness of flesh, of sin," yet restores life; sums it into Himself, and claims to purge it and to reconstruct it. I come to Him—I will be taught by Him. I would have the key to life—I would feel myself under His instruction. He turns upon me, He speaks to me. But it is not first of freedom. A secure life—a strong life, that is the first thing. It must be strong before it can be free—strong at the centre ere it can be free at the circumference, and to make it strong there must be concentration, and that means for the moment mutilation—the cutting off of occasions of sin, of whatever hinders the progress of the true self.

If there is a theory which puzzles me, which I cannot refute, which perhaps has some attraction for me, yet seems to militate against my spiritual growth, which is to go—the spiritual growth or the intellectual?" "Thy intellectual interest," the answer of Christ seems to come, "is not thy primary self. Behind thine intellect is thy will—thy spirit. The centre of thy being where conscience speaks, where will acts, where prayer rises and God is known—that is thyself. It conditions all else. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness—at all costs, limit thyself as you mayest to do so." Thus the first claim of Christ is a claim upon us for concentration of faculties upon the pursuit of holiness. All things are yours; but not till ye are Christ's, then, as Christ is God's. But so, if in blind surrender the sacrifice has been made and remade and made for ever,—is the reward sure. What is this vaunt of the Christian life? In what sense does the "slave of Jesus Christ" find that "all things are his"? 1. He finds it first in the moral sphere. Self has been cut at the roots, and it is selfishness which is the source of narrowness, the impoverishment of life. Party spirit (that is St. Paul's point) narrows your privileges. To make one great teacher of the Church your patron in such sense as that you exult exclusively in what he taught, exalt his special adherents and depreciate the work of others, is to narrow your Christian heritage. Yours is not what one teacher only was given to teach, but what all were given. All are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas. Argument, it has been said, is often most effective when it is most one-sided. The Christian Church in like manner may gain a certain sort of effectiveness by ignoring half her mission, and dealing with half human nature, but "all things are ours." The heritage is not meant to be impoverished and narrowed into ever closer channels as it comes down the ages. Meant for Catholic humanity, it remains in its Catholicity. We believe in one holy Catholic Church, one in its Divine authority, one in the truth it teaches in common, one in the grace which flows in its channels and makes its inner life the same, one in its common organisation, one in its sacred books, and to no part of that one whole do I limit my faith. By no corporate self-assertion would I have a part of that society strive to be the whole. "All things are ours." 2. But it is not only within the area of the Christian Church that the Spirit of Christ, by cutting the roots of self-assertion, realises in us the richness of our heritage. "Not only Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas," but the world, the κοσμος, is ours. The Christian realises his freedom in all truth, his kinship with all nature. It is not only that the good man is at peace with nature, that he is in league with the slaves of the field and the beasts of the land are at peace with him; there is a deep ground for such kinship. He has learned to recognise in Christ (in the latter days Incarnate) the eternal Word of God, the expression and counterpart of his being. His mediation in grace is based upon an unceasing mediation in nature. "Through Him all things were made." "Without Him was not anything made." "Whatever has been made, in Him was life." And as the Christian must lay his claim to be utterly at home in the modern scientific conception of nature, so must he also be in the world of universal humanity. The great Greek theologians of the epoch of the great general councils never let their students forget the largeness of the Christian claim. God's special dealings with the Jews (St. Athanasius reminds us) are given only to prevent us forgetting His universal providence in all history and nature. For He who came into our territory (he tells us) in the Incarnation, came not as a stranger nor as having been far off before. For no part of creation had ever been left void of Him. He had filled all things through all. He was through all the ages "coming into the world." He was the light which lighteneth every man—the same Jesus Christ. "Dream not," says St. Justin (meeting a difficulty by anticipation), in his apology to the heathen, "that persons who lived more than a century and a half ago, before Christ was born in the flesh, escape His judgment. For we have been taught" (it is not a private opinion of his own) "and have explained before that He is the *Logos*, in which the whole race of man shared. And those who lived with reason up to their lights, are Christians even though they are reckoned Atheists among men, as among the Greeks were Socrates and Heracleitus, and among the Barbarians Abraham and Elijah, and many others, and those who lived of old without reason, were ever the enemies of Christ and the murderers of those who lived with reason. But they who lived or live with reason (*i.e.*, up to their lights) are Christians and can live without fear." It ought to have been the instinct of Christianity always to recognise this. Christianity supersedes all other religions not by excluding but by including. In part indeed they represent merely man's bewilderment and ugly perversions of the truth. But in part they

also represent that natural revelation of God which is involved in the light shining in darkness, so that the darkness could not suppress it. Everywhere there was something of a witness to God. And Christian faith stands to all other teachings, as that which supersedes them, by containing and elevating the truth they taught, and illuminating and satisfying the human need that they expressed. They become foes only when they become rivals, as even the good may ever be the enemy of the best, as the twilight is darkness by comparison with the sunlight. "There are many noble things," says Origen, "in the Oracles by those not of Christ's part, but with us only are their Oracles complete and pure." 3. All things are yours—"Life and death," the world of human nature. It is the privilege of Christian faith to give us the freest access to human hearts. For the wants that Christ came to evoke and to satisfy belong to man, as man, to men equally in every age and in every class. The capacity for prayer, the sense of sin, the need of pardon, the reality and force of temptation, the vicissitudes of spiritual feeling, the moral discouragements and encouragements of life, the moral perplexities from conflicting duties—these things belong to people of utterly different positions in life and with scarcely any reference to degrees of education. 4. "All things are ours, whether things present or things to come." The great poet of human nature in our time constantly gives expression to the conviction that the problems of human character demand an immortality for their solution. Human characters he feels, in proportion to their worth, need an environment to develop them larger than this world; need a vaster field to work out their issues. "On the earth the broken arcs: in the heaven the perfect round." "God's task to make the heavenly period—perfect the earthen." Now this conviction of immortality in which the Christian lives gives him a leverage for action, and makes him the minister of hope. He can believe in the small beginnings who believes in immortal growth. He can believe in the perfect victory for all who do not finally and obstinately cling by choice to evil. He again has a rational doctrine to hold out to man of human perfection—a doctrine rational because it takes account of experience. Make this world the only sphere of progress, obliterate from men's eyes what we heard of last week as "the world as little like Whitechapel as possible," in which, "after death men shall wake up," and you certainly have no rational doctrine of hope to present to mankind. Where is the experience that justifies us in expecting that the progress of knowledge and civilisation really means for "the sacrificed classes" the progress of happiness. Does not experience rather give us a doctrine that nations have their periods of climax, and then their periods of decay? and is there any real ground for believing the later period for a particular race, happier than the earlier? Or have great social convulsions (though they have taught great lessons to humanity at large) been (except under certain conditions not now existing in England) productive of happiness to the nations who were the subjects of them? Does civilisation or knowledge any way tend to minimise the selfishness which is the root of all social evils? Behind the veil, under the feet of the great Head of a redeeming humanity, the Christian knows that the race of man who will consent to have God when He is offered them in His love, is being gathered into an ever developing perfection. (*C. Gore, M.A.*)

Christ's servants lords of all:—I. HOW CHRIST'S SERVANTS ARE MEN'S LORDS. "Paul, Apollos, Cephas" were all lights kindled at the central Light, and therefore shining. Each was but a part of the mighty whole, a little segment of the circle—

> "They are but broken lights of Thee.
> And Thou, O Lord! art more than they."

And in the measure, therefore, in which men adhere to Christ, and have taken Him for theirs; in that measure are they delivered from all undue dependence on, still more, all slavish submission, to any single individual teacher or aspect of truth. If Christ be our Master, if we take our creed from Him, if we accept His words and His revelation of the Father as our faith and our objective religion, then all the slavery to favourite names, all the taking of truth second-hand from lips that we honour, all the partisanship for one against another which has been the shame and the ruin of the Christian Church, and is working untold mischiefs in it to-day, are ended at once. "One is your Master, even Christ." "Call no man Rabbi! upon earth"; but bow before Him, the incarnate and the personal Truth. And in like manner they who are Christ's are delivered from all temptations to make men's maxims and practices and approbation the law of their conduct. "They say. What say they? Let them say." The envoy of some foreign power cares very

little what the inhabitants of the land to which he is ambassador may think of him and his doings; it is his sovereign's good opinion that he seeks to secure. The soldier's reward is his commander's praise, the slave's joy is the master's smile, and for us it ought to be the law of our lives, and in the measure in which we belong to Christ really it will be the law of our lives, that "we labour that whether present or absent we may be pleasing to Him." II. CHRIST'S SERVANTS ARE THE LORDS OF THE WORLD. That phrase is used here, no doubt, as meaning the external material universe. He owns the world who turns it to the highest use of growing his soul by it. If I look out upon a fair landscape, and the man that draws the rents of it is standing by my side, and I suck more sweetness and deeper impulses and larger and loftier thoughts out of it than he does, it belongs to me far more than it does to him. The world is his who from it has learned to despise it, to know himself and to know God. He owns the world who uses it as the arena, or wrestling ground, on which, by labour, he may gain strength, and in which he may do service. Antagonism helps to develop muscle, and the best use of the outward frame of things is that we shall take it as the field upon which we can serve God. III. CHRISTIAN MEN WHO BELONG TO JESUS CHRIST ARE THE LORDS AND MASTERS OF "LIFE AND DEATH." 1. The true ownership of life depends upon self-control, and self-control depends upon letting Jesus Christ govern us wholly. So the measure in which it is true of me that "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" is the measure in which our lower life of sense really belongs to us, and ministers to our highest good. 2. Animals expire; a Christian man may yield his soul to his Saviour, who is the Lord both of the dead and of the living. If thus we feel our dependence upon Him, and yield up our wills to Him, and can say, "Living or dying we are the Lord's," then we may be quite sure that Death, too, will be our servant, and that our wills will be concerned even in passing out of life. Still more, if you and I belong to Jesus Christ, then Death is our fellow-servant who comes to call us out of this ill-lighted workshop into the presence of the King. IV. CHRIST'S SERVANTS ARE THE LORDS OF TIME AND ETERNITY, "things present or things to come." 1. The whole mass of "things present," including all the events and circumstances of our lives, over these we may exercise supreme control. If we are bowing in humble submission to Jesus Christ, they will all subserve our highest good. The howling tempests of winter and its white snows, the sharp winds of spring and its bursting sunshine; the calm, steady heat of June and the mellowing days of August, all serve to ripen the grain. And so all "things present," the light and the dark, the hopes fulfilled and the hopes disappointed, the gains and the losses, the prayers answered and the prayers unanswered, they will all be recognised if we have the wisdom that comes from submission to Jesus Christ's will as being ours, and ministering to our highest blessing. We shall be their lords, too, inasmuch as we shall be able to control them. We need not be like the mosses in the stream, that lie whichever way the current sets, nor like some poor little sailing boat that is at the mercy of the winds and the waves, but may carry an inward impulse like some great ocean-going steamer, the throb of whose power shall drive us straight forward on our course, what ever beats against us. That we may have this inward power and mastery over things present and not to be shaped and moulded and made by them, let us yield ourselves to Christ, and He will help us to rule them. 2. And then, all "things to come"; the dim, vague future shall be for each of us like some sunlit ocean stretching shoreless to the horizon; every little ripple flashing with its own bright sunshine, and all bearing us onwards to the great throne that stands on the sea of glass mingled with fire. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

That all things are for the spiritual good and advantage of the godly man:—I. IN HOW MANY RESPECTS ALL THINGS MAY BE SAID TO BE THE GODLY MAN'S, BOTH IN THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD. And first, thus, in that there is nothing which would be for their good that God denieth them. Whatsoever is in all the world, if it be good for the godly man, he shall have it (Psa. lxxxiv. 11). There is no man that feareth God, though he may say, I want riches, I want health, I am without this or that, that can say he is without Christ, and justification, and the covenant of grace. 2. There is a limited good, that which in itself is good, but doth not make good those that have it, yea, it may be turned to evil. As wine is good, but give it to the feverish man you hurt him. And thus it is with all the temporal good things of the world; they do not make the possessors good, yea, they may be turned to sin, and increase thy corruption. And then it is no wonder if God, out of His love to thee, withhold these things from thee. If they were as necessary and as good as Christ is, and heaven is, thou wert sure to have them

(Rom. viii. 32). Now this very particular should rebuke all the winds and waves of fears and discontent within thee. Art thou repining thou hast not this, thou hast not that? Oh, look! Hast thou godliness? Hast thou the fear of God in thy heart, then thou hast all things, because there is nothing that is good for thee that God keeps from thee? Secondly, a godly man may be said to have all things, because he hath a right and a claim to the covenant of grace, wherein is a deed of gift of all things both spiritual and temporal. Therefore godliness is said to have the promise of this life and the life to come (1 Tim. iv. 8). All heavenly and earthly things are by promise made to the godly, only heavenly things absolutely, earthly things conditionally and with subordination. So, then, it is with thee, as some man, who hath all his estate lying in bonds and covenants, though for the present he cannot command such a sum of money, yet he is rich in bonds. Thirdly, all things are the godly man's because he hath God for his God, who hath all things. He that hath the sun hath the light of all the stars; he that hath the ocean hath all the streams. Hence our happiness is said to be in this if we have the Lord for our God. David, in all his exigencies, supported himself with this, that God was his portion and his inheritance. Though a child hath not money and raiment at his command, yet because he hath a rich father, who can procure all these things, therefore he may be well said to have them all. Fourthly, a godly man may be said to have all things because godliness worketh such an holy contentation and satisfaction of spirit, that in what estate he is, he is as well pleased as if he had all things, as if he had the whole world (1 Tim. vi. 6). Thus all things are theirs, because through contentation they have all things. Fifthly, all things are the godly man's because they were made finaliter for him. They are all for his spiritual use. Every gift is given to profit withal (chap. xii. 7). II. Let us now consider WHY GOD SHOULD MAKE ALL HEAVENLY AND EARTHLY THINGS FOR THE GODLY. First, we need not wonder at it, if we consider that Christ Himself took our nature upon Him, and did undergo that shameful death, and those terrible conflicts with God's wrath for His Church, He gave Himself for His Church. So that Christ being theirs, no wonder if all things else be theirs. If ever God would have denied anything, would have withheld anything, it would have been His only Son, in whom He was so well pleased. Secondly, because all things in the world are ordered by His providence only; but the whole work of God about His children is the effect of His predestination. III. Having asserted a comfortable doctrine out of these words for the godly, we proceed to make SOME OBJECTIONS OR DOUBTS ABOUT IT. First, the doubt may be, How are all things the godly man's for his use and spiritual edification, when many times we see the godly man gets no good by these? To answer this, first, we must distinguish between God's intention in giving these, and the godly man's actual improvement of them to that end. When the apostle saith, "All things are yours," his meaning is, on God's part. His love is so great that for the godly only all things in heaven and earth were created. If so be, therefore, at any time these things turn to thy hurt, blame thyself. The physician will tell the patient sometimes, all these potions and all these cordials, they are yours; you are to take them; you may expect much good and ease by them. But if the patient be wilful, and disorder himself, it is his fault, not the physician's, that they do hurt. Therefore, secondly, the godly man, through his weakness and sinfulness, not walking up to God's order, may make that a hindrance which God intended a furtherance. Thirdly, though the godly may for a while make these things against their end, and not for it, yet this will not be always. Fourthly, when we say all things are the godly man's, you must take them in their collective co-operation, as Rom. viii., "All things work together." The next doubt is, If all things be the godly's, why, then, are they so uncomfortable, so dejected, complaining of wants, as if nothing were theirs? Answer: It is true it should be so, but we are weak in faith, we do not live upon Scripture principles and privileges. It is by faith only. A quiet resting and reposing of the soul upon God's promise puts us into the possession of all these things. Secondly, as they want faith, so a heavenly prudence and skill how to improve them spiritually. Though all things be for their good, yet they must have wisdom to know how to use all things. What is a fountain sealed up, or a book that cannot be read, though it hath never such admirable matter? Thus are all things, though never so useful, if thou hast not Christian wisdom. There is no condition, affliction, or event, but thou mayest say, if I had heavenly wisdom I might make excellent use of it. The last doubt is, How are all things the godly man's, seeing for the most part they are most wanting,

they are in the greatest necessities? Answer—1. This place doth not so much speak of the possession of all things as the spiritual serviceableness of them. Those things which they have no possession of may yet serve for their soul's good. 2. If the godly have not all things they would, that want is good for them. The want of any outward mercies may sometimes be better than the having of them. 3. Thou hast what is best for thee, and that according to the wise God's ordering. Let this silence thee always. (*A. Burgess.*) *All things are yours*:—You remember the fable of the beautiful fairy who always appeared to turn evil into good, and you have sometimes wished it true. Paul believed that Jesus had power to make everything that happened turn out for the best welfare of His people. The apostle seems to say, "If you serve God, everything in the world shall minister to you as much as if it were really your own." God did not make you for the earth; He made the earth for you. As a father values his children more than the house he has built for them, so the Lord values you more than the world in which you live. Do not think you are of secondary importance, created only as an offshoot of the earth, to grind away at your labour and care and pain for a number of years, and then die. No; the apostle believed that God made everything for us, and that as workmen are employed to construct a beautiful palace, so God employs the earth and life and death, and all things as workers and materials to build us. What more comforting doctrine can you imagine? Every tribulation, and all our worries, crosses, and losses are as workmen governed by the Lord for the good of His people. (*W. Birch.*) *Owned, but not explored*:—"A dear uncle of mine, an Indian chaplain, made the acquaintance, at Singapore, in 1852, of a Christian widow lady, who told him her story. In 1848 her husband's death had left her, at Manilla, in much reduced circumstances. She owned a little land in Australia, and she now asked an Australian friend to sell it. He did his best; but one barren little field he could not sell, and the widow seemed the poorer for such a possession. Then, in 1851, gold was discovered in Australia; a mine was found in that rough field; and the widow was secured for life from poverty. What was, and had been, her position? In respect of provision, she had owned every nugget, "all the fulness" of the field, all along. In respect of fruition, she had it all to discover; it was all new wealth. So with you, so with me, in Jesus Christ. We have the fulness of the Spirit—in Him. Have we come to have it—in us? If not, let us be animated by the fact that the gold is in the field, is on the property." (*H. C. G. Moule.*) *All things are yours when you are Christ's*:—A great gulf is fixed between God and man by sin. The Bible reveals a chain depending from the throne of God stretching across the void and holding up the dislocated world. I. CHRIST IS GOD'S: that is the highest link. The Creator rejoices in all His works, but He has a special and peculiar interest in man. 1. When the work of creation, as to its bulk, was nearly done, the Creator was not yet satisfied. He found no point of sympathetic contact between Himself, a spirit, and the material world which He had made. Then was held that council in which humanity was planned. "Let us make man in our own image." Allied to God by an intelligent mind and an immortal spirit, yet wedded to matter by his body, man was added to the upper edge of creation, a link of communion between the Maker and His work. 2. The mystery of the fall came on and the connecting link was broken. But Satan was not permitted to triumph. When the creature called into being as a son has become an alien, where shall God now find a man, holy as Himself, to be His companion and reciprocate His love? 3. Here is the mystery revealed: Christ is God's. "Behold the man"! He dwells in the bosom of the Father, and yet is bound in brotherhood to the human family. This is the plan of redemption. The Father cometh to no man; no man cometh to the Father but by Him. The Father's delight in the Son incarnate (Psa. xlii.; Matt. iii. 17) is the uppermost link of the chain whereon all our hope for eternity hangs. How strong and sure it is! Satan tried in the wilderness to separate between this Man and God, as in the garden he had separated between the first man and God. The Tempted triumphed and the tempter fled. II. YE ARE CHRIST'S: the next link. It is not that He is your portion, but that ye are His. In actual experience, however, the union is mutual. The vine holds the branch, and the branch holds the vine. "My beloved is mine"—there lies my present happiness; but "I am His"—there lies my everlasting safety. A very slight temptation may break asunder your love to Christ; but all the powers of darkness cannot overcome His love to you. Who shall separate? A British subject may be safe although surrounded by enemies in a distant land, and his confidence

in his queen may rebuke the feeble faith of a Christian. Note—1. How He obtains His property. (1) By the sovereign gift of God. "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me" (John xvii.). (2) By the price of His own blood. Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price. (3) By the renewing of the Holy Spirit. God the Father gives you to Christ, and you give yourselves. This latter is the effect of the Spirit working repentance and faith in a human heart. 2. How He will use His property. (1) As objects to exercise His kindness on. The good delight in doing good. Christ in giving grace to His people is getting delight for Himself. (2) As servants to do His work. He desires your service and deserves it. To work willingly is a mark of a true disciple. (3) As living epistles in which the world may read the riches of His grace. (4) For company at His coming, and for portion evermore. III. ALL THINGS ARE YOURS: the lowest link. All the fulness of the Godhead bodily has been treasured up in Christ expressly that it may be within the reach of His people. 1. The ministry. The full-bodied doctrinal teaching of Paul, the melting and arousing eloquence of Apollos, and the abrupt, fiery energy of Peter—all are gladly recognised as a wisely mingled provision from the hand of that Father who paints the rose and the violet of different hues but equal loveliness. But, besides the bounty of the Giver, the liberty of the receivers also is signalised in this text. Paul and Apollos and Cephas are yours—not ye theirs. In Rome the ministers have the people; here the people have the ministers. The ministry is an article in the inventory of a Christian's goods. They are the Lord's gifts to the heirs, not lords over the heritage. 2. "The world." The world, under direction of its god, wars against the soul. But our Father in heaven holds that enemy and compels it, in His own time and way, to serve His sons. 3. "Life." The natural life is indeed corrupt, but over its corrupt root the new nature is engrafted, and so this lower earthly life becomes the root of a spiritual life in heaven. 4. "Death." Through Christ it is only the dark, narrow door in the partition wall between time and eternity, through which the children are led from the place of exile into the mansions of the Father's house. 5. "Things present or things to come." All things are yours in virtue of your union to Christ, whether they lie within the horizon of time or beyond it in the unseen eternity. We have reached now those things that no ear hath heard, and no tongue can tell. I once heard a father tell that when he removed his family to a new and ampler residence his youngest son, yet a lisping infant, ran round every room and scanned every article with ecstacy, calling out in childish wonder at every new sight, "Is this ours, father? and is this ours?" The child did not say "yours"; and the father was not offended with the freedom. The infant's confidence in appropriating as his own all that his father had was an important element in his satisfaction. Such, I suppose, will be the surprise and joy and appropriating confidence with which the child of our Father's family will count all his own when he enters the infinite of things to come. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *All things ours:*—"All things mine? Oh, how delightful that would be if only it were true!" But it is true. "All things mine that I may make them Christ's? But that is hardly so delightful as having all things for my own." It is more delightful. Nay, to give all to Christ is the only way to make all things yours. So we might talk on this wonderful passage, finding much that seems incredible, but nothing so incredible as the assurance that all things are ours. Even this incredible assertion, however, may grow credible to you if only you approach it from the apostle's point of view. I. ALL THINGS ARE YOURS. 1. All ministers are yours. "Oh, yes," you say, "that is true enough; but what are we the richer for that?" But I am by no means sure that all ministers are yours. I am quite sure that, if they are, you are much the richer for it. 1. St. Paul's general principle is that the teachers are for the Church, not the Church for the teachers. But the intention of God is one thing and the intention of the Church, as shown by its conduct, is often another. (1) God intended eloquent Apollos, learned Paul, and sagacious and enthusiastic Peter for the Church at Corinth; but some said, "We are of Apollos." They were charmed with the eloquence of the mighty expositor of Scripture, but they did not care for the learned Paul or the plain Peter. Others attached themselves to Paul, but thought Apollos too rhetorical and Peter too rustic, &c. Thus this ancient Church flung away two-thirds of its treasure. (2) All the ministers of the Church universal are yours in the design and intention of God; but do you permit them all to be yours? What, all the ministers of the Apostolic, Patristic, Mediæval, Roman, Episcopal, Presbyterian, &c., branches of the one Catholic Church? All are yours, and yet how few of them are yours! 2. But here you may object: "We have neither the means nor the opportunity of learning from many of Christ's ministers."

But do you learn as much, and from as many of them, as you might? Do you study the apostolic preachers with the devotion they deserve? When wise and holy men of other communions than your own publish a volume of choice discourses, do you take as much pains to get it as you take for the last new novel, and read it with even as much interest as you bestow on your daily newspaper? There are those in our Churches who so attach themselves to one minister that, like the Corinthians, they care to hear no one but him. Now I do not say that if you find a minister who can most effectually touch the springs of spiritual thought and emotion within you you are not to love and to addict yourselves to his ministry; but I do say that if you so addict yourselves to one that you can hear no other you are flinging away the greater part of your spiritual heritage. But not only all ministers, "all things" are yours, in precisely the same sense, viz., to use and to profit by. 2. The world. If a deed of gift were placed in your hand which made over a whole country, or even a whole cosmos to you as your private estate, you might be the worse and poorer for it. So vast an estate would entail responsibilities under which the strongest and wisest must faint. If you cared only to make a personal and selfish use of it, and if your possession of it robbed you of all stimulus to labour, to mental and moral culture, you would simply sink into the most astounding sot and sinner under heaven. Property is what we can appropriate. And what in the world is there of which, with due pains and trouble, you cannot get the best it has to give? The splendour of sunrise and sunset, the glory of the seasons, the beauty of flower and herb and spreading tree, the starry canopy of heaven, do they not become yours in proportion as you have power to appropriate their teaching, their value? Any house or piece of land that you have bought you may lose by a thousand accidents, and at the best you will soon have to leave it behind you; but the culture wrought into your very spirit by your love and admiration of the natural world, this will never leave you. 3. What is there in all the forms and varieties of human life which you may not so observe as to learn its highest lessons, as to work the very essence of it into the very substance of your mind? What have men ever done, what great and noble thoughts have they uttered, of which you may not so read as to make all that is so permanently valuable in them your own? Christ has thrown open to you the whole domain of history and of human life; and it rests with you to determine how far you will go up into it and possess yourselves of it. 4. And He has made "death" your friend and servant; for if you believe in Him what is death to you, or to those whom you love, but a transition to more life and fuller? 5. So with "things present," with which we are so seldom content, and "things to come" which we are so apt to fear. All are yours in proportion as you make them yours. II. ALL ARE YOURS BECAUSE YOU ARE CHRIST'S, AND THAT YOU MAY MAKE THEM CHRIST'S AND GOD'S. Nay, we can only make all things ours as we give them all to Christ and God. 1. All ministers are yours; but when do you make them all yours in fact? Only when you make the best use of the best that is in them, and suffer it to minister to your highest and most enduring welfare. And when you do that, do you not both take them as God's gift to you and give them back to Him? 2. And in the same way you make "life" yours, viz., as you yield to its nobler influences and suffer them to mould and reform you. That is to say, all life becomes yours as you give your personal life to God. 3. So, again, with death. Only those who believe that Christ has overcome the sharpness and taken away the sting of death, only those know that death is a minister of God for their good. And who are these but those for whom to live is Christ and to die gain? Who but those for whom to depart is to be with the Lord? Death is ours only as we are Christ's and God's. 4. And only on the same terms are things present ours and things to come. (*S. Cox, D.D.*) *The Christian's possessions*:—I. THE GENERAL SCOPE OF THE DECLARATION. Of course all things are not the Christian's in the sense of actual right or control. A man possesses that which he turns to his own account. A miser, though abounding in wealth, is a very poor man; although he has all things he possesses nothing. So all things in creation and providence shall as certainly minister to the Christian's present and eternal welfare as if they were absolutely his own. "All things work together for good to them that love God." II. THE SEVERAL PARTICULARS. 1. All ministers are yours. Whatever their talents, zeal, piety, fruit, you have an interest in them all. Christ thought of you when He gave some apostles, &c. Feel that you have a personal property in your ministers, not only in their time, talents, prayers, but also in their spiritual prosperity and their growth in grace. 2. The world is yours. The world is created for the saints, and for their sakes is it preserved. It is a mere stage of action for

them, and when of these the last has obtained his crown it shall be burned up, having fulfilled its mission in preparing man for a higher condition of existence. The earth hath God given to the children of men, but in an especial sense to the redeemed. It belongs not to men of the world to whom providential gifts are often a ruin. 3. Life is yours, *i.e.*, as it is a blessing, as it serves us for doing the work of God. He lives twice who lives for life's great end. Only use it rightly, and life is yours. 4. Death is yours; because to the Christian to die is gain. III. THE SOLID GROUND UPON WHICH THESE ASSURANCES REST: because "ye are Christ's." Ministers, &c., are not yours by any right of your own, not yours for your obedience, your prayers. And therefore remember that if you are not Christ's, then none of these things are yours. Ministers are not yours, for they shall rise as a testimony against you; nor the world, for it is a master by whom you are held in bondage; nor life, for its things are not blessed to you; nor death, for he comes as God's executioner, to drag you from your tenacious hold on things present, and to make you view your forfeited interest in all the joys of things to come. Oh, see to it, then, that ye are Christ's by a good confession, by a choice of service, by faith, by love. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The Christian's riches*:—I. WHEREIN DO THESE RICHES CONSIST? 1. It was not without intention that the apostle placed at the head the great apostolic personalities. For the highest of man's possessions is man. What would this whole creation be but for man, the image of God? (1) But it is man who appears to be least of all ours. How many a man would have given thousands to rescue the life of a beloved child, or have cheerfully laid aside his dignities to lengthen a beloved partner's life, or have sacrificed a portion of our own life to redeem that of a friend? How then can we say that men are ours, if we cannot hinder their being snatched away from us? (2) It is true that what is earthly and perishable in man does not belong to us; of that we must be deprived. But all that is imperishable and holy in human nature is ours, and cannot be snatched from us. Centuries have passed since the great apostles passed away; but have they ceased to be ours? The word of repentance which they preached, has it not awakened us? The testimony they bore to the grace in Christ, has it not converted us? The example of love which they have set forth, has it not enlightened us? This Paul, this Peter, &c., are ours. And not only they, but all who walk in their footsteps. Yes, they too are ours who seem to be far removed from us. Paul had been a persecutor of the Church, and became its protector. Peter was a shaken reed, and became like a rock. Apollos was a disciple of the false Greek wisdom (Acts xviii. 24), and became a scholar of Christ. We will not despair, then, of those whom we cannot call ours in reality. 2. All other created things. (1) On few things do we seem so dependent. There is the lightning, the hailstorm, the flood, the pestilence, war. These forces, which neither the mind nor the will of man can tame or control—are they ours? That wonderful power that carries men across the country, as on the wings of the wind, that still more wonderful power which multiplies thought with lightning speed; that gold which rules the hearts of men; the spirit of inquiry—do these powers belong to us, Christians? Even the gentle gifts which summer scatters over the trees and fields, will not misuse desecrate them, will not sin poison them? (2) But we must not be misled by appearances. The apostle's statement is true. For can misfortune touch us when we know that all things work together for our good? When we know that we are not the sport of chance, but that an almighty and all-loving hand sends these trials to us; when we have the experience, too, that we are purified by them as gold by the fire? It is true that the commercial activity of the day may serve the purposes of sin; but does it fail to serve the purposes of the kingdom of God? It is true that a prolific press forges weapons of falsehood and ungodliness; but does it fail to forge the weapons of truth? It is true that gold enters many a house with a message of hatred and hostility; but does it cease to be an angel of love and comfort when we carry it into the dwellings of the poor and wretched? It is true that the spirit of inquiry kindles a fire-brand and casts it into the very sanctuary of God; but does it not also kindle the flame of wisdom and throw light into the sanctuary of Divine truth? 3. But, says the doubter, there is one thing you cannot make your own. It is all-embracing time with life and death, the past, the present, and the future. (1) We will not dispute that there is nothing on which men seem so dependent as time. (*a*) What are we to say of life—is this ours? We devise a plan of life to-day, to-morrow it lies in ruins at our feet. We build to-day on our health, to-morrow we are stretched on our bed. (*b*) And how about death? When we shall die we do not know; that we shall die is certain. There are some who during life never cease to be in bondage

to the fear of death (Heb. ii. 15). (*c*) And is the past ours? What we have done, we have done and cannot recall. (*d*) And how can the present or the future belong to us? At the present moment is not the future dark before us? What will happen in the next hour or day we cannot tell. (2) Amid these apparent contradictions we hold immovably to the apostle's word when he calls time ours. (*a*) Of course the empty, perishing, earthly life is not ours. But what does this signify? On the other hand, eternal life, whose pledge for us is the resurrection of Christ, will after this life first attain its full perfection. This eternal life is ours, and death cannot rob us of it. For death is ours in Christ. (*b*) The past, too, is ours. The centuries have swept away a hundred signs of human devotion; one is left, it is the Cross. Thousands of words of human wisdom have been forgotten; the Word of God remains. Names that once shone brightly in the firmament are now never mentioned; one name remains, it is the name Christ. Numberless hopes have vanished like the morning mist; one hope remains, is ours—the hope of eternal life. The past is ours: all that is worthy and imperishable in it. (*c*) And therefore are the present and future ours too. Let men set up new signs, the Cross alone will remain. Let them utter wondrous words, they will all cease to be heard; the Divine Word will remain. Let new names rise into favour, they will all disappear like meteors, while the name of Christ will be like the sun. Let new hopes delude men, our hope is an anchor sure and steadfast. II. THE CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED THAT THIS MAY BE SO. The natural man cannot inherit the kingdom of God; therefore, cannot say "all things are mine," but must rather confess "I belong to all things." The context shows how freedom may be gained, and with it the assurance that all things are ours. The apostle is not addressing the unbelieving, but (ver. 16) those who have received the Holy Ghost. This is the condition. The way to become possessed of the Christian's wealth is the way of repentance which leads us to the knowledge of what sin is before the Father; the way of faith which causes us to find in God the Son reconciliation and redemption from sin; the way of regeneration—we are renewed and sanctified by God the Holy Ghost. (*D. Schenkel, D.D.*) *Christian riches*:—"Give me a great thought, that I may live upon it," said a noble man in his dying hour; but even in life there is often need of a great thought to expand and elevate the soul. Such a thought we have in our text. I. THE WORLD HAS OFTEN USED THESE WORDS TO DECK OUT A GOSPEL OF THE FLESH. Do we not hear men calling out, "All is yours"? Lordship over the earth is yours; therefore seize, rule, and enjoy. And because all is yours, ye must all equally rule and enjoy; therefore demolish the old distinction between masters and servants, rich and poor. We know, indeed, that in the early Apostolic Church there was a short time when the word, "All is yours," was quite literally fulfilled (Acts ii. 44), but this state of matters had of necessity very soon to disappear. The providence of God is not uniform, and in different ways will lead different men, setting some as stewards over much, others as stewards over little. But—II. THE HIGHEST GOOD IS COMMON TO ALL. In the sense of faith, and hope, and love, we say with the apostle, "All is yours; for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." What can be more my own than what I possess in best thoughts and feelings? Name anything in the whole world, and I ask whether it is not mine if it may serve my inner man and serve me for growth in wisdom and grace. Wert thou ever so poor, art thou Christ's, then the whole world must serve thee, for Christ is God's; but wert thou so rich that thou wouldst have to pull down thy barns and build greater, &c., the days of thy riches are soon numbered. Here, however, are riches which moth and rust cannot corrupt and which cannot be counted. "All is yours." 1. Paul, Apollos, and Cephas belong to thee, with their varying gifts. For thee the evangelists write, apostles preach, the sacred poets unfold the depths of their soul. For thee is the exhortation and the promise. 2. The world. Yes, not only the kingdom of grace, but also the kingdom of nature, and the lilies of the field and the birds of the air reveal to thee the glory of God. 3. Life or death. How poor would we be if death, too, did not belong to us. The gospel of the flesh leads its adherents up to the gates of death, and just there death, as it were, calls out, "Nothing is yours!" But art thou Christ's, then "to die is gain." 4. And whosoever can speak thus can also say, "things present or things to come." Many perhaps will say, "Yes, no doubt the present is ours—these misfortunes and sufferings—but where are our joy and peace?" But art thou Christ's, then these times contain a great wealth of Divine exhortations, warnings, appeals, which also belong to thee for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness. And if thou yieldest to these, then also the great word belongs to thee: "We are saved by hope," hope in

the brighter morning of eternity, when all the children of God will reap with joy, for they bring in the fruits of righteousness. III. IF THE LORD IS TO BE ABLE TO GIVE US ALL, THEN MUST WE BE ABLE TO GIVE THE LORD ALL. "Lord, we have left all and followed Thee." Luther sang, "Everything may go. . . . To us the crown remaineth." This we too must learn if we would obtain the promise. Let all go that is now thine own; the earthly, selfish desires which hold thee back, because thou thyself holdest them so fast; and many a thing which, though it has had a noble origin, yet turns thee from the riches of God, if thou wilt hold it fast against the will of God. Let go, therefore, the vain dreams of a happiness which knows neither sufferings nor the cross. Perhaps thou hast thyself already experienced the disappointments of this life. There were perhaps some dear ones whom thou couldst truly call thine own! The grave covers them, and why wilt thou still cling to the earthly possession? In the name of Jesus, let it go. For in Him we know that we should not seek the living among the dead; we know that what is sown in corruption will be raised in incorruption, &c. And the better we learn to say from the heart, "Let everything go, to us the crown remaineth," the freer, the more joyous, the richer will we be. For then that dies in us which ought to die, and then that lives in us which ought to live. And then we feel that all is ours. (*Bp. Martensen.*) *The Christian's heritage*:—I. THE BELIEVER MAY BE SAID TO POSSESS ALL THINGS IN GOD. 1. The mind of a great author is more precious than his books, of a great artist than his pictures. To have the mind is better than to have merely the products of that mind. Give the fountain, and you virtually have the streams. But no earthly or finite mind can transfer its gifts to another. But there is a sense in which we may become sharers of the Infinite Mind from which all that is true and good and fair in the universe proceeds. As really as true, or noble, or holy thoughts become a portion of the mind which apprehends them, does God communicate Himself through the spirit of the believer. 2. The happiness of this mysterious nature of ours is never to be found merely in the possession of God's gifts; the soul can find its true satisfaction only in rising beyond the gifts, and claiming the Giver as its own. When you covet the friendship or love of a fellow-man, it does not satisfy you that he bestows upon you only outward gifts; unless the man give you himself, the rest are but worthless boons. So the wealth of worlds would be, to the heart longing after Deity, a miserable substitute for one look of love from the Great Father's eye. 3. Now, admitting the truth of the thought that God is the portion of the soul, then the argument of the text becomes obvious and conclusive. As the scattered rays of light are all included in the focus, as the fountain contains the streams, so all finite and created good is contained in Him who is the Supreme Good; all earthly excellence is but the partial emanation, the more or less bright reflection of the Great Original. The man who is in possession of some great masterpiece need not envy others who have only casts or copies of it. II. SOME OF THE SPECIAL BLESSINGS HERE ENUMERATED. 1. "The world is yours." Not, obviously, in the literal sense. This earth is not the exclusive property of the good. It is not their Master, but another who, displaying "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," said, "All these will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." As often as otherwise the rich in faith are poor in this world's possessions. The best of the sons of men "had not where to lay His head"; and even this last resting-place the hand of charity bestowed. But the world belongs to the Christian in that he only has a legitimate title to the benefits and blessings he enjoys in it. This earth was not meant to be the home of evil. (1) Even mute and material things, the laws and agencies of nature, have in them something that asserts their Divine origin, and proclaims that wrong is done to them when forced into the service of sin. If, therefore, you are living a sinful life, you are out of harmony with the world in which you live. You are an intruder on its soil, a misappropriator of its benefits, a usurper and perverter of its laws. And so long as you continue in estrangement from God, it is as if His sun were unwilling to shine upon you, and His air to inspire you, and the fruits of His earth to nourish you, and that earth itself to hold you, and as if "the whole creation," weary of a bondage so degrading, were "groaning and travailing in pain." (2) On the other hand, let your soul be brought back into living union with the Father of spirits through His Son, and thenceforward the world will become yours, because you are God's. In harmony with the Great Centre, you will be in harmony with all things in His universe. Nature will serve him who serves her God. The earth will be fulfilling its proper function in yielding you bread, and the heavens in shedding their sweet influences on your path.

You will be able to claim a peculiar property in the works of your Father's hand, and the bounties of your Father's providence. You will have served yourself heir to Him who is the Universal Proprietor, and become "heir of God, and joint heir with Christ." And so "the world" and the fulness thereof will become "yours," because "ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." 2. "Life is yours." (1) Of course, considered as mere existence or duration of being, "life" cannot be regarded as the peculiar property of the Christian. For though it is true that religion is really conducive to health and longevity, and that, in absence of its restraints, vicious excess often impairs the health and shortens life, yet it is not always the holiest men who live the longest. (2) But if the good do not live longer, they live more in the same space of time than other men. Life is to be reckoned not only extensively, but also intensively. An oak lives for centuries; but who would exchange for it a single day of the existence of a living, conscious, thinking man? The briefest life of rationality, again, has more of real life in it than the longest of a mere animal. And, amongst rational beings, that life is longest, whether brief or protracted its outward term, into which the largest amount of mental and moral activity is condensed. "We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths," &c. But if so, it is only the man who lives to God who can really be said to live at all. For in him alone the whole man lives—in him alone all the energies of man's being are called into fullest, noblest activity. The man who merely vegetates through existence, who rises day by day only to eat and drink and pursue the same unreflective round, without one lofty thought or pure spiritual emotion—surely, to such an one, life, in its real essence, its true significance, is lost. The man of property, who has an undiscovered gold mine on his estate, is no richer for his latent wealth; and whatever other men contrive to extract out of life—as comfort, honour, knowledge, power—they are, after all, possessors only of its surface wealth; the Christian alone, the man who has discovered and appropriated its hidden treasure of holy thought, feeling, energy, he alone can be said to be its true possessor. Confine a bird for life to a cage, and could it be said to be in reality possessor of the unexercised, unenjoyed power to soar and sweep the heavens? But within every human breast there are capabilities of heaven, folded wings of thought, aspiration, energy, which need only the liberating touch of the Spirit of God to call forth their hidden power, and bear the soul upward to the true region of its life. The true ideal of man's life is that of a heavenly life. To that man only who can say, "To me to live is Christ," can we say, in the full significance of the words, Then "life is yours." 3. "Death is yours." Outwardly, indeed, death bears the same aspect to all. But yet, whilst of all other men it may be said that they are death's, of the believer alone can it be averred that death is his. (1) Sin renders a man, in a sense, the rightful property of death, so that, when the hour of dissolution arrives, it is but the lawful proprietor coming to claim his own. In human society, a man by the commission of a crime is by right, if not in fact, the property of the law. The criminal may elude for a while the hands of justice; but, go where he may, he has no right to liberty or life. And when at last, it may be in some unwary moment, he feels a stern hand laid upon his shoulder, and the terrible words, "You are my prisoner," fall upon his ear, his guilty freedom is at an end. And though shrinking in dismay from the fate that awaits him, go he must with the officer of justice to meet it. Now, similar to this is the condition of the irreligious man in relation to that law which he has dishonoured, and that dread penalty which he has incurred. (2) On the other hand, if you are Christ's, then death is yours. His power over you is gone. For your condition will be analogous to that of the innocent man in the hands of the law. Over him the law has no power. All its authority, its sanctions, its penalties are on his side. And so, if ye be Christ's, the stain of guilt no longer rests upon you, and death has no longer any claim to your person. It may be still your mysterious fate to pass into the prison-house of the destroyer; but He to whom you belong will soon claim you as one who, like Himself, cannot be "holden of death." And then when "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality," then shall the believer discover the full and blessed import of the words, "Death is yours." (*J. Caird, D.D.*) *Christian dominion*:—In Gen. i. and ii. we learn that according to God's creative ideal, man was designed to subject all things to his own will, to have the power of enjoying all things. But the realisation of that was subject to the condition that man should retain the form and spirit of that Divine life of which he was created. Therefore the truth of the text is that when man is restored to his true character, he recovers his original dominion. Now Christ is the

image of God; therefore to be Christ's is to recover the original character which God created in man. When it can be said of us, "Ye are Christ's," it can also be said, "Ye are God's," and "all things are yours." Now the two main characteristics in the Divine life in Christ are light in the understanding, love in the will and the heart. And we shall find that progress in enlightenment, and sympathy makes man more and more capable of reducing all things to His service, and of drawing tribute from all things. I. THE GIFTS OF MEN. 1. "Paul, Apollos, and Cephas." Each had his own special power of setting forth some aspects of the Divine truth. To the narrow-minded and narrow-hearted these teachers were of no service; but to the enlightened and unselfish man the powers of thought, of feeling, and of spirit that existed in these men added to his inward wealth. 2. This is for ever the case. Our ability to make use, for our own good, of the splendid gifts of other men depends upon our own state of heart and mind. For instance, the soul of a great poet is a mine of mental and of moral wealth to those who can make him their own; but the coarse, the unintellectual man cannot grasp its treasures. When Paul's body was bound by Nero at Rome, the apostle was not possessed by the brutal emperor who could not enter into his ideas; but the humblest Christian slave in Nero's household was able to make the genius of the great apostle contribute to the inward wealth of his own soul. II. THE WORLD. 1. The material form of the world becomes ours not by virtue of our external position but of our inward state of heart and mind. The man of cultured mind and heart, who knows the inward life and the hidden history of the world, who looks at and loves the glorious landscape, who sees everywhere the signs of God's wisdom and power, who secs the beauty of His works; and above all he who knows how to appreciate the greatest of all—the moral nature of man—is more truly the owner of wide provinces of the world than a king dark in mind and debased in heart. 2. So the wealth of the world does not belong to a man really until he has become renewed in mind and in heart. The narrow-minded, narrow-hearted churl may have countless hoards, but he is not the master of his money, but his money is the master of the man. 3. The callings, the social intercourse of the world, do not really belong to us in the sense of doing us any good until we are renewed in heart and mind. A selfish, Christless man may have a large practice, a lucrative business, a high social position, but he cannot derive from them any rich inward happiness; but the man who is animated by the spirit of Christ, finds in doing his every-day duty a resource that gives strength and satisfaction to the whole being, and he can say, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me and to finish His work." III. LIFE. The desire for life is innate in man. How shall I see life? is the cry of the young human heart. The only answer is, "I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly." Mere animal existence is not the all of life. The enlightening of the mind by the rays, and the enlargement of the heart by the ardour of that fire of love that came down on Pentecost give the fulness of life. Sensual and worldly life as old age creeps upon us, becomes a burden, not a treasure. But if we are animated by the spirit of Christ we have an undecaying life that we realise day by day more and more our own possession. There are other masters who wish to supersede Christ, that tell us of life sensual and of life intellectual, but they admit that the life of which they speak is not to be our own, and that it is to become the spoil of the grave. Christ alone rescues our life from corruption and makes it ours, ours for ever. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou alone hast the words of eternal life." IV. DEATH. If we are living worldly, sensual, thoughtless lives, then death is not our possession but our enemy; but if we are deadening the lower life and giving ourselves to the life of the spirit in Christ day by day, then death is ours. As the exile welcomes the white-winged ship that is to bear him away from the strange land of his sojourn where he cannot find lasting rest, and to take him across the storm-tossed waves of the ocean to the calm shores where stands the home of his inheritance, so is the approach of death to those who are in Christ. As is the opening of the door to the guest that has long been wearily waiting in the ante-room of the outward existence to be ushered into the presence-chamber where he shall "see the king in his beauty," and find the bounty of his favour, so is the approach of death to those who have been all through their life straining the gaze of the soul to catch the vision of the higher life. (*Dean Edwards.*) *A Christian's portion*:—I. ALL THINGS ARE YOURS. 1. "Paul, Apollos, Cephas." Therefore Peter is not the head of the Church. He is named here in the third place. Peter is the Church's, and therefore cannot be the head and commander. 2. The world. (1) The world natural—the frame of heaven and

earth. All things are made for man, and he is made for God. They have their happiness and misery together with men (Rom. viii. 21). (2) The civil world. The commonwealth is for the Church. Therefore St. Paul bids us "pray for kings and princes," &c. (1 Tim. ii. 2). Commonwealths stand because the Church is mingled with them. (3) The world of wicked men, all their plots, and the "prince of the world" are the Church's. He and all his instruments are under the command of Him who turns all his designs contrary to his own intention. 3. Life. Why doth God prolong the life of good pastors and good people, but that they may be blessed instruments to convey truth to posterity? (Phil. i. 23, 24). And so the life of good magistrates (Acts xiii. 36). And then our own life is ours, in order to a better life, which is the only life. This present life is nothing but a shadow. Again, life is ours, because the time we live here is a seed time. This time is given us to do a great many good things in, the harvest of which is reserved for the world to come. And life is a special benefit, because by the advantage of life we further our reckonings after death. A good Christian, the longer he lives, the more he soweth to the Spirit. 4. "Or death." Paul joins these together, for if life be not ours for good, death will never be ours. But if life be ours, and we have made a blessed improvement of it, then death also shall be ours (Rev. xiv. 13). It tends to our benefit many ways. (1) It unclothes us of these rags, these sick, weak bodies of ours, that occasion so much disquiet to our souls, and puts on a new robe of immortality, and garments of glory. It ends all that is ill. (2) It ends labour in our callings, and the miseries and afflictions that accompany them. Death is ours because it is our resting-place. (3) It frees us from wicked men, and sets us clear out of Satan's reach. (4) It is a passage to another world. It is the gate of glory. Our death is our birthday. For when we die, we begin to live, and we never live indeed till we die. Death is ours every way. It is our greatest friend under the mask of an enemy. It is a good messenger; it brings good tidings when it comes (Eccles. vii. 1). It is the best physician. It cures all diseases whatsoever of soul and body. And, indeed, death is the death of itself; for after death there is no more death (Rom. vi. 9). 5. "Or things present." (1) The good things present are ours, for our comfort in our pilgrimage and passage towards heaven (Titus i. 15; 1 Tim. iv. 4). (2) And as good things, so ill things. Afflictions are ours, because they fit us for a happier state; they exercise what is good in us, and mortify what is ill. 6. Things to come—whether they be good or evil. (1) For good. The remainder of our life, that is ours to be good in. Death is to come, and that is ours. And judgment, that is ours; for our Brother and Saviour shall be our judge (1 Cor. vi. 2). And then after judgment heaven is ours. Indeed, the best is to come. (2) And evil things to come are ours also. They cannot do us harm (Rom. viii. 35, 38). II. BUT WE MUST UNDERSTAND THIS WITH SOME LIMITS. We therefore answer some cases. 1. It may seem there is no distinction of property if all be a Christian's. If every Christian may say, "All is mine," then what is one man's is another's, and there will be no property. Undoubtedly there is a distinction of properties in the things of this life. "All is ours," to help us to heaven; in order to comfort and happiness. 2. If all is the Church's, nothing belongs to the wicked. Therefore say the Jesuited papists, the pope may excommunicate ill princes. They are evil governors; nothing is theirs, all is the Church's. But political government is not founded upon religion, but upon nature and free election, so that the heathen that have no religion may yet have a lawful government and governors. But it is further objected that they succeed Christ, &c., and He was the Lord of the world; and therefore they may dispossess and invest whom they will. But Christ as man had no government at all (John xviii. 36), only as God-man, Mediator; and so He hath no successor. 3. Doth not this hinder bounty? It is mine, and therefore I do not owe any bounty unto others (1 Sam. xxv. 11). However all that we possess is ours in law, yet the bonds of duty, both of humanity and religion, are larger than the bonds of law. Therefore "all things are ours," not to possess all we have, but to use them as He will have them used, that gives them. 4. If all be ours, we may do what we choose in all things. Not so. There is difference between right, and the use of that right. God's children have right to that which God gives them, but they have not the use of that right at all times. Again, though all be ours, yet we have not a sanctified use, but by the Word and prayer (1 Tim. iv. 4). We must take them with God's leave. 5. Again, "all things are ours." Therefore truth, wheresoever we find it, is ours. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *Glorious united property*:—I. CHRIST IS GOD'S. 1. God's Son. 2. God's image. 3. God's gift. 4. God's great ordinance of salvation. II. YE ARE CHRIST'S. 1. Negatively. (1)

You are not the devil's. (2) You are not Moses'. You are not the property of the law. (3) You are not Adam's. His headship was soon lost. 2. Positively, "Ye are Christ's." His property, His spouse, His members, His riches, His glory. III. HAVING CHRIST, WE HAVE ALL THINGS. I remember reading of a lady looking over certain treasures of the house. She says, this is mine, and this is mine, and this is mine. The husband very pleasantly smiled, and said, Yes, my dear, all this is yours, because you are mine. Now all belongs to the believer that belongs to Christ, officially, relatively, and by covenant, and by mediation. 1. All the fulness stored up in the person of Christ belongs to His people. "It hath pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell." "Of His fulness we have received, and grace for grace." 2. All the merit of His work. 3. All the triumphs of His victories. (*G. Murrell.*) *A call to the utmost expansiveness in religious sympathy* :—The Church has not always treated its ministers rightly. The attendants on a Christian ministry may be divided into—1. Those who esteem the doctrine because of the teacher. Paul seems to have had those in his eye when he wrote this chapter. This is a mistake, as bad as it is prevalent. 2. Those who esteem the teacher because of his doctrines. A man who preaches to them, they feel, is estimable only as he embodies and propounds the true doctrines of the gospel. The impropriety of glorying in teachers, rather than in their doctrines, is strikingly illustrated by three things in the text. I. THE UNIVERSE IS FOR THE CHURCH. "All things"—not some things. 1. The ministry. "Whether Paul, or Apollos." In every way it serves man—intellectually, socially, materially. But its grand aim is to restore the human spirit to God. Now this ministry, in all its varieties, is the property of the Church. Why, then, should it glory in any one form? 2. The world. In the sense of legal possession the world of course is not the property of Christians, nor of others. Yet in the highest sense it is the property of the Christian. He feels an intense sympathy with God who created it; he rejoices in it as the workmanship of a Father's hands, as the expression of a Father's heart, the revelation of a Father's wisdom and power. Spiritually he appropriates the world to himself, he gathers up its truths, he cherishes its impressions, he drinks in its Divine spirit. 3. Life. There are certain conditions in which men cannot be said to live. The prisoner under the sentence of death; his life belongs to the avenging justice of his country. There are others whose faculties are so paralysed they can neither speak nor move. Life is not theirs. Morally man is dead in trespasses and in sin; his life is not his. But life is the Christian's. His sentence of death is removed; his moral infirmities are healed, and he is enjoying the right of life, he is prosecuting the mission of life, he is answering the grand purpose of life. 4. Death. It delivers from all that is incompatible with our peace, safety, and advancement; and introduces us into the scenes, the services, the society of a blessed immortality. It is ours; the last step in the pilgrimage, the last storm in the voyage, the last blow in the conflict. 5. General events. "Things present," whatever their character—painful or pleasant—are ours. "Things to come." What things come to us in a day! What things, therefore, are to come in eternity! II. THE CHURCH IS FOR THE REDEEMER. There are two very different senses in which Christian men are Christ's. They are His—1. By His relationship to them. He is the Creator of all. "By Him were all things created, visible and invisible," &c. He is the Mediator of all. "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price," &c. 2. By their pledge to Him. They have pledged themselves to Him as their moral Leader. III. THE REDEEMER IS FOR GOD. Christ is—1. God's Revealer. He reveals Him—(1) In creation. God's creative plan was wrought out by the hand of Christ; He, as the builder of the universe, revealed the mind of the infinite Architect. (2) In His personal ministry. He was the Image of the invisible God, the brightness of His Father's glory. 2. God's Servant. He came here to work out God's great plan of saving mercy. Christ is God's Revealer and Servant in a sense in which no other being in the universe is, and therefore to Him men should give their undivided attention. Conclusion: Learn—1. The infinite worth of Christianity. It gives "all things" to its true disciples. None of the "all things" specified here are possessed by those who are not His genuine disciples. 2. The contemptibleness of religious sectarianism. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Ver. 22. **Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.**—*The gospel ministry as a property* :—I would say to the Church, in relation to this property—I. APPRECIATE IT. What on earth so valuable as a true gospel ministry? In it you have, as a rule, the most richly cultured intellect, the highest order of genius, the most dis-

interested services, the most sanctified sympathies. II. PROTECT IT from worldly cares, secular embarrassments, social slanders. Take care of it—it is more precious than gold. III. USE IT. You have eternal treasures in these earthly vessels. Take care, and get from them the "pearl of great price." IV. THANK GOD FOR IT. It is given to you in trust. You must give an account at last. (*Caleb Morris.*)

Christ and thought:—The text must be regarded as a warning against—I. INTELLECTUAL LEVITY. 1. It was far from the intention of the apostle in this Epistle to speak slightingly of knowledge, or of those gifted men who are its mouthpieces. True, he speaks depreciatingly of a certain wisdom; but there was another wisdom, on account of which he was prepared to suffer the loss of all things. Paul knew that Christ had put us into a fresh attitude of reverence towards the whole intellectual world. Christ taught us—(1) The reality of truth. "What is truth?" asks the scoffing sceptic. It is an illusion in his view. But when Christ showed us the Father, He taught us at once the reality of truth, and the truth of reality. (2) The supremacy of truth. "Art Thou a King, then? To this end was I born . . . that I should bear witness unto the truth." (3) The accessibility of truth. That the search for truth is not a vain search. 2. And it was no part of Paul's purpose that the Corinthians should think lightly of their great teachers. In fact, he gives those teachers a very high place. "The world" is unquestionably a magnificent thing, and the apostle puts great teachers into the same category. "The heavens declare the glory of God," &c. Intellectual men also declare the glory of God, and with an eloquence surpassing that of the stars. (1) Let us not, then, lightly esteem our intellectual teachers. All the great thinkers, and writers, and scientists are ours. A ship at sea is directed from two points of view—there is the man with the lead taking soundings from below, and there is the man with the glass taking the bearings from above; so our race is indebted for its guidance alike to the science which concerns itself with the physical world beneath us, and to the theology which contemplates the world above and beyond us. And ours in this matter is a day of exceptionally high privilege. Our easily accessible libraries bring all the gifted teachers close to us. Do not neglect or despise this splendid privilege. (2) Let us not despise our religious teachers. It seems very probable that "the Christ party" in Corinth was in danger of doing this. This is a mistake. Each generation has its gifted teachers, and these are to be reckoned as God's choice gifts to His Church, and every lowlier teacher who speaks living words has a real value to his age. A while ago somebody suggested, with a touch of scorn, that preachers ought to be "paid by results." "Paid by results!" How the money would roll in upon us! To speak the word, at a critical moment, which shall turn a faltering young man or woman into the path of life—how much for that? To utter thoughts which widen and purify a man's soul, and which save him from lapsing into a sordid, sensual life—how much for that? To inspire with fresh hope one sinking into grief and unbelief and despair—how much for that? No, payment by results must be left to the great Paymaster. II. INTELLECTUAL SERVILITY. 1. Whilst one party amongst the Corinthians set little store by any of the great teachers of the Church, the other three parties were in danger of paying these teachers exaggerated homage. Says the noble apostle: You do not exist for them; they exist for you. The apostle has just been remarking that the greatest sages have been guilty of the most serious errors; he then proceeds: "Therefore let no man glory in men." The most gifted men are not infallible, and consequently they are to be followed with caution. The greatest teachers are only instrumental. There is a certain respect to be paid to the husbandman who brings forth precious fruits, but we reserve our full wonder and reverence for Him who alone gives the increase. There must, then, be no servility of soul in any of the congregation of the saints. No thinker must be permitted to coerce your intellect, no theologian to dictate your creed, no ecclesiastic to bind your conscience. God endows men that they may help and not enslave one another. 2. Here is a lesson for us to-day. Intellectual men are very prone to lord it over their less-gifted or less-cultured brethren. Sometimes they turn the republic of letters into a tyranny; sometimes they set up lordship in the Church. We see this despotism in philosophy. We are soon overawed by, and accept as gospel, what Carlyle says, or Arnold, or Ruskin, or Huxley, or Spencer. And we see this despotism in religion, and in the Roman Church in a very pronounced form. Now, our text warns us against such ignoble submission. "We are Christ's, and Christ is God's." We do not stop with Paul, &c.; we are thankful for the stars, but it is still our privilege to have access to the Central Luminary; and all believers, even the humblest of

them, share the illumination. It was given to tentmakers and fishermen to see truths not seen by prophets and kings; it was given to a peasant's son to find for Christendom the Divine doctrine it had lost; it was given to a tinker in Bedford to have visions of God as Isaiah and Ezekiel had; it was given to Wesley's "ragged regiment" to see truths of life hidden from the wise and prudent; it was given to a Northamptonshire cobbler to seize afresh and to give practical efficacy to the magnificent truth of the universality of salvation in Jesus Christ. Evils may arise out of an exaggerated individuality, but the right of the individual to be taught of God is too clear and too precious to be relinquished on any pretence whatever. III. INTELLECTUAL PARTIALITY. These four sects were mutually exclusive, but Paul declares that all the great teachers belong to the whole Church. It has been said that an intellectual man ought to have preferences, but no exclusions; the Christian may have sundry preferences, but he ought to be prepared to get light from all who can give it. He must recognise the special truths insisted upon by philosophy on the one side, and by theology on the other, and joyfully concede the preciousness of the work wrought by the several denominations. Why should we shut ourselves up to one meadow, when the whole land is ours; to one tree, when the forest is ours; to one constellation, when the whole firmament is ours? (*W. L. Watkinson.*) **Or the world.**—*The world is yours*:—It is—I. THE CHRISTIAN'S TEMPORARY LODGING PLACE UNTIL GOD TRANSLATES HIM TO A BETTER WORLD. This is the patriarchal view; they lived as pilgrims and strangers. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY. There are the books of nature—astronomy, geology, &c.; books of providence—history of nations, individuals—his own history. III. THE CHRISTIAN'S SPIRITUAL MART. He has much to do both with earth and heaven. He is one of Christ's agents for extending His cause and kingdom in this world. A Christian cannot be talkative; he has too much to do. IV. THE CHRISTIAN'S SCHOOL-ROOM. In this school he is taught, especially on the Lord's Day. Ministers are teachers. The Spirit instructs by the Word. Providence is a great teacher, so are children. Christ placed a child in the midst of His disciples to teach them humility. He places sluggards under the tuition of the ant; and the ungrateful must take lessons from the ox and the ass. V. THE CHRISTIAN'S BATTLEFIELD. No battlefield in heaven, it is a palace; no battlefield in hell, it is a prison. This world to Christ was a battlefield. It is only in this world that Christians have to "fight the good fight of faith." VI. THE CHRISTIAN'S PLACE FOR MORAL CLEANSING AND ADORNMENT. He who has to stand in the presence of God and the Lamb, must be washed and properly dressed. Priests, Levites, washed in the laver outside the holy place, were robed and dressed before officiating in the presence of God. "Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people." There are no means of saving, justifying, and cleansing sinners, but in this world. VII. THE CHRISTIAN'S ROAD TO HEAVEN. Two roads in this world—the broad road leading to destruction, the narrow way that leads to life everlasting. Let us fear lest we should miss the way. Alongside the Christian's way there flows the river of life; be constantly drinking its waters, and rejoicing you will go on your way to the heavenly world. (*J. Robertson, M.A.*) *That the whole world, with all things therein, is for the spiritual advantage of a godly man*:—He may say of the whole universe, all this is mine for the advantage of my soul one way or other. Come we, therefore, to show in how many particulars we may say the whole world is a godly man's; it is for his use—First, it is the godly man's school or academy; it is his study or library. The heavens and all things therein are so many books, whereby he admireth the wisdom of God (Rom. i.). Secondly, the world is a godly man's, because everything therein is given him for his necessary use. Though he hath not everything, yet he hath as much as is needful to him. If you take a man into your house and bid him call for what he will, he may command everything in the house, though he doth not call for all things, but what is for his use—that is, as if he had all. And thus the whole world is for a godly man. What wealth, what honours, what health, is necessary and needful, he is sure to have. He that dwelleth by the ocean, he hath all the water in the sea for his use, though it is not necessary he should make use of it all. He that hath the use of anything, hath the thing. Thirdly, the world is a godly man's, as his shop and place of service. It is that wherein he works and labours for God. It is the great shop for mankind to do that work God hath appointed them. It is the great vineyard, in which God hath set every man to work. This world is for doing; the world to come for receiving. Fourthly, the world is a godly man's inn or lodging-place. It is a provision God makes for a season, till they are ripe for heaven.

Thus the godly are often compared to pilgrims and strangers. Fifthly, the godly have the world as the stage or artillery-yard—a place of exercise, wherein all their graces are to be drawn out by the opposition therein. To be quickened to the height of all thy graces, by how much more the combat and conflict thou hast, is exceeding great. The greatness of the tempest will discover the great art of the pilot. Sixthly, the world is a godly man's, because all things therein are sanctified and made clean to his use. The objection, then, is, why have the godly the least possession of it, if they have the sanctified use of it? Doth not David complain that wicked men have the fatness of the earth? To answer this you must know that even those wicked men, who are said to have the world at their will, yet they have not the world indeed, they have it not as the godly men. "The little that the righteous hath, is better than great treasures of the wicked" (Psa. xxxvii. 16). First, whatsoever the wicked man hath, he hath it in wrath; it cometh from God's anger. God is angry with the wicked all the day long. Secondly, wicked men have not the world, because they are overcome by it; the world hath them rather. Thirdly, wicked men have not the world, because they do not own and acknowledge God as the Giver of all; neither do they live to Him, but the things of the world are instruments to draw out their lusts, to make them the more wicked. They take the good creatures of God, and abuse them to wickedness. The very air, the very earth, is weary of them; yea, the timber in the house, and the stones of the wall do witness against them; they are, by the things of the world, made more wicked. Lastly, they have not the world, because they have not an holy contentation of mind; they are not quiet or satisfied in their condition. (*A. Burgess.*) *That godly men do only live, or the godly only do make a spiritual use of their life*:—1. THAT ONLY GODLY MEN LIVE. First, the godly man only liveth, because he is united to God and Christ, the fountain of life. David doth often style God "the fountain of life" (Psa. xxxvi. 9). And in His favour there is life. And in the New Testament, especially by John, Christ is made the Author of all life. Secondly, only the godly man liveth, because he hath a spiritual and a new life added to his animal life. Thirdly, the godly man only liveth, because he only hath the true blessedness and comfort of this life. He only hath true joy and peace of conscience, and this only the Scripture calls life. Fourthly, the godly only live, or life is theirs, because they only know how to improve the days of their life for God. Fifthly, life is only the godly man's, because he hath an interest in eternal life. He hath passed from death unto life (John v. 24). He shall never die that liveth this life. Sixthly, the godly man only liveth, because he taketh his life from God, and referreth it to His glory. "Whether we live, we live to the Lord," said Paul (Rom. xiv. 8). Seventhly, the righteous only live, because they mortify and subdue those sins that kill our bodies, that take away our lives. Lastly, the godly man only liveth, because, even in the last breathings of this life, his hopes and comforts do most remain. "The righteous hath hope in his death" (Prov. xiv. 32). And this hope is called a lively hope. II. HOW CAN IT BE SAID THAT THE WICKED DO NOT LIVE, WHEN THEY ARE SAID TO HAVE THEIR PORTION CHIEFLY IN THIS LIFE? 1. They are dead in their sins, and hereby their faith, their religion, their Christianity is all dead. 2. They do not live, because they are in a condemned estate; they are appointed to wrath. 3. They do not live, because all their time is lost, so all the time of a man's unregeneracy is no life. 4. They make everything an instrument of death—their health, their wealth, their honours, are all deadly herbs in the pot; their tongue speaks the words of death; their hands work the works of death. (*Ibid.*) *The world is yours*:—1. It is useful as well as curious to observe under what different aspects the world is surveyed by different persons. The politician considers it as the scene of political changes; the soldier, as the field of war; the man of business, as the place for the acquisition of wealth; the gay and dissolute estimate it by its pleasures. 2. But each of these estimates is essentially erroneous. The Word of God affords the only criterion by which we can form a just judgment of the world. Instructed, therefore, by the light of Scripture, the Christian looks upon the world as fallen, and under a curse; but by the same Divine light he discovers that God, in His great mercy, has sent His Son into the world to save and raise it. 3. Every Christian, therefore, views the present world not merely as it is in itself, but as it is connected with this great plan of salvation in Jesus Christ. Its aspect is thus totally changed; it becomes a school of discipline, in which God places the heirs of salvation for their improvement and growth in grace; a theatre of instruction, in which are continually exhibited striking examples of the truth

and excellency of God's precepts, the vanity of earthly pursuits, and the folly and evil of sin; a scene for the display of the bounty and goodness of God to those whom Christ has received as His disciples. 4. Thus "the world is yours." It is intended for your use; it is adorned for your enjoyment; it was never formed to gratify the purposes of ambition, to satiate the lust of wealth, to be a scene of dissipation and unhallowed pleasure. The world is abused whenever it is used for these purposes. But yours is the world who use it for those ends for which its gracious Creator formed it; who survey its scenery, its mountains, &c.; and feel that they are yours because they were made by your Father. The world is yours who receive the bounty of Heaven with a thankful heart, and employ it, as God has intended, to your own lawful advantage and the good of others. The world is yours to enjoy it with moderation, thankful for the conveniences it affords you while a pilgrim and a stranger in it, in your way to a better and heavenly country. The world is yours who enjoy the blessing of God upon all your possessions and occupations in it, and possess in your souls "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." (*J. Venn, M.A.*) *Christ and nature*:—I. LET US SEEK TO ESTABLISH THE TRUTH OF THE TEXT—THAT THE WORLD IS OURS. Many ridicule this assertion. The conception that the earth was the centre of the universe has been entirely disproved. Now, man imagines himself to be the centre of the universe of things, the end for which the whole creation has groaned and travailed through countless ages, and groans and travails still. This view is declared to be an insane egotism. Let us see. 1. The world is realised only in man. It was only a mass of dark force, a dance of atoms, a whirlpool of vibrations, until Adam came. The universe is revealed only in the sense and in the thought of humanity. 2. The world is comprehended only by man. Geology makes the world of the past ours; astronomy makes the worlds above our head ours; a score of sciences make the world at our feet ours. The world is ours, for we comprehend its laws, perceive its unity, mark its developments, rejoice in all its wonderful movements and manifestations. A thing is pre-eminently made for the mind which comprehends it. 3. The world is claimed only by man. Man instinctively acts as if the whole world belonged to him. Ages ago the Psalmist celebrated the splendid sovereignty of man: "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet." And the fact is not less apparent to-day. Each living creature keeps within its narrow world, but men with telescope, microscope, spectroscope, go forth to claim the wide universe. If men acknowledge that the material realm has a centre, a master, an end, they are compelled to recognise that humanity alone meets the requirements of the case. If you take away man you must put what is inferior in his place. II. LET US SHOW HOW IN CHRIST WE REALISE OUR PROPERTY IN CREATED THINGS. "We see not yet all things put under" man. He has dropped the sceptre, or it has been wrested from him. But in Christ the government of the world is being restored to us. To illustrate this, look at—1. The Christian creed. (1) About God. In Egypt, in Greece, in Rome, the powers of nature were regarded as Divine, and the God that is above was denied (Job xxxi. 26–28). Now, Christianity delivers us from this tyranny of superstition, by making manifest to us "the God that is above." "You are the world's," says a sceptical science, reducing us to a sad idolatry, a sad slavery. The world, like fire, is a grand servant, but a bad master. "You are God's," says Christ. He fixes our eye on the God of heaven; He tells us that God made the world for us, that He rules it for us, and just as we hold to that doctrine and serve God, so shall the world be ours, ministering to our utmost satisfaction of soul and sense. (2) About man. Some of our teachers love to exalt nature at the expense of man. They remind us of the vastness, force, and duration of the universe, as against our limitation, weakness, and mortality. And when they have done this, it is easy to add: "You are the world's; it is everything, you are nothing." But Christianity asserts with mighty emphasis the dignity of human nature. There is an element in us that is not in the universe; an element vaster, for it dreams of infinity; stronger, for it forces nature to do its bidding; more abiding, for it claims immortality. The dignity of man has been demonstrated by the fact of the Incarnation. God will see a sun go out as we see a spark, but Bethlehem and Calvary declare that the redemption of the soul is precious. 2. Christian character. What humanity has lost of authority over nature through ignorance, lust, pride, sloth, covetousness, violence, cruelty, it shall recover through Christ in humility, kindness, wisdom, earnestness, truth, and love. Through righteousness shall we become heirs of the world. More righteousness, and our

dominion shall extend over the vast, wild, mysterious forces of the material universe; more righteousness, and the birds of the air, the beasts of the field shall become our loyal subjects as we do not now dream; more righteousness, and desert places shall blossom as the rose. 3. Christian civilisation. (1) How does it come to pass that science should have attained to such perfection in Christendom? Science sprang up ages ago in China, but it soon became an aborted, arrested thing; it flashed out with the Moors, only to sink again into the darkness of paganism. How is it that it is not found where Buddhism reigns, or Confucianism, or Mohammedanism? Christ has girded our scientific men, although some of them know Him not. The glorious science which is making the world ours, is ours because Christ is ours. (2) How does it come to pass that the commerce, which is realising the riches of the world, should have sprung up and come to such wonderful perfection in Christendom? It is because Christ has set up amongst us the kingdom of God and His righteousness that all things are being added unto us. Conclusion—1. If the world is ours, let us carefully claim it. There would be less "godless science" if religious people more directly and fully put in their claim to nature. If you notice a piece of unclaimed ground anywhere, somebody will shoot his rubbish there; and so if we neglect to claim nature for God, an atheistical science will soon accumulate its rubbish there. Be sure you realise all that creation will give and teach. Enjoy all its physical fruits and treasures so far as they may be given unto you. Then, remember its intellectual ministry. It is to enrich thought, to exalt and expand the mind, to kindle the imagination and feeling. But, above and beyond all this, nature has a ministry to our spirit. Our Lord showed us this. What lessons He found in the lily and in the bird! &c. "The world is ours." It is a magazine of instruments for our service; it is a school full of diagrams for our instruction; it is a sanctuary whose grand symbols, properly interpreted, are sacraments indeed. Man was not made for the world, but the world for man, and we must be careful to realise all the wealth and blessing of our great inheritance. 2. Does any one object, "But this proprietorship is all visionary—how can a man without a foot of land say, the world is mine?" To say that the fields and hills are ours only when we have certain parchments made out in our name, and locked up in our iron safe, that is the artificial proprietorship. That is truly ours which enlarges our mind, rejoices our heart, purifies our life. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) **Or life, or death.**—*Life and death are yours*:—I. LIFE IS YOURS. 1. It is obvious that St. Paul does not mean that any one is supreme over the events or circumstances of his life. Save in so far as virtue conducts to health and prosperity, there is, in this sense, but one end and course to the righteous and the wicked. 2. St. John wrote in Patmos, "He hath made us kings." This royalty was untouched by transportation and imprisonment. This is a sufficient commentary upon the text. Life is yours still, whatever its condition. You are not its slave because it is adverse. The man who can say, "I have learned the great secret, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content"; "I am in the hand of God, and God is my Father"—is a king in reference to that life, and every part of it. But this empire of the man over his own life is the privilege of him alone who recognises Christ's empire over him. "Life is yours, and ye are Christ's." Give yourself to Him, and then life is yours. (1) For enjoyment. A Christian living his Christianity is a happy man. He has a sense of safety, of independence, of dignity, and of tranquility, in his life; and those two other delightful things, the sense of being cared for, and the sense of having a secret—"For the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him"—a secret of explanation, and (better still) of confidence, between himself and One "whom to know is eternal life"—which must give a joy to the most sorrowful of his experiences, and fully justify, in point of happiness, the apostle's saying to him "Life is yours." (2) For improvement. If to be conscious of growth in anything, knowledge of a language, or skill in a game, or insight into a science, &c., is one of the purest pleasures of which this human nature is capable—what must it be to know oneself the recipient of Divine grace, for illimitable progress in all that is beautiful and lovely and of good report? (3) For communication. When once the thought has entered, "I am not my own, I am Christ's, and Christ is God's," with it there comes the recollection, I am not only the recipient, I am also the transmitter of life. You can help others to live. Your very look and voice may be a help to them. Your happiness, strength, integrity, loving and holy influence, may, through grace, quicken into newness of life some dead soul. II. DEATH IS YOURS. 1. Who shall echo this? Who that has seen death can do so with any feeling of

truth? No, rather we say, as St. Paul (in a different connexion) says, Death reigns. Death is the limit of our free action, as well as the terminus of our long journey. All may be ours up to death, but not further. 2. How shall we interpret this which is here written as to our ownership of death? (1) Your own death is yours. (*a*) Death is the master of the fallen being, as fallen. It makes every plan precarious. How soon must this right hand lose its cunning! There is not a purchase which can be more than a few years' possession, because of this reign of death over the individual. Hence that feverish eagerness in crowding two years' work or ten years' work into one. (*b*) It is into existences thus circumstanced that St. Paul bears the startling explanation of the gospel, "Death is yours." Instead of thus cowering and grovelling before the grim phantom, play the man. Death is yours. Take it betimes for your possession, and it shall be great gain. Look to it as the goal and prize of your being; expect it as the admission into a presence which is the fulness of joy, and you will find its very name and nature transfigured. See it as the gate of life, and it shall be yours, not you its, while you live; and it shall be yours, not you its, when you come to die. (2) The death of others is yours. (*a*) We are apt, by fallen nature, to see ourselves cruelly vanquished by the onslaught of death upon those we love. Many who could face their own death with something better than fortitude, are yet conquered by death when he assails them through another. (*b*) Yet in Christ we still own the dead. They are ours, not in hope only of reunion, but in possession too and fruition. Our richest stores of all must surely be those which are the most safely garnered. Our most real heirlooms are the memories and the affections of the dead. Death has set his seal upon them. What they were, in faith and patience, in wisdom and beauty, in grace and love—that are they for ever, that are they to us. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Christ and life*:—We maintain that life is ours as against—I. THE FATALIST, who teaches that we are the slaves of time, place, organisation, and circumstance. Our personal life is sacrificed to the exigencies of nature and humanity; just as the Egyptian tyrant made slaves of the Israelites, and compelled them to build the pyramids, so we are simply tools in the hands of necessity, building strange structures which at last are sepulchres. In opposition to this, the apostle declares that "life is ours"—our servant, with a hundred hands, enriching us with measureless blessings. Christ liberates us from the bondage of the outside world. Science is man asserting his liberty as against nature; history is man asserting his liberty as against the despotism of climate, situation, and material fortune; and Christian life is man asserting his personal liberty as against hereditary influences and current circumstances, and using these in such a way that they build up his character in the full power and beauty of righteousness. Man apart from Christ is too often the manifest creature of circumstances—success inflates him; failure crushes him; darkness makes a worm of him; and sunshine a butterfly. But in Christ life becomes ours, and we use it towards the attainment of that ideal moral perfection which is the mark of the prize of our high calling. You are not the poor vassals of outside forces, you are not sacrificed to the type, you are not insignificant as the coral worm which builds the reef and perishes in the depths, you are free to use the world, and to be served by it in the very largest and grandest sense. The bee does not find honey in every flower, nor the diver a gem in every shell, but in Christ all things are yours, and every emotion within, every action and circumstance without, shall strengthen and refine. II. THE PESSIMIST, who holds that life is our foe, that to live is a misfortune. It is little matter whether you are rich or poor; life is weeping; the rich man wipes his eyes with a silk, the poor man with a cotton handkerchief, and it doesn't much matter. It is little matter whether you are wise or ignorant; perhaps it is better to be ignorant, since he who increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. Froude writes of Carlyle, "Every day he told me he was weary of life, and spoke wistfully of the old Roman method. Increasing weakness only partially tamed him into patience, or reconciled him to an existence which, even at its best, he had more despised than valued." John S. Mill says his father "thought human life a poor thing at best, after the freshness of youth and of unsatisfied curiosity had gone by. . . . He would sometimes say, that if life were made what it might be, by good government and good education, it would be worth having; but he never spoke with anything like enthusiasm even of that possibility." Miss Martineau says, "You will feel at once how earnestly I must be longing for death—I, who never loved life, and who would any day of my life have rather departed than stayed. Well! it can hardly go on very well much longer

now. But I do wish it was permitted to us to judge for ourselves a little how long we ought to carry on the task which we never desired and could not refuse." That is, she wishes that suicide were permitted. "The world's winter is going, I hope, but my everlasting winter has set in." Thus sadly wrote George Eliot. Now, in opposition to all this, the text declares that in Christ "life is ours." The New Testament everywhere holds human life as a precious and blessed thing. Not that Christianity fails to recognise the sad element in human life. Yet, in face of a groaning and wailing creation, it maintains that life is the crowning benediction, to be prized by us all, to be held fast with gratitude and wonder and hope. And living in Christ we prove that life is a blessing. Christ makes man to rejoice in life—1. By discovering a great purpose in it—the perfection of our immortal spirit, through the love of God and the keeping of His commandments. Here is something to live for. 2. By putting a great strength into it. "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." 3. By putting a great love into it. The great curse of life is egotism, selfishness. If our pessimists would only leave their selfish moonings and lay themselves out to help, and bless all who are about them, it would soon change their philosophy. III. THE SENSUALIST. There is an idea abroad that life belongs to the man who lives to the end of self-indulgence. To see the world of animal indulgence is spoken of as "seeing life." One following a course of licence is said to be "fond of life." Such life is called "fast life," "gay life," and those who live it say to the Christian, "You have some advantage now, you have also great expectations beyond, but surely this life here and now is ours." This we deny. Life, here and now, is ours—it is our inheritance who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. A man who merely lives on the carnal side misses the real depth and fulness of life. You may say that the Greenlander is alive, and that he enjoys life; but what a different thing from the life of Europe! And the spiritual life of man goes still beyond. Now, the man who knows not this life, knows not the true life of man—living for meat and drink and raiment, he is dead while he liveth. To be carnally minded is death—the death even now of the finer faculties of the living soul. Christ enables us to realise life in all its fulness. 1. The life of the senses is ours in Christ. He is "the Lord of the body," and as we live to Him the sensational life becomes ours. The very restraint and moderation which the Christian creed imposes on all material enjoyment only puts us in fuller possession of that enjoyment. We lose our life to find it. 2. Christ leaves us free to expatiate through the whole intellectual world. 3. And, most of all, He brings out that Divine nature of ours in which we most truly and gloriously live. As the summer shines on the landscape, and brings green leaves out of the barren stems, full flowers from the sleeping bulbs, singing birds from the silent woods, a world of sweet smells and bright colours and rich music, so Christ acts upon human nature, realising its instincts, its faculties, its powers, making it to blossom as the rose, to stretch its wings like the eagle, to thrill with joyous feeling as the harp with many strings. Our modern poet tells that "more life and fuller" is what we most need. Surely we find this in Christ. He came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. IV. THE ASCETIC, who denies to the Christian the pleasures of life; he considers that the more meagre, starved, and sad our life is, the safer and better it is, and the nearer to the true ideal. Let us remember that in Christ "life is ours"—all good, bright, glad things. And life shall be ever brighter with us to the perfect day. True life implies constant renunciation, but it implies also constant acquisition. We do not so much put away joy and gladness, as we keep changing one joy for a higher, one glory for a fuller, one gift for a more excellent gift. Christian life often involves self-denial; but every act of renunciation is followed by the acquisition of a strength and treasure, a beauty and blessedness, altogether more deep and precious. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *Death is yours*:—Death is the property of the Christian—I. As BRINGING A CONCLUSION TO ALL HIS SORROWS. It is, to the Christian, the Red Sea, where all pursuing enemies are arrested and perish—the confines of Canaan, where the wilderness, with all its privations and perils, terminates—the perfect sleep, in which the toils of the day are all forgotten, not a dream even, or floating reminiscence, disturbing its composure. II. AS FORMING THE INTRODUCTION TO HIS HEAVENLY JOYS. When Hannibal was conducting his troops through Alpine heights, before deemed impassable, and they were ready to yield in despair amid the snows and crags and gulfs which surrounded them, he found it sufficient for their reinvigoration to tell them of the fertile Italy they were triumphantly to subdue. Be the boundary of life, then, ever so steep, frowning, and unproved, should not the

prospect of Canaan suffice to sustain us amid all its wilds and terrors? We must not judge of what death is to the departing soul by what it is to the survivors. Elisha prayed that his servant's eyes might be opened to see the defence by which they were encompassed. Were a similar prayer to be heard on behalf of Christians lamenting the departure of friends, a sight would be exhibited superior at once in its glory and its efficacy. III. AS ITSELF CONTRIBUTING TO HIS PRESENT AND FUTURE WELL-BEING. 1. The Greeks and Romans had an adage that no man should be accounted happy till he was dead—thus indicating that a desirable end was a chief element of happiness. But in the connection of our text we have death classed with the present possessions of the Christian, subordinated to his interests, and enhancing life itself by augmenting holiness, usefulness, and reward. Paul says (Acts xx. 24), "But none of these things (trials, &c.) move me; neither count I," &c. And so the last stage, anticipated and realised, gives energy to prior stages; and life, while it lasts, is turned to account, and rendered more vital and vitalising, through that solemn change beheld in the vista (2 Pet. i. 13, &c.). 2. Death is serviceable to the Christian not only in prospect, but also at the time it befalls him, in affording him occasion for the greatest of victories. There is not, indeed, always the same manifestation of triumph; but it comes effectually and seasonably. "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory," &c. In case entrance to heaven be abundant, then indeed is grace specially magnified, and the soul in which it dwells is blessed in its commendation. We have not many accounts of death-bed scenes and experiences in the New Testament. Still examples are given us which verify the exclamation, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace!" Nothing in all Stephen's foregoing service was so serviceable to the cause of the gospel as his martyrdom, and on the very border of sealing his testimony with his blood Paul said, "I am now ready to be offered," &c. Come, ye devotees of pleasure, and witness such spectacles; and say if all your cravings for delight can find anything to equal this transport! Well may it extort from a very Balaam the aspiration, "Let me die the death of the righteous." It will be eternally good for the Christian to have died. He will thereby be made more like to the Saviour. Think, too, what eternal life will gain by contrast with this. Conclusion: The practical lesson of all is to make sure of death being ours. With multitudes the great aim is to secure benefits of which death will despoil them. By all their acquisitions they are only extending the ravages of the King of Terrors. Be it your aim to coerce hostility into friendship, and make the very spoiler yours. (*D. King. LL.D.*) *Death is yours*:—I. THE FORERUNNERS OF DEATH ARE FOR OUR ADVANTAGE. These, indeed, are often not joyous but grievous at first, but afterwards yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby. In common life we often consider those things which are attended with a very considerable degree of pain, as advantageous, because they are so in their results. For instance, a man suffers the amputation of a limb, because he hopes that the operation will be productive of good: and so it is eventually; life is spared. Now, on the same principle, but on higher grounds, we should learn to submit to those afflictions, whatever they may be, that are the precursors of death, to put us in mind that the great destroyer is on his way. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment," &c. II. ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF DEATH ARE FOR OUR ADVANTAGE—time and place and manner. "My times are in Thy hand." And we know that God's time is the best; and the place, too, in which we shall expire, and the manner of our death—both will be of Divine appointment, and will prove to be the best. The manner of your death—whether it be natural or violent—whether it be a sudden death, or preceded by a lingering and distressing illness—all these things are ordered by the Lord. III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF DEATH ARE FOR OUR ADVANTAGE. I do not wonder that people are unwilling to think of death who have not a good hope through grace; but the heir of eternal life can look forward beyond all the dark clouds that intervene between him and the consummation of his happiness, and "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." "Death is yours," if you are members of Christ, for your advantage—1. Because there will then be an end of all evil—not only moral evil, or sin, but all natural, inward suffering. 2. Because as soon as it takes place, your happy spirits, disentangled from the encumbrance of these tenements of clay, enter into eternal rest. (*J. Entwisle.*) *Death an advantage to the Christian*:—Death is ours—I. AS THE MEANS OF DELIVERANCE FROM ALL THE INCONSISTENCIES AND SINFULNESS OF TIME. Select any of the people of God whose lives are recorded in the Word of God, and how often have we reason to deplore their inconsistencies! But for death

this would be the eternity of their history. II. As the means of delivering us from all weakness and imperfection, whether of body or of mind. III. As the means of relieving us from the isolated position which we occupy in this world. About the angels we know nothing; we are separated from them. What do we know about the immediate presence of God; the joys of a glorious immortality; the power of the fellowship that is formed around the everlasting throne? By death we enter into the universal region of the good. Conclusion: Sinner, death is not yours—he brings you no benefit. You are his victim. He comes as the messenger of justice to lead you to the judgment seat, to hear the doom which you are to undergo, world without end. Painful as your pilgrimage on earth may be, it is your highest happiness. Your happiness must terminate with its close. You are death's, and when death seizes you, instead of delivering you from your sins and imperfections, all your sins and imperfections are confirmed for ever. (*J. Burnett.*) *Death, the privilege of the believer*:—"Death is yours" if you look at it—I. In reference to others. 1. It is so when you seriously regard its universal appointment. There are multitudes who acknowledge this mournful fact, but who derive no advantage whatever from the solemn occurrence. It is otherwise with the Christian; he beholds a number of lessons which, by Divine grace, he is enabled to learn. (1) He sees the evil and malignity of sin; for there is no rational explanation of the cause of death, but as a penalty due to the violated law of God. (2) He discovers, also, that "the creature is made subject to vanity"; for it is not the old and decrepid alone who die. 2. It is so when you are impressed by the deaths of particular characters. (1) When "the wicked is driven away in his wickedness," he is shocked to reflect on their awful doom, and makes the earnest appeal, "Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men." (2) When he hears of the righteous who have expired in the expression of a firm faith and joyful hope of immortality, he pours forth the fervent petition, "May I die the death of the righteous, and may my last end be like his." There is also something in the aspect of the death-bed experience of many a fellow-Christian which has a tendency to banish the fears and animate the holy courage of the fellow-believer. II. In reference to ourselves. "Death is yours," as it is—1. A complete deliverance from sin. 2. A final termination of suffering. 3. A retreat from injurious and distressing associations. 4. Secures your admission to the enjoyment of all possible good. (*J. Clayton.*) *Death for the advantage of the good*:—Let us consider in how many particulars death is a godly man's; it is for his benefit and comfort. And first, in this respect, because by death he gaineth, he is invested with greater glory, joy, and happiness than this world can afford. All the while a godly man liveth in this world he is a loser, he is kept from his best treasures, he is not enjoying his best blessings, which will be vouchsafed to him. The apostle doth fully express it (2 Cor. v. 4). We would gladly be clothed with immortality, yet to put off this mortal body is grievous; as little children cry for their new garments, and yet cry while they are putting them on. Secondly, death is a godly man's, because it putteth a period to all those miseries and troubles he was here exercised with. It is the haven, after all the tossings he had in this world. Thirdly, death is theirs, because it is the finishing of all their works and service, and by that they come for their wages. How doth the labouring man long for the end of the day, or the week, that he may come to receive his wages? Fourthly, death is the godly man's, because the meditation and thoughts of it are sanctified to him. He liveth as one that expecteth it daily. Fifthly, death is the godly man's, because he only knoweth how to die well, as we told you. Life was his, because he only could tell how to live. So death is his, because he only knoweth how to die. Simeon saith (Luke ii. 29). Sixthly, the godly man hath death as an advantage, if you respect the time and season of his death. His death is not only mercy, but the time of his death is mercy. The term of every man's life is appointed by God, "To Him belong the issues of death" (Psa. lxviii. 20). Now God in great wisdom and mercy hath determined the time of thy death. Lastly, even the violent death of martyrdom, which cometh by the cruel and bloody oppression of implacable enemies, that is theirs. It is a mercy, a gain, and honour. The apostles rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to lose what they had for Christ's sake. (*A. Burgess.*) *Death of rude appearance, but welcome to the good*:—Many a man has an ill-favoured countenance, is lean and haggard, pale and sallow, and mean in his attire, who yet, under an ungainly exterior, conceals great talents and virtues. Such is the case with death. Ah me! how much of what is good and sweet and blessed is concealed beneath its sour aspect and

transient bitterness! It is not I who die, when I die, but my sin and misery. As often as I think of death I figure to myself that I see a messenger coming from a distant land, bringing the good news of my Saviour, the Bridegroom of my soul, and of the inheritance which He has purchased with His blood, and reserves for me in heaven. What care I although the messenger may have an ugly face, be armed with a long dart, wear a tattered coat, and knock rudely at my door? I attend less to his appearance than to his business. (*Gotthold.*) *Death a blessing*:—I congratulate you and myself that life is passing fast away. What a superlatively grand and consoling idea is that of death! Without this radiant idea, this delightful morning star, indicating that the luminary of eternity is going to rise, life would, to my view, darken into midnight melancholy. Oh, the expectation of living here and living thus always, would be indeed a prospect of overwhelming despair! But thanks be to that fatal decree that dooms us to die; thanks to that gospel which opens the vision of an endless life; and thanks, above all, to that Saviour Friend who has promised to conduct all the faithful through the sacred trance of death, into scenes of paradise and everlasting delight. (*J. Foster.*) *Death brings freedom to the good*:—Mr. William Jenkyn, one of the ejected ministers in England, being imprisoned in Newgate, presented a petition to King Charles II. for a release, which was backed by an assurance from his physician that his life was in danger from his close imprisonment; but no other answer could be obtained than this: "Jenkyn shall be a prisoner as long as he lives." A nobleman hearing some time after of his death, said to the king, "May it please your majesty, Jenkyn has got his liberty." Upon which he asked, with eagerness, "Ay! who gave it him?" The nobleman replied, "A greater than your majesty—the King of kings"; with which the king seemed greatly struck, and remained silent. (*Scripture Doctrines Illustrated.*) *The Christian's mastership over death*:—Development in our life on earth is limited, as is the development of the bird in the egg. The bursting of the egg-shell is no disaster, but a relief and a profit. That breaking of the shell brings the bird into a world that is unspeakably more glorious. Death is our servant, not our master—through Christ an immeasurable blessing. Because—I. IT RESTORES US MORE NEARLY TO OUR FRIENDS WHO HAVE GONE BEYOND. II. IT BRINGS US NEARER TO CHRIST. III. IT PLACES US IN A POSITION MORE FAVOURABLE FOR SOUL GROWTH. IV. IT INCREASES OUR CAPACITY FOR USEFULNESS. Those who are faithful in this life in a few things, will be made in the life to come rulers over many things. V. AS A CONSEQUENCE OUR HAPPINESS WILL BE GREATLY AUGMENTED. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *Christ and death*:—Christ makes death ours—I. AS HE GIVES US ASSURANCE OF THE LIFE BEYOND. If we consider death with the eye of the materialist we feel that we are death's. We are delivered helplessly into its cruel hands, and it strips us of everything. But Christ makes death ours by giving us the assurance of immortality. 1. Men have an instinct of immortality. It has been found in the lowest savages, and in the most intellectual races. Very strange and diversified are the manifestations of this instinct, but that it exists in the human heart is beyond question. And this instinct we are bound to respect. "But then," says Mr. Darwin, "arises the doubt, Can the mind of man, which has, as I fully believe, been developed from a mind as low as that possessed by the lowest animal, be trusted when it draws such grand conclusions?" Here he does his own theory injustice. Are not the instincts of the lower creatures on the whole marvellously correct? And, may we not ask with confidence, if the instinct of the caterpillar pointing to the butterfly, if the instinct of the swallow discerning far beyond the sea a land of sunshine and flowers, if these instincts prove no mockery, why should the instincts of human nature, pointing to a grand perfection in a world above and beyond, prove untrustworthy? 2. And reason has a powerful verdict to give on this question of our immortality. Even sceptical philosophers cannot do without this great doctrine. George Sand felt that without immortality there is a painful "deficiency of proportion." Darwin felt it "an intolerable thought" that after such long-continued and costly progress we should all be annihilated. And Edgar Quinet concludes "that, whilst the human race pursues on earth its career of perfection, the individual continues its parallel march in some place and in some form already prepared for it by Providence." 3. But whilst human instinct and reason thus declare for immortality, the subject at last is left in deep uncertainty. It may be nothing more than guess-work and illusion. But when Christ comes all is changed. He makes eternity a fact. You cannot come into contact with Him without tasting the powers of the world to come. He

brought life and immortality to light. It is the same change that we witness when we see alchemy changed into chemistry, astrology into astronomy, speculation into science. In Christ the dream becomes a reality, the inference a certainty, the desire knowledge and experience. Christ has shown us that through death we find "more life and fuller," even length of days for ever and ever. II. As He gives us fitness for the life beyond. 1. We are sometimes disposed to consider the question of immortality as altogether an intellectual one; we think if we can only succeed in establishing it on logical grounds, that we have nothing more to do than to surrender ourselves to the mighty comfort. But the moral element enters very largely into it. It is conscience that makes death terrible, the unknown world so dark and dreadful. This Epistle goes to the depth of the thing: "The sting of death is sin." Without sin we might view death with the uneasiness with which we might suppose a caterpillar to view a chrysalis; but a wounded conscience brings in another element, and we shrink from death with sore amazement (see also Heb. ii. 14, 15). If it had not been for sin we should have feared death only as a young bird fears to try its wings, but we fear death now as the bird fears the barbed arrow which drinks up its life. 2. It is very easy for us to see what a vast difference is made in our estimate of death whether we bring in or leave out the idea of guilt. Look at the death of a malefactor. How truly repulsive and terrible is death in such a case in all its circumstances! Consider, on the other hand, the death of a martyr. Here the material adjuncts are pretty much the same; but how different is the effect of the whole spectacle! The very same spectacle of death is a horror or a triumph according as you bring into it the idea of guilt or innocence, of infamy or glory. The consciousness of sin makes death an enemy. Because we are children of disobedience we are all our lifetime in bondage to the fear of death; we are debtors, there is an execution out against us for arrest, and we are always trembling lest the bony policeman should lay his cold grip upon us, saying, "You are my prisoner," and so shut us up in the prison till we have paid that uttermost farthing we never can pay. 3. Here once again Christ makes death ours. He changes death for us from the death of a malefactor to the death of a martyr. He takes away the guilt and power of sin. He satisfies the conscience as He does the intellect. And as He gives peace to the conscience He gives purity and life to the whole personality. Christ becomes the Resurrection and the Life, freeing us from the death of sin, awaking in us the life of righteousness, and so making us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Christ, so far as we gather from the New Testament, never saw any one die; I do not believe that any one else could have died in His presence; death cannot come where Christ is. Let Christ, then, be with you in your last hour, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *Spoiling the spoiler*:—The believer stands with his heel on the neck of the king of terrors. Death is yours as—I. A conquered foe transformed into a friend. A lion's carcass with the honeycomb in it. II. An opportunity to glorify God. The Christian's way of meeting death, not that of the Stoic glorifying his firmness, nor that of the sceptic glorifying his shame, but of the believer magnifying the grace of God. Showing forth Christ's power perfected in his weakness. III. A redeemer from servitude to the clayey body, and subjection to the discordant, tempting, crippling influence of the physical. IV. A convoy to heaven—a gateway to glory, a herald of coronation. The dawn of "Graduation Day." V. A boon. Rest to the tired pilgrim; harbour for the storm-tossed voyager; Sabbath eve to the working man. Conclusion: Faith in Christ is victory over death. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) **Or things present.**—*Things present*:—We reckon present things at the highest rate: "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." The little present, to our apprehension, eclipses the great past or the greater future. In the case of the true Christian—I. His temporal possessions are his own. The ungodly man for awhile engrosses the good things of this life, but they are sent to him often in anger, and are taken away in wrath. As for you, whatever of earthly good the Lord has apportioned you, is in a most blessed manner your own; because—1. Honestly got. The Christian owns no stolen property or unrighteous gain. Dishonest persons may be rich, but none of their riches are in truth their own; like the jackdaw in the fable, they wear borrowed plumes. 2. Acknowledged to the great Giver with becoming gratitude. Gratitude is, as it were, the quit rent to the great superior owner, and until we discharge the claim, our goods are not lawfully ours in the court of heaven. 3. The due portion which belongs to God has been conscientiously consecrated. The tithing of the substance is the true

title to it. It is not altogether thine till thou hast proved thy gratitude by thy proportionate gift to the cause of the Master. 4. We seek to be graciously guided in the use of them. They are not bestowed upon us absolutely; they are ours within the lines of law and gospel, within bounds of sobriety and holiness; not as masters, but as mercies. The benediction of heaven sweetens the lawful use of earthly goods. You are not required to play the ascetic. John came neither eating nor drinking; but the Son of man, who is your master, came both eating and drinking. There is no piety whatever in your accounting the gifts of Providence as necessarily temptations; you can make them so, but that is your folly and no fault of theirs. Vain are those who sneer at nature and the lavish bounty thereof. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." It is no crime to enjoy the beauties of nature, but a sign of idiocy to be unaffected thereby. Fair scenes, sweet sounds, balmy odours, and fresh gales, your Father sends them to you, take them and be thankful. Let us note well, before we leave this point, that any of God's saints who have but little of this world's goods, may yet remember that all things are theirs, so that up to the measure of their necessities God will be quite sure to afford them sustenance. The Lord is your shepherd, and you shall not want. II. TEMPORAL TRIALS. 1. Tribulations are treasures. Saints gain more by their losses than by their profits. Your present trials are yours—(1) As medicine. You need that your soul, like your body, should be dealt with by the beloved Physician. (2) As means of strength. No man becomes a veteran except by practice in arms. Experience worketh patience, and patience brings with it a train of virtues. (3) As windows, through which we get the clearest views of Christ. Do you understand what it is to come up to Christ's Cross, and to be conformed unto His death? It is only as you do this that you will have fellowship with Jesus, and understand what His love was towards you. 2. You who are cross-bearers, I would remind you for your comfort—(1) That you have to bear the cross, but not the curse. Your Lord endured both. The penal result of sin Christ has exhausted, and now the cross that comes to you is garlanded with love. (2) That your Lord sends you a cross, but not a crush. Your cross is proportioned to your strength. (3) That your cross is not a loss. It shall only be a putting out to interest that which is taken from you that it may be returned anon with usury. III. ALL OUR CIRCUMSTANTIAL SURROUNDINGS. These are ours as subservient to our usefulness. You wish to win souls, and say, "I wish I were a minister"; but you have a family round about you, and you have to keep to that farm, to manage the shop. Now the position you occupy is, all things considered, the most advantageous for doing your utmost for the glory of God. Suppose the mole should cry, "How I could have honoured the great Creator if I could have been allowed to fly!" it would be very foolish, for a mole flying would have been a very ridiculous object, while a mole fashioning its tunnels and casting up its castles is viewed with admiring wonder by the naturalist, who perceives its remarkable suitability to its sphere. The fish might say, "How could I display the wisdom of God if I could sing, or mount a tree, like a bird!" But you know a fish in a tree would be a very grotesque affair; but when the fish cuts the wave with agile fin, all who have observed it say how wonderfully it is adapted to its habitat. It is just so with you. If you begin to say, "I cannot glorify God where I am, and as I am," I answer, neither could you anywhere. "But I have a large family," says one, "what can I do?" Train them in the fear of God. "I work in a large factory with ungodly men, what can I do?" Needless inquiry! What cannot the salt do when it is cast among the meat? "I am sick," says another; "I am chained to the bed of languishing." But your patience will magnify the power of grace, and your words of experience will enrich those who listen to you. Look at the seaman out at sea! does he sit down and fret because the wind will not blow from the quarter that he would most prefer? No; he tacks about and catches every capful of wind that can be of use to him, and so reaches the haven at last. Look at a good commander, if he occupies a bad position, he turns that to account, and often makes the worse become the better. IV. SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGES. 1. The favour of God is not for heaven only; it is ours to-day. Adoption into His family is for this present time. 2. Christ is present, and He is ours. We have a "fountain filled with blood," which puts away all sin; a mercy-seat where all prayer is prevalent; an Intercessor who takes our prayers and offers them. 3. The Holy Ghost, too, is present, and He brings you present enlightenment, guidance, strength, consolation. 4. And if there be any promise to-day written in the Word of God, any blessing to-day guaranteed to the elect family, any mindfulness of

Providence, or any abundance of grace, all these are yours, and yours now. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ and the present*:—That things above, that things beyond, may belong to the Christian is well understood; the sceptic with a smile will allow this; but that "things present" are ours in Christ is not so well understood. Observe, however—1. THAT THE FAITH OF CHRIST SECURES TO US "THINGS PRESENT." It is a common complaint of secularism that the tendency of supernatural religion is to withdraw our attention from the immediate practical world, and to waste our time and powers on mere figments of the imagination. And it is a very common thing for secular writers to point to the mediæval age for the demonstration of their position, and to assert that civilisation was saved only by the Renaissance calling man's energies from the unknowable to the knowable, from heaven to earth. Now this is capable of a satisfactory reply. 1. We appeal from a corrupt to a pure Christianity. Surely none would compare the positive science of astronomy with the obscure divinations and horoscopes of astrology. Yet astronomy concerns itself with the distant, but the science of the firmament is a most fruitful one in regard to our present immediate worldly interests. And so if in the middle ages a corrupt theology and ecclesiasticism worked badly, that is no argument against the Christianity of Christ. The New Testament never separates earth from heaven. It brings before us, in God and Christ and heaven, great ideals which are to vivify, to enrich, to realise, to exalt, to perfect, all earthly things. Men talk of the unworldliness of Christianity, but it recognises the dignity and rights of the body, it assigns us all the wealth of nature, it leaves us free to work out our intellectual faculty, it gives its Divine sanction to all the articulations of human society. Men talk of the narrowness of Christianity, but it is wide enough for all present things so far as those things are rational and useful. If there ever was a grand protest against narrowness it is the protest of the text. Christianity is wide enough for all muscularities; it shuts out Roman amphitheatres and modern prize-rings, but thank God for the narrowness that shuts out brutality and blood. Christianity is wide enough for all art; it shuts out Pompeian chambers of obscenity, but thank God for the narrowness that shuts out beastliness and ghastliness. Christianity is wide enough for love and home; it shuts out Venus's temple and Mohammed's harem, but thank God for the narrowness that shuts out the degradation of women. Christianity is wide enough for all true commerce, wealth, pleasure; it warns us against covetousness, licentiousness, materialism, but thank God for the narrowness that prevents our taking the big barn of Dives for the supreme goal of life. 2. We appeal from the mediæval to the modern world. Whatever a few dilettante critics may say, the faith of Christ has filled us with an energy which finds manifold and magnificent manifestations in the things present. Do you find that the faith of Christ gives men about you a distaste for, and makes them successful in, practical life? "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," and all is yours, for "ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." II. THAT THE FAITH OF CHRIST MAKES "THINGS PRESENT" OURS WITH TRUEST AND FULLEST PROPRIETY. In Christ we have—1. The richest enjoyment of things present. Things are not ours when they are ours legally, conventionally—they are ours only when we so realise them that they rejoice our heart. It is easy to have riches, &c., and yet not have the power to eat thereof. Some maintain that it is in miserable conditions that the deepest need is felt for religious truth and consolation; and they affirm that as man ceases to be miserable, so religion will be ignored as a superfluous thing. But this is far from being the case. Men are never more deeply, mysteriously miserable than they are when they have everything their soul desireth. Look at Germany to-day, brilliant in genius, flushed with power and success, and yet cankered with the philosophy of despair. And we are constant witnesses how successful opulent men are wearied of life; they remind one of bees drowning in their own honey. The fact is, you can only realise the joy of things present in the light of God's presence, in the power of His blessing. When the beautiful orb comes between the sun and the earth, it is an inky blot on the heavens. And so all beautiful things in human life become dark and disappointing the moment they come between us and God. It is only in the light of God that life shines, only in His blessing that it is rich. 2. The fullest profit of things present. A life of material success is no advantage. Maudsley, who has no bias to religion certainly, observes: "There is no more efficient cause of mental degeneracy than the mean and vulgar life of a tradesman, whose soul is entirely taken up with petty gains, who, under the sanction of the customs of the trade, practises systematic fraud and theft. The deterioration of nature which he has

acquired will, unless a healthier family influence serve to counteract it, be transmitted as a family heritage to his children, and may result in some form of moral or intellectual deficiency, perhaps in outbreaks of positive insanity." Here, then, the religion of materialism and material success is nothing very grand. Now, what is to save a man from this deterioration? Romances? Politics? The theatre? The newspaper? Surely not. Great thoughts, great principles, great hopes—these will lift the soul of the tradesman; and these are to be found only in religion. Christ makes things present ours by making them means and instruments of our higher education. Conclusion: In this way we are told much about impressionism, about making the best of the present moment. It is said that man has always one foot in the past, the other in the future, and that he misses altogether the flowers and fruits, the delights and treasures, of the present. There is no vivid, full realisation of the moment except as we realise immortality in the moment; he who tastes the power of the present must taste the powers of the world to come. In Christ things present are ours because things to come are ours. Present joy is ours in all its depth and preciousness; and these "light afflictions, which are but for a moment," are ours also. "Whilst we look not at the things which are seen," &c. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *The present for the good of the godly man:*—I. WHATEVER MERCIES OR GOOD THINGS COME ABOUT, THEY ARE THE GODLY MAN'S, in these respects: First, they are for his necessary use and supply. They come as so many gifts immediately given by God for thy necessities. Secondly, these prosperous things are not only in a sanctified way to the godly, but God also requireth that with joy and gladness we should make use of them for His glory. It is lawful for them to eat and drink, and enjoy the good mercies they have with a cheerful, joyful spirit. God doth not only love a cheerful giver, but a cheerful receiver also of His mercies. So then, when prosperous things befall thee, thou mayest with great joy of heart make use of them. Thirdly, these prosperous things are not only sanctified to them, but they are also made sanctifying of them. God giveth them those good things of the body to make their souls better. Abraham had many outward mercies, but these also were helpful to his graces; he was rich in faith, as well as in cattle and great substance. Fourthly, these prosperous present things are theirs, because they know how to make the present use of them for God's glory. As life was theirs, and death theirs, because they only could live well and die well, so present riches, present death, present comforts are theirs, because they know how to make the present improvement of them. And thus it should be with every godly man; there is nothing befalls thee, no good comes to thee, but thou shouldst bethink thyself, How can this be improved for God? How may I make heavenly advantages of these things? Thus be like the bee sucking honey out of every herb. Fifthly, present good things are a godly man's, because they are accompanied with the love and favour of God, which is infinitely more than the good things themselves. That all these good things are the effects of God's favour and gracious reconciliation through Christ, this makes them ours in an eminent manner. When God gave Abraham such large worldly revenues, and withal said He Himself would be his great reward (Gen. xv. 1). This was the fulness of happiness. A good conscience is a continual feast. Now no man hath a good conscience but he who is reconciled with God through Christ. Lastly, these prosperous events are theirs, because God giveth contentment of spirit. The blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it (Prov. x. 22). Many men have these outward mercies, but then many thorns grow up with them. There is so much gall in their honey that all the sweetness is gone. II. We come now to the second sort of present events, AND THOSE ARE TRIBULATIONS AND AFFLICTIONS. There are none of these present troubles upon thee, though grievous and burdensome, but it is for thy good. Now they may well be called ours—First, because they come from God's gracious love to us. It is the same hand that doth stroke thee and strike thee (Heb. xii. 6; Psa. cxix. 15). Thy tribulations are for thy advantage, as much as all the mercies thou ever enjoyedst. Go to the fountain from whence they came, and that is nothing but precious love. Secondly, they are thine for the blessed and heavenly effects they work on the godly, so that they could not be so well without them. Now of many excellent effects, consider—(1) They are to humble us for sin, to make us feel how bitter it is to go out of God's way. What profit have I of such sins that now do so wound me? (2) Another end is, to make us more vigilant for the future, to preserve us against future temptations. We have been burnt already. Thirdly, these afflictions are ours, because they are exercises to draw out our graces, our faith, our patience, our heavenly-

mindedness, and thereby our crown of glory is greater. (*A. Burgess.*) **Or things to come.**—*Things to come:*—I. THE BROAD FUTURE IS OURS. We are apt to wish to pry into it, but grace forbids us to indulge impertinent and foolish curiosity. My text is a crystal ball, which doth not tell thee facts and minutiæ, but what it is far better for thee to know, if thou be Christ's—viz., that all future things are vested in thy name. Let that content thee. 1. We have no reason to expect that the rest of our life will be more unhappy than the years which are passed already. Life to us has its sorrows, but goodness and mercy have followed us hitherto, and they shall with equal certainty follow us all the days of our life. You who are contending against sin may anticipate the joy of conquest. You who are planning how you can serve God on a wider scale, and in a wiser manner, may expect the joy of His guidance. 2. Still, without any foolish forebodings, you may expect troubles. Changes in circumstances may arise, poverty may supplant wealth, and slander injure fame, or if not, thy friends must die. Then, sooner or later, bodily infirmities must set in. And there must come temptations and inward conflicts, in all which we shall have need to possess our souls in patience, lest we be overcome of evil. And certainly to us all there must come the valley of death-shade; "for it is appointed unto men once to die." 3. Passing on a little further, in the Word of God we have dark hints as to the grand events of the future, which concern the Church and the world. All things that shall happen, be they ever so counter to your wishes, will, nevertheless, come up, like Blucher at Waterloo, at the exact moment when they shall help on the grand old cause. 4. Amongst the things to come, there is heaven—the heaven of the separate spirit, and the perfect heaven, when soul and body in one man shall sit down at the right hand of God—all this is ours. II. THE BRIGHT ETERNAL FUTURE IS OURS. 1. Notice that the text is not "all may be yours." According to some a Christian may have a hope of heaven, but he can never have a certainty of it. 2. Notice, too, that the text is not—"Things to come *shall* be yours." But how can they be ours till they have come? Because we have a title to them; and though, like nobles who are under age, we come not into our estates until we have reached our majority, yet those estates are as much ours as if we possessed them at this moment. When one of our English kings demanded of his barons where were their title deeds to their lands, a hundred swords flashed from the scabbards, as every man swore to maintain his right by his good sword. We take no sword from its scabbard, but we point to Christ, for He is both our God and our right, and we are persuaded that as our Surety and Representative, He will preserve our inheritance for us. 3. Notice, again, that in the text there is no exception—"Things to come; *all* are yours." Whatever may be the future glory of the saints, it all belongs to them. And as there is no exception of things, so there is no exception of persons. Not "All belongs to a few of you, and only a portion to others." 4. The text speaks without a grain of contingency as to the things to come. It does not say heaven is ours if there be a heaven; but the blessings are spoken of as though they must come. Our future glory is ordained by Divine decree. It is hastened on by every event of Providence; it is prepared by the ascension and session of our Lord; in measure, beatified saints are already partakers of it, and we may rest assured that by no means shall we be defrauded of it. III. EXAMINE WELL YOUR TITLE DEEDS TO SEE WHETHER THEY BELONG TO YOU. Are you Christ's? Do you trust Him? Do you love Him and serve Him? If so, your title is clear, and all future things are yours. Rejoice even now in your inheritance. Conclusion: 1. All these things are yours; then—(1) Prepare for them. (2) Gratefully bless God for them. 2. If thou hast no title for these things to come, be amazed and confounded, for it will be an awful thing for heaven to come and thou no entrance into it. God grant that thou mayest lay hold on Christ by an act of faith; thus and thus only the blessings of Christ shall become yours. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ and the future:*—I. HUMANITY HAS A GRAND FUTURE. Consider—1. The possibilities of nature. The scoffer speaks of all things continuing as they were from the beginning of the creation, but the scoffer is wrong. Things have changed, are changing, and will change immensely yet. You cannot look into the prophecy of Isaiah, into the argument of Paul, into the vision of John, without a deep feeling of the coming glorification of nature. "Yes," you say, "but we cannot build much on these." Very well, then, listen to a President of the Royal Society. Sir J. W. Dawson writes: "There have been, and might be again, conditions which would convert the ice-clad arctic regions into blooming paradises, and which, at the same time, would moderate the fervent heat of the tropics. We are accustomed to say

that nothing is impossible with God; but how little have we known of the gigantic possibilities which lie hidden under some of the most common of His natural laws!" "How great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up, which Thou hast hidden, for them that fear Thee!" Nature is a great storehouse, whose treasures of darkness will in due time be brought into the light. 2. The possibilities of society. (1) Who shall say where the perfecting of our physical nature shall end? The coming man, according to science, is to be tall, and free, and lofty of carriage, having a godlike intelligence of countenance. And the woman of the future is to grow with and through the ages in strength and beauty. (2) Who shall say what the intellectual force of the coming man may be? Emerson speaks of "the unexplored riches of the human constitution," and it is delightful to think of the faculties of our nature which are yet so largely undeveloped. (3) Our senses now only take in a bit of the universe, and a larger education of those senses will bring into ken new continents of wonder and wealth. We in the nineteenth century are wonderful people, but in a century or two more we shall appear to our posterity mere barbarians. (4) Who shall say what the social perfection of the future shall be? The Book of the Revelation has proved a stumbling-block to many. But George Lewes reminds us that Comte's system has its Apocalypse as full of wonderful things touching a glorified humanity as John's cities of gold. So all parties are full of expectations of progress—saints, scientists, socialists, are looking for ages of gold. Men are always asking for finality, but there is no finality in anything. We move from evil to good, from good to better, from better to better still. Every new discovery fills us with wonder and delight, and we are prone to stay with it, to rest in it, as if it were the ultimate glory; but God keeps saying to us, "Thou shalt see greater things than these." Some men talk of the world finishing; it is but commencing. This is but the first stage of our existence, and new earths and new heavens open on our sight. II. THE GRAND FUTURE OF HUMANITY WILL BE REALISED IN CHRIST. This is the distinct teaching of the Scriptures. The Old Testament teaches that in Messiah the world, the ages, will become the possession of the faithful. In the Hebrews we are taught that Christ is Heir of all things, and that He brings many sons to share His glory; and so in Rom. viii. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the apostle declares in the Ephesians, hath set Christ at His own right hand in the heavenly places, and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body. 1. It is only in godliness that there is progress. (1) Religion, in setting the living God before us, sets before us a grand inspiring Ideal, which makes the highest perfection possible. We have only to look to China to find an illustration of the non-progressiveness of an atheistic people. It is the land of arrested development, of fossils, of petrifactions. If you could take religion out of our civilisation, as some desire, Europe would immediately resemble the fabled city in which every person and thing was changed into stone. (2) Now, if godliness be the life of the race, Christianity is the religion of progress, because it gives us the highest conception of godliness. Blessed is the nation that has God in Christ for its Ideal. How can it stand still? "Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee," will be its motto, its evolving force, its strength and glory. It is only in righteousness that there is progress. Moral advancement is the condition of all other advancement, and it would be utterly ruinous if our material prosperity outran our moral wealth. There is certain knowledge and a certain liberty you keep from a child, who could only abuse them; and you give him a spoon until he is fit to be trusted with knives, razors, and swords. So it is with the nations. It was necessary that there should be a fuller moral discipline in the race before we could be trusted with certain knowledge and instruments and forces. And so God will continue to enrich us as we are morally fit for fuller wealth and dominion; just as Christ sets up amongst us the righteousness of God, so shall all other things be added unto us. 2. It is only in hope that there is progress. "When the heart sinks the ship sinks," and when a people lose heart the mightiest and richest civilisation suffers wreck. Now, the religion of Christ is pre-eminently the religion of hope. Of the confusion and anguish of the world there is no mistake, but everything depends upon the interpretation of the wailing creation. Says the pessimistic philosophy, the world is in its death-throes. And herein that philosophy strikes at the very root of civilisation and progress. No, says Christianity, it is the birth-pang of a grander world that is now coming into the light. And herein is the faith of Christ a well-spring of life and energy to our race as it struggles onward to its goal of glory. We are saved by hope—that is, by Christ. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *The Christian's possessions.*

sions :—Here is the three-fold cord which unites earth with heaven. I. THE SOURCE of all things—God. He possesses all things. 1. By creation. 2. By undisputed authority. There is no other being in the world to dispute His right. 3. By practical manifestation. He regulates all we see and know. II. THE RECIPIENTS of all things—"All things are yours." 1. In the Church—its members, their labours, graces, and efforts. 2. In the present world—that is, all its highest good. 3. In the world to come—life, death, and eternity. III. THE MEDIUM OF CONNECTION—"Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Here is one Being standing between man and God. Christ's relationship to the Father renders Him proprietor of the universe. His relationship to us gives us all He possessed. We are one with Him who is one with the Father. (*Homilist.*) *Inclusions* :—I. ALL THINGS FOR MAN—so wide is the first inclusion. Laws and forces, beauties and sublimities, thought, invention, genius, endeavour, failure, victory—the history of them, the evolution to which they have contributed—life and death, what is, and what is to be—such is man's inheritance. "How the world is made for each of us!"—each a centre to which the streams of a thousand hills converge, the rays of a thousand stars, the sorrows and joys of ten thousand hearts. "Man is one world, and hath another to attend him." He can go the whole round of creation, selecting, appropriating what he will. II. BUT THERE IS ANOTHER INCLUSION BY WHICH THE FIRST IS RULED AND MADE CONSONANT WITH OUR TRUE POSITION. It cannot seem that our enjoyment and use exhaust the economy of the world. Does any one go the whole round of creation and gather its gems to enrich himself?—then his wisdom is at an end. The whole would be lost, as mere unproductive expenditure, if men kept it for their own glory. There is One who claims men. The end of God's gifts is not to aggrandise a man so that he shall become a self-satisfied vanity, filled with the wind of knowledge, the pride of possession. The law is—All belongs to you, and you to Christ. It is when we are possessed by Christ, and our life is His tribute, that the wealth of nature and the bounty of providence fill our souls to their spiritual fulness. III. And the final inclusion gives a perfect issue to the series. ALL IS FROM GOD, AND RETURNS THROUGH CHRIST TO GOD. Where else can there be an end? The world and life, the streams from a thousand springs, flow into the being of the man whose soul is opened and enlarged by his devotion to Christ. And Christ with all the men He has made His own, and all they have gathered from the generous creation, a broad, deep, rejoicing river, must flow in eternal tribute to the Father. Conclusion: We see—1. The use of the world—to enlarge the mind, enrich the soul, and perfect the power of man. 2. The place of men with all their science, power, and experience, gathered from the vassal world—to serve Christ, to make for Him a manifold kingdom of brave, wise, earnest life. 3. Christ as mediatorial Prince, all the conquests, gains, and harvests of His patient toil and splendid sacrifice devoted to the glory of the Father, whose He is. This is the cycle which completes the Christian philosophy of being, the economy of the natural and spiritual universe, revealing the glory of the world, of man, of Christ, and of God. (*R. A. Watson, M.A.*) *An account of stock* :—We have here a roll of government securities—a warranty-deed to the whole universe. In making an inventory of the Christian's possessions, I remark—I. That HE OWNS THIS WORLD. If you have a large park, a grand mansion, &c., to whom will you give the first right to them? To your own children. Now this world is God's park, and while He allows those who refuse His authority the privilege of walking through, all this grandeur is the right of the Christian. He may not have the title-deed to one acre of land; but we can go up on a mountain and look off and say, "All this is mine: my Father gave it to me." Lawyers when they search into titles often find everything right for some years back; but, after a while, they come to a break in the title, a diversion of the property, and find that the man who supposed he owned it has no right to it at all. Now examine the title to all earthly possessions. Go back a little way, and men of the world think they have a right to them; but go farther back, and you will find the whole right vested in God. Now, to whom did He convey it? To His own children! And in the last days they will have it literally. "The meek shall inherit the earth." The Christian has a right to—1. The refinements of life. He has a right to as fine apparel, to as beautiful adornments, to as elegant a residence. Show me any passage that tells the people of the world that they have privileges that are denied the Christian. 2. All the sweet sounds. When did the house of sin or the bacchanal get the right to music? 3. All artistic and literary advantage. I do not care on whose wall the picture hangs, or on whose pedestal the sculpture stands, "All are yours." 4. Full temporal

support. The commissary department of an army will busy scores of people, but just think of the commissary department of a world! God spreads this table first of all for His children, and therefore it is extreme folly for them ever to fret about food or raiment. If God takes care of a wasp, will He not take care of you? 5. All the vicissitudes of this life, so far as they have any religious profit. There are a great many sharp curves in life; but if we are Christians we are on the right track, and are going to come out at the right place. In this voyage of life we often have to change our tacks. One storm blows us this way, and another that way; but He who holds the winds in His fist will bring us into the haven at the right time. One of the best things that ever happened to Paul was being thrown off his horse. One of the best things that ever happened to Joseph was being thrown into the pit. The losing of his physical eyesight helped John Milton to see the battle of the angels. All things work together for your good. II. HE OWNS THE NEXT. Death is not a ruffian that comes to burn us out of house and home, to leave us homeless for ever. He is only a messenger who comes to tell us it is time to move from this hut into that palace. The Christian owns all heaven. He will not walk in the eternal city as a foreigner, but as a farmer walks over his own premises. "All are yours." All the mansions yours. Angels your companions. Trees of life your shade. You look up into the face of God, and say, "My Father." You look up into the face of Jesus and say, "My brother." Yours the love. Yours the acclaim. Yours the transport. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*)

Ver. 23. **And ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.**—*Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's* :—I. "CHRIST IS GOD'S." To understand this high saying we must remember that Christ is God. But Christ is man also. As Man, Christ is God's great Agent for man in every respect. 1. He is God's Messenger, God's Witness, to reveal the mind and heart of God towards fallen men. His whole life is an index by which you may read the secret spring of love divine; in Him "God is love." 2. He is God's Servant—obedient in life, "obedient unto death." 3. He is God's Priest—the One only "Mediator between God and men," who "ever liveth to make intercession for them." 4. He is God's King, reigning now invisibly in truth, and to reign in due time visibly in righteousness over the whole earth. II. "YE ARE CHRIST'S." 1. By creation, in common with all things. "All things were made by Him," &c. 2. By purchase, in common with all mankind. He "tasted death for every man." 3. By ordinance, in common with all Christendom. 4. By gift from God the Father. 5. By the secret power of the eternal Spirit working in due season, according to the purpose and plan of God. 6. In the enjoyment of a friendship and fellowship such as no other friendship can equal. (*H. McNeile, D.D.*) *That a godly man in all that he is, or can do, is wholly Christ's* :—Where we may observe the apostle in a climax rising higher, "All things are yours, you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." So that the highest round in this ladder reacheth to heaven as Jacob's did, and the lowest one is in the earth. "All things are yours," there is your privilege; but "you are Christ's," there is your duty; even to see that whatever you are, or can do, it be in reverence to Him. So all things are for the godly, and the godly is for Christ. I. Let us consider IN WHAT RESPECTS THE GODLY MAN IS CHRIST'S. 1. He is bought and purchased by His blood, so that he oweth all his being, comforts, and privileges to Christ (chap. vi. 19, 20). So then, well may the godly man be said to be Christ's, for he cometh to be His at a dear rate. Never did king get subject, or master a servant, at so dear a price as Christ obtained thee. 2. The godly they are Christ's because by His Spirit they are made new creatures. They have a new being. For it cannot be that any should be Christ's who live in the flesh and are carnally minded. 3. They are Christ's because He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. He is the Alpha; He is the Author and Fountain of all the spiritual good we have; and the apostle calls Him "the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Heb. xii. 2). It is He that giveth life and motion and all spiritual strength to us. Now every effect is more the cause's than it is its own. Seeing, therefore, thou hast no good but what thou hast received from Christ, thou art wholly to depend on Him, as the stream is on the fountain, as the light is on the sun—for take them away and these immediately perish. We are not to live to ourselves, but to Him (Gal. iii. 20). All our graces are to carry us out of ourselves to Christ, our faith in Christ, our love and affections to be pitched on Christ. 4. We are Christ's in that all our Christian completeness is in Him (Col. i. 19). It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell. The privileges of justification, and adoption, and

sanctification, that we have by Him, are to be more than meat or drink unto us. 5. We are Christ's because we are wholly to be disposed by Him in all conditions, in all exercises and temptations. For Christ being made a Lord and King over us, He orders us in all things. II. Now in the next place let us consider SOME CHARACTERS OR PROPERTIES OF SUCH AS ARE CHRIST'S. 1. They desire more knowledge of Him, more acquaintance with Him; they prize Him above all worldly things (Phil. iii. 8). 2. Those that are Christ's abhor and have no communion with any sin or wickedness, because that only Christ hateth. 3. Those that are Christ's, they live not to themselves but to Him. They please not themselves or others in a sinful way. Exhortation to those who are Christ's to be self-denying, to take up Christ's cross, to love Him more than all they have; for Christ is not for thee, but thou for Christ. (*A. Burgess.*) *Christ is God's*:—Now the doctrine speaks of Christ both in respect of His human nature, and as He is a Mediator—not as God. Let us see, then, how Christ as a man and as a Mediator is God's. 1. His incarnation and coming into the world, it was not for Himself but for God. 2. That Christ is God's appeareth, in that He ackuowledgeth His doctrine and truth not to be His, but His Father's, taking all off from Himself, and making Himself only a minister or ambassador in His Father's Name, and revealing His will (John viii. 26, 28; vii. 16). 3. That Christ is wholly God's appeareth in that as the doctrine He preached was the Father's, so He sought not His own glory, did not exalt Himself but the Father (John viii. 29; xvii. 4). 4. That Christ is wholly God's appeareth in that obedientiul resignation of Himself to do God's will (John xvii. 4). (*Ibid.*) *Ye are Christ's* means that we are dependent on Him and belong to Him. Note—I. CHRIST'S PROPRIETORSHIP. 1. In this is involved the denial—(1) That we are our own. We do not belong to ourselves in the sense that our own advantage can be the legitimate end of our pursuit, or that our will can be the legitimate rule of our conduct. (2) That we belong to the world, parents, friends, country, mankind in either of the above senses; that their good or their will can be the legitimate end or rule. (3) That we belong to the Church. It is a fatal error to live for and be governed by the Church, and know no higher end or rule or duty. 2. Positively the declaration includes that we are Christ's in such a sense that His glory is the end and His will the rule of our life. He, and He alone, has the right to us. To Him, and to Him alone, is devotion and submission due. II. ITS BASIS. 1. Not specially creation, for as creatures we belong to the Triune God. 2. But—(1) Gift. From countless orders of creatures the people of Christ were given Him, in the counsels of eternity, as a peculium, a speciality, in which He was to have exclusive right. God as Sovereign of the universe can give what He pleases, and His will is the only real and stable ground of property or possession. (2) Purchase. (*a*) This gives the right of property as founded on justice. (*b*) The purchase involving redemption from infinite evil gives the higher and tenderer obligation of gratitude. (*c*) The price paid being His own precious blood it gives the highest of all obligations, that of love. (3) Conquest. We were the captives of Satan. Christ has destroyed his power and delivered us who were led captive at his will. III. ITS VARIOUS FORMS. We are—1. The servants of Christ, which expresses the relation as founded in justice. We are bound as His δοῦλοι to live for Him and obey Him. 2. His bride. This includes the ideas of—(1) Exclusive possession. (2) Preference and peculiar love. (3) Perfect community of interest. 3. His friends, bound to Him by mutual love and confidence. 4. His body. Nothing is so intimately a man's own as his body. It has a common life and consciousness with him. The pains and pleasures of the body are our own pains and pleasures. It has a common interest and destiny with us. So are we bound to Christ in all these ways. This is the nearest relationship of all. IV. THE BLESSEDNESS RESULTING FROM IT. 1. Security. If we belong to Christ as His servants, &c., we are secure for time and eternity. 2. Participation in Christ's excellence, both as to soul and body—in His happiness, glory, and dominion. V. DUTIES. 1. That we should act worthy of this relation. Remember that we belong neither to ourselves nor the world, but only to Christ. 2. Contentment. We may well be satisfied if we are Christ's, for all things are ours. 3. Joyful anticipation of Christ's coming. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Ye are Christ's*:—You are His—I. BY DONATION; for the Father gave you to the Son. II. BY PURCHASE; for He counted down the price for your redemption. III. BY DEDICATION; for you have consecrated yourself to Him. IV. BY RELATION; for you are named by His name, and made one of His brethren and joint heirs. Application—Labour practically to show the world that you are—(1) The servant. (2) The friend. (3)

The bride of Jesus. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The possession:*—A gentleman one day took an acquaintance to the top of his house to show him the extent of his possessions. Waving his hand about, "There," said he, "that is my estate." Then pointing to a great distance on one side, "Do you see that farm?" "Yes." "Well, that is mine." Pointing again to the other side, "Do you see that house?" "Yes." "That also belongs to me." "Then," said his friend, "do you see that little village out yonder?" "Yes." "Well, there lives a poor woman in that village who can say more than all this." "Ay! what can she say?" "Why, she can say, 'Christ is mine.'" He looked confounded, and said no more.

CHAPTER IV.

VERS. 1–5. **Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.**—*The ministry:*—So keenly alive is Paul to the danger and folly of party-spirit, that he has still one more word of rebuke to utter. I. PAUL AND THE REST WERE SERVANTS AND STEWARDS. 1. The question therefore was, were they faithful? not, were they eloquent or philosophical? Criticism no preacher need expect to escape. Sometimes one might suppose sermons were of no other use than to furnish material for discussion. But who shall say which style is most edifying to the Church and which teacher is most faithfully serving his Master? 2. With him who is conscious that he must give account to his Master, "it is a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment," whether for applause or condemnation. A teacher who thinks for himself is compelled to utter truths which he knows will be misunderstood by many; but so long as he is conscious of his fidelity this does not trouble him. And, on the other hand, the applause of men comes to him only as a reminder that there is no finality in man's judgment, and that it is only Christ's approval which avails to give permanent satisfaction. II. GREAT DIFFICULTY HAS ALWAYS BEEN EXPERIENCED IN TRACING THE SIMILARITIES AND DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THE APOSTLES AND THE ORDINARY MINISTRY, and had Paul been writing in our own day he would have spoken more definitely. For what makes union hopeless in Christendom at present is not that parties are formed round individual leaders, but that Churches are based on diametrically opposed opinions regarding the ministry itself. 1. As in the State a prince, though legitimate, does not succeed to the throne without formal coronation, so in the Church there is needed a formal recognition of the title which any one claims to office. 2. It would therefore seem to be every one's duty to inquire, before he gives himself to another profession or business, whether Christ is not claiming him to serve in His Church. III. Paul concludes this portion of his Epistle with a pathetic COMPARISON OF HIS CONDITION AS AN APOSTLE WITH THE CONDITION OF THOSE IN CORINTH WHO WERE GLORYING IN THIS OR THAT TEACHER (ver. 8). With the frothy spirit of young converts, they are full of a triumph which they despise Paul for not inculcating. While they thus triumphed, he who had begotten them in Christ was being treated as the offscouring and filth of the world. 1. Paul can only compare himself and the other apostles to those gladiators who came into the arena last, after the spectators had been sated with bloodless performances (ver. 9). While others sat comfortably looking on, they were in the arena, exposed to ill-usage and death. Life became no easier, the world no kinder, to Paul as time went on (ver. 11). Here is the finest mind, the noblest spirit, on earth; and this is how he is treated. And yet he goes on with his work, and lets nothing interrupt that (vers. 12, 13). Nay, it is a life which he is so far from giving up himself, that he will call to it the easy-going Christians of Corinth (ver. 16). 2. And if the contrast between Paul's self-sacrificing life and the luxurious life of the Corinthians might be expected to shame them into Christian service, a similar contrast should accomplish some good results in us. Already the Corinthians were accepting that pernicious conception of Christianity which looks upon it as merely a new luxury. They recognised how happy a thing it is to be forgiven, to be at peace with God, to have a sure hope of life everlasting. As yet they had not caught a glimpse of what is involved in becoming holy as Christ is holy. Are there none still who listen to Christianity rather as a voice soothing their fears than as a bugle summoning them to conflict? Paul does not summon the Church to be outcast from all joy; but

when he says, "Be ye followers of me," he means that there is not one standard of duty for him and another for us. All is wrong with us until we are made somehow to recognise that we have no right to selfishly aggrandise while Paul is driven through life with scarcely one day's bread provided. If we be Christ's, as Paul was, it must inevitably come to this with us: that we cordially yield to Him all we are and have. If our hearts be His, this is inevitable and delightful; unless they be so, it is impossible, and seems extravagant. 3. It was Christ's own self-sacrifice that threw such a spell over the apostles and gave them so new a feeling towards their fellow-men and so new an estimate of their deepest needs. After seeing how Christ lived, they could never again justify themselves in living for self. And it is because we are so sunk in self-seeking and worldliness that we continue so unapostolic. 4. It might encourage us to bring our life more nearly into the line of Paul's were we to see clearly that the cause he served is really inclusive of all that is worth working for. We can scarcely apprehend this with any clearness without feeling some enthusiasm for it. You have seen men become so enamoured of a cause that they will literally sell all they have to forward it, and when such a cause is worthy the men who adopt it seem to lead the only lives which have some semblance of glory in them. Our Lord, by claiming our service, gives us the opportunity of sinking our selfishness, which is in the last analysis our sin, and of living for a worthier object than our own pleasure or our own careful preservation. When He tells us to live for Him and to seek the things that are His, He but tells us in other words and in a more attractive and practical form to seek the common good. We seek the things that are Christ's when we act as Christ would act were He in our place. (*M. Dods, D.D.*) *The true estimate of the Christian ministry*:—I. ITS UNDUE GLORIFICATION. The Christian minister may be made an idol of—1. By party worship of the man. This was the particular danger here. Let us take the cases the apostle selects (ver. 6) as specimens of all. (1) Paul and Apollos each taught a truth that had taken possession of his soul, and so with modern teachers. Well, this truth commends itself to kindred spirits; it expresses their difficulties, it is a flood of light on many a dark passage of their history. No wonder that they view with gratitude and enthusiasm the messenger of this blessedness. And no wonder that the truth thus taught becomes at last the chief, almost the sole, truth proclaimed by him. Because—(*a*) Every man has but one mind, and must, therefore, repeat himself. (*b*) That which has won attachment from his congregation can scarcely be made subordinate in subsequent teaching without losing that attachment; so that ministers and congregations often narrow into a party, and hold one truth especially. And so far they do well; but when they hold that truth to the exclusion of all other truths it is not well; and then, when with bitter and jealous antagonism, party-men watch all other religious factions but their own, the sectarian work is done: the minister is at once the idol and the slave of the party. (2) Now St. Paul meets this with his usual delicacy (ver. 6). Think you that he knew nothing of that which is so dear to many a minister in our day—the power of gaining the confidence of his people, the power of having his every word accepted as infallible? Yet hear him—I am a minister, a steward only. I dare not be a party leader, for I am the servant of Him who came to make all one. 2. By attributing supernatural powers and imaginary gifts to the office. When one claiming the power of the keys, and pretending to the power of miraculous conveyance of grace in the sacraments; or, declaring that he has an especial power to receive confession and to forgive sins; then, grave men, who would turn contemptuously from the tricks of the mere preacher, are sometimes subdued before those of the priest. And yet this is but the same thing in another form; for pride and vanity sometimes appear in the very guise of humility. Who would not depreciate himself if, by magnifying his office, he obtained the power he loved? Bernard, professing to be unsecular, yet ruled the secular affairs of the world, and many others have reigned in their sackcloth with a power which the imperial purple never gave. II. ITS DEPRECIATION. 1. There is a way common enough in which the minister is viewed simply as a very useful regulation, on a par with the magistracy and the police. In this light his chief duty is to lecture the poor, and of all the texts which bear on politics to preach from only two, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," and, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers"; to be the treasurer of charitable institutions, and to bless the rich man's banquet. Thus the office is simply considered a profession, a "living" for the younger branches of noble houses, and an advance for the sons of those of a lower grade. In this view a degrading compact is made between the minister and society. If he

will not interfere with abuses and only echo current conventionalisms, then shall there be shown to him the condescending patronage which comes from men who stand by the Church as they would stand by any other old time-honoured institution; who would think it ill-bred to take God's name in vain in the presence of a clergyman, and unmanly to insult a man whose profession prevents his resenting indignities. Now it is enough to quote the apostle's view (ver. 1), and at once you are in a different atmosphere of thought. 2. The other way is to measure, as the Corinthians did, teachers by their gifts, and in proportion to their acceptability to them. Men seem to look on the ministry as an institution intended for their comfort, for their gratification, nay, even for their pastime. In this way the preaching of the gospel seems to be something like a lecture, professional or popular; a free arena for light discussion and flippant criticism. Now St. Paul (ver. 3) simply refuses to submit his authority to any judgment; and this you will say, perchance, was priestly pride. It was profound humility; he was to be judged before a tribunal far more awful than Corinthian society. Fidelity is the chief excellence in a steward, and fidelity is precisely that which men cannot judge (vers. 4, 5). Another Eye had seen, and He could tell how far the sentence was framed for man's applause; how far the unpleasant truth was softened, not for love's sake, but simply from cowardice; how far independence was only another name for stubbornness; how far even avoidance of sectarianism is merely a proud resolve not to interfere with any other man's ministry, or to allow any man to interfere with his. Conclusion: Learn—1. Not to judge, for we do not know the secrets of the heart. We judge men by gifts, or by a correspondence with our own peculiarities; but God judges by fidelity. Many a dull sermon is the result of humble powers, honestly cultivated, whilst many a brilliant discourse arises merely from a love of display. Many a diligent and active ministry proceeds from the love of power. 2. To be neither depressed unduly by blame nor to be too much exalted by praise. Man's judgment will not last, but God's will. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *The character of gospel ministers*:—I. THE CHARACTER OF GOSPEL MINISTERS. 1. They are ministers of Christ. (1) They derive their commission from Christ (1 Tim. i. 12; Eph. iv. 8–13; Matt. xxviii. 20). (2) They are under Christ's direction and command. They ought not to go until He sends them, and they ought to go whenever and wherever His providence and the voice of His Church call them. (3) They are employed in Christ's service, to act under His authority, to publish and enforce His law and His gospel, to keep the ordinances of His house, and by all appointed means to subserve His work of grace and holiness and the interests of His kingdom and glory in the world. (4) Christ Himself is the great subject of their ministrations. They are to preach Christ Jesus the Lord; and all the lines of their ministry are one way or another to centre in Him. (5) They receive their furniture for Christ's work, and their assistance in it, from Him. (*a*) As to their temporal concerns, that they may be subsisted in His service, He has ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel. And He takes care, in His providence, to protect them from the rage of their enemies, so long as He has any work to do by them (Acts xviii. 9, 10). (*b*) And as to their gifts and graces, He is exalted to fill the officers of His Church with such supplies as are necessary for the work of the ministry (Eph. iv. 7); He distributes His gifts with great variety for different administrations by His Spirit (chap. xii. 11); and is with them alway to the end of the world. (6) All the success and reward of their ministry proceeds from Christ. They can speak only to the ear, but He speaks to the heart, and adds such energy to their words as turns them into spirit and life. 2. They are stewards of the mysteries of God. (1) What their stewardship relates to. The mysteries of God. The doctrines of the gospel may be called the mysteries of God on various accounts. (*a*) They were secret in God till He revealed them, first more obscurely under the Old Testament and afterwards more clearly under the New (Rom. xvi. 25, 26). (*b*) And even after these things are revealed in New Testament light there are mysteries in them still, especially with relation to the manner of their existence or of their operation (1 Tim. iii. 16; John iii. 8). (*c*) After all the revelation which is made of them unrenewed souls do not see their excellence and beauty till Christ opens their understandings to understand the Scriptures, and they come to view them in the transforming light of the Holy Spirit (chap. ii. 14). (2) Their stewardship itself. (*a*) They are not lords of the affairs which are under their management. A steward is but a servant to his Lord, and under Him; and so are all the ministers of Christ (Matt. xxiii. 10). They are not authors of the mysteries they dispense, but are to preach only that gospel which they have received from Him. (*b*) Their

stewardship intimates that what they are concerned in is committed to them as a trust, which they must give an account of to God (chap. ix. 16, 17; 2 Tim. i. 13, 14). (*c*) Their stewardship intimates that faithfulness, care, and diligence are to be used in discharging their trust (ver. 2). They must be faithful to Christ, to truth, and to their own and others' souls. II. THE REGARD THAT IS TO BE SHOWN TO GOSPEL MINISTERS. "Let a man so account of us," &c. You should consider them all—1. As servants and stewards, that you may not raise them too high in your account of them. 2. As the servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, that you may not sink them too low in your account of them. (*J. Guyse, D.D.*) *A true and a false estimate of genuine ministers of the gospel*:—Here we have—I. A TRUE ESTIMATE. 1. They are servants of Christ. There are some who regard them as servants of their Church. The Churches guarantee their stipend, and they require that their dogmas shall be propounded and their laws obeyed. He who yields to such an expectation degrades his position. The true servant of Christ will feel and act as the moral leader and commander of the people. "Obey them that have the rule over you," &c. There is no office on this earth so dignified and royal as this. 2. As servants of Christ they are responsible. "Stewards of the mysteries of God." The gospel is a mystery not in the sense of incomprehensibility, but in the sense of progressive unfoldment. It is a mystery to the man who at first begins its study, but as he gets on it becomes more and more clear. The true minister is to translate these mysteries into intelligible ideas, and dispense them to the people. As a steward of such things his position is one of transcendent responsibility. 3. As servants of Christ they are faithful—(1) To their trust; not abuse it, but use it according to the directions of its Owner. (2) To their hearers; seeking no man's applause, fearing no man's frown, "commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." 4. As servants of Christ they are independent (ver. 3). Whilst no true minister will despise the favour or court the contempt of men, they will not be concerned about their judgment so long as they are faithful to God. Paul indicates three reasons for this independency. (1) His own consciousness of faithfulness (ver. 5). "Others may accuse me, but I am not conscious of that which should condemn me, or render me unworthy of this office." (2) His confidence in the judgment of God. "But He that judgeth me is the Lord." I am content to abide by His judgment. (3) His belief in a full revelation of that judgment (ver. 5). Do not let us judge one another; do not let us even trust too much to our own judgment of ourselves. Let us await heaven's judgment. (*a*) There is a period appointed for that judgment. (*b*) At that period there will be a full revelation of our characters. (*c*) At that period, too, every man shall have his due. II. A FALSE ESTIMATE (ver. 6). Paul speaks of himself and Apollos to show the impropriety of one minister being pitted against another. The Corinthians seemed to estimate ministers—1. In proportion as they met their views and feelings. Every true preacher preaches the gospel as it has passed through his own mind, and as it passes through his own mind, it will, of course, be more interesting to the minds most in harmony with his own. Hence, in the Corinthian Church those who preferred Peter's preaching thought no one was like Peter, &c. It is so now. Thus it is that some of the most inferior preachers are over-rated, and the most devoted degraded; whereas all true ministers are "servants of Christ," the "stewards of the mysteries of God," and as such should be honoured. 2. According to the greatness of their natural endowments (ver. 7). Between the natural endowments of Paul, Apollos, and Peter there was a great difference, and, indeed, between all ministers of the gospel. But what of that? There is nothing in those for boasting, for they all came from God. No man or angel deserves credit on account of natural abilities. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The ministerial trust*:—A party in the Church at Corinth said they were of Christ. They pretended to be so much under His immediate influence that they had no need of other teachers. "What," said they, "is Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas to us? We are of Christ." For the reproof and instruction of such, as thus undervalued, as well as for the reproof and instruction of the other parties who were disposed to exalt the ministers of Christ, the apostle says, "Let a man," &c. I. STEWARDS FILL AN HONOURABLE BUT SUBORDINATE OFFICE. 1. A steward is set over a certain household for the purpose of superintending its affairs. Sustaining, then, the character of rulers in God's house, and representatives of the majesty of heaven, the office with which ministers of the gospel are clothed must be an honourable one. The apostle, humble as he was, magnified his office, and enjoined that it should be respected and esteemed by others. 2. But the office is no less subordinate; it is

held under him who is the lord of the steward. In correspondence with this, ministers are but servants of Christ. Sovereignty in the holy hill of Zion is that glory which He will not give to another. From Him they receive their appointment and all those qualifications which are necessary for the effectual discharge of their office. He, too, allots them their respective fields of labour, and assigns the measure of their success. II. STEWARDS HAVE A TRUST COMMITTED TO THEM. The office of a steward is to take charge of the estate of his lord. Agreeably to this, ministers of the gospel have a trust of all others the most important. Time, talents, opportunities, and spheres of usefulness are a portion of the goods committed to their charge. But the trust delivered to them is the mysteries of God, the whole of Divine truth contained in the Scriptures. 1. The gospel is denominated a mystery (Mark iv. 11; Rom. xvi. 25; 1 Cor. ii. 7; Col. i. 26). Because—(1) Its gracious doctrines would have remained hid in the mind of God had it not pleased Him to have made a revelation of them to man. (2) It was but obscurely and partially revealed under the Old Testament economy. (3) It can only be properly understood through the teaching of the Spirit of God. In the gospel there is a variety of mysteries, and accordingly the word is used in the plural number. There are mysteries—(*a*) Which, though disclosed in Scripture as to their existence and reality, are not level to, but far above the comprehension of a finite mind. Such are the doctrines of the Trinity. (*b*) Which, having been revealed, may in some measure be understood and explained. Such are the doctrines of the fall, the atonement, justification, &c., &c. (*c*) Which, though not at present comprehended by the believer, will be fully disclosed to him in heaven, to which, "At that day, ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in Me, and I in you." "Now we see through a glass darkly," &c. 2. Of these mysteries ministers are the stewards. In making known the mysteries of the gospel, they are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. III. STEWARDS ARE REQUIRED TO BE FAITHFUL TO THEIR TRUST (ver. 2). 1. They are not his own, but his lord's goods that a steward has in his custody, and therefore he must be careful not to embezzle or squander them, but to lay out the whole to the best advantage. In agreement with this, it is required from ministers to be found faithful. 2. No such thing as faithfulness could be displayed by a worldly steward had he no correct knowledge of the estate, or of the goods that were consigned to his care. In like manner, it is impossible that those stewards of the mysteries of God can be faithful to their trust who do not give all diligence in perusing the Scriptures, to become scribes well instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. 3. It is the duty of a worldly steward to provide food for, and to distribute it among the members of the house over which he is set. In correspondence with this, it is the duty of those who are stewards of the mysteries of God to be attentive to the spiritual wants of those among whom they labour, and to make careful provision of what is requisite for the supplyment of these. Fidelity also requires an impartial distribution of the Word of Life. Saints and sinners are alike to have the Word of Truth rightly divided among them. The former need to be comforted and assisted; the latter to be cautioned and directed by it. 4. It is the duty of a worldly steward vigilantly to watch, and anxiously to protect from spoliation the property which his lord has committed to his trust. In like manner it is the duty of the stewards of Divine mysteries to watch over them, and to guard them against the attacks of their enemies. 5. The steward of the mysteries of God who is faithful to his trust must be decidedly a man of God. IV. STEWARDS ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE TRUST THAT HAS BEEN COMMITTED TO THEM. Both just and unjust stewards may look forward with certainty to a day of reckoning. In agreement with this, ministers of the gospel are accountable for the solemn trust which has been committed to them. An account will be demanded from them of their time, how it was spent by them—of their gifts, how they improved them—of the gospel, how they preached it—and of precious souls as to the concern manifested, and the efforts made by them for their salvation. Conclusion: Who is sufficient for these things? None, in their own strength. Your sufficiency is only of God. (*J. Duncan.*) *Ministers and stewards*:—Ministers here means "under-rowers," as pulling together in one galley where Christ sits at the helm, the vessel being the Church, and the passengers the members of the Church. Not only is disunion in the crew fatal to progress and a thing tending to shipwreck, but the fact of Christ's presidency and magisterium should exalt high above petty partisanship, especially when the supreme owner of the sacred galley is God. Here the house-stewards of God and dispensers of His mysteries are said to be strictly such, as being servants

or underlings of Christ; for between the Father of the household or Church and the distributors of the spiritual goods stands the Son. In fact the image is again a stair of three steps. The Father delivers the Divine decrees or eternal ideas, elsewhere called the hidden wisdom of God, to the Incarnate Son. He in turn communicates them to His apostles, selected by Himself to dispense and apportion with wise judgment these secret counsels or mysteries of God to the members of the household. The house of God, an idea latent in the word "household," denotes the Christian theocracy (1 Tim. iii. 16) of which Christ is the nearer Head, God (the Head of Christ) the more remote. It appears certain from some of the deeper texts of Scripture that all that has taken place in the world through all the ages is but the historical evolution in time of the manifold and marvellous counsel of Triune Deity, willed in a remote eternity. These archetypal ideas, both of creation and redemption, were in part only and by degrees revealed to Paul, and of that part he himself has communicated to the Church a part only: for that he knew more than he wrote is clear enough from his occasional ejaculations of wonder, followed by no elucidations: to such an inspired mind teeming with supernatural mysteries, no marvel that all human science pales and waxes dim before a single ray of Divine wisdom! (*Canon Evans.*) *The steward of God's mysteries*:—The Church at Corinth were divided into rival factions, arrayed under party leaders; and unprofitable controversies and unbecoming tempers were the natural results. The idea of the Christian ministry as a Divine institution was lost sight of, while the man who held the office was invested with undue importance. St. Paul endeavours to correct this state of things by showing that the office was distinct from any qualities or attractions which might belong to the man. The apostle himself was both learned and eloquent, but this did not constitute him a minister of Christ. So far as the man was concerned, he was satisfied to be esteemed "the least," and even "the servant of all," but when the office was brought into view it was a different matter. A hundred men, in any county, may write a better hand than the "county clerk," and yet his hand and seal are indispensable for the validity of certain acts. Shall so much depend on office, in worldly things, and can it be supposed that the Divine Head of the Church has taken less precaution to secure the interests of the soul? I. "MINISTERS OF CHRIST." 1. Derive their commission from Him (John xx. 21). The apostles went forth in His name, and never pleaded any authority for what they said, or did, but His. As an ambassador is duly authorised to make and ratify treaties in his king's name, and to act concerning measures involving the weal or woe of millions, so is Christ's ambassador clothed with power to proclaim the terms of reconciliation with God. 2. Are rulers in God's kingdom. "All power" was given unto the Saviour in heaven and earth, and this authority He dispenses to His servants, who are sent forth to execute His will. They are to awe men into obedience, not by implements of temporal dominion, but by weapons from God's own armoury. 3. They become the comforters of the sorrowing, and physicians of the broken-hearted. 4. Intercede with God for His people. All Christians of course discharge this duty (James v. 16), but more especially those who are commissioned by the Most High to serve at His altar. II. "STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD." 1. They are conservators, expounders, and dispensers of all those things once hidden, but now revealed. 2. They are the dispensers of His grace through the ordinances of the gospel. 3. As such it is required of them to be faithful—(1) To their heavenly Master, not following ways agreeable to themselves, but meekly receiving their Lord's instructions and doing their utmost to carry them into effect. Worldly hopes and fears must not influence them, and all they say and do should have reference to their final account. (2) To their fellow-servants. "Gospel ministers," says Bishop Hall, "should not only be like dials on watches, or milestones upon the road, but like clocks and larums, to sound the alarm to sinners. Aaron wore bells as well as pomegranates, and the prophets were commanded to lift up their voice like a trumpet. A sleeping sentinel may be the loss of the city." A dying nobleman once sent for his minister, and said to him, "You know that I have been living a very wicked life, and yet you have never warned me of my danger." "Yes, my lord," was the constrained and sickening response, "your manner of living was not unknown to me; but great personal kindness to me made me unwilling to offend you by words of reproof." "Oh, how wicked! how cruel in you!" cried the dying man. "The provision which I made for you and your family ought to have prompted care and fidelity. You neglected to warn and instruct me; and now, my soul is lost!" Conclusion: Christians—1. Be thankful for the provision which has been made for your instruction and guidance. 2. Be careful to improve it. (*J.*

N. Norton, D.D.) *Man a steward*:—Note—I. THE TRUST IMPLIED. Of what are we stewards? All, in fact, that we are and have, but sin. Health, reason, property, influence, &c., &c. "All things, O Lord, come of Thee," &c., &c. This trust is—1. Undeniable. The moral reason of humanity binds man to acknowledge that all he has he holds in trust. He is not the proprietor, but the trustee. 2. Ever-increasing. Mercies increase every hour, and with the increase obligation accumulates. II. THE TRUST DISCHARGED. 1. A good man uses all under a sense of his responsibility to God. 2. In the right discharge of this trust man—(1) Blesses himself. (2) Serves his generation. (3) Wins the approbation of his God. III. THE TRUST ABUSED. We read of some—1. That waste their Lord's goods. 2. That are unprofitable servants. "Many will say unto Me in that day." (*J. Harding, M.A.*) *Clergy and laity*:—Consider—I. WHAT THE CLERGY ARE. 1. Ministers. (1) The word in the original signifies an "under-rower." Our Lord is the Pilot of the vessel of His Church, and the clergy are the rowers under His command. He from heaven still guides His Church below; but, under His guidance, and by His own appointment, a distinct share of the work is allotted to His ministers. (2) Strictly speaking, the clergy are not the ministers of the congregation, and it is not their primary duty to try and please the people. They are "ministers of Christ"; and they must count it "a very small thing" that they should be "judged of man's judgment," remembering that "He that judgeth them is the Lord." 2. Stewards. A steward is one who is appointed by an owner of estates to deal on his behalf with his tenants, manage his property, rule in his absence, dispense his bounty. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the owner of the estate of His Church, and the clergy are the officers appointed by Him to represent Him in matters affecting His people. As the power of a steward is not inherent, but only delegated, so the authority of "the stewards of the mysteries of God" has its origin in, and depends for its continuance on, the will of Christ their Lord. Now it is obvious that a steward—(1) Must receive some external appointment, and must be able to produce his credentials. It is not enough that a man should call himself a steward. "No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God." (2) Must have somewhat committed to his charge, some official acts to perform, and some bounty to dispense. And to the clergy, as "stewards," are committed "the mysteries of God." It is their business to defend and promulgate the "truth as it is in Jesus," not preaching themselves—*i.e.*, their own theories and fancies—but "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." (3) Is not only representative of his master to the tenants, but that equally is he representative of the tenants to his master. And so it is the high privilege of the clergy as "stewards," to become intimately acquainted with the circumstances, needs, perplexities, and sorrows of Christ's people; it is their duty to find out all about them, and then, on their behalf, to go to the throne of grace and intercede. Certainly if the dignity of "the ministers of Christ" is great their responsibility is greater still. II. HOW THE LAITY SHOULD REGARD THEM—"Account of them," &c. And if you do so you will—1. Esteem them very highly, not for their own, but for their work's sake. Lose sight of the man in the office, and prove your esteem by receiving at his hands "the mysteries of the kingdom of God," for thus you will—2. Encourage them. And probably there is no class of men who more greatly need encouragement. Recognising their difficulties, and wishing to encourage them, you will be led—3. To pray for them. (1) That the words spoken by them may have success. (2) That they may be preserved from all the dangers peculiar to the position which they hold. (3) Lest that by any means when they have preached to others they themselves should be castaways! (*J. Beeby.*) "*The mysteries of God*":—There can be no doubt that this word "mystery" rouses a certain feeling of mental discomfort, almost amounting to suspicion and dislike, in the mind of an ordinary Englishman when he first hears it. In the ordinary use of language, too, the word has got into bad odour by the force of bad association. A mystery is frequently understood to mean something that will not bear the light; something that is wanting in the qualities of straightforwardness and explicitness; something that belongs to the region of charlatanism, intrigue, ignorance, superstition. It would be curious to ascertain the idea which the word "mystery" suggests to the first five men whom we meet in the street. One man would probably say, "I mean by mystery something confused and unintelligible"; and another, "Something involving a plain contradiction"; and another, "A statement which is chiefly distinguished by its defiance of reason"; and another, "Some physical or even moral impossibility"; and another, "That which is believed to be

true because there is no real reason for disbelieving it." And if these, or anything like these, are the ideas which are associated by us with the word "mystery," what wonder that the word is regarded with a certain dislike and suspicion when we find it in the region of religious truth? What, then, let us ask, is the true account of this word "mystery." The word "mystery" in the Bible is a purely Greek word, the termination only being changed. In Greece for many centuries it meant a religious or sacred secret into which, after due preparation, men were initiated by solemn rites. At Eleusis, near Athens, to give only one of the most famous examples, there were for centuries mysteries of this description, and there has been much controversy in the learned world as to their exact origin and object, the most probable account of them being that they were designed to preserve and hand on certain truths which formed part of the earliest religion of Greece, and which were lost sight of or denied, or denounced by the popular religion of a later day. A tenet thus concealed and thus disclosed was called a "mystery," because, after disclosure, it was still concealed from the general public, because it had been concealed even from the initiated up to the moment of initiation, and because, probably, it was of a character to suggest that, however much truth it might convey, there was more to which it pointed, but which still remained unknown. This was the general sense which the word had acquired at the time when the New Testament was written. Now the apostles of Christ, in order to make their Divine message to the souls of men as clear as might be, took the words in common use which most nearly answered their purpose—did the best they could with them, giving them, so to speak, a new turn, inspiring them with a new and a higher significance. What, then, is the meaning of the word "mystery" in the New Testament? It is used to describe not a fancy, not a contradiction, not an impossibility, but always a truth, yet a truth which has been or which is more or less hidden. There are some truths on which the mind's eye rests directly, just as the bodily eye rests on the sun in a cloudless sky; and there are other truths of the reality of which the mind is assured by seeing something else which satisfies it that they are there, just as the bodily eye sees the strong ray which pours forth in a stream of brilliancy from behind a cloud and reports to the understanding that if only the cloud were to be removed the sun would itself be seen. Now "mysteries" in religion, as we commonly use the word, are of this description; we see enough to know that there is more which we do not see, and, in this state of existence, which we shall not directly see. We see the ray which implies the sun behind the cloud. And thus to look upon apparent truth, which certainly implies truth which is not apparent, is to be in the presence of mystery. Why, it is asked, should there be in religion this element of mystery? Why should there be this outlying, this transcendental margin traced round the doctrines and the rites of Christianity—this margin within which the Church whispers of mystery, but which seems to provide a natural home for illusion? This is probably what Toland, by no means the least capable of the English deists, thought when he undertook at the beginning of the last century the somewhat desperate enterprise of showing that Christianity is not mysterious. To strip Christianity of mystery was to do it, he conceived, an essential service—to bring it, in the phraseology of his day, "within the conditions of nature," within the rules of that world of sensible experience in which we live. Is it, then, the case that the natural world around us is so entirely free from that element of mystery which attaches so closely to the doctrines and the rites of Christianity? Before long spring will be here again, and probably some of you will try in some sort to keep step with the expansions of its beautiful life even here in London by putting a hyacinth bulb into a glass jar of water, and watching day by day the leaves and the bud unfold above, and the roots develop below, as the days get warmer and brighter, until at last, about Easter-time, it bursts into full and beautiful bloom. Why should the bulb thus break out into flower, and leaf, and root, before your eyes? "Why," some one says, "they always do." Yes, but why do they? What is the motive power at work which thus breaks up the bulb, and which almost violently issues into a flower of such beauty, in perfect conformity to a general type, and yet with a variety that is all its own? You say it is the law of growth; yes, but what do you mean by the law of growth? You do not explain it by merely labelling it—you explain neither what it is in itself, nor why it should be at work here, or under these conditions. You cannot deny its existence, and yet the moment you endeavour to penetrate below the surface it altogether eludes you. What is this but to have ascertained that here is a fact, a truth, hidden behind the cloud that is formed by the surface aspect of nature? What is this but

to be in the presence of mystery? The philosopher Locke laid down the doctrine which has been often quoted since his time, that we cannot acquiesce in any proposition unless we fully understand all that is conveyed by each of its terms, and hence he inferred that when a man tells us that any mystery is true, he is stating that to which we cannot assent, because a mystery, from its nature, is said to be a hidden, and, therefore, uncomprehended truth. This, at first, seems plausible enough; but in fact we may, and do, assent reasonably enough to a great many propositions respecting the terms of which we have only an obscure or an incomplete idea. A man born blind may, I take it, reasonably assent to the descriptions of objects which we who have the blessing of sight see with our eyes, although probably no description could possibly give him an adequate impression of the reality. Locke himself, like the strong thinker that he was, admitted, could not but admit, the infinite divisibility of matter; yet had he, has any man, an adequate conception of what this means? It, too, belongs to the sphere of mystery. To treat nature as not mysterious is to mistake that superficial, thoughtless familiarity with nature for a knowledge based on observation and reflection. And the mysterious creed of Christendom corresponds with nature, which is thus constantly mysterious, while both are only what we should expect in revelation. And nature, too, in its way, is a revelation of the infinite God. Suppose, if you can, that a religion claiming to come from God were wholly divested of this element of mystery; suppose that it spoke of a God whose attributes we could understand as perfectly as the character of our next-door neighbour; and of a government of the world which presented no more difficulties than the administration of a small joint-stock company; and of prayer, and rules of worship, which meant no more than the conventional usages and ceremonies of human society. Should we not say—you and I—"Certainly this is very intelligible; it is wholly free from the infection of mystery; but is it really a message from a higher world? Is it not too obviously an accommodation to our poor, dwarfed conceptions? Does it not somewhere in its system carry the trade mark of a human manufactory?" After all, we may dislike and resent mystery in our lower and captious, as distinct from our better and thoughtful, moods; but we know on reflection that it is the inevitable robe of a real revelation of the Infinite Being, and that, if the great truths and ordinances of Christianity shade off, as they do, into regions where we cannot hope to follow them, this is only what was to be expected if Christianity is what it claims to be. (*Canon Liddon.*) **It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.**—*Ministerial stewardship*:—I. MINISTERS THE STEWARDS OF GOD. 1. Divinely commissioned. A call to the ministry is a call from God, or it has in it no worth or authority. Let a man possess the consciousness of this commission, then he will go forth with authority and power. Without it his lips will falter and his heart fail. 2. Divinely qualified. There must be—(1) Mental fitness. A minister must be "apt to teach." (2) Moral fitness. The first condition is conversion of heart; the next, holiness of life. How lifeless and barren a ministry without this! 3. Divinely sustained. With all the help and happiness of such outward encouragements as it is the duty of Churches to give, ministers feel that they need Divine strength. II. AS MINISTERS, WE ARE ENTRUSTED WITH THE GOSPEL. It is our duty—1. To expound it. Expository preaching has not received sufficient attention. 2. To apply it. It is not sufficient to elucidate the principles of the gospel, they must be enforced. The gospel—(1) Makes known the pardon which has been provided for sinners; and it is incumbent on the stewards of God to beseech them to be reconciled to God. (2) Is a trumpet-call to Christian perfection. To transform men we must be persuasive—intensely practical. 3. To defend it. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The Christian ministry*:—I. THE ACCOUNT GIVEN IN THE TEXT OF THE NATURE OF OUR OFFICE AS MINISTERS OF CHRIST AND STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD. 1. The ministry of the word is in all essential points the same ever since it was ordained as an employment. At the same time it is plain that several circumstances attending it are considerably varied. The ordinary call to the office, which now takes place, is very different from the miraculous mission by which men were consecrated to it in former times. Their vocation was more immediate, more striking, attended with more ample powers, as well as more splendid effects. The pastors of the Christian Church, in these later ages, are neither possessed of the immediate inspiration nor of the power of working miracles enjoyed by the apostles. They are now men in all respects like yourselves. When we speak of a faithful minister we speak of the rare and happy union of ability and attention, of zeal and

knowledge, of meekness and firmness, in the same character; for all these are necessary to sustain the office with propriety. And are these qualities to be attained with a slight degree of application? 2. But you are not to imagine that while such high obligations are laid on the ministers of the gospel, no duties are, on the other hand, required of you towards those who hold that station. (1) The same authority which lays such arduous obligations on your pastors, requires of you to entertain a spirit of equity and candour towards them. (2) This rule of equity and candour is transgressed in a still higher degree when you expect of us to preach doctrines accommodated to your passions, or to refrain from delivering those truths which are unacceptable or alarming. II. YOU ARE REQUIRED TO ENTERTAIN A JUST ESTEEM FOR THE OFFICE AND CHARACTER WHICH WE BEAR. We claim no obsequious homage, we arrogate no dominion over your faith; but we expect that no man should despise us. III. MAKE A PROPER IMPROVEMENT OF THE TRUTHS WHICH WE DELIVER. (*R. Walker.*) *Faithful stewardship:*—Consider—I. THE STATION WHICH IS OCCUPIED. The station of a steward—one who has a delegated authority—who acts in subserviency to another—and who is required to account for the manner in which he has conducted himself while holding that responsible station. The term applies originally to the ministers of the gospel; yet we may safely found upon them a general argument and appeal. You have each of you received various gifts, which you are to hold as stewards of God, and for which you have to render a final account. 1. Intellectual faculties. 2. Temporal blessings, such as—(1) Property, and opulence, and rank, and those things which give men such influence in the sphere in which they move. (2) National distinction. (3) Civil and religious liberty. 3. Spiritual mercies. (1) The Scriptures. (2) Holy ordinances. (3) The ministry of the gospel. (4) The gift of the Spirit to convince, convert, sanctify, &c. Every Christian attainment, hope, enjoyment, makes the person who possesses it a steward, and involves the highest responsibility. II. THE CHARACTER BY WHICH THE OCCUPATION OF THIS STATION SHOULD BE ATTENDED. The steward is called upon to "be faithful" to his Master's property, and whatever is committed to his trust. 1. Abundant facts prove that men are generally reckless in regard to all the privileges enumerated. 2. Consider, then, in what this fidelity consists. The great basis of all duty is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," &c. Now, in order to answer to the character described in the text, there must be sincere repentance, an entire reliance on the one only foundation of hope, and an earnest striving for the salvation of the immortal soul by the diligent use of the means prescribed. It is your duty—(1) To work out your salvation with fear and trembling. There must be employed for this every natural and intellectual power: for this Sabbaths were hallowed, the Book of God given, the ministry instituted, &c. (2) To attend to what pertains to the Divine honour and glory in the world in which we live. While we attend diligently to the common business of life we must not forget what we owe to God, on whose bounty we live, in whose presence we stand, and before whom we must soon appear. (3) This part of the subject may be applied—(*a*) To those who occupy private stations in the Church of Christ. What have you done in the way of desire, in the way of effort, in the way of prayer? (*b*) To ministers. III. THE SOLEMN CONSIDERATIONS BY WHICH THE EXHIBITION OF SUCH A CHARACTER MAY BE ENFORCED. A steward must reckon on a day of final account. This will be a day of reckoning—1. For rewards of glory. 2. For punishment also. (*J. Parsons.*) *Faithfulness:*—St. Paul accepted the full responsibility of his office. God has nowhere placed on the human heart such a high trust as the ministry of the gospel. We do not think lightly of the responsibilities of the statesman, the warrior, the philanthropist, the teacher; but the ambassador of the Cross stands in the Saviour's place, and speaks in His name. On his office depends the salvation of mankind. The minister must feel the responsibility of his office, and so must those to whom he ministers. The congregation that demands topics and forms to gratify taste or emotion cannot be sensible of the fact that God speaks, and not man. Micaiah said, "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak." The man who helps sinners to build on a false foundation is a source of greater danger than the company of evildoers. I. LET US DO WHAT WE CAN. 1. It is possible to fancy what mighty things we would do had we the opportunity. Some thoughts of this nature must have crossed the mind of the man who received only one talent. Exchange these grand probabilities for actual possibilities. God has given us to do what we can, and expects us to do it. 2. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much," &c. Look into every department of life, and see that he who has faithfully filled the humbler situation, has both fitted himself for,

and been promoted to a higher. Joseph the slave became the premier of Egypt. The captive Hebrew youths were made presidents of Chaldea. The history of those men is not more marvellous than "From Log Cabin to White House," or from the shoemaker's bench to the mission-field of India. Seeing that the Church of Christ is burdened with duties, we long to see the day when every Christian shall be an active worker. II. LET US DO EVERY WORK IN ITS OWN TIME. 1. To-morrow will not have a moment to spare for duties that are neglected to-day. Duty says—"Now or never." Nature, the lives of men of mark, and our own experience are decisive as to this. "Procrastination is the thief of time." To put off duty to a more convenient season is done with impunity. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow," &c. Every hour has its duty, and every duty its pleasure. 2. To further enforce diligence in this matter, observe that our very safety in time to come is secured by fidelity to present trust. Negligence is a preparation for temptation (2 Pet. i. 10). The path of duty is the path of safety. III. LET US DO OUR WORK IN THE RIGHT SPIRIT. It is impossible to be faithful considering the difficulties in the way, without willingness and love. To be forced to work for Jesus by fear is to destroy the greatest condition of success. IV. LET OUR WORK BE DONE UNDER A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY. The work is not ours. We do not supply the materials. We are all responsible to God. The day of account is coming. Shall we meet it with joy, or with grief? (*Weekly Pulpit.*)

Vers. 3–5. **But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment.**—*Judgment*:—I. IS THE PREROGATIVE OF GOD. 1. It belongs not to man. 2. Not to ourselves. 3. But the Lord. II. IS PREMATURE IN THIS LIFE. Because—1. Many things are hidden. 2. There is no universal and absolute standard. 3. None capable of applying it. III. IS RESERVED TO THE COMING OF CHRIST. 1. To Him all judgment is committed. 2. By Him all hearts shall be disclosed. 3. From Him every man shall receive his reward. (*Family Churchman.*) *The judgment*:—I. OF MAN IS OF LITTLE VALUE. Because—1. Without authority. 2. Seldom just. 3. Always transient. II. OF OUR CONSCIENCE IS DECEPTIVE. Because—1. We are ignorant. 2. It cannot justify us. III. OF THE LORD IS DECISIVE. 1. True. 2. Supreme. 3. Final. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Man's judyments*:—Many are in the habit of reversing the apostle's words; and what is most surprising is that great numbers who would be shocked at the thought are nevertheless really more governed by the opinions of men than by the Word of God. The truth is, the fear of man grows up with us from our infancy, is often encouraged by education, and is disguised under fair names, or mixed up with something allowable, so that we become enslaved to it without suspicion. Combined with this passages of Scripture are passed lightly over, which pronounce it to be a bad sign when all men speak well of us. Let us see—I. WHAT THE CASE ACTUALLY IS. 1. The foundation of a great part of the evil is the want of accustoming children to be influenced by the love or fear of God. On the contrary, they have too often no other motives placed before them than those of pleasing their parents, of being well thought of by their friends. Besides, it is natural to wish to be thought well of by others, because we often derive solid benefits from a good reputation, and great inconvenience from a bad one. This leads to the great evil of substituting an idol for God; and this idol often applauds what God condemns, and condemns what God approves. And rather than sacrifice this idol men will go to great lengths—even to murder and suicide. 2. But it may be said that he who is indifferent to the opinion of others must lose one great check on his vices, and that men, in proportion as they despise the judgment of others, magnify themselves in their own conceits. True, they who are without God can but go from one extreme to another; and indeed it is better to fear other men than to fear no one, and there is worse selfishness and pride in consulting only our own judgment than in following after the praise of others. But all this is excluded if we submit to the judgment of God. Here is a check upon carelessness and hardness to reproof, and here, too, is freedom from all unworthy compliances, and a freedom which can nowhere else be found pure from pride and contempt of our neighbours. II. HOW FAR THE SCRIPTURE ALLOWS US TO DESIRE OR CARE FOR THE GOOD OPINION OF OTHERS. 1. It is clear that to gain a good character with men must never be our chief object; if it is, the praise of men will be our only reward. So parents should teach their children to secure the approbation of God first; then they will know that in trying to please them they are obeying God, who has commanded them to honour their parents. 2. The approbation of good and wise men should be received with thankful-

ness. On secular matters bad men can judge as well as good; but in all matters of right and wrong, no opinion but that of a Christian is worth a moment's notice. They have the mind of Christ, and their praise or censure is really our interpretation of God's. 3. But the judgment of God is the final appeal. To our own Master we stand or fall. (*T. Arnold, D.D.*) *Judgment of ministers*:—I. MINISTERS OF CHRIST MUST EXPECT TO BE MADE THE SUBJECTS OF HUMAN JUDGMENT. They are like a city set on an hill, and every action they perform will be weighed, and every word they speak will be examined. Nor can there be any doubt about the right of men to judge the ministers of Christ. Ministers come to them professing to be commissioned from God, to deal with them about the concerns of their souls, and have they not a right to examine the truth of their statement, their qualifications for their work, and the manner in which they discharge the duties of their high office? That the right of judging ministers is often grossly abused cannot be denied. But this can never be assigned as a reason why they should be deprived of it altogether. Those who hear the gospel are commanded to prove all things, and to hold fast only that which is good. II. THOUGH THE JUDGMENT OF MAN SHOULD NOT BE ENTIRELY OVERLOOKED, IT IS A MATTER OF COMPARATIVELY SMALL IMPORTANCE. Many ministers pay far too little attention to the good opinion of their people. But though the judgment of man should not be overlooked, yet it is a matter of comparatively small importance. The opinions which men form about ministers are often prejudiced, unjust, and fluctuating; and it is not by their judgment that they shall be tried at the last day. Their applause need not flatter our vanity; their condemnation need not make us sad. III. MINISTERS MUST NOT REST SATISFIED WITH THE FAVOURABLE OPINIONS WHICH THEY MAY BE INCLINED TO FORM OF THEMSELVES. Paul says, "I judge not mine own self." This expression must refer to his ministerial character. As a believer in Christ he knew much of himself, and bitterly bewailed the existence of sin within him. But as a minister of Christ he was not conscious in himself of having been negligent, partial, or unfaithful. He was able to make solemn appeal to the elders of Ephesus (Acts xx. 18–21). But though he knew nothing of which he could accuse himself, "yet," he says, "am I not hereby justified." The opinion which I have of myself does not determine my character, nor shall it determine my condition. But if Paul did not justify himself, how shall we justify ourselves? Who will have the presumption to compare himself in zeal, in faithfulness, in ability, in diligence, in success, with this holy apostle? Are we not commonly blind to our faults? Are we not equally prone to overrate our virtues? But however much we may be disposed to conceal our faults from ourselves and others; however much we may be disposed to overrate our virtues, still the opinion which we may form of ourselves will have no influence in determining our everlasting condition. The Lord shall judge righteous judgment. It is not impossible that we may be proud even of our faults, and may think that a ground of self-justification which in the sight of God is a ground of condemnation. We should tremble at the thought of deceiving ourselves. If men deceive us as to the affairs of this world, future watchfulness and diligence may repair all the damage which we have sustained, but if we deceive our own souls the consequences may be eternally ruinous. IV. WE MUST LOOK CHIEFLY TO THE JUDGMENT OF GOD, AND UNDER AN ABIDING SENSE OF ITS JUSTICE AND IMPARTIALITY ENDEAVOUR TO REGULATE OUR OWN CONDUCT. 1. He is perfectly acquainted with our character and conduct. What is the judgment of our own mind when compared with the judgment of Him whose "eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good"? 2. The opinion which He forms of us determines our character. We are in reality what He sees us to be. Prejudice, passion, interest, partiality, can have no influence upon His mind: He sees things as they really are. The world may approve—but what is this if the Lord condemn? 3. His judgment shall fix our everlasting condition. In the present world the wheat and the tares grow together. But when the Lord shall come to judgment, the unclean shall be separated from the clean, the unfaithful from the faithful ministers of Christ; and upon each a different sentence shall be passed. V. IT BECOMES US TO REGULATE OUR WHOLE BEHAVIOUR BY THESE SOLEMN AND IMPORTANT TRUTHS. If we daily remember that we shall be judged by the Lord, we shall be—1. Excited to faithfulness. We must boldly and resolutely publish the whole counsel of God. We must "reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long-suffering, and doctrine," whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. 2. This will prove a powerful antidote to trifling with the concerns of immortal souls. 3. The remembrance of this will render our conduct the more becoming. 4. The remembrance of this will

support us under the unjust censures and calumnies of men. The reproach which you bear for Christ will ultimately redound to your glory. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." 5. The remembrance of this will support us under that neglect into which our talents and performances may undeservedly fall. Ministers of the most eminent talents and faithfulness and piety are often neglected. That love of novelty which is so prevalent in the human heart, and which, if not laid under proper restraints, is attended with such serious consequences, is apt to render the labours of the same individual tiresome. When this temper of mind is produced prejudice, and not reason, becomes the judge. But when this happens, and it has happened often and will certainly happen again, a faithful minister rejoices that it is but a light matter to be judged of man's judgment, but that He that judgeth him is the Lord. (*W. S. Smart.*) *The judgment of men compared with the judgment of God:*—1. When two parties meet to adjust their respective claims, the principles on which they proceed must depend on the relation in which they stand to each other; and there is no more fatal delusion than that by which the principles applicable to the case of a man entering into judgment with his fellow-men are transferred to the case of man's entering into judgment with his God. 2. Now a man may have the judgment of his fellows, and yet be utterly unfit for contending in judgment with God; and it is possible to build on the applause of man the sandy foundation of a confidence before God. Have we never met with men esteemed in society who find scriptural views of humanity to be beyond their comprehension, and with whom the voice of God is deafened by the testimony of men? And thus many live in the habitual neglect of a salvation which they cannot see that they require. To do away this delusion, we shall advert to the distinction between the judgment of men and that of God. I. FOUNDED UPON THE CLAIMS OF GOD WHEN COMPARED WITH MAN'S. 1. People have no right to complain, but are willing, indeed, to applaud if I give to every man his own. In an unfallen world this virtue would not at all signalise me, but it so happens that I live in a world where deceit and dishonesty are common. But again, I may give to others more than their own, and thus earn the credit of other virtues. A man may, without any sensible surrender of enjoyment at all, stand out to the eye of others in a blaze of moral reputation. And even when the man can appeal to some mighty reduction of wealth, as the measure of his beneficence, is there not still left to him that without which all is nothingness? A thousand avenues of enjoyment are still open to him, and he is free to all the common blessings of nature, and freer still to all the consolations and privileges of the gospel. 2. Thus it appears, that after I have fulfilled more than all the claims of men, and men are filled with delight and admiration, the footing on which I stand with God still remains to be attended to, and His claims to be adjusted. While not one claim which your neighbours can prefer is not met most readily, the great claims of the Creator may lie altogether unheeded. God is not man, nor can we measure what is due to Him by what is due to our fellows in society. Amid all the praise we give and receive from each other, we may have no claims to that substantial praise which cometh from God only. 3. A just sense of the extent of claim which God has upon His own creatures would lead us to see that we may earn a cheap and easy credit for such virtues as will satisfy the world, and be utter strangers to the self-denial and the spirituality and the affection for the things that are above—all of which graces enter as essential ingredients into the sanctification of the gospel. II. FOUNDED ON GOD'S CLEARER AND MORE ELEVATED SENSE OF THAT HOLINESS WITHOUT WHICH NO MAN SHALL SEE HIS FACE, AND WITHOUT WHICH WE ARE UTTERLY UNFIT FOR THE SOCIETY OF HEAVEN. 1. Man's sense of right and wrong may be clear and intelligent enough, in so far as that part of character is concerned which renders us fit for the society of earth. Those virtues, without which a community could not be held together, are both urgently demanded, and highly appreciated. And even without any exquisite refinement of these virtues, many an ordinary character will pass; and should he be deformed by levity, or even by profligacy, he may still bear his part among the good men of society. And if such indulgence be extended to the iniquities of the outer man, let us not wonder that the errors of the inner man should find indulgence. What else can we look for than that the man who feels no tenderness towards God will tolerate in another an equally entire habit of ungodliness? And with a man whose rights I have never invaded, and who shares equally with myself in nature's blindness and propensities, I will not be afraid of entering into judgment. 2. Man and man may judge each other in mutual complacency. But between man and God there is another principle and standard of examination. There is a claim

of justice on the part of the Creator, totally distinct from any human claim; and while the one will tolerate all that is consistent with society upon earth, the other can tolerate nothing that is inconsistent with society in heaven. God made us for eternity. He formed us after His own likeness; and ere we can be re-admitted into paradise, we must be created anew in the image of God. Heaven is the place into which nothing that is unholy can enter; and we are not preparing for our inheritance unless there be gathering upon us the lineaments of a celestial character. Think then of the delight which God takes in the contemplation of what is pure and righteous; think how one great object of His creation was to diffuse over the face of it a multiplied resemblance of Himself; and that, therefore, however fit you may be for sustaining your part in the alienated community of this world, you are most assuredly unfit for the assembly of the spirits of just men made perfect, if, unlike unto God who is in the midst of them, you have no congenial delight with the Father of all, in the contemplation of spiritual excellence. Take the case of Job. In reference to his fellows, he could make a triumphant appeal to the honour and the humanity which adorned him. But when God at length revealed Himself, and brought His claims to bear upon his conscience, he abhorred himself and repented in dust and in ashes. It is indeed a small matter to be judged of man's judgment. The testimony of our fellows will as little avail us in the day of judgment, as the help of our fellows will avail us in the hour of death. He who judges us is God; and from this judgment there is no escape. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Public opinion*:—This is the language of a man exposed to sharp and unfriendly criticism. There were some busy persons at work by whom everything that the apostle did or said was misrepresented. Besides this, there was much going on which called for a sharp exercise of the apostolical authority, and we all know that the exercise of authority creates opposition. So St. Paul's enemies succeeded in creating a body of public opinion against him. Consider—I. THE NATURE AND AUTHORITY OF PUBLIC OPINION. No sooner are men formed into society than, in order to keep this society together, the members instinctively secrete a certain deposit of thought and feeling about their common interests. To this deposit everybody contributes something, and by it everybody tacitly understands that they are to be bound. Thus every family has its public opinion. Thus every village and every town has its public opinion. Again, classes and professions have a public opinion, which in some cases is tyrannical. And, above all this, arises a larger public opinion, to which they all contribute, and by which they are each in turn controlled, the public opinion of the country. And this, we all know, is a tremendous force. Then, again, as civilisation advances, as nations come to know more and more of each other, there springs up the opinion of the civilised world. This will probably be more felt in days to come than it is now. So Churches have a public opinion of their own. Outside the faith, which rests upon God's authority, there is a large margin of questions upon which the opinion of Christians is incessantly taking form; and this is by no means certain to be always well-informed or just. It was with this that St. Paul here stood face to face. II. THE APOSTLE'S INDEPENDENCE OF IT. Not that he had any pleasure in feeling or proclaiming this independence; but as matters stood, he felt that he could not hope to be of service unless he were perfectly candid and independent. It is sometimes assumed that when a man blames public opinion he must necessarily be right, as it is an act of conscience requiring courage and resolution; but an eccentric man may defy public opinion simply to give play to his personal peculiarities. Public opinion often smiles good-naturedly at such, rating them at their proper value. But, again, a criminal is at war with public opinion; for public opinion asserts as much of moral truth as is necessary to keep society together; and a criminal offends against some part of that moral truth which society defends. Looked at from its moral and religious point, public opinion is at best a compromise. It affirms not the whole law of God, but just so much as may be useful for social purposes. It strikes an average from the impulses it receives from above and from below—between the good and bad elements of human society. The criminal makes war upon public opinion because he is below it; the true Christian is at war with it because he is above it. St. Paul was opposed to the public opinion of the Church of Corinth in this latter sense. If that public opinion had been successful the apostle would have had all heart taken out of him; for it denied the virtue of the Redeemer's work, and restricted the universal Church of God within national frontiers. St. Paul did not care how he was judged by a public opinion intent upon such purposes as these. III. THE CONSIDERATIONS THAT SUSTAINED ST. PAUL IN HIS INDEPENDENCE.

To a good man it can never be a pleasure to find himself differing from other people; because it means that one side must be wrong. The precept, "As much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men," implies that a Christian should do his best to keep in harmony with the common opinion of his fellow men. But there are times and circumstances when such agreement is impossible, and such was St. Paul's case. He had heard as it were the hum of unfriendly voices which pronounced him a faithless steward of the Divine mysteries. Not in contempt or scorn did the great apostle say, "For me it is a small thing to be judged of you or of man's judgment." He spoke out of another world. He was in spirit with God. He did not venture to judge himself. He knew nothing against himself; but he did not feel his ignorance to be a certificate of acquittal. He felt that in his own mysterious being there were unsuspected depths, which God alone could fathom. But the All-seeing he knew was also the All-merciful; and if there were that in His servant which moved Him to displeasure, so also there was in Himself that which would cancel it. God knew the purity of the apostle's intention, and it was the sense of this Divine judgment which made him feel the worthlessness of those judgments of the Corinthian Church. There can be no doubt that any man who serves God must expect, sooner or later, to be judged hardly by public opinion. It is the average public opinion which blames those whose crimes would, if they could, destroy society; and so, on the other hand, it condemns those who, not content with so much of moral and religious life, desire to have as much of holiness as they can. So it was with Noah, in his time; so it was with Abraham, Moses, and the great representative prophets. And our Lord warned us that we must not expect the world to change; "If the world hate you, it hated Me before it hated you"; and again, "If ye were of the world," &c. Thus the apostle concludes that whoever will live godly must suffer persecution. So it has ever happened, from the time of the apostles, that the Church has been at war with public opinion. The history of all the martyrs is a history of this conflict of public opinion pushed to its last extremity. But before a man steels himself against the judgment even of a section of his fellow men, he ought to be very sure of his ground. A man may hold the truth, not as God's voice in him, but as a personal prejudice or passion of his own. This spirit will reproduce, not the temper of Paul, but the temper of the Pharisee. But on the other hand, when on the one side there is human error, and on the other eternal truth, then to give way is to be a slave and a coward. Conclusion: St. Paul's words remind us of two classes who suffer because of public opinion. 1. Take the case of a public man who is convinced that a certain line of legislation is for the true interests of his country. He hopes that his countrymen will share his convictions, but, alas! he is disappointed. The judgment formed of him becomes more and more unfavourable. It may be that there are documents which would at once restore confidence; but these for reasons of public policy cannot be published for years to come, and then only to vindicate his memory. He whispers to himself, "There is a witness of my intentions—one who hereafter will make my righteousness as clear as noonday. He is my strength." And as he passes out from public scenes he can say to the nation which is dismissing him, "For me it is a small thing," &c. 2. Look at the young man who has just come up to London to begin life. He finds himself among three or four hundred companions of his own age. He is a member of a society which has a public opinion of its own. If he be going to cling unflinchingly to what he knows to be right, he will have to reckon, sooner or later, with that opinion. Many young men would go bravely through fire who cannot stand ridicule; and ridicule is the weapon which a narrow and rude public opinion invariably uses in enforcing or trying to enforce its assertions. Sooner or later that young man will have to say, "For me it is a small thing to be judged of you or of man's judgment"; but yet let him remember that he may say it in the spirit of the Pharisee or in the spirit of the Christian. I cannot say that he will escape suffering; but he can, like the apostle, turn from the hard words of man unto the love of God. There is an old Latin maxim, "Don't let us say hard things about the dead." Why not? Because they have already been judged, and have learnt what awaits them at the general judgment. Remember always that there are two judgments—the human and the Divine. Let us not ignore man's judgment; but let us not forget that upon the greatest of subjects it is sometimes likely to be mistaken, and that beyond it there is another judgment which cannot err. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Magnanimity:*—Some person reported to the amiable poet, Tasso, that a malicious enemy spoke ill of him to all the world. "Let him persevere," said Tasso; "his rancour gives me no pain. How much better it is that he should

speak ill of me to all the world than that all the world should speak ill of me to him!" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **I judge not mine own self.**—*Self-judgment is*—I. FALLIBLE. Because—1. Partial. 2. Founded in ignorance of ourselves, and of the true standard of judgment. II. INSUFFICIENT. 1. It may condemn. 2. But cannot justify us. III. WITHOUT AUTHORITY. 1. The Lord is our Judge. 2. He knoweth all things. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord.**—*Conscience the approver, but not the justifier of the Christian*:—1. Man is God's masterpiece, but conscience is the masterpiece of man. It is clear, both from Scripture and from the experience of our own hearts, that every man is a partaker of this wonderful faculty. But this natural conscience is in every unconverted man an accusing conscience. It witnesses against him; it condemns him. The sense of sin on the natural conscience is one of Satan's strongest chains. While a man is under it he will only run further into sin. We may see how it worked in Adam, the first sinner, directly he had broken God's commandment, and his conscience accused him as guilty. It drove him to fly from God, and when called out to appear before his Judge, drove him to excuse himself. And so in every man a guilty conscience leads into more sin; and the more surely he believes God to be a holy God, that hates sin, and a just God, that will surely punish it, like the devils, he believes and trembles. And he never can get peace by any effort of his own. The criminal who knows that he has broken the laws of his country, and that his life is forfeited to the justice of his country, can have no peace while he knows that. The gospel discovers to us the only way by which sin can be pardoned. Thus the tidings which the gospel brings can alone give peace to the conscience of any man. 2. Now St. Paul had found the blessing of this way of peace in the gospel. And from the hour that Christ manifested Himself to him, to his soul, it was his continual endeavour to "keep a conscience void of offence both towards God and man." And that, by the grace of God, which was given him, he had not endeavoured after this in vain, our text shows. Observe—I. THAT ST. PAUL HAD KEPT A "CONSCIENCE VOID OF OFFENCE, BOTH TOWARDS GOD AND MAN." "I know nothing against myself." There was no permitted sin allowed in his mind. He had known the deep corruption of his own heart (Rom. vii. 18). He found that without Christ he could do nothing; that he had no power "of himself to think anything of himself"; therefore by the Spirit he sought strength out of himself, and by that Spirit was enabled to do what his conscience, cleansed by Christ's blood and enlightened by Christ's Spirit, bade him do, and to avoid what it taught him to avoid (2 Cor. i. 12). "His heart did not condemn him." He knew that he had endeavoured as in the sight of God to speak and to live in Christ; and thus at the very close of his life he wrote 2 Tim. iv. 7. II. THAT NOTWITHSTANDING THIS, HE WAS NOT HEREBY JUSTIFIED. Now this is the very opposite of what the worldly moral man and nominal Christian say. Their ground of confidence is just that which St. Paul declares was no ground of confidence in him. "I have done my duty; thank God I have nothing to fear." Done their duty! St. Paul had done more than them, and yet he did not say what these say. This was not that on which he rested his hope of acceptance before God, though it was a proof that God had accepted him, and, as such, a subject of rejoicing and a ground of thankfulness. He felt, that after all he had done, he was an unprofitable servant, and that he had done nothing by himself, but only the grace of God that was with him. His only ground of hope and confidence was Christ (Phil. iii. 8). (*W. W. Champneys, M.A.*) *False peace*:—It is then possible that a man's conscience may think that all is well with it; and yet all may be very ill. St. Paul had declined all judgments of men. One only can judge the heart, He who made it. Man can judge from the surface only. In the very plainest cases he may be mistaken. Human praise and blame are mostly valueless, because men know not the whole which they praise or blame (chap. ii. 11). But neither must man trust wholly his judgments of himself. Since even an apostle said, that although he "knew nothing of himself," he was not thereby justified, what a vast abyss then must the unexamined conscience of a sinner be! I. THERE ARE TWO SORTS OF PEACEFUL AND OF TROUBLED CONSCIENCES. 1. There is a good conscience which is peaceful, because it mourns its past sin for love of Him who loved us; it resists present temptation, in His might who overcame the evil one; it trusts in Him who never fails those who trust Him. This is a foretaste of paradise (Phil. iv. 7). 2. But peace, as it is the blessing of the good conscience, so it is the curse of the bad conscience. A troubled, remorseful conscience has life. There is hope of a man amid any mass of sins, if he hates

them; but a conscience wholly at peace and yet sinning is not alive, but dead. The eye of the soul is blind; the ear has been stopped; the heart has been drugged (1 Tim. iv. 2). II. HOW THEN MAY WE KNOW WHETHER OUR PEACE IS THE FALSE OR THE TRUE? 1. False peace needs but that a man should follow his passions; true peace requires that a man should have resisted them. True peace rests on the knowledge and love of God; false peace relies on ignorance of God and of itself. 2. It is something to see that there is such a thing as false peace. It is something to know that all is not, of a necessity, well with a man, because he is at peace with himself. For this is his very delusion. "I have nothing against myself; my conscience does not reproach me." Take some instances. (1) How was David at rest for a whole year after his sins of adultery and murder! His conscience was alive as to the injustice of taking away a poor man's ewe-lamb; it was dead to his own. (2) How did Balaam blind his conscience! He did speak God's words in his office as a prophet; as a man, he gave the devilish counsel to seduce Israel to idolatry by the beauty of the daughters of Midian, and fell in the battle with the people whom, in the name of God, he had blessed. (3) How did Simeon and Levi blind their conscience by their passion in their treacherous vengeance! Yet they themselves had no doubt that they were justified (Gen. xxxiv. 31). (4) Esau justified himself by looking away from himself, and calling Jacob a supplanter. (5) Saul, in his first act of disobedience, did violence to himself; in the second he justified himself. When he consulted the witch it was on the plea of necessity, and when he murdered himself, religion was still in his mouth, "lest the uncircumcised should abuse me." (6) Samson deceived himself by tampering as to the secret of his strength, making as though he had betrayed it, when he did not, until at the end, when he did betray it. (7) Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard, and held himself justified, while he inquired not how Jezebel would give it to him. 3. But since there has been such a large reign of self-deceit, how may any of us know that we are not deceived now? (1) Men have thought they did God service while they murdered God's servants. It is not enough, then, to think that we do God service. (2) A conscience, healthfully at peace, has been kept in peace, through believing in God, loving God, serving God, and, by the grace of God, conquering self for the love of God. A conscience, falsely at peace, arrived at its peace, through ignorance of God and of itself, amid the dislike to look into God's Word or to compare its own ways with it, persuading itself that what it likes is not contrary to the law of God, stifling doubts, that it may not be according to the law of God. (3) That is a false peace, which would be broken, if man knew the whole heart and the whole life. Any moment might break it; if not broken before, it will be broken more terribly in the day of judgment. (4) A false peace is founded on false maxims, such as—"Why should I not do what others do?" "Why should I be singular?" (5) A false peace is gained by looking at this or that fault of another. "This thing cannot be so bad, because such an one does it." These may be tests to you. Has thy peace come to thee, while looking into thyself, or looking away from thyself? by taking up with corrupt maxims of the world, or while looking into the law of God? while listening to conscience, or while escaping from it? while encouraging thyself by the sins of those around thee, or while looking to Jesus to forgive thee the past, to keep thee by His Spirit and give thee power over thy sins? Conclusion: 1. Look well then whether, at the beginning, thy conscience followed thy desires, or thy desires thy conscience. Granted that there is nothing about which you reproach yourself, that your desires and your conscience are at one, how was the peace made—which gave way? People begin mostly in little things. They take some little thing which is not theirs, or which seems of no great value to its owner, or which, it is thought, he will not miss. Conscience remonstrates, "Thou shalt not steal." And then the will cozens the conscience, and says, it is but "this and that." The deed is done again. Conscience again forbids. Then it is put off. "Only this once; I cannot help it now. I have begun. I cannot draw back." Conscience is thrust back again, wounded, murmuring. When next conscience forbids, it is put off to a more convenient time, or the passion turns away from it, or tells it to its face, "I will do it." And then, to avoid conscience, the soul buries itself amid any tumult of pleasure, or thought, or care. In this way does the soul inure itself to break every commandment. The conscience is first dulled; then drugged to sleep; then stupefied; then seared and past feeling. Look at the first step and the last! Who in the first act of self-indulgence could picture the bloated drunkard? Who could picture the remorseless hardened sinner in the first forced stifling of remorse? 2. But conscience has an inextinguishable life. It cannot be destroyed. It will awake again once; here, or in eternity. Pitiable

it is, when it wakes on the death-bed, and says to the dying sinner, "Behold thyself." Miserable and pitiable as this would be, it would be a great mercy of God. If the soul is awakened even on the death-bed, it may yet be saved by the grace of God. Too often, if it has slept till then, it seems then to sleep the sleep of death. But miserable and pitiable as this awakening of conscience would be then, at the the last, there is what is more miserable still, that it should not awaken, What would it be if your conscience were to awake first at the judgment-seat of Christ? (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *The only true Judge*:—I. CHRIST AND NOT MAN THE ONLY JUDGE OF HUMAN CONDUCT. 1. Human judges are imperfect in knowledge and wisdom. 2. They are often unrighteous in their purpose. 3. Their ability to punish or reward is limited. II. CHRIST'S QUALIFICATIONS AS A JUDGE. 1. He is our Master. 2. He is the head of the family to which we as Christians belong. 3. He has perfect knowledge of the law by which we are to be judged. 4. He knows all about every one of us. 5. He has absolute power to enforce His decisions. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *The terror of the day of judgment as arising from its justice*:—I. TERRIBLE ARE THE OUTWARD CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DAY OF JUDGMENT (2 Pet. iii. 10; Matt. xxiv. 29), BECAUSE THEY IMPLY SOME GREAT DISPLEASURE OF GOD. But not against things inanimate could that displeasure be (Hab. iii. 8). Through that mysterious law whereby the creation is bound up with the lot of man (Psa. cvii. 34; Rom. viii. 22), the visitation of this our dwelling-place indicates displeasure against ourselves. But it will be terrible to those only whom the judgment shall condemn. II. THE TERROR OF TERRORS IN THAT DAY IS, THAT IT IS JUDGMENT. Of all the attributes of God, that which is, above all, terrible is—His justice. Man can bear to look on His holiness, and even on His majesty and almightiness: these are not of necessity directed against him; he can even endure to think of His wrath against sin, His heavy displeasure against the sinner. To be passed over might imply that God knew the soul to be dross from which the refiner's fire could extract no gold. The most awful severity of God were a token of love, that God had not abandoned us. But justice! It is terrible, because God Himself is, as it were, bound by it (Acts x. 34). He cannot show favour, where it is a question of justice. III. THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, AS THE SUMMARY OF ALL PARTICULAR JUDGMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL SOULS, IS THE GREAT JUSTIFICATION OF GOD; the unfolding of the righteousness of His judgments. We know that there is to be a final parting between the righteous and the wicked. We know too that they who have made most diligent use of the talents committed to them shall have higher rewards, and that among the lost there will be degrees of punishment. And since all these on both sides will vary with each several soul, so each must come into its own distinct judgment, that it and all besides, men and angels, may know why God assigned to it its place; why He could not, without violating His own justice, assign it to any other. All nations and each individual will be judged (Matt. xxv. 31, 32; Rom. xiv. 10–12; Rev. xx. 12, 13). Until God brings home to the soul the value of a soul, mankind seems such an uninteresting mass. Those ever-renewed millions of China are born, live, die, and are to us as one man. We think of them as "the Chinese." It never even occurs to most of us that they have any individual character. So as to those hordes, who, at any time, overran the world. In God's sight they are individual souls, each with its own separate history, by which they have been or shall be judged. But then how fine and minute and appreciating an attribute that justice must be which will allot to every soul of man its own place, its own degree of bliss or of suffering, relatively to every other! For this belongs to exact justice. There can be no ground of complaint there. We could not there wish it otherwise; for it were to wish that God were less just. We shall be judged according to our works; not the works of one period of life only, but all (Eccles. xii. 14; Matt. xvi. 27; 2 Cor. v. 10); not of one age only, but of all; not good alone, but bad also; nor deeds only, but the "idle word"; nor by these alone, but "by the thoughts and intents of the heart." IV. THE DAY OF JUDGMENT WILL BE A GREAT SURPRISE, BECAUSE MOST OF US, AT THE BEST, KNOW SO LITTLE OF OURSELVES. "The foolish virgins" will expect that the door will be opened; and they will find it shut. They think that they stand in a relation to Him, as their Lord; He knows, owns them not. They shall be amazed at their exclusion. Even among the saved, St. Paul speaks of what must be the most agonising surprise, short of the loss of the soul itself, the loss of the soul's imagined store with God (chap. iii. 11–15). V. THE DAY OF JUDGMENT WILL ALSO BE A GREAT REVERSAL. "Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." Every human standard will simply cease in that day; everything, whereby we can estimate our fellow-men; all which is admired, looked up to,

idolised, will be of no account. One question alone there will be then, What use has been made of all and each? Every *gift* of God well used will have its appropriate reward; but one question will anticipate all, "Whom, according to your light, have you loved and obeyed?" VI. THE DAY OF JUDGMENT WILL BE A GREAT DISCLOSURE. How few outstanding things will even a strict sifting of the conscience disclose! You see the countenance marked with vanity or cunning or contempt or sensuality, &c.—how many thousand, thousand indulged thoughts or acts must have gone to stamp that expression on the countenance which was formed to be the image of God. They are forgotten, dead, buried: but there is the terrible resurrection. His sins of omission, who can ever imagine? One has but to name the word "prayer," and with what a countless multitude of omissions it encompasses us! Yet even sins of omission are in some degree imaginable, but what about graces neglected or despised! And then the calls of God's providence any one of which might have led to a lasting conversion to God, where have they left us? "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." What we have had, might have made glorious saints of those who have had less. Who will be able to bear the sight of all his neglected privileges? Embrace them, then, this day, and so prepare for that day. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) **Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.**—*Premature judging forbidden:*—The apostle here teaches us that all pretensions to a certain knowledge of other men's sincerity in religion are rash and unwarrantable. 1. We are in some cases more competent judges of the wickedness than of the goodness of men's hearts. Particular acts of sin are incident to good men. But the habitual indulgence of sin is characteristic of the wicked only. But then, on the other hand, we cannot with equal certainty pronounce any man to be holy; for worldly motives may operate on corrupt hearts to produce the appearance of holiness. 2. Though we cannot absolutely determine any man's godly sincerity, yet we may form such a charitable judgment concerning our fellow Christians, as is sufficient to religious communion. We may have different degrees of evidence in favour of different persons, arising from their different attainments, or from our different acquaintance with them. But our judgment must always incline to the favourable side. We are to hope every man a saint, till we have conclusive evidence that he is not such. Having stated the doctrine in the text, note some arguments in support of it. I. THE KNOWLEDGE OF MEN'S HEARTS IS GOD'S PREROGATIVE. "I, the Lord, search the hearts," &c. It is on this ground that the apostle cautions us not to judge anything before the time. For us to judge the heart is to invade His throne. II. IT IS NO EASY MATTER FOR MEN TO KNOW THEIR OWN HEARTS. "The heart is deceitful above all things, . . . who can know it?" So the apostle says, "I judge not my own self," &c. We are cautioned not to deceive ourselves, nor to be deceived. III. WE CAN JUDGE THE HEARTS OF OTHERS ONLY BY EXTERNAL INDICATIONS. In conversing with a friend we may be much pleased with his doctrinal knowledge, religious sentiments, and professed experience. This, however, is but external evidence. We know not but he aims to deceive us, or may be deceived himself. Such works as are the proper fruits of faith are more solid evidence; for in these there is less room for dissimulation. But we may misjudge even here; for it is but a small part of any man's life which falls under our observation. IV. THE SCRIPTURE GIVES US MANY INSTANCES OF THE UNCERTAINTY OF HUMAN JUDGMENT IN THIS MATTER. All the disciples were deceived by the hypocrisy of Judas; and none of the first believers in Jerusalem could discern the sincerity of Paul. What arrogance, then, must it be in us to assume the bold pretension of ascertaining the existence of grace in other men's hearts! Wise is the caution given in the text. Conclusion: The subject suggests some useful remarks. 1. The spirit and temper of the primitive disciples afford a substantial evidence of the truth of our religion. They were not credulous, but cautious; not hasty in their judgment, but deliberate in their inquiries. 2. Worthy of our imitation is the prudence of the early Christians in regard to those whom they received as teachers of religion. In admitting members into the Church, they were liberal and candid; but in receiving public teachers they acted with great caution. They required, not only a present personal profession, but a testimony from others of previous good conduct. 3. The sentiment entertained by some, that there is in true Christians a kind of sympathy or fellowship, by which they infallibly know one another, appears to be irrational and unscriptural. 4. It is dangerous hastily to pronounce men in a converted state. This is judging before the time. As we cannot know others infallibly, so neither can we form a probable judgment of them speedily. 5. We cannot be sure of forming a pure Church on earth. (*J. Lathrop, D.D.*) *Premature*

judgments discouraged:—How necessary it is to make charitable judgments of our fellow-men! We cannot wholly know them now. We see the husk of the man only, the kernel is not yet fully revealed. We must wait. In looking at our fellow-men we are sometimes like as though we were walking through a friend's orchard in the autumn. We see a tree with only a few scrawny apples upon it. We have only contempt for such a specimen, and say to the owner, "Why don't you cut that tree down? It does not deserve a place here." But the owner replies: "Cut that tree down! Why it is one of my best varieties, but the season has been against it. First of all, the rabbits almost barked it, then it was almost uprooted by a storm, but it is coming round, and next year I will show you some of the finest fruit in my orchard from that tree." So we, in looking upon a human life, judging from a few imperfect specimens of its character that circumstances largely controlled, may possibly condemn it as being unworthy. But perhaps the Great Husbandman is saying, "Circumstances have been against him for awhile, but a high quality of life is there; it is growing to something better than now appears, and in spite of adverse influences, it is even now a worthier life than many of loftier pretensions. (*S. Pascoe.*) *Righteous judgment*:—The Church of Corinth was largely turned into a school of ill-natured criticism. 1. Each of the parties was occupied in finding fault with the names appealed to by the others; and thus some taunted those who clung especially to St. Paul with the suggestion that their much-loved apostle might be an active teacher and organiser, a great letter-writer, an ingenious disputant; but he was not faithful: he was wanting in that sincerity of purpose which is indispensable in a public servant of Christ. St. Paul here deals with this charge. No doubt a steward must be before all things faithful; but whether the Corinthians or any other men think him faithful or not matters very little to him, since he does not venture to decide even for himself. His conscience, indeed, accuses him of unfaithfulness; but then he does not see very far, and he is judged by One who knows all. Therefore the Corinthians had better give up their habit of judging "until the Lord come." 2. This precept often occurs in the Bible. Our Lord says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged"; and St. Paul warns the Romans: "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest." I. WHAT IS THE IMPORT OF THIS PRECEPT? 1. It is not meant that we are to form and express no judgment whatever upon human conduct. For—(1) Many judgments are inevitable if we think at all. Judgments of some kind issue from us just as naturally as flour does from a working corn-mill. How can it be otherwise? (*a*) God has given us a moral sense, and if this be alive it must judge with utter antipathy that which is in contradiction with this governing law; not to do this is to capitulate to the forces of evil, and to cancel the law of right within us. (*b*) God has given us also a law or sense of truth. As to what is true, some of us are better informed than others. We are, *e.g.*, instructed Christians, who know and believe the whole body of truth taught by our Lord and His apostles; and so we approve of agreement and disapprove of disagreement, to what we hold for truth. In our days men sometimes think it good-natured to treat truth and falsehood as at bottom much the same thing; but this cannot be done with impunity. (2) Holy Scripture stimulates and trains the judicial faculty within us. The great servants of God in the Bible are intended to rouse us to admire and to imitate them; the sinners in the Bible are intended to create in us moral repulsion for their crimes. And what is this but an inward judgment? And as the Jewish law, by its higher standard, makes the judicial faculty in man more active than it was in the case of the heathen, so Christianity, with a higher standard still, makes it more active in the Christian than it was in the Jew. A Christian cannot help condemning acts that violate the law of Christ; not to do so is to renounce that law as a rule of thought and conduct. A Christian ought, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, to have his moral senses exercised so as to discern between good and evil. Evidently the apostle wished the faculty of moral judgment to be very active at Corinth in the case of the incestuous person. (3) Human society has always found it necessary to lay upon some of its members the duty of judging others. Every day of term causes are heard and judged in our Law Courts before the time. Is this to contravene the teaching of St. Paul? Is it not clear that without some such officer as a judge associated human life would be impossible? No, a judge, so far from being an unchristian functionary, is the organ, within certain limits, of the judgment of the human and Christian conscience. 2. What, then, is the apostle's exact meaning—what is the class of judgments no one of which is permitted to a Christian? Some of the Corinthians undertook to decide what was the character

and worth of Paul's motive, and therefore he bids them judge nothing, *i.e.*, of this purely internal character, "until the Lord come." Our Lord would drag bad motives from their obscurity and show in the full light of day the real motives upon which all before His throne had acted. It is, then, the judgment of that which does not meet the eye, the judgment of the characters as distinct from acts, which is forbidden. If we witness an act of theft, we must say that it is an act of theft, and that Almighty God will punish it. If we are asked to say further what is the moral condition of a thief before God, the answer is by no means so easy. II. THE REASONS WHICH MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR ALL OF US TO JUDGE THE CHARACTERS AS DISTINGUISHED FROM THE ACTS OF OTHER MEN EQUITABLY. 1. We have our likes and dislikes; only those who have a very strong sense of justice keep these tendencies well in hand before they speak or act in relation to others. (1) We do not welcome virtues which condemn ourselves. If our tendency be to vanity, we find it hard to do justice to the humble, &c., &c. (2) We assume that the virtues which cost us little or nothing to practise are the most important, and that the vices which contradict these virtues ought to be judged with the greatest severity. A bias like this disqualifies us for equitable judgment and warns us not to attempt to judge character "before the Lord come." 2. We are necessarily ignorant of circumstances, which, if they do not decide our action, they do, nevertheless, influence it very seriously. One eye only can take a full account of circumstances. He knew what had been the circumstances of the penitent thief when He said: "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." He knew what had been the circumstances of Judas when He said, "It were better for that man if he had never been born." As for us we do not know, and therefore we had better "judge nothing" as to character "until the Lord come." 3. We see only the outside of character in those whom we know most intimately. Sometimes, under most unpromising appearances, there is a fund of hidden good. On the other hand, outward appearances may be uniformly fair while concealing some deep secret evil that is eating out the very heart of the soul, like the disease which is at work upon the constitution while the bloom of health still lingers on the cheek. Every man who is trying to serve God must deplore the contrast between his real life and the favourable reputation which he enjoys among his friends, and must experience something like relief when, now and then, he gets abused, it may be quite unjustly, since in this way he feels the appraisement is partly redressed. We cannot anticipate God's judgments in either direction. He looked of old on a pagan and He said, "Lo! I have not found so great faith; no, not in Israel." He called some who had the greatest reputation for goodness "whited sepulchres," &c. He said that the first on earth would often be the last hereafter, and that the last would be first. You may here remind me of our Lord's words, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Yes; but He is speaking of false prophets, and He tells us that the goodness or badness of human actions is a guide to the worth of the systems which produce them; He is giving us a test of doctrines. As for character it is by no means almost or adequately to be measured by acts. The Pharisee's good acts were more numerous and indisputable than those of the publican, but the publican's inward disposition was his justification before God. 4. Once more, there is the soul of every action, the intention with which it is done. Apart from this an act is merely the product of an animated machine. Many actions in themselves excellent are corrupted by a bad motive. Prayer is a good action, so is fasting, so is almsgiving; but we remember what our Lord said of those who prayed or gave alms, or fasted to be seen of men. On the other hand, a good motive cannot transform an act in itself bad into a good act. A lie remains a lie, even if we tell it with a pious motive. Oh, what a mysterious unknown world is the world of motives! Human law has little to do with it; it touches the fringe of it, but reluctantly now and then, as when it essays to distinguish between manslaughter and murder. But do we really know about it? and, in our ignorance, how can we possibly undertake to judge the inward life of others before the time? On two occasions St. Paul seems to have violated his own precept: when he denounced Elymas and Ananias. But he was acting under the guidance of an inspiration which discovered to him the real character of these men, but which it would be contrary to humility and good sense in us to assume that we were possessed of. If our Lord said to His hearers, "Ye hypocrites," He saw the men through and through, so that there was not a trace of possible injustice in His description. III. WHEN THE LORD COMES THERE WILL BE A JUDGMENT AT ONCE ADEQUATE AND UNIVERSAL. 1. Well it is for us that we have not to trust to any of the phrases that are sometimes proffered us as

substitutes for the last judgment—the judgment of posterity. Posterity, the chances are, will know nothing whatever about us. Posterity does judge the few eminences of a past age, but whether posterity is right or wrong what does it matter to those most concerned? They hear nothing of its favourable or unfavourable verdict, they have long since passed before a higher tribunal. And what about the millions of whom posterity never hears? Surely it is well that we may look forward to something better than a judgment of posterity. 2. "Until the Lord come." Yes; He can do that which we cannot do; He can judge men as they really are. There is no warp in His perfect humanity that can for a moment affect the balance of His judgment; there is no sin or weakness to which He has a subtle inclination, or of which He will ever exaggerate the evil. He is acquainted with any circumstances that excuse or enhance the guilt of each who stands before His throne. He has had His eye all along upon each one of us. He can form not merely an outward but an inward estimate of us; He is never misled by appearances; and therefore, when He does come, His judgment will be neither superficial nor inequitable; it will carry its own certificate of perfect justice into the inmost conscience of those whom it condemns. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Unrighteous judgment*:—General Grant, speaking of charges of cowardice, says, "The distant rear of an army engaged in battle is not the best place to judge what is going on. The stragglers in the rear are not to make us forget the intrepid soldiers in front." But how many judge the Christian Church and religion by its worst representatives! (*H. O. Mackey.*) **Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart.**—*The processes of the last judgment*:—This is a very simple description of the last judgment, only a brief statement of some things to be done by the Judge, without any of those details which address themselves irresistibly to the imagination. I. CHRIST WILL BRING TO LIGHT THE HIDDEN THINGS OF DARKNESS. 1. Now such is the imperfectness of the strictest human legislation that a great deal of crime passes undiscovered. The effect of this is to encourage many to commit it in hope of impunity. If it were certain that every breaker of the law would be visited with its penalties, there would be few violations of its statutes. 2. But this holds good not only in regard to legal offences which cover only a limited range of wickedness. There are many sins which a man may commit without exposing himself to any legal penalty, but not, if the commission be known, without suffering in his good name or reputation. You have only to bring it about, that public odium shall be attached to a certain action, and you may almost reckon on it becoming comparatively unknown. But then public opinion, as well as the law, may be altogether evaded through concealment. There are so many ways of hiding vice, so many chances against being found out. There is hardly anything so powerful as an encouragement to sin as the expectation of concealment. 3. Yet the very publicity to which we attribute such power may be affirmed in regard of all of us. The moment you recognise the Divine omnipresence you make the very notion of secrecy absurd. And yet so powerful is practical unbelief that the very things which men would not dare to do, if they thought themselves observed by a human being, they do without scruple if observed only by God. 4. But let us see whether it be of any real advantage that the inspection is that of God and not that of man. We will suppose it known that on this day twelvemonth there shall be made a revelation of the actions of every man's life: now would not the prospect of this have a vast influence on a man; would not those actions which he would not have dared to commit, had he not looked for concealment, press on his mind and cause him deep agony; and would he not instantly set about the work of reformation, that he might reduce as much as possible what would have to be disclosed? It is not, then, the temporary impunity which induces a man to commit what would bring him to shame if it were but disclosed—it is the hope of escaping altogether. And it is no imaginary case which we thus bring to convict you of the worst infatuation, if you could be content with hiding from your fellow-men what is faulty in your actions; this is the very case which is actually to come to pass. 5. We do not see why it should practically make any difference to you, that this revelation is not to take place until after death. Except that you should be vastly more affected than if it occurred during your life; for if you dread the revelation because of punishment which may follow, you should dread it the more when the punishment is eternal; and if it be the shame that you fear, where would your exposure be so terrible as in the presence of myriads of angels, and of the whole human race? And now we want to know why the very men, on whom the prospect of such a revelation would tell with awful

force, if it were certain to take place during their natural lives, can regard it with the most utter indifference, because not to take place until they have passed into eternity? It must, we think, be that they do not associate such a revelation with the business of the last judgment. We need not suppose there is any one of you who has secretly transgressed the laws of the land, in such sense, that if his actions were exposed, they would bring on him judicial interference; but we may suppose that there are numbers who would be horror-struck with the idea of having their lives laid bare, so that every man might know whatever they had done. Does the merchant allow himself to be guilty of practices not strictly honourable, &c., &c.? Why you would sink into the earth for very shame if this revelation of yourselves were to take place now in the face of the congregation! Oh! then, think, Shall we be able to bear it better when spirits innumerable from every district of the universe shall look with searching gaze on all our hidden doings? If the disgrace of exposure would make you long now to hide yourselves in the depths of the earth, shall you not then be of those who will call passionately on the rocks and mountains to cover them?—passionately, but vainly—for there shall be no more darkness but the darkness of hell, and that is the darkness of a fire which cannot conceal because it cannot consume. II. CHRIST WILL MAKE MANIFEST THE COUNSELS OF THE HEART. But there are many who might venture to live in public; so high are their morals, so amiable their tempers. These men will not fear exposure. But if there be some who might venture on submitting their lives, who is there that would venture on submitting his thoughts? Active sin bears hardly any proportion to imagined sin; for whilst a thousand things may put restraint on the actions, there is nothing whatever to control the imagination, save an earnestness to obey, by God's help, the injunction, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Compassed, as we all are, with infirmity, there is no diligence which can keep watch over an ever active fancy; so that almost before we are aware, there will be defilement within, whilst all is yet purity without. But there will be a scrutiny going down into the heart out of which proceeds evil thoughts, adulteries, &c. Well might Malachi exclaim, "Who can abide the day of His coming?" This ought completely to overturn every confidence, except that which is based on the mediation of Christ. We do not see how any self-righteousness could think of submitting to such a trial as is here spread before us. No living man can endure such a scrutiny, unless he has applied, by faith, to the conscience, that blood which cleanses from all sin. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Hidden things revealed*:—The hydrometer is an instrument by which the strength of spirit is determined, or, rather, by which the quantity of water mixed with the spirit is ascertained: and the dependence which may be placed on its accuracy once gave rise to a curious scene in China. A merchant sold to the purser of a ship a quantity of distilled spirit, according to a sample shown; but not standing in awe of conscience, he afterwards, in the privacy of his storehouse, added a quantity of water to each cask. The article having been delivered on board, and tried by the hydrometer, was discovered to be wanting in strength. When the vendor was charged with the fraud, he stoutly denied it; but on the exact quantity of water which had been mixed with the spirit being named, he was confounded; for he knew of no human means by which the discovery could have been made, and, trembling, he confessed his roguery. If the ingenuity of man is thus able to detect the iniquity of a fellow-creature, and to expose his secret practices, how shall we escape the all-seeing eye of the Almighty, that omniscient Being, "who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart"? *Hidden impressions revealed*:—Place on a cold polished metal, such as a new razor, a wafer. Breathe on it; and though, when the wafer is removed, no trace of the wafer whatever will be discovered, breathe again, and a spectral image of the wafer will come plainly into view. And as often as you repeat the breathing, the image will appear. More than this, if the polished metal be carefully put aside where nothing can deteriorate its surface, though it remains for many months, breathing on it again will cause a shadowy form to emerge. Indeed, a shadow never falls upon a wall without leaving thereupon a permanent trace, a trace which might be made visible by reverting to proper processes. In photography, peoples, palaces, churches, landscapes, &c., may lay hidden from the eye on the sensitive surface for years, and reappear in all their freshness, reality, and proportion, as soon as the proper developers are applied. It is thus with mental impressions. No impression once made upon the mind is ever lost. Like the wafer image on the polished metal, or the picture on the sensitive plate, it may lay concealed; but

a mere breath, or beam, or particle will call it forth in all its reality, and thus on for ever. A man commits a trifling sin; the act falls as a mere wafer on the surface of his soul; but the impression of that wafer is more lasting than the stars. But God has given to the human soul a quality which no polished metal or sensitive plate possesses. No impression made thereon is ever obliterated, though it is multiplied on millions of millions of times. Every impression is vividly and imperishably fixed in all its own distinctiveness, and so it would be well for us to reflect as we look or think or act. (*The Homilist.*) **And then shall every man have praise of God.**—*God glorified in the judgment*:—It is evident enough from the connection that the apostle does not mean that every man, whosoever he may be, shall obtain praise of God. This taking for granted the excellence of the individual would be distinctly opposed to all his reasoning. He can only mean that every man, whose conduct has been acceptable to God, shall be openly approved, and that in exact proportion to his piety and zeal. But when you consider the text as containing generally a description of the last assize, you cannot fail to be struck with the largeness of the assertion. By no perverse ingenuity can the words be made to sanction the wild notion of universal salvation, for those who indulge in the idle dream would not venture to talk of having praise of God. But, nevertheless, it would seem as if there might be some sense in which all, without exception, shall have praise of God, viz., in the sense that all are to be made to glorify God. It will be for the fulfilling this end that any receive commendation; and so far then as every man may at length be said to fulfil it, every man may be spoken of as in the position of one praised. And whether or not it be a groundless conjecture, that the praise given to every man may denote that every man will be made to glorify God, we know, at least, that this latter is not supposition but fact. We can never weary of endeavouring to expel the delusion that God is too merciful to inflict lasting pain, and that He never will, therefore, exact what His Word threatens. The delusion is based on a manifest fallacy. It supposes that it must be at variance with the Divine nature. But God will be glorified in punishing the rebellious, as well as in pardoning the penitent. God has made all things for Himself. He is His own end, and it is Godlike in Him to do and allow whatsoever promotes His own glory. For this it was that thousands of worlds glittered through infinite space; for this it was that earth, sea, air, teemed with animated beings; for this it was that He sent His own Son as the surety of the lost; for this it was that He opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers; aye, and for this it was that He appointed the prison of hell to all despisers. You are wrong in thinking that He has nothing to gain in condemning you. He has glory to gain; more glory than in releasing you, if you die in your sins; for this were to compromise, whilst the other is to display all His attributes. Examine the terms of salvation through Christ; comply with them, and then shall every man literally have praise of God: "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (*H. Melvill, B.D.*)

Ver. 6. **And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes.**—*Apostolic delicacy and tact*:—St. Paul means that in the preceding passage (from chap. iii. 5) he has presented, while applying them to himself and Apollos, the principles regarding the ministry which he was concerned to remind them of, in view of certain preachers of the Church which misunderstood them. He did not wish to designate those preachers by name, lest he should shock susceptibilities already awakened. He explains this method, which he felt called to use in the delicate circumstances, by the words "for your sakes," which here signify "the more easily to gain your acceptance of the truth thus presented." Expressions like "Paul is nothing, Apollos is nothing," applied to other leading persons at Corinth, would have seemed injurious, while in the form used by Paul the truth declared lost all character of personal hostility. Hence it follows that "these things" applies solely to the last passage concerning the ministry, and not at all to the previous passages regarding the nature of the gospel. It is therefore a mistake to find here a proof in favour of applying to Apollos or his partisans the polemic against human wisdom in chaps. i. and ii. The passage rather shows how thoroughly Paul felt himself one with Apollos, seeing he could treat him as a second self, and distinguish him so pointedly from teachers who opposed him at Corinth. (*Prof. Godet.*) *How the apostle reproves the pride of the Corinthian Church*:—I. BY EXAMPLE (ver. 6). II. BY ARGUMENT (ver. 7). III. BY SARCASM (ver. 8). IV. BY THE CONSIDERATION OF GOD'S PROCEDURE (ver. 9). V. BY CONTRAST (ver. 10).

VI. By an enumeration of apostolic humiliations and sufferings (vers. 11–13). (*Ibid.*) **That ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written.**—*The true standard of the gospel ministry*:—The apostle means by "what is written," the Scriptures of the Old Testament; not that he refers to any particular passage, but to the general spirit and point of view of the Divine revelation. The facts which he has delivered to the Corinthians are "according to the Scriptures" (chap. xv. 3). He claims the same allegiance to the Old Testament on behalf of Apollos, who was "strong in the Scriptures." The words are another undesigned vindication of himself and Apollos from the charge of being party leaders. Both kept close to the teaching of Scripture. The faithfulness of the steward (chap. iv. 2) turns out to be loyalty to the Word of God; and, as the faithful servant fears not the judgment of men, so also the pride of his self-conceit is quelled by the subjection of his spirit to God's revelation. Both qualities are the opposite of the tortuous intellectual cleverness of the Corinthians. Both are the surest safeguard of transparent, direct, honest simplicity of character, which, in turn, is the best preservative of Church order, and the only remedy against faction. (*Principal Edwards.*) **That not one of you be puffed up for one against another.**—*Puffed up*:—"Be not puffed up one above another" (comp. in the Greek 1 Thess. v. 11). The followers of Apollos exalted themselves over those of Paul, and those of Paul over those of Cephas. One exalted himself above another and against him. He not only thought himself better than his brother, but assumed a hostile attitude towards him. This view is confirmed by the next verse, which is directed against the self-conceit of the Corinthians and not against their zeal for their teachers. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *The evil of pride exhibited*:—I. By direct exposure. 1. It is an over-estimation of self (ver. 6). 2. Ignores its dependence upon God (ver. 7). 3. Is inflated with imaginary superiority (ver. 8). II. By contrast with apostolic example. 1. Apostles esteemed themselves the least, the proud think themselves the greatest (vers. 9, 10). 2. Apostles willingly endured for Christ's sake, the proud shun all self-sacrifice (vers. 11, 12). 3. Apostles maintained under their afflictions a spirit of forbearance and love, the proud are easily offended, &c. (chap. vi. 13). (*Family Churchman.*)

Ver. 7. **For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?**—*Human differences*:—Why cannot we write poetry like John Milton, or paint like Raphael? One man seems to be good without an effort; another man says he cannot be good do what he will. We differ intellectually. There is Jedediah Buxton, a common ploughman; give him the size of a wheel, and he would tell you on the spot how many circumvolutions it would make in going round the globe. Of Streleczki, a Polish count, it is said that "from the colonial capacities of Australia to the diameter of an extinct crater in one of the Polynesian islands, from the details of an Irish poor law to the chemical composition of malachite," he was perfectly at home. How different from ourselves! Let us come around this subject determined to find out what we can of its deep and holy meaning. Let me first address myself—I. To those who may be inclined to despair. They fix their eye upon brilliant examples, and say, "How is it that we are not glorious and powerful like these?" Now this thing is really not so bad as it looks. There are compensations. You wish to be like the great calculator I have named. Let me tell you that on almost every subject but numbers Jedediah Buxton was little better than an imbecile. His admirers once took him to the opera, and when he came back he said, "Wonderful, she took so many steps in so many minutes!" Now will you change with him? And as for the Polish count he knew everything, but he built nothing, was brilliant but not solid. You should set one thing over against another. Every daisy has its own little bit of colour. Remember the tortoise and the hare. Instead of dwelling on your defects dwell on your gifts. If you have little you might have had less. If you stammer you might have been dumb. Though you have no wings you have good strong limbs. II. To those who pride themselves on their gifts and powers. The apostle referred to these, and asks a question of those who are puffed up, which might well make them modest and thoughtful: "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" He makes every man a debtor. Strength is from God, so is skill, so is opportunity. But one man has ten thousand a year, and another man can hardly live; what about such contrasts as these? Let me tell you. 1. A man may require a ladder ten thousand steps high before he can see any Providence at all, and another man can see God in the raiment of the lilies and the livelihood of

birds. 2. One man may be able to bear the prosperity represented by ten thousand a year, and another might be crushed by the golden load. 3. And wholly apart from all such considerations, it still remains graciously true that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." III. To THOSE WHO WONDER HOW IT IS THAT ONE MAN IS SAVED, AND ANOTHER MAN IS LOST. 1. God is far more concerned for the salvation of the human family than it is possible for man to be. He will do all that can be done. Let me leave the awful problem in His good hands. 2. The judgments of God are founded upon the gifts of God. When much is given, much will be required; where little has been given, little will be required. 3. It is not for me to say who will be saved, and who will not. I may not ask, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" or He will instantly answer: Strive to enter in at the straight gate! He will throw me back on my own obligations, and withdraw me from problems too deep for my immature and presumptuous mind. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Distinguishing grace*:—Pride is the inherent sin of man, and yet it is of all sins the most foolish. A thousand arguments might be used to show its absurdity; but none of these would be sufficient to quench its vitality. Take for instance the argument of creation. We are the thing formed; shall we say of ourselves that we deserve honour because God hath formed us wondrously? What are we, after all, but as grasshoppers in God's sight? But surely if this prevail not to clip the pinions of our pride, the Christian man may at least bind its wings with arguments derived from the distinguishing love and peculiar mercies of God. Observe—I. WHEREIN GOD HATH MADE US TO DIFFER. 1. Many of us differ from others in God's providential dealings towards us. Many of God's beloved children are in the depths of poverty, while some of us who are here have all that heart can wish. Let us gratefully ask, "Who maketh us to differ?" Perhaps none of us can ever know, until the great day shall reveal it, how much some of God's servants are tried, and if God hath made our path more pleasant, it is owing only to His grace, and we will not be high-minded, but condescend to men of low estate. The more God has given us the more we are in debt. Why should a man boast because he is deeper in debt than another? But the best way for you to feel this is to go into the hospital; then go round the neighbourhood to the sick who have lain for years upon the same bed, and after that go and visit some of God's poverty-stricken children. 2. Many differ in regard to God's gracious dealings. (1) Ask yourself, Why am I not at this very hour hearing the Word with my outward ear, but rejecting it in my inward heart? Have I made myself to differ? God forbid that such a proud thought should defile our hearts. The only reason is because He hath made thee to differ. Who are more hardened than those to whom we have alluded? (2) There are some of whose salvation, if it were to be wrought by man, we must indeed utterly despair; for their hearts are harder than the most stubborn steel. How is it that my heart is melted, my conscience is tender, and that I know how to pray and to groan before God on account of sin? (3) But the lowest class of sinners do not mingle with our congregations, but are to be seen in our streets and lanes. How frightful are the sins of drunkenness, of blasphemy, of lasciviousness! "Who maketh thee to differ?" Some of you have experienced redemption from these very iniquities. (4) How is it that the minister has not forsaken his profession? How is it that the deacons have not turned aside unto crooked ways? How is it that so many members of this Church have been kept so that the wicked one toucheth them not? Let Abraham be deserted by God, he equivocates and denies his wife. Let Noah be deserted, he becomes a drunkard. Let David be left, and Uriah's wife shall soon show the world that the man after God's own heart hath still an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Then give all glory to the only wise God your Saviour who has kept you thus. (5) Since you and I have joined the Church how many who were once our companions have been damned whilst we have been saved? Oh, why is it you are not already a fiend; who is it that has given you a good hope through grace? II. Now WHAT SHALL WE SAY TO THESE THINGS? If God has made you to differ—1. You should pray, "Lord, humble us. Take away pride out of us. O God, forgive us, that we should ever be proud." 2. Why may He not make others to differ too? "After the Lord saved me," said one, "I never despaired of anybody." Will you ever give up praying for anybody now that you are saved? Let me serve Him more than others. "What do ye more than others?" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *All blessings come from God*:—I. I begin with reminding you that EVERY BLESSING WE POSSESS IS THE GIFT OF GOD, and that we have nothing which we did not

receive from Him. That this is the case with respect to natural endowments will readily be admitted. A quick apprehension, a retentive memory, a lively imagination, and other mental powers are favours which the great Author of our being dispenseth to whom, and in what measure, it pleaseth Him; and never was any man so arrogant as to pretend that he bestowed these qualities upon himself. It is no less evident that the light of Divine revelation is an additional blessing which flows immediately from the same fountain of beneficence. We see every day that earthly things are estimated, not by their use, but by their scarcity; though, in fact, the things that are truly precious, because most necessary, instead of being rare, are scattered abroad with the greatest profusion. Thus doth God dispense temporal benefits: the best, that is the most useful, are universally given out in greatest abundance. And it may justly be affirmed that spiritual blessings are dispensed in the same way. The most comprehensive blessing, the unspeakable gift of Jesus Christ, is of all others the most free and liberal. In like manner the great rules of duty, and the truths that are best adapted to purify our hearts, and reform our practice, are dispersed, as it were, around us in the greatest plenty and variety. This affords a glorious display of the wisdom and goodness of our great Lawgiver and Judge. But, alas! we thwart His merciful intentions. Overlooking what is near, we roam abroad in quest of other things that lie at the remotest distance from us, and have the feeblest influence upon our temper and practice. To correct this false taste, by recalling men's attention to the most simple and practical truths, ought, in my apprehension, to be the principal aim of a gospel minister. Life is short, and souls are precious, and therefore things of eternal consequence ought in all reason to be preferred. II. To select some PRACTICAL LESSONS was the second thing proposed, to which I now proceed. 1. If all the blessings we possess be the gifts of God, the effects of His free and unmerited bounty, then surely we ought to be humble. 2. From the same principle, with equal ease and certainty, we may deduce our obligation to thankfulness and praise. 3. To humility and gratitude I add resignation to the will of God. Surely if no wrong be done us, we have no right to complain. We ought rather to adore that goodness which at first bestowed the gift, gave us the comfortable enjoyment of it, and continued it with us so long. 4. Did we attend to this truth we should not dare to employ any means that are unlawful for improving our circumstances, or acquiring the good things that belong to a present world, and even in using the means that are lawful, we should constantly look up to God for success, and implore His blessing upon our honest endeavours. 5. The importance of enjoying the blessing of God, with all the gifts which His bounty bestows upon us. From this alone ariseth their value, and nothing else can impart to them that sweetness which renders the possession of them truly desirable. (*R. Walker.*)

The free grace and gifts of God:—These are questions which strike at the very root of human pride. They teach us the absolutely dependent condition of every one upon earth. Why some should be rich, others poor; why some should be strong, others weak; some blessed with the highest powers of thought and understanding, and others deprived of reason, of this great gift of God; why some should be endowed with many excellent graces of the soul; why some should be cut off in the very midst of their sins, whilst we have been spared—are difficulties which human reason could never explain. We require something infinitely beyond all human authority to explain these things, and to teach them as truths to be reconciled with the gracious attributes of the Supreme Being—and this want is well supplied. From Scripture we learn, that as God is the Creator of all things, so He has the unquestionable right of disposing and adapting everything according to His own free will, both in the moral and natural world. His holy Word very plainly tells us that He is the sole Author of all good (John iii. 27, vi. 65; James i. 17; 1 Cor. iii. 7; 2 Cor. iii. 5; Phil. ii. 13). There are other passages which teach us that God deals out His mercies according to His own free grace, without regard to any real merit on the part of those, His fallen creatures, who are the objects of His gracious and Fatherly care (Acts xvii. 24, 25, 28; Exod. xxxiii. 19; Isa. lxv. 1; Matt. xx. 15; Luke xix. 10; Rom. ix. 16, xi. 33; Eph. ii. 8, 9). 1. Of this doctrine of God's free grace in the distribution of His manifold gifts, the following practical uses may be made. First, we are never to suffer our not being able to understand the counsels of God to perplex our minds, or to prevent us from fulfilling the various duties which He hath given us to perform. We know enough of God's moral government over us to know this great truth, that whatever comes from Him must be right and good, however unable we may be

to explain all His dealings towards the children of men. We are therefore to go on with the work of God, the salvation of our immortal souls, with constancy and holy zeal. 2. We are, secondly, to rest satisfied with what hath been already made known to us, waiting for more perfect knowledge of the ways of God in the world to come. (*H. Marriot.*) *The inequalities of life*:—1. That inequalities do exist is one of the most patent and enduring of facts. And we cannot but reflect that it might have been otherwise. The moral law, indeed, could not have been other than it is consistently with the nature of its Author; but we might conceivably have had a world upon which a law of equality might have been stamped as plainly as it is in fact everywhere absent. Nor is grace in this matter the antithesis of nature. 2. The great truth which the apostle suggests is that the author of differences is the infinitely wise and good God. It is not chance; it is not a fatal outcome of inexorable law. We differ from one another—I. IN EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES. 1. Of these inequalities, England is, perhaps, beyond any country in Europe, the great example. The contrast presented by the east and west ends of the metropolis is probably not to be found in any other capital; and, considering the small area and vast population of this country, the actual distribution of land and wealth might seem to approach the proportions of a social danger, and to threaten some form of destructive change. 2. There are answers enough to the apostle's question. These differences, we are told, are begotten of ancient injustice; they are a legacy of feudalism, or they are traceable to more recent eras of misgovernment; they represent the traditional selfishness of one class and the chronic inertness and degradation of another. Let the truth of all this, here and there, be granted, yet vast differences will still remain, due to the simple fact that God makes one man to differ from another in productive power, and hence there is inevitably a corresponding difference in the amount produced. If to-morrow you could cut up the land into strips, that every Englishman should have his tiny share in it, a fortnight would not pass before the reign of inequality would have begun again. Nature and fact would assert themselves against theory; and property varying in amount concomitantly with each man's productive power, would find its way into the hands of a minority—though, no doubt, a new minority—of the people. 3. What is this, then, but the old story of the Church ever upholding privilege against right, wealth against poverty, the few against the many? What is this but an endeavour to stereotype wrong by making God responsible for it, and by interposing Divine sanctions between it and its correction? And if we point in reply to a future in which inequalities will be for ever redressed, we are fiercely warned that this faith of ours in a future stands in the way of efforts to improve man's present lot. No, you misunderstand us. If property be of a kind to make crime almost the instinct of self-preservation; if the lack of education means no ruling moral principles in the conscience; if human beings are huddled together into dwellings which deny to purity its simplest safeguards, then, most assuredly, the Church of Christ would be false to her Master if she did not, at whatever risks, urge a remedy. Nay, more, whenever Christianity is really believed and acted on, it tends to lessen the general inequalities of life. Its charities throw bridges over the abysses which separate classes; its spirit of self-sacrifice prompts the free abandonment of wealth and station for the sake of others. Yet when all that can be done in this direction has been done, great inequalities must remain, because they are due to inherited differences of personal capacity. II. IN THE PERSONAL ENDOWMENTS WITH WHICH OUR CREATOR HAS SENT US INTO THE WORLD. 1. Race differs so widely from race, that these differences have been exaggerated into one of the stock arguments against the unity of the human family. But members of the same race often differ from each other scarcely, if at all, less widely. Not seldom does this original inequality traverse, as if with a disdainful irony, the other inequalities of external circumstances which you have inherited from those who have transmitted to you their name and blood. 2. Here we are encountered by the doctrine of heredity. We are told that every quality in the individual has its roots and germs in the ancestral past. Undoubtedly this doctrine rests on a basis of fact; but if you say that most of the differences between man and man can be explained by it, does this do anything more than postpone the larger question which lies behind? Why should a given individual have this particular ancestry? Nay, why should there be anything to be transmitted, or any law of type to govern its transmission? In presence of these questions, science is wisely silent; but religion is not silent. And the answer to them leaves man, as he was of old, in the pre-scientific days, face to face with the Almighty Creator. III. IN THE RELIGIOUS ADVANTAGES AND

OPPORTUNITIES WHICH HAVE BEEN BESTOWED ON US. Our homes are, in this respect, very different; in some God is practically ignored, in others His will and honour are made a first consideration. The schools to which we have been sent are very different; in some religion is all but forgotten, in others it is the life and soul of the whole system. Our friendships are very different; and there are times in life when, religiously speaking, a friendship may have decisive consequences. Who maketh thee to differ from another? Who stands behind the opportunities of youth, behind the intellectual and moral environments of manhood, behind the subtle predispositions, which from the early days of life exercise a propelling influence in this direction or in that? Who gave his mother to St. Augustine, and his father to John Stuart Mill? These differences come from God; and if we ask why they should exist, we find ourselves face to face with abysmal mysteries, out of which issues the warning, "Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with Mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?" Conclusion: 1. But is not this disappointing? Might we not have hoped that Christ, in whom all are brethren, and who makes all free indeed, would also have made us equal? But let us note that inequality of gift does not imply that God loves less those to whom He gives less. He gives as we can bear His gifts; He withholds, as He bestows, in love. Nay, underlying the great differences there is a much truer equality than we may think. As in a well-ordered state all are equal before the law, so in the Church all are equal before their Maker and Redeemer. We are equal, in that—(1) We all have before us the solemn moment of death. (2) We shall all be judged relatively to the gifts and opportunities we have enjoyed. (3) We must all of us be washed in the precious blood of Christ, and sanctified by the Eternal Spirit. (4) We are all of us receivers, although some of us may have received five talents, and others one. 2. What hast thou that thou hast not received? Is there nothing? Yes, one thing, only one—sin. 3. The temper in which we should think and act in view of the truth before us has three characteristics. (1) Disinterestedness. Any gift, possessed by others, and used for the glory of the Giver, should excite in a Christian pure and disinterested pleasure. If He has not given them to us individually, what does that matter, so far as our appreciating them is concerned? (2) Anxiety. Anxiety for others lest they should misuse God's bounty; but great anxiety for ourselves, if any of us have reason to think that we have been entrusted with anything considerable. "Be not high-minded, but fear." (3) Self-consecration. It may be little that you can give, give it to God; it may be what men deem much, give it unreservedly. (*Canon Liddon.*) *A catechism for the proud:* — 1. The Corinthian Church was exceedingly gifted. Alas! its grace was not in proportion to its gifts, and consequently a proud spirit was developed. Parties were formed who gloried in men that other men might glory in them. 2. There is great wisdom in Paul's rebuke. He did not cry down their talents. You very seldom lower a man's opinion of himself by undervaluing his gifts. He remembers the fable of the fox and the sour grapes. Pride is not to be cured by injustice: one devil will not drive out another. Pride often finds fuel for itself in that which was intended to damp its flame. The apostle follows a far more sensible course; he asks where the talent comes from. 3. The questions of the text may well humble us; but to this end we need the assistance of the Holy Ghost, for nothing is more difficult than to overcome our self-conceit. Pride hides itself under numberless disguises. Many take a pride in what they call having no pride about them. When Diogenes trampled on his valuable carpets and said, "I trample upon the pride of Plato!" "Yes," said Plato, "and with greater pride." Note—I. A GREAT AND COMPREHENSIVE TRUTH. "Every good gift," &c. 1. Temporal advantages. Men boast of—(1) Strength and beauty; but these are gifts, not virtues. Some consider the strongest man to be the best, forgetting that horses and elephants can bear greater loads, and lions and tigers can be fiercer in fight. As for beauty, one of its most potent charms lies in its modest unconsciousness. These personal advantages are distributed at the Divine pleasure. The Lord has made one athletic while another is born a cripple, &c. (2) Position. But what determined the circumstances of our birth? and after all we are all on a level if we trace our pedigrees to their common meeting-place. Some claim to have made their own position; nay, to have made themselves. Yes, and worship their supposed maker. But "who gave you your opportunity and the force of character which have brought you to the front?" (3) Talent and knowledge; but to whom do they owe those natural predilections and talents which have been denied to others who have been equally industrious? Whence also has come the

health which has enabled the student to persevere in laborious research? (4) Wealth. Certainly it is to a man's credit that he has not squandered his money in waste and self-indulgence; but still, what has he that he did not receive? His habits and discretions may be traced to training, or to force of mind, or to happy example, and they are, therefore, things received. And then his success, it is not alone due to industry, for sickness or accident might have made him unable to earn his bread. "Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth." 2. Gracious privileges. Those who have been saved by Divine grace differ greatly from what they used to be, and from others still unregenerate. How comes this? It has been by the hearing of the gospel as the means, but we must ascribe it to Divine grace, and not to chance, that we were born where the gospel was preached, and not left under the influence of heathenism. The sovereignty of God is to be seen, again, in the fact that one should be found under a cold, dead ministry, and another should hear a soul-saving preacher. Yet further, there were some who heard the same sermons as you did and were not converted, and you were. How came that about? It is true you did pay more earnest attention, but what led you to do so? 3. Spiritual blessings. Conviction of sin; did that arise spontaneously, or did the Spirit convince you of sin? Repentance towards God—was that wrought in you by the Holy Spirit, or was it the outgrowth of your own free will? You have faith, but faith is the gift of God. Since your conversion you have exhibited some measure of holiness, but was that wrought in you by the Spirit, or is it the fruit of your natural excellence? Who distinguishes thee now? Suppose thou wert left to thyself, couldst thou continue in thy state of grace? And who shall make us to differ in days to come? Are we our own keepers? II. ITS TEACHINGS. 1. It is a rebuke to pride. Let any one of us look back to our first estate, and we shall surely be compelled to silence every boast for ever. Think of what we should be if grace left us! 2. An excitement to gratitude. If all I have and am is due to the distinguishing grace of God, then let me bless the Lord in the depths of my soul. This gratitude should take the shape of continual obedience. 3. A reminder of responsibilities. Where much is given much will be required. It is to be deeply regretted that some of those who have the most ability to do good are doing the least. 4. A suggestion of great tenderness in dealing with others. "Who maketh thee to differ?" You met the other day with a man fast bound with bad habits, and you said, "Nothing can be done with such a wreck. I will not waste words upon him." It would be better to drink into the spirit of John Bradford, who, when he saw a condemned malefactor, was wont to say, "There goes John Bradford but for the grace of God." I have never despaired of the salvation of any man since the Lord saved me. 5. An encouragement for seekers. Now, you know some eminent Christians; remember that there is nothing good in them but what they have received from God. The Lord can give the like grace to you. "Then what have I to do?" Simply, according to the text, to be a receiver; and that is the easiest thing in the world. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Pride catechised and condemned*:—Pride cannot endure honest questioning, and so Paul tried it by the Socratic method, and put it through a catechism. We have here—I. A QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED WITH EASE. When we are asked, "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" the answer is, "God": and if we are asked, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" we reply, "We have nothing but our sin." We are the more glad to hear Paul say this, because he was what is nowadays styled a "self-made" man. Yet though he was "not a whit behind the very chief of the apostles," he said, "I be nothing." "By the grace of God I am what I am." Our question is easy to answer, whether it be applied to natural gifts or to spiritual ones. II. A QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED WITH SHAME. "If thou didst receive it," &c. When we glory in anything we have received—1. We rob God of His honour. Every particle of praise we take to ourselves is so much stolen out of the revennes of the King of kings. 2. We leave our truthful position. When I confess myself to be weak, helpless, and ascribe all I have to grace, then I stand in the truth; but if I take the remotest praise to myself, I stand in a lie. 3. We are sure to esteem our Lord less. If Christ goes up self goes down; and if self rises Jesus falls in our esteem. 4. We undervalue our fellow Christians, and that is a great sin. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones"; but if we over-estimate ourselves we do so. 5. We miss the right course as to our gifts, and forget that they are only lent us to be used for our Master. It is required of stewards that they be found faithful, not that they vaunt themselves and deck themselves in their Master's goods. Some boast—(1) Because

God has placed them in office. What mighty airs some give themselves! "Honour to whom honour is due"—they have learned by heart, and seen a personal inference in it. (2) About their experience. This also is vanity. Let the man who does this remember that he has gone nowhere except as the Lord's hand has borne him onward. Suppose a garden were proud, and boasted of its fruitfulness! III. OTHER QUESTIONS WHICH THESE QUESTIONS SUGGEST. 1. Have I ever given to God His due place in the matter of my salvation? 2. Have I the spirit of humble gratitude? 3. Seeing I have been a receiver, what have I done towards giving out again? They make in the north of England earthenware saving boxes for the children. You can put what you like in, but you cannot get it out until you break the box; and there are persons of that sort among us. Some have died lately, and their estates have been reported in the Probate Court. We ought not to be as a stagnant pond, but like the great lakes of America which receive the mighty rivers and pour them out again, and consequently keep fresh and clear. 4. Since what I have had I have received by God's grace, might I not receive more? Covet earnestly the best gifts. 5. If all that Christians have they have received, sinner, why should not you receive as well as they? (*Ibid.*) *Nothing to be proud of*:—In "Ethics for Young People," Professor C. C. Everett tells of a question he asked when a small boy. He says: "A lady was talking with me about 'easily besetting sins.' She said that her besetting sin was pride. I looked at her in innocent wonder and exclaimed, 'Why, what have you to be proud of?' I saw at once by her confusion that I had made a very impudent and unlucky speech." We cannot ask this question of others; but if any one who is disposed to be proud should ask himself the question, "What have you to be proud of?" and answer it truly, it might do him good. *The inflation of pride*:—Jehan Hering, who was a close observer of ants and their doings, once gave an account of a battle royal which he watched between two of the smallest of the species. It took place on the stem of a leaf; the cause was a scrap of food. The contestants fought until one killed the other. "The victor," says Hering, "then strutted to and fro in view of the other ants. Napoleon could not have been more sure of his own mighty place in creation. 'For me,' he seemed to say, 'was this world made.' The mite was actually inflated with vanity." An observer watching the throng of human beings passing along our crowded thoroughfares, would often be reminded of Hering's ant. So many are the men and women who express in their walk, their manner, their voice, a sense of their own importance. Here is a middle-aged tradesman who has just driven a sharp bargain; there is a schoolboy who ran a winning race last week; yonder is a young man who is pushing his way successfully into business or into fashionable society, and here comes a young girl whose only claim to distinction is a new hat. These are not strong proofs of superiority to the swarming millions of people on the earth. Yet these men and women bear themselves as if, like the ant, each of them thought, "This world was made for me!" Theodore Hook, viewing a vain member of his college strutting along in cap and gown, approached presently, and timidly demanded, "If you please, sir, are you anybody in particular?" How many of us, when most secure in our vanity, could stand that probing question? The men and women who have real work in life as a rule forget themselves, and acquire that total lack of self-consciousness which is the basis of the finest manners. *Apostolic warnings*:—I. TO THOSE WHO FOSTERED THE PERSONAL WORSHIP OF THE MINISTERS—that is, of themselves. 1. The qualities which are requisite for the higher part of the ministry are—great powers of sympathy; humbleness; wisdom to direct; knowledge of the world; and a knowledge of evil which comes rather from repulsion from it. But those which adapt a man for the merely showy parts are of an inferior order: fluency, self-confidence, tact, a certain histrionic power of conceiving feelings, and expressing them. Now, it was precisely to this class of qualities that Christianity opened a new field in places such as Corinth. Men who had been unknown suddenly found an opportunity for public addresses, activity, and leadership. They became fluent talkers; and the more shallow and self-sufficient they were, the more likely it was that they would become the leaders of a faction. And how did the apostle meet this? By inculcating (ver. 7) Christian dependence: "Who maketh thee to differ?" Christian responsibility: "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" 2. This tendency besets us ever. Even at school brilliancy is admired, whilst plodding industry is sneered at. Yet which of these would St. Paul approve? Which shows fidelity? The dull mediocre talent faithfully used, or the bright talent used only for glitter and display? St. Paul did not sneer at eloquence, &c.; but he said, These are your responsibilities.

You are a steward: you have received. Beware that you be found faithful. Woe, if the gifts and manner that have made you acceptable have done no more. In truth, this independence of God is man's fall. Adam tried to be independent; and just as all things are ours if we be Christ's, so, if we be not Christ's, then our pleasures, gifts, honours are all stolen; "we glory as if we had not received." II. TO THOSE WHO UNDULY MAGNIFIED THE OFFICE. 1. There were men who exercised lordship over the congregations. Place vers. 8 and 9 side by side, and think, first of all, of these teachers—admired, flattered, made rich, and then going on to rule as autocrats, so that when a Corinthian entertained his minister, he entertained his oracle, his very religion. And then turn to the apostolic life. If the one be an apostle, what is the other? If one be the high, the Christian life, how can the other be a life to boast of? 2. Remark here the irony. People who look upon Christianity as a mere passive, strengthless thing, must needs be perplexed with passages such as these. But remark how gracefully it turns with Paul from loving though angry irony, to loving earnestness: "I would to God ye did reign." Would to God that the time for triumph were come indeed, that these factions might cease, and we be kings together! 3. See here the true doctrine of the apostolical succession. The apostolical office is one thing; the apostolical character is quite another. And just as the true children of Abraham were not his lineal descendants, but the inheritors of his faith, so the true apostolical succession consists not in what these men pride themselves upon—their office, attainments, &c.; but rather in a life of truth, and in the suffering which inevitably comes as the result of being true. 4. Now, therefore, we can understand the passage with which he ends: "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me" (ver. 16). Only do not misread it. You have here no mere partisan trying to outbid and outvie others. He says that the life he had just described was the one for them to follow. In this—"Be ye followers of me," he declares the life of suffering, in the cause of duty, to be higher than the life of popularity and self-indulgence. He says that the dignity of a minister, and the majesty of a man, consists not in "Most Reverend," or "Most Noble," prefixed to his name; but it lies in being through and through a man, according to the Divine idea; a man whose chief privilege it is to be a minister, a follower of Him who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*)

Vers. 8–13. **Now ye are full . . . rich . . . as kings.**—*The difference between the counterfeit and the real Christian*:—I. THE COUNTERFEIT—1. Is so replenished with Divine knowledge that he needs no teacher. 2. Is so rich in grace that he exalts himself above the spiritually poor. 3. Is so confident in himself that he would rule the consciences of others. II. THE REAL—1. Regards himself as the least (vers. 9, 10). 2. Submits willingly to toil and suffering for the sake of Christ. 3. Recompenses evil with good. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The state of the Corinthians contrasted with that of the apostles*:—I. THE STATE OF THE CORINTHIANS. They were—1. Full of the good things of this world. 2. As kings, reigning. 3. But their condition spiritually was such as to demand earnest prayer. II. THE STATE OF THE APOSTLES. 1. Poor in worldly things—rich in faith. 2. A spectacle both to angels and to men; a sight of misery to men; a spectacle of sorrow to angels. But their reward is not far distant. (*J. H. Tasson.*) *Apostolic irony*:—I. EXPOSES PRIDE. 1. It is empty, yet imagines itself full of wisdom. 2. Poor, yet regards itself as rich in every good gift. 3. Dependent, yet would reign as a king. II. CONDEMNS IT—1. By an indirect assertion of its folly. 2. By an implied consciousness of personal insufficiency. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Apostolic treatment of vanity*:—Vanity is a state of mind at once the most prevalent and detestable, it is a plant that springs from self-ignorance, and is disgusting to the spectator in all its forms and fruits. The apostle treats it with—I. WITHERING SARCASM. "Now ye are full," &c. The Bible furnishes us with many instances of irony (1 Kings xviii. 27; Job xii. 2), but nowhere have we it more forceful than here. Here are three metaphors, the first taken from persons filled with food, the second from persons so rich that they required no more, the third from those who have reached the highest elevation, obtained a throne. Paul seems to say to these conceited teachers that they were so great that they did not require such services as his. We scarcely know of a more effective way of treating vanity than by sarcasm. Treat the vain, swaggering man before you not according to your judgment of him, but according to his estimate of himself. Speak to him as one as stupendous as he believes himself to be, and your irony will stab him to the quick. Sarcasm often becomes the instrument of a great

manly soul roused into indignation. II. A NOBLE GENEROSITY. "I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you." Here the north wind of sarcasm gives way to the south breezes of love. What he means is a wish that they were as truly full, rich, and royal as they thought themselves to be. The irony of a Christly man, however pungent, is not malign, but generous. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, . . . for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.**—*Before the footlights* :—1. A man may imagine it to be an easy matter to appear before an audience; but to stand before the footlights, when every turn of one's features are plainly to be seen, is a strain on the nerves which is hard to bear. 2. The Christian life is, however, more trying than any performance on the stage. The actor appears before a few hundred spectators who are willing to be pleased, and he is under the glare of the footlights for only two or three hours at a time; but the Christian is a spectacle to his many neighbours and also to the angelic hosts, and his part continues for life. 3. The apostle refers to the spectacles in the Colosseum at Rome. On some days, when about eighty thousand persons were assembled in its galleries, the first show in the arena would be men fighting with hungry lions and tigers, but in this performance the men were allowed to wear armour. In the pause after the first show, the vast crowd would refresh themselves with grapes, wine, and food, and then the second performance began, consisting of naked men fighting with each other, and without anything to defend themselves except their swords, the result being that the slightest touch of their weapons inflicted a gash. The most horrid regulation, however, was that he who preserved his own life should not be released, but kept for slaughter another day. These men, therefore, that were actors in the last performance might well be called men appointed to death. 4. Of course everybody in his senses when he appears before the footlights of life, that is, when other people can see him, does his best. It is only the drunkard, the insane, or the woman that has lost all sense of shame, who label their sins before the eyes of others like a sign-board stating what they are. If an ordinary man have something that is bad within him, he tries to hide it from his fellow-men. Let the spectacle of your life be—I. AN EMBODIMENT OF MERCY. II. EXHIBIT THE ESSENCE OF TRUTH. Learn to love the truth because it is the truth, and do it because it is right. Some people are not afraid to do wrong; all they are afraid of is being "found out." III. EMBODY CHARITY IN YOUR DEEDS TO YOUR FELLOW-MEN. Follow the charity of God, who keeps open the gates of heaven day and night. (*W. Birch.*) *A wonderful spectacle* :—I. THE SPECTACLE. 1. The actors were Divinely called. They appeared on the stage in answer to the behest of the highest will, guided in the selection by perfect wisdom. He who called David from the flock to preside over Israel, called these men from their daily avocations to preside over the affairs of the kingdom of heaven. 2. The actors were Divinely commissioned. The mission of apostolic life was special (1 Cor. v. 18–20). 3. The actors were subjected to intense sufferings, and to cruel death. This was not accidental, but a part of their mission. They suffered in the tragedy to enforce its lessons (Matt. x. 16–18). It is almost certain that they all suffered martyrdom, except St. John. II. THE SPECTATORS. 1. Angels. We cannot say how their pure minds were affected, or what emotions throbbed in their breast. It appears from Eph. iii. 10, 11, that they gather lessons from the life of the Church militant. (1) They saw the power of truth in lifting man above circumstances. By this they discovered that he had a nobler nature than they had been wont to ascribe to him. (2) The apostles gloried in tribulation, and this went beyond their experience and joy. They returned from the theatre inflamed with a greater degree of devotion. (3) That spectacle had something to do with their final safety. They had often ministered to the apostles in their trials, which taught them more perfect submission, and warmer obedience. No part of the audience realised the spectacle better than the angels. 2. Men. We have no difficulty in understanding the lessons which apostolic life teach us. (1) Entire consecration of life to the service of Christ. The apostles were not half-hearted or indifferent, but threw their heart and soul into the work. Can we look at this spectacle, and not be moved? (2) That the Christian life will surely vanquish difficulties. The boldness of faith is the same as that which encouraged the apostles to say—"We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard." (*Weekly Pulpit.*) *A spectacle to angels* :—In its widest reference the text teaches that our world is a theatre or arena, whereon men act their various parts, as in a drama—"a spectacle to angels." And this thought is at one with all Bible testimony. It teaches that from the first our planet has been an object of absorbing

interest to all spiritual beings. I. THE DRAMA OF HUMAN LIFE HAS BEEN CAST IN THREE GREAT MORAL ACTS. And as displaying the Divine attributes, the angels are represented as bending down to study all of them. 1. The first scene was one of blissful and holy human life. And endowed, as the first man was, with every power of perseverance in holiness, and plied with every motive to retain it, that first act in the drama of human life was fittingly "a spectacle to angels." 2. The second scene is a world apostate and accursed. An exhibition is now to be made of the terrible nature of sin, as seen alike in the malice of the tempter and the misery of the tempted. And when you consider the whole plot and progress of the drama—all the exhibitions of moral character under this fearful inspiration of sin, the whole wondrous development of redemption, from the first promise down through those ages of antediluvian depravity, through all those slowly evolving ritualisms to the tragic scene of Calvary, through all the gospel's subsequent triumphs—then this second act seems not unworthily "a spectacle to angels." 3. But on this scene the curtain falls. And when it rises again, it will be upon an arena worthier angelic regard. Out of the wreck and ruin of the present system of things, as a platform fitted for the manifestation of triumphant holiness, shall come forth the "new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." II. ITS SPECIAL AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION TO OURSELVES. It is a plain truth of revelation that these glorious beings are ever around us. They are represented not only as "ministering unto the heirs of salvation," but as watchful of even their seemingly most trivial interests, "bearing them up, lest they dash their foot against a stone." Let us consider this—1. For encouragement and consolation amid the trials of life. This is the application Paul gives it in the context. In a life wherein so few occasions are ours to do great things for God, and whose great law is suffering, it is blessed to think that it is especially when in sorrow, and agony, and death, we are "a spectacle to angels." They come on their bright wings to our desolate homes, our sick-beds, our death-beds, and every whisper of submissive Christian love sounds out as a grand hallelujah to the Infinite Glory, and every gentle tear in the eye of faith flashes as a gem of immense price in the diadem of their God. 2. As a ground of exhortation. We are all "a spectacle to angels." And how are we acting? (1) You may be this day an impenitent man; and if so, the part you are acting is one solemn beyond all conception—the part of an imperilled man with an immortal soul to save! For just such acting is this life-stage fitted. Oh, what solemn scenery it arranges around you! Here Sinai with its fire, and there Calvary with its Cross. And now tell me, you that live as if there were no God, and no judgment, sporting with the soul and salvation, if you are acting well your part before this great cloud of witnesses! Hath it not been with gestures of astonishment and indignation they have watched you? (2) Or you may be a true child of God; and then the part you are acting, if less terrible, is scarcely less solemn; for it is that of a redeemed man in the service of the Redeemer. In reference to this thought, Paul speaks of the believer as having "put on Christ"—*i. e.*, as a tragedian assumes that of the hero he personates. Thus, to personate the Lord Jesus is the part you are to act, as "a spectacle to angels." And for such acting, also, is the world-stage fitted. For it is the self-same world wherein He personally acted. The same sinful and suffering humanity is ever around you. The same realities of eternity rise in transparencies beyond you. And tell me, if you seem unto yourselves acting your magoificent part well? III. AS THUS A SPECTACLE TO ANGELS, IT MAY BE SAID, IN ONE SENSE, WE CAN CHOOSE THE PARTS WE ARE TO ACT IN THEIR PRESENCE. There are some things common and certain to us all, and in regard of them we can choose at least our own style of acting. 1. Take one set order—1. A death-scene! A darkened chamber. A company of heart-broken relatives keeping watch. The actor is a poor lover of pleasure, who put his eternity carefully away from him, living only for this world. Now witness his acting as it seems unto angels. Behold those feeble hands, lifted as to repel some shape of terror. Listen! That cry of anguish: "Oh, do not let me die!" "I cannot die!" "I rejected the Saviour!" "I am lost, lost, lost!" (2) The next is a judgment scene! And again this poor worldling appears upon the stage, "a spectacle to angels." And see it—that look of hopeless anguish, as there falls on the shrinking sense the appalling sentence—"Depart!—depart!" (3) The last scene is in eternity! Go, ponder it as pictured in God's solemn Book. 2. This is one style of acting. Consider, in contrast, the other! The same stage; the same scenery; but all else different! (1) Again the death-scene! See the radiant fire in the eye! the rapturous smile on the lip! Hear those words, feeble, yet joyous in

faith and love: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," &c. Behold that fixed look heavenward, as the ransomed spirit spreads wing for its place in the many mansions! (2) The same scene of judgment! Note that look of triumph, that cry of rapture, at the approving sentence: "Come, ye blessed of My Father," &c. (3) Again, a scene laid in eternity! But here, stage, scenery, acting, all different. Such, shortly, are the two styles of human action on the great theatre of life. And for each of us, just behind this massive curtain, are stage and scenery being prepared! And we are here to choose, each for himself, the style of his performance. And now, tell me how you will act your solemn part—O immortal man! as "a spectacle to angels." (*C. Wadsworth.*) *Humanity watched by angels:*—The word spectacle is from the Greek word *theatron.* I. IMPLIES THE EXISTENCE OF ANGELIC INTELLIGENCES. No one who believes in the Bible can doubt this. Its pages are almost as full of angels as those of Homer are full of gods. They are represented as—1. Overwhelming in numbers of various orders and gradations, possessing life, power, intelligence, holiness, celerity, transcending all that is human. 2. As the special ministers of the Great Monarch of the universe, executing His judgment and distributing His favours. They have eyes to mark my movements, ears to catch my words, hearts to sympathise with my lonely history, and power to lift me up, or to press me down. II. ARGUES THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN LIFE. Would those transcendent intelligences watch creatures of no or little worth? 1. They may know the extraordinary relation of man to God. Not merely the creatures of His power, the subject of His government, but the redeemed of His Son. They see human nature in personal connection with Christ, uplifted to the centre of the universe. Thus they study God through man, and through man they have loftier views of the Infinite, than from a universe of blazing systems, and of unfallen intelligences. 2. They may know the wonderful possibilities of his nature. What thoughts he can originate, what discoveries he can make, what works he can invent, what good he can accomplish, what evil he can effect. 3. They may know the influence of his life. They may see the thoughts and words and deeds of his life, spreading in ever widening circles over the great world of spirits. They may see from one man's life many hells created and many heavens produced. To our fellow-men we are insignificant, but to angels we are of transcendent importance. III. URGES CIRCUMSPECTION IN HUMAN CONDUCT. Men are generally cautious in their conduct when they feel even a human eye upon them, especially if that eye be keen, intelligent, and pure. The unexpected glance of a child has paralysed the arm of a burglar before now. But who would not be circumspect if we felt that the eyes of angels were ever on us, on us in our most private chamber and in our public walks? (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Man an object of angelic observation:*—If the eye of such intelligences are constantly upon us, what are the practical conclusions? I. THAT OUR CONDUCT HERE CONCERNS THE UNIVERSE. No man lives unto himself; each unit is a link in being's endless chain. His actions must tell banefully or beneficently on the creation; hence all loving and loyal intelligences direct their attention to him with deep and unabating interest. Besides, men and angels are offsprings of the same Father, participators of the same nature, subjects of the same moral government. No wonder they are so concerned. II. THAT OUR PART SHOULD BE CAREFULLY PLAYED. It behoves every man to be cautious how he acts in the presence of his fellow-creatures, whether they are children or adults, plebeians or princes; but how much more cautious should he be when he knows that angels, whose pure natures loathe sin in all its forms, have their keenest gaze fastened ever on his life! III. THAT THERE IS NO CHANCE OF CONCEALING OUR SIN. The attempt to cloak or dissemble our sins is absurdly futile. Whilst there is One who reads the heart, there may be millions who mark all our overt acts, whether in darkness or in light. IV. THAT WE MAY EXPECT HELP IN ALL HOLY ENDEAVOURS. Those celestial spirits are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. They helped Abraham on the plains of Mamre, and Lot in his flight towards Zoar; they freed the apostle from the prison; they bore the spirit of Lazarus to the bosom of Abraham. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 10-14. **We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ.**—*The folly of Paul:*—The better to serve Christ, Paul refrained from making acquirement of knowledge his chief aim. And many others have renounced a path which might have led to literary eminence in order to devote their entire energies to evangelical work. Again, by abstaining from teaching mere human learning and by preaching a gospel which in the eyes of men was folly, Paul became, and felt himself to be,

in their view, a foolish man. In other words, because of his loyalty to Christ he passed among men as one destitute of wisdom (*cf.* chap. ii. 2). (*Prof. Beet.*) *Paul and the Corinthians: a contrast*:—The contrast between the two situations enunciated in vers. 8 and 9 is expressed here in three antitheses, which are, as it were, so many blows for the proud Corinthians. The text is addressed especially to the principal men of the Church, but at the same time to all its members who share in the pretensions of these proud party leaders. And—I. As to TEACHING. The apostles had to face the reputation of foolishness which the gospel brings on them, while at Corinth there is found a way of preaching Christ so as to procure a name for wisdom, the reputation of profound philosophers and men of most reliable judgment. As a Rabbi Paul might have become as eminent a savant as Gamaliel; for Christ he consented to pass as a fool. The Corinthians knew better how to manage: they make the teaching even of the gospel a means of gaining celebrity for their lofty wisdom. II. As to CONDUCT. They came before their public with the feeling of their strength: there is in them neither hesitation nor timidity. The apostles do not know these grand lordly airs. Witness chap. ii. 1–5. III. As to THE WELCOME RECEIVED FROM THE WORLD. The Corinthians are honoured, fêted, regarded as the ornament of cultivated circles; there is a rivalry to do them honour. The apostles are scarcely judged worthy of attention; nay, rather reviled and calumniated. In this last contrast the apostle reverses the order of the two terms, and puts the apostles in the second place. This is by way of transition to one or two traits of detail in the apostolic life he is about to draw. Indeed "despised" is the theme of the following verses. (*Prof. Godet.*) *Paul's treatment of self-conceited teachers*:—The Corinthian teachers were "puffed up" with conceit. Paul treats them here with—I. AN IRONIC APPEAL (ver. 10). "Ye have glory, but we have dishonour; we know nothing, you know everything; we are timid and feeble, but ye are strong and fearless; you are thought a deal of, but we are despised." How would our little penny-a-liners feel if such a man as Carlyle were to speak in this way? If they had any sense remaining, they would quiver into nothingness. How much more would those small pretentious teachers feel this stroke of satire from the grand apostle! II. A PERSONAL HISTORY. 1. Here he refers to—(1) His privations (ver. 11)—without nourishment, clothing, and the shelter of a home. (2) His labours (ver. 12). (3) His persecutions (ver. 13). (4) The spirit in which he endured the sufferings (ver. 12). 2. Why did he state all this? Not for the sake of parade, but for the sake of bringing these proud teachers to their senses. They could not fail to feel that he was a pre-eminent minister of Christ; notwithstanding this, in the world he was treated with cruelty and contempt. What, then, had they to be proud of as ministers? (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst.**—*True religion*:—I. WHAT IT COSTS. 1. Sacrifice. 2. Shame. 3. Suffering. 4. Toil. II. WHAT IT SECURES. 1. Companionship with the best of men. 2. The approbation of God. 3. A certain and glorious reward. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **And labour, working with our own hands.**—*Honest labour*:—1. Is no disgrace. 2. Is a sign of true independence. 3. Is acceptable to God. (*Ibid.*) *Manual labour gentlemanly*:—When Bishop Patteson went among the South Sea Islanders they were surprised to see that he was ready to put his hand to anything. He would do a piece of carpentering, wash up things after meals, and teach the little blacks to wash and dress themselves. Other white men wanted to put all the work on the negroes; so in order to mark the difference, they called the bishop a "gentleman-gentleman," and the others "pig-gentlemen." Jesus Christ, "the first true gentleman that ever breathed," was when on earth called "the Carpenter," and if one of His chief apostles, St. Paul, worked with his hands as a tent-maker, manual labour ought never to be thought derogatory to the dignity of a gentleman. *A honourable occupation*:—There are three vitally important choices to be made by young men, about which a few plain hints may be pertinent and useful. The first one is his occupation. "He who does not bring up his son for a trade brings up a boy for the devil," is an ancient Jewish proverb. In America, too, many of the native-born youths eschew a mechanical trade as vulgar, and go scouring about for some easier "situation." If Benjamin Franklin, the printer, and Roger Sherman, the shoemaker, were alive now, they would tell their young countrymen what a foolish mistake many of them are making. So would Vice-President Wilson and Governor Banks, who said that he "graduated from an institution which had a factory-bell on the roof and a water-wheel at the bottom." In selecting your occupation, endeavour first to find out what the Creator made you for. Consult your natural bent and talent. If you

have a talent for trade, then you may venture into a counting-room or store. If you have a native skill in chemistry, and are made for a doctor, then study medicine. If your mathematical capacity fit you for it, you may be an engineer. No one ever fails in life who understands his *forte*, and few ever succeeded in life who did not understand it. Seek for a useful, productive calling, and steer clear of a career of "speculation" as you would a gambling den or a glass of gin. Don't be ashamed to begin at the bottom and work up. Remember that every occupation is honourable in which you can serve God and your fellow-men, and keep a clean conscience. (*T. L. Cuyler.*) **Being reviled we bless.**—*Apostolic meekness*:—Observe—I. WHAT THE TRUE CHRISTIAN MUST EXPECT. 1. Reproach. 2. Persecution. 3. Calumny. 4. Contempt. II. WHY HE MUST EXPECT IT. Because of—1. The experience of others. 2. The unaltered spirit of the world. III. HOW HE OUGHT TO BEAR IT. 1. Meekly. 2. Patiently. 3. Christianly. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The triumph of the true Christian*:—He triumphs—I. OVER THE HATRED OF THE WORLD. Which is—1. Unchangeable. 2. Bitter. 3. Variously manifested. II. BY—1. Faith. 2. Hope. 3. Love. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 14–21. **I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.**—*Paul an example to parents and teachers*:—He proceeds—I. WITH LOVE. 1. Not as a schoolmaster, but as a father. 2. Not to shame, but to warn. 3. Not to threaten, but encourage (ver. 16). 4. Not to punish, but to supply suitable help (ver. 17). II. WITH FIRMNESS. 1. He discourages the perverse (ver. 18). 2. Exposes the false. 3. Exalts the true. 3. Submits the choice of a rod or love. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian training* is—I. LOVING IN ITS AIM AND PROCEDURE (vers. 14–16). II. PRUDENT IN ITS CHOICE (ver. 17). III. FIRM IN ITS PURPOSE (vers. 18–21). (*Ibid.*) *The true minister is the father of his flock*:—I. HIS RELATIVE POSITION. 1. Not a mere instructor, but the instrument of communicating new life. 2. This cannot be accomplished by severity, but by a loving proclamation of the truth. II. HIS INFLUENCE—1. Depends upon example (ver. 16). 2. Supposes that he is in Christ (ver. 17). 3. Will generally succeed where precept and example are combined. (*Ibid.*) *Censoriousness and faithfulness contrasted*:—"He that would be a good man must have either a friend to admonish him or an enemy to watch over him." Censoriousness—I. IS A NIMROD, a mighty hunter for faults (Jer. xx. 10; Psa. lvi. 6). Faithfulness does not delight to dwell on a fault, but censoriousness does. II. A MIGHTY CREATOR. It makes faults where there are none; it puts the worst construction on words and actions. Examples: The Pharisees and disciples going through the corn-fields. Eliab to David. It calls zeal rashness—Michael to David. Faithfulness is discreet in its decisions. III. IS AN EASY BELIEVER WHERE HE IS NOT AN INVENTOR OF FAULTS. Examples: The two false witnesses against Christ. The people of Ephesus when Demetrius slandered Paul. The Israelites when the spies returned and brought the evil report which the Israelites believed. Faithfulness is not credulous; it believes not every spirit, but "tries the spirits." IV. IS A KIND OF OPTICIAN. It magnifies small things, makes a man an offender for a word, carries magnifying-glasses with it. Faithfulness endeavours to mitigate the offence (1 Pet. iv. 8). V. IS A KIND OF CRIER. It propagates the faults of men where they are not known. Example: Ham (Gen. ix. 20–22). Faithfulness concealeth the matter (Gen. ix. 33; Prov. xi. 13). VI. DELIGHTS TO DWELL ON A FAULT (Psa. cii. 8). Faithfulness grieves and laments the failings of others (Prov. xxiv. 17). VII. IS VERY SUPERCILIOUS IN ITS REPROOFS (Isa. lv. 5; Luke xviii. 11). Faithfulness is tender of the reputation of others, and desires to reclaim and restore them. (*Homilist.*) **Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers.**—*The pedagogue and the father*:—The word "pedagogues"—who in most cases were charged with constant attendance on boys till they came of age—here denotes in a figure the later workers in the Corinthian Church. Of this Church St. Paul has been termed the founder, his successors the after-builders; he the planter, they the waterers: now he is father, they the tutors. The apostle here merely wishes to remind his readers of his own paternal rights, which can never be invalidated by subsequent labourers in the same field. Observe that they are called "tutors in Christ," but he "father in Christ Jesus"—*i.e.*, a host of tutors ye may have in the sphere of knowing about Christ; but into the life of knowing Christ as Saviour, none but *I* begot you by my preaching of the gospel. "I" is emphatic: mine was a moral begetting unto salvation; this took place once for all; teachers after me are not spiritual fathers, but educators in the faith which I sowed.

(*Canon Evans.*) *The spiritual father*:—I. IS MORE THAN AN INSTRUCTOR. II. IS THE MEDIUM OF A NEW LIFE. 1. Instrumentally. 2. By the Spirit of Christ, who originates life into the soul. III. IS BOUND TO HIS CHILDREN BY INDISSOLUBLE TIES. IV. HAS SPECIAL CLAIMS ON THEIR LOVE AND OBEDIENCE. V. SHOULD BE THE OBJECT OF IMITATION. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Spiritual paternity*:—I. THAT ONE MAY BECOME THE SPIRITUAL FATHER OF ANOTHER. This is—1. Something more than to become the father of one's ideas. There are gifted men who generate the leading ideas in the minds of their contemporaries, by their conversation, speeches, writings. But these are mere schoolmasters or teachers. Coleridge and Carlyle are examples of this. 2. Something more than the author of a certain style of thinking. Aristotle, Bacon, &c., are examples. 3. One who generates in another his own spirit, sympathies, and aims; one who transforms the character of another into his own image. II. THAT THE NOBLEST SPIRITUAL FATHER IS HE WHO BEGETS IN ANOTHER THE CHRISTLY CHARACTER. Many are the moral characters prevalent among men—the sensual, the sceptical, the selfish. The Christly character stands in sublime contrast to these; it is disinterested, spiritual, Divine. The man who generates in others this character—1. Imparts the highest good. To be like Christ is the highest end of being; it is the *summum bonum* of souls. 2. Creates the highest mutual affection. Paul called Timothy his "beloved son," and speaks with inexpressible tenderness of his converts as his little children with whom he travailed in birth (Gal. iv. 10). III. THAT THE CHRISTLY CHARACTER IS ONLY BEGOTTEN BY THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Natural religion cannot do it; Judaism, Mohammedanism, heathenism cannot do it; no speculative creeds, moral codes, ritualistic religions can do it. The gospel alone is the power to generate in man the true Christly character; it is that transformative glass into which as we look we get changed into the same image from "glory to glory." Conclusion: Learn from this—1. The supreme interest of man. What is that? Learning, wealth, fame? No; Christliness. He who has this, has everything; all things are his. He who has not this, has "nothing," says Paul. 2. The grandest distinctions amongst men. What are they? Sages, soldiers, sovereigns? No; spiritual sires. The man who generates in another the Christly character has done a greater work than any sage or king has ever done. Every man may, and ought to, become a spiritual father. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christian lineage*:—As a child who has been kept in ignorance of his parentage rejoices to know those who have given him life, so we in times of evil condition and days of questioning may be made glad in the knowledge that we belong to a noble race. I. THE RECORDS AND MEMORIALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY. 1. The propagating power of the Divine life in men is one of the distinctive features of Christ's religion. Other systems have made provision for carrying down their tenets, but the office of the Spirit of God is to recreate. The Founder of Christianity and His disciples claimed those in their day as "children," those who had been born again into a new family [circle. 2. In looking up the genealogy of any line, the fact that there were known to be numerous descendants gives us the best evidence that we shall be able to trace the branches to the parent stock. The Church has as well authenticated outlines from the time of Constantine, in 325, as have the governments of the greatest nations of the past or their ruling houses. 3. You will realise, however, that a Church which has reached this stage of organisation and influence must have some time allowance for its crystallisation. Your scientist wants you to grant him thousands of years for the erosion of the bed of Niagara and the glacier tracts and deposits of natural forces. He must not deny some fair period of Christianising energy to cut the channel in which we find the love of God moving within the visible Church, so that the gospel might spread as it had done from India to Spain and Britain. The graves of the saints would bridge the gulf from Constantine to Polycarp, if there were no other records. Their inscriptions of the Christian virtues, hopes of immortality, and faith in Jesus would restore the materials for our family history, and the types by which we could trace our ancestry if all other lines should fail. II. PROOFS OF OUR SPIRITUAL LINEAGE. 1. Paul traces his own new birth and life to Jesus, so that we may consider the great apostle to the Gentiles as a representative of what men had begun to be in the line of Christian descent, and compare ourselves with him. We are told what was the character of other people before they also were changed (1 Cor. vi. 9–11). In order to set forth more clearly the type of the new family, an example is given of one of Paul's pupils (ver. 17). Timothy is, as it were, a spiritual grandson of Jesus. We can tell what the gospel was as it worked in the son, sire, and founder of our faith. Then Timothy is particular not to teach

doctrines only, but to put the people in remembrance of Paul's ways. They could see whether the child's walk and features were like those of the parent, and were "in Christ." 2. There are many varieties of temperament among children of the same household, and the Christian family presents us those with differing and peculiar traits. But does any candid man dare to say he cannot find to-day the type of those who formed the early Church in spirit, love, and works? If the men of the kingdom come short of your ideal, ask yourself where you received this noble image of the mind save from the gospel history. It should not be a matter of surprise that grotesque forms come to us from the isolated frontier communities of the world. The wonder is that they have preserved any likeness to our great ancestors. Select the best examples of faith and service in our world to-day, and you will be careful how you say you cannot find Christ, or His truth, or His will for you to obey. Through all the ages of darkness, idolatry, and persecution, the Spirit has been among men. III. AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY. "Be ye imitators of Me." (*W. R. Campbell.*) *Spiritual paternity*:—In my fernery I have some ferns which have little ones growing on the ends of their fronds; and as they are fine specimens, there are great numbers of the baby-ferns. Probably as many as three or four hundred complete ferns have sprung up out of each mother-fern, all of them having tiny roots, and everything necessary to their growth, so that you have nothing to do but to pick them off, put them in a little silver sand, and they will grow, and by and by become mother-ferns themselves. Every one of them, if broken off the frond, will live and grow; but you need not break them off, for they will continue to grow without being separated from their mother, for they are all alive, and they do not appear, by their existence, to cause any damage to the original plant from which they spring. The baby-ferns will keep on living and growing as long as the frond of the mother-fern lives; and even when the frond dies, each baby-fern, if it is planted, will live and thrive, and in its turn will become a mother-fern, producing its hundreds of children to perpetuate the species. There are other plants that are somewhat similar to the mother-fern in this respect. I saw at Mentone a very fine specimen of a flowering aloe. It sent up its blossom high into the air, and in due season the little aloes fell off, and dropped into the ground, and wherever they fell they grew after the manner of the mother-plant. I picked one up, and brought it home; and now it is growing into quite a large plant. These little aloes are born alive; they do not come in a seed, like a bird in an egg, but they come from the plant—living things falling from the living parent. Now, is not this a good illustration of what a Christian should be? It is well to be a living Christian yourself; but it is better to have springing from you many others that are your offshoots, each one ready to start on his own account, and to take root, and multiply to almost any extent. If you and I are living, acting, serving, growing Christians ourselves, maintaining a high degree of spiritual life, we may be the means, by the blessing of God, of imparting life to many others. Those to whom we are thus blessed will be to us what Paul's converts were to him, "our glory and joy." Every true servant of the Lord Jesus Christ leaves an influence for good behind him when he is taken away; but it is better still if his influence is also felt while he lives. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me.**—*Teaching by example*:—I. IS GOD'S METHOD. 1. Christ. 2. Scriptural examples. II. IS INCUMBENT ON ALL, especially ministers, parents, teachers, &c. III. SUPPOSES SOME PROFICIENCY IN THE TEACHER — principle, practice, motive. IV. IS MOST CERTAIN AND EFFECTIVE. It is more simple, persuasive, powerful. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The force of example*:—1. It is our duty and concernment to regard the practices of good men, and to follow their example. It is the manner of the apostles on all occasions to inculcate the duty of imitating the examples of the good. 2. That we might have worthy patterns to imitate, God hath raised up in all ages excellent persons to lead us by good example in the paths of righteousness. 3. It was a special design of God's providence in recording and recommending to our regard the sacred histories. They were not framed as monuments of a fruitless memory; they were not proposed to us as entertainments of our curiosity; but they are set before us as copies to transcribe, as lights to guide us in our way to happiness. 4. Good example is of exceeding advantage to practice on many accounts. I. IT MORE COMPENDIOUSLY, EASILY, AND PLEASANTLY INFORMS OUR MINDS AND DIRECTS OUR PRACTICE THAN PRECEPTS OR ANY OTHER INSTRUMENT OF DISCIPLINE. Who would not more readily learn to build by viewing carefully a well-contrived structure, than by a studious inquiry into the rules of

architecture? or to draw by setting a good picture before him, than by merely speculating on the laws of perspective? Neither is the case much different in moral concernments; one good example may represent more fully and clearly the nature of a virtue than any verbose description. *E.g.*—1. If we desire to know what faith is, and how we should rely on the Divine Providence, let us propose to our consideration the practice of Abraham. 2. He that would learn how to demean himself in resisting the assaults of temptation, let him consider that one carriage of Joseph. 3. Would we learn wisdom, constancy, and resolution in the conduct of honest and worthy designs, let us set before our eyes the pattern of Moses. 4. Would you be instructed how faithfully to discharge the ministerial or any other office? With a steadfast attention then behold the excellent pattern of St. Paul. 5. I might in like manner instance how Elias's practice might teach us to be zealous champions for truth and righteousness; how they who would be good judges, or honest patriots, may receive direction from the carriage of Samuel, Daniel, and Nehemiah. II. IT PERSUADES AND INCLINES OUR REASON TO GOOD PRACTICE, COMMENDING IT TO US BY PLAUSIBLE AUTHORITY. For that wise and virtuous persons do anything is a very probable argument that we are concerned to do the like. It is obvious in temporal concernments how boldly men adventure their dearest interests in following such whom they deem honest and able to guide them. III. IT INCITES OUR PASSIONS AND IMPELS THEM TO THE PERFORMANCE OF DUTY. 1. It raises hope, by discovering to us the possibility of success in undertaking good designs, and that by the best and most convincing of arguments, experience. "The example," saith St. Bernard, "of a work done is a lively and efficacious oration, easily persuading what we intend by proving that feasible which we strive to persuade unto." 2. It inflames courage. So the apostle to the Hebrews signified when he set before them the examples of the patriarchs. How many persons, timorous and averse from dangerous undertakings, have notwithstanding become very bold and adventurous in war by the discipline and influence of an exemplary valour! 3. It provokes emulation, moving us earnestly to desire, and thence eagerly to pursue, whatever good, privilege, or advantage we see another to enjoy. Shall he, a man like myself, by noble dispositions and worthy performances, render himself highly considerable, while I, by sordid qualities and unworthy practices, render myself despicable? Shall a stripling David gloriously triumph over giants, while I basely am vanquished by dwarfs? 4. It works on modesty, that preserver and guardian of virtue, as Cicero calls it. For every good action of another doth upbraid and shame him who acteth not conformably thereto. 5. It awakens that curiosity which is of no mean efficacy on our actions. For whatever we see done, we are apt to inquire why and to what purpose it is done, what the grounds are, and what the fruits of the performance. 6. It pleases the mind and fancy in contemplation, thence drawing a considerable influence on practice. No kind of studious entertainment doth so generally delight as history, or the tradition of remarkable examples. Conclusion: Consider that God hath provided and recommended to us one example, as a perfect standard of good practice: the example of our Lord, the which declareth the use and efficacy of good example as one principal instrument of piety. (*I. Barrow, D.D.*) *A teacher must not set an imperfect example*:—The teacher must be himself his own illustration. And he must aim at the highest. His example will be their standard. This is natural. A pupil teacher at school used to gain a good deal of popularity by writing a line or two on the copy-books of the children in his class. One day the head teacher said, "Do you know why the boys like you to write the first line in their copy-books?" "I suppose it is because they think I am a good writer," replied the conceited youth. "No; it is because they know you are a bad one," was the answer. "The headline is perfect, and hard to follow. Yours is such a poor copy, that any one can imitate it quite easily."

Vers. 17–20. **For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus.**—*The visitation*:—I. THE VISITOR. 1. Known. 2. Beloved in Christ. 3. Tried. II. HIS WORK. 1. To remind—2. Of old truths. 3. In Christ. III. THE DESIGN. To secure unity. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you.**—*Pride rebuked*:—I. PRIDE IS A FRUITFUL SOURCE OF MISCHIEF IN THE CHURCH. II. OFTEN EXHIBITS ITSELF IN REFLECTIONS UPON GOD'S MINISTERS. 1. Their motives are impugned. 2. Forbearance is regarded as weakness. 3. Delay as want of purpose. III. MUST BE FAIRLY MET—1. In the Spirit of Christ. 2. In dependence upon the will of God. IV. MUST BE WISELY—1. Discriminated.

2. Rebuked. (*Ibid.*) *The disciplinary office of the Christian minister*:—I. ITS REQUIREMENTS—1. Firmness, and sincerity of purpose (ver. 18). 2. Submission to the will of God (ver. 19). 3. Wise discernment (ver. 20). II. ITS MEANS. 1. In harmony with the kingdom of God. 2. Especially the Word of God. 3. Accompanied with power. III. ITS CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. It is—1. Forbearing. 2. Discriminating. 3. Kind. (*Ibid.*) *The worthless, the subordinate, and the vital in personal Christianity*:—Note—1. The spirit that should regulate all our purposes. 2. The liability of the best men to disappointments. The words suggest—I. THE WORTHLESS. They said that Paul would not venture to visit Corinth again. And when they heard that he was sending Timothy instead they boasted, maybe, that Paul was afraid to come himself. They were "puffed up" with the idea that they knew more about Paul's feeling and intention than their fellow-members. They were inflated with the spirit of vanity. Now there has always been, and still is, a great deal of this in professors of religion. What is called the Christian world seems to be as rife with "puffs" as the world of commerce, literature, or politics. Some are "puffed up" on account of—1. The superior contributions they are able to make to the cause of charity and religion. Having more of this world's goods than others, their names stand pre-eminent on subscription lists, are emblazoned in reports, and are loudly trumpeted on platforms. The more they give the more they are praised, and the more they are praised the more they are "puffed up." 2. Their superior intellectual endowments. Not a few in our churches imagine themselves as possessing mental faculties and furniture far superior to the majority, and they are "puffed up." But the very fact that they are "puffed up" on this ground proves the inferiority of their mental endowments. As a rule, the higher they are the more humble they will be. 3. The extensive popularity they have obtained. Those who are acquainted to any extent with the tastes and sentiments of the populace will scarcely be disposed to render great honour to the man who will attract the greatest numbers. The most miserable prints have the largest circulation, the most empty talkers attract the largest audiences. 4. The supposed superiority of the Church or sect to which they belong. Such people are constantly glorifying "our Church," "our denomination," "our body." He who is impressed with the greatness of the universe, still more with the greatness of God, could hardly consider any human institution great. 5. The assumption that they and their community are the special favourites of heaven. This "puffing-up" spirit is the "canker of religion"; it gnaws like a worm at the root, and when we look for the harvest it is dust and bitterness. II. THE SUBORDINATE. What is the subordinate? The "word." "The kingdom of God is not in word." Take the "word" here as representing profession in religion. 1. There should be a "word" or profession, but this is not religion. A profession of true religion is important in itself inasmuch as it is—(1) A duty. "Whosoever shall confess Me before men," &c. But it is a duty only where the reality exists. The man who has not religion sins and acts in violation of duty, and his profession is hypocrisy. (2) An aid to religion itself. It is possible, it may be, for religion to exist in the soul, where there is no public profession of it. It may be like a seed germinating under the soil, but in this state it must be very weak as well as uninfluential. The man who has the real thing in him, however weak, and makes a declaration of it, strengthens and develops it thereby. 2. The "word," therefore, or confession of religion, is of value, but its value is subordinate. Nicodemus was a disciple, though a secret one. Profession without possession is a sin and a hindrance. Profession with possession is a duty and a help. III. THE VITAL. The kingdom of God is—1. A "power." It is the "power"—(1) Of truth over the intellect. (2) Of love over the heart. (3) Of right over the conscience. 2. A reigning power, "kingdom." 3. The Divine power. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **But I will come unto you shortly if the Lord will.**—*Human purposes*—1. Are suspended on the Divine purposes. 2. Should be entertained in submission to the Divine will. 3. Should be committed to the direction of the Divine Providence. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **And will know, not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power.**—*A boaster* may be known —1. By his prating. 2. By his lack of power. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 20. **For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.**—*The kingdom of God not word, but power*:—The kingdom of God—I. IS NOT IN WORD. It is one of the leading features of the age to make the gospel consist in phrases. It is a kind of pious fashion to formulate religious truths like the definitions of an

exact science, and satisfy ourselves, and condemn others, only as they agree or not with the vernacular of party. There is a grievous lack of earnest originality, a suspicious amount of spiritual plagiarism in colloquial Christianity. Men adopt current phrases as a hypochondriac imagines the normal symptoms of a disease. Falsehoods often repeated at length impress their author with a vague belief of their veracity. And so the hypocrite or the formalist rehearse the spiritual phraseology of faith till they believe themselves believers. During the last century the besetting sin of the Church was a lifeless formality. Men have since learned to lay stress on forms of words in lieu of forms of worship. II. Is IN POWER. But what kind of power? Not natural, nor moral, nor intellectual power. In these all men vary, but in the power of the text all who are the subjects of it are alike; for "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Note—1. Its commencement in believers in Christ, to "whom gave He power to become the sons of God." 2. In its continuance in them, as they are "kept by the power of God unto salvation." 3. Its influence, so that this Divine "strength is made perfect in our weakness." When I am weak, then I am strong." 4. Its extent, including the final destiny of the body, which is "sown in weakness, but raised in power." 5. Its duration. Christ's people, like their Lord, being kings and priests after the order of Melchisedek, are "made after the power of an endless life." Conclusion: 1. By this power St. Paul would gauge the professions of his rivals. Not by their speech, though they might have had "the knowledge which puffeth up"; nor by their gifts, for they might have gifts without grace, or they might have grace without the gifts. So he would try professors now; for "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink," &c. And the solemn inquiry is, Have we "the form of godliness without the power"? If our personal religion have not power enough within us to subdue our besetments, with all its tongues of men and angels, its mysteries, and knowledge, and prophecy, and it may be, "all faith," it is the "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal." It is not the professing, but the putting on Christ, and by necessary consequence "the putting off as concerning the former conversation the old man with his deeds." 6. A day is coming when the critical inquiry will be, not what doctrinal system we professed, but what was its influence on our hearts and lives? (*J. B. Owen, M.A.*) *The kingdom of God in word and in power*:—I. Its INSTRUMENT—revealed truth. Although the word may be present without power, wherever the power is put forth it employs the word as its instrument: although the letter is sometimes dead, it is by that letter, when it lives, that all the real work is done. II. Its ESSENCE—Christ (chap. i. 24). Here is the fountain-head of all the force which, through the preaching of the truth, can be brought to bear upon the hearts and lives of men. The word and ordinances stand ready to convey the power, but the redemption that is in Christ is the power which must be led to men's hearts and led on. III. Its APPLICATION is effected by the ministry of the Spirit. Before His ascension our Lord promised this, and at Pentecost the promise was fulfilled. Then the kingdom came in power to a multitude who had previously known it in word only. From that day to this, with a ministry sometimes silent as the dew, and sometimes terrible as a tempest, the same Spirit has been working in the world. IV. Its EFFECTS. 1. It subdues. It seizes Saul, and in a moment lays him prostrate on the earth. It makes him blind, and again gives him light. It strips him of his own righteousness, and forthwith clothes him in another. The soldier is compelled to change his side, and without even putting off his armour marches under another Captain to fight another foe. The conquest, as might have been expected, is more complete than any which earthly powers can achieve (2 Cor. x. 5). Other monarchs rule men's actions; Christ is King of thoughts. 2. It comforts. It is as much the peculiar prerogative of royalty to make peace, as to declare war. "Peace I leave with you," &c. These are kingly words; only One has the right to use them. 3. It levies tribute. This is the sure mark of a real kingdom. Once the king of Britain claimed to be also king of France. In France his kingdom consisted in word only; in Britain and Ireland it came in power. Here tribute flowed into the royal treasury; there not a penny was paid. Christ's kingdom, wherever it is real, puts forth the taxing power. Tribute, bearing the image and superscription of earthly kings, flows into its treasury to maintain its machinery and extend its bounds; but the self of the subject is the coin in which the King best likes the tribute to be paid. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *The kingdom of God in power*:—The kingdom of God is—I. A GOVERNMENT OF AUTHORITY IN DISTINCTION FROM LEGISLATION AND REPRESENTATION. A government of absolute authority is charac-

terised—1. By certainty in the righteousness of its requirements. Human governments cannot be certain here; they arise from finite intelligence; but the government of God arises from infinite intelligence and righteousness, and hence it is absolutely certain. We are so constituted as to accept with entire confidence that condensation of the Divine government known as the Ten Commandments. If a reformer were to propose to change these laws, they could not be accepted by the human character which God has created. In this certainty we see the distinction between the Divine and a merely verbal government. 2. By certainty in the reach of its prerogative. This is not possible to human governments. There are of necessity questions of prerogatives with regard to territories and dynasties, and consequently wars arise over questions of prerogative. There can, however, be no doubt with regard to the reach of the Divine prerogatives. He is the creator of all men, and hence has the sovereign right to govern all. And the omnipresence and omniscience of the sovereign power settles the question. 3. By certainty in the execution of penalties. This is not possible of human governments, for witnesses may be incompetent, and juries may be mistaken. But there is a perfectness in the administration of the Divine justice which renders evasion and error impossible. II. IT IS A GOVERNMENT OF ABSOLUTE AND OF AVAILABLE CONDITIONS, AND IS THEREFORE REMEDY IN DISTINCTION FROM INEXORABLE DOOM. It is one kind of power, having imposed penalties, to inflict them; it is another kind of power to maintain the authority of the government, and yet extend the grace of God. Because Jesus died and ever liveth to make intercession for us, we are called to receive the forgiveness of sins. When the pardon is announced from God, the repenting, believing sinner is able to say, "Being justified by faith, I am at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." There is man dead in trespasses and sins, but under the power of the quickening Spirit the soul is brought to life again. There are the stains which sin has made upon our souls, but "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all unrighteousness." This is the remedy. You thus see the power of God's government rising above all mere nominal definitions in the great change of heart and change of life which the gospel works upon the souls of men. This is the government of remedy, and hence the government of power. III. IT IS A LIFE IN DISTINCTION FROM A DOCTRINE. The potency of the Divine kingdom appears in the fact that it accomplishes what all other forms of power fail to achieve. It is the power not of mere creed, but the power of God within the soul; and hence springs up a life that is "hid with Christ in God." It is a new life, for it is life that flows from Jesus Christ through the faith that is operative in the soul. "Old things have passed away, and behold, all things have become new." This is a life of obedience, purity, and benevolence. Let me not be misunderstood as depreciating or undervaluing dogmatic theology; the kingdom, however, is not the doctrine whatever may be its form or its correctness. To take in the words of the Lord Jesus as He utters them is spirit and life, and inclusive of the kingdom; but the words of which we speak are the words of men having only a representative authority with regard to truth. If you ask me, Where is the kingdom? It is within you. If you ask me, What is the kingdom? I answer, It is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." (*Bp. J. T. Peck.*)

The nature of religion:—I. IT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD. A kingdom which He hath erected in the hearts of men. 1. Of this kingdom God is the Sovereign. He hath laid the foundations of it, and He therefore of right presides over it, commanding a ready obedience to His will, taking effectual care of its real interests, and administering all its affairs with infinite wisdom and goodness. 2. As the heart is the place where He hath erected His throne, so the powers of it, the understanding, will, and affections, are the proper subjects over which He sways His sceptre. 3. Nor need we be at any loss to determine what are the means or instruments by which the soul of man, restored to the dominion of its rightful Sovereign, is ruled and governed. By the sacred Scriptures the man of religion would have his opinions, affections, and conduct directed, governed, and tried. 4. We are led to contemplate the beauty, order, and harmony of this spiritual kingdom, which is another idea the metaphor naturally conveys. 5. If such be the nature and tendency of religion, how great are the privileges and immunities annexed to this spiritual kingdom! 6. Its stability and duration. It is a kingdom that shall not be moved. The foundation of it is laid in the purpose and grace of Him who wants neither means nor inclination to support and defend it. II. IT IS NOT IN WORD, BUT IN POWER. It is not "in word," it does not consist in notions, professions, or external forms—things wherein men are too apt to place the essence of it; but "in power,"

it is an inward spiritual vital principle, which takes hold of the heart and diffuses its influence through the life. It may in general be described as a principle of Divine and spiritual life. If it be considered in reference to the understanding it expresses itself in our perceptions, reasonings, and reflections about spiritual objects; if in regard to the conscience, in a lively impression of the truth and importance of Divine things; if as respecting the judgment, in an approbation of the things which are excellent; if the will, in a concurrence with whatever appears to be the pleasure of God, and in one word, if it be considered in reference to the affections, it consists in the direction of them to their proper objects. The result of all which will be such a course of behaviour as is in the general answerable to this state of the mind. And now with how much reason may we—1. Appeal to the judgments and consciences of all men, whether there is not a real excellency in what we have thus been describing! How much then—2. Is it to be lamented that so little of real religion is to be found in our world! 3. Of what importance is it that we each of us seriously examine ourselves upon this question, whether God hath erected His kingdom in our hearts, and in what it consists, whether in word or in power! (*S. Stennett, D.D.*) *The kingdom of God in power*:—The kingdom of God is the substance and the order of the gospel, and of the gospel dispensation. 1. In a kingdom the subjects become connected with each other and with their king. Salvation connects man with man, and man with God. 2. In a kingdom there is strength. Many kingdoms are powerful, but this is more so than the whole of them. 3. The kingdom of God is not in word; it is not in "enticing words of man's wisdom." Words pertain to the kingdom, but they are not its power—words are the clothing; power is in the body where truth lies. Fallen angels are mighty and have possession of man's fallen nature; the angels must be subdued, and man must be changed. What words are adequate for such a performance? 4. The kingdom of God is not like the kingdom of men, where the power is in the voice of the people: here the power is in the king, and of the king. 5. The power of this kingdom is exercised in the people of God. A new nature is formed in them by an almighty power. The power that will raise the dead in the last day is now exercised in raising the spiritually dead into a life of holiness. The grace received is not in word, but in power: the man does not talk of repentance merely, but departs from iniquity: he does not speak of faith merely, but believes in Christ, and gives himself to Him. The power of the kingdom makes strong the weakest. 6. The power of the kingdom is engaged on behalf of the subjects. The power of their King was engaged for the subjects here on earth, when He stood as their surety. Out of the treasures of holiness in Christ the power of God draws when engaged in the sinner's sanctification. The might and the holiness of God are alike infinite. 7. The power of God is sovereign in its exercise. A greater degree of success attended the preaching of fishermen in one day, than had been produced by the ministry of Christ Himself in three years and a half. Paul had the same gifts in preaching in every place, but not the same success. 8. The power of the kingdom is exercised against the enemies of the Church, and it reduces the creation into order. Sin and Satan are the great authors of disorder, and this kingdom is opposed to them; and its power will bring down whatever will rise up against it. 9. It will be the power of the kingdom that will appear in the great day. The Lord Jesus Christ will "judge the quick and the dead, at His appearing and His kingdom." Thenceforth the very world of perdition will be in order: then the chief author of disorder will be reduced to eternal order. Not many words will be used on the occasion, but power. (*D. Charles.*) *The relation of word to power*:—God has put truth into word, and so given us a Bible, for the purpose of making the Divine a practical working factor inside each man's own individual life; so that by virtue of it we become organs of God, and young incarnations. A man is not a man fully and fairly until his own energies gain their final touch of effectiveness through the power of God working within him to will and to do of the Divine good pleasure. Inspiration is permanent; only in one case it covers the Spirit of God going forth into the forms of lettered truth; in another into forms of thought, feeling, purpose, and power through personal instrumentality. Inspired power to write a Divine Bible; inspired power to live a Divine life; inspired power to conceive or achieve a Divine purpose—each of them is as a separate coloured ray that issues into the air after its passage through the prism of the human spirit; but one of these just as much as another sprung out of the original white beam of the Spirit of God. To be a Christian, then, is to live with a Divine life; and to secure that result is the object which God had in giving

to us a book—an instrument, therefore, whose prime value lies only in its competency to contribute to the realisation and maintenance in men of the Spirit of God as the law and the material of life. (*C. H. Parkhurst, D.D.*) *The distinction between word and power:*—The written pages from Matthew to Revelation did not make Christianity; Christianity made those pages. Words are the accident of the matter. It is easier to carry a book around in our pocket than it is to carry God's Spirit around in our life. But gospel is power; it is life, Divine life. Christ is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life"; the whole thing. And to be a Christian is not to know a book, but to be knit into the Son of God. There was no book in St. John's piety, or in St. Peter's, or in St. Paul's. I know whom, not what "I have believed." This, of course, is not to depreciate the Christian Scriptures. They serve a necessary purpose. They are a highway over which men are to be led to Christ. The error does not lie in using the written records as an instrument, but in treating them as a finality, as a substitute for Christ. We are in danger of trying to live on an inspired description of Christ and a verbal photograph of Him instead of succeeding in living on Christ. We cannot live on a history—even an inspired history. Christ told His disciples that it was expedient for them that He go away; to their advantage that He go away, because He would send His Spirit instead. (*Ibid.*) *The power of the gospel:*—1. The text does not mean that words have no place in the kingdom of God. No man made a more marvellous use of language than St. Paul. A man who has a perfect command of words has a very great command of things, because words are things in reality. 2. Yet it is true that the kingdom of God is not in words but in power, as it is that the glory of the picture is not in its frame, but in the picture itself. The gospel is in power. Men write and speak about it, some for and some against it; and in either case there is evidence of its power. Nothing in Europe to-day has such power over the minds of men as the New Testament. Millions of people believe the gospel, and are endeavouring in a manner to conform their lives to its requirements. Then people who are in trouble all love it. You have no idea what a power it has over them. What is the reason? I attribute the power of the gospel—I. To THE CHARM OF THE LIFE OF JESUS. You have read all manner of lives, but as a rule you do not read a man's biography twice. But how many times have you read the life of Christ? You say, "But it is in the Bible, and is inspired." You do not read it because of that. The main secret is in the charm of the history itself. There are certain elements of it that must always have a wonderful power over man. 1. Its truth and naturalness. Some men love error, but our nature loves reality, and any man that is brave enough to be natural and true will be loved, and people will gather around him. No age was ever more real than this. Everywhere men are inclined to discover the reality of things, whether in the heavens or in the earth. Look at the sorrowful earnestness of writers in the daily journals. In the New Testament you meet a man who speaks fresh from the glory of God; you come in contact with reality and truth, qualities which will always have a charm. 2. Its perfect goodness and love. All that is rich, sweet, and inspiring in the vegetable world is concentrated in the fruit of the vine. Jesus said, "I am the Vine"; and all the virtues are found in Him. It is this that gives a power and a charm to the gospel. 3. Its supernatural majesty. Take one or two instances. There arose a great storm, and He said, "Peace be still." There followed a great calm. He sees people burdened with sin and sorrow, and He says, "Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." When sin and death came into the family of friends, He said, "Lazarus, come forth," and the man came forth from the tomb. You may write splendid essays to prove that miracles are outside experience; but as long as you have this supernaturalism mingled with goodness, and all founded upon truth and naturalness, you will have a power which will always have a charm for the minds of men. II. TO THE MANNER IN WHICH OUR LORD MAKES GOOD HIS DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE INTEREST IN US. Science is bringing marvellous facts to light. Why then not make a religion of science, and make thoroughly scientific men the priests of that religion, and let its disciples worship the cosmos? You cannot. Science does not touch the heart deep enough. Why not make a religion of philosophy? Why not worship the Absolute One which underlies all things? The answer again is you cannot. Philosophy does not touch the heart deep enough to cause it to worship. Splendid as it is, still it seems cold as the northern lights that play around the pole. Why has the gospel a power over us? It brings God near to the heart, and enables us to believe in, to love, and to worship Him. III. TO ITS DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL LIFE. All that we are and all that we have are summed up in the word "life." Hence men love life

so dearly. "All that a man hath will he give for his life." We say of some people that they love riches, but it is not gold the people love. It is the position, the influence, the enjoyments, the independency that wealth gives. Men love wealth because it can make their life deeper, richer, broader. These are seeking the tree of life if they only knew it, but in the wrong way, in a way in which they never can find it. The gospel has a charm over us because it speaks certainly concerning eternal life. If you could take away all desire of knowledge from man, then you might shut up all the libraries of the world, for books would have no power. Books appeal to the love of knowledge. If we could lock out this thirst for life, if we could reduce the human mind to contentment, so that it should cease to desire an endless, blessed existence, then might the gospel become a dead letter. But whilst we thirst for eternal life, the message "I give unto you eternal life" shall always be welcome. (*T. Jones, D.D.*)

Profession and action:—These words may be—I. ABUSED. 1. When they are employed to weaken the outward institutions of piety. Some would so refine religion as to render it unsuited for human beings. We have to worship God in spirit, but we must not forget that we have bodies. There may be the form of godliness without the power, but while we are here the power cannot be manifested without the form. Even the practical duties of life are better discharged by those who wait upon God in His appointed means. It is a dangerous delusion that leads people to the neglect of those means and forms which God, who knoweth our frame, has enjoined us to use. 2. When we fail to regulate our religion by the rule of God's Word. Impulse is good, but requires guidance. Zeal may cause our good to be evil spoken of, and even produce evil. One duty must not defraud another. There are some who would even use the text to do away with social distinctions. II. IMPROVED by applying them—1. To judging ourselves. Is religion a power in our lives? Does faith work by love? Professions or intentions do not make piety. 2. To judging others. Men differ in temperament. We often consider an individual who speaks much on religion as a zealous Christian, when, if we followed him through life, we should find him as zealous in worldly concerns. So also we meet with a man who shrinks from notice, and set him down as not "fervent in spirit," when it is only his natural timidity that restrains him from more active exertion. (*J. J. S. Bird, B.A.*)

The spiritual mind:—I. IF WE WOULD FORM A JUST NOTION HOW FAR WE ARE INFLUENCED BY THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL, WE MUST PUT ASIDE EVERYTHING WHICH WE DO MERELY IN IMITATION OF OTHERS, AND NOT FROM RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES. 1. Let a man consider the number of times he has attended public worship because others do; or the number of times he has found himself unequal to temptations when they came, which beforehand he and others made light of, and he must own that his outward conduct shapes itself unconsciously by the manners of those with whom he lives. 2. Now, I am not condemning all that we do without thinking expressly of the duty of obedience at the very time we are doing it. It is natural to a religious man to obey, and therefore he will do it naturally, *i.e.*, without effort or deliberation. Separate acts of faith aid us only while we are unstable. As we get strength, but one extended act of faith (so to call it) influences us all through the day, and our whole day is but one act of obedience also. Our will runs parallel to God's. We are moved by God dwelling in us, and need not but act on instinct. 3. How different is this high obedience from that random unawares way of doing right, which to so many men seems to constitute a religious life! The one is obedience on habit, the other obedience on custom; the one is of the heart, the other of the lips; the one is in power, the other in word; the one cannot be acquired without much and constant vigilance, generally not without much pain and trouble; the other is the result of a mere passive imitation of those whom we fall in with. Have we then received the kingdom of God more than externally? II. WE MAY HAVE RECEIVED IT IN A HIGHER SENSE THAN IN WORD MERELY, AND YET IN NO REAL SENSE IN POWER. Our obedience may be in some sort religious, and yet hardly deserve the title of Christian. 1. It is possible, according to St. Peter, to fear God and work righteousness without being Christians. Is it not the way of men to dwell with satisfaction on their good deeds? They never harmed any one, they have not given in to a profligate life; they can speak of their honesty, industry, conscientiousness, &c. Now all this is really praiseworthy, and, when a man from want of opportunity knows no more, really acceptable to God; yet it determines nothing about his having received the gospel of Christ in power. 2. To be Christians, surely it is not enough to be that which we must be, even without Christ; not enough to be no better than good heathens. I am not wishing to frighten these imperfect Christians, but to lead them on; to open their minds to the greatness of

the work before them, to dissipate the meagre and carnal views in which the gospel has come to them, to warn them that they must never be contented with themselves, but must go on unto perfection; that till they are much more than they are at present, they have received the kingdom of God in word, not in power. 3. What is it, then, that they lack? Read 2 Cor. v. 14, 17; Gal. ii. 20; Col. iii. 12-16; Gal. iv. 6; Luke ix. 23. Now it is plain that this is a very different mode of obedience from any which natural reason and conscience tell us of. Observe in what respect it is different from that lower degree of religion which we may possess without entering into the mind of the gospel. (1) In its faith; which is placed, not simply in God, but in God as manifested in Christ, according to His own words, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." (2) We must adore Christ as our Lord and Master, and love Him as our most gracious Redeemer. (3) We must, for His sake, aim at a noble and unusual strictness of life, perfecting holiness in His fear, destroying our sins, mastering our whole soul, and bringing it into captivity to His law, exercising a profound humility, and an unbounded, never-failing love, and shunning irreligious men. This is to be a Christian. (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*) *Valid Christianity*:—1. This "kingdom" is not God's government among the nations; nor the outward dispensation of the gospel, a kingdom which is "preached" unto us; nor the sphere of celestial bliss, to which we are "called." It is spiritual. "It cometh not with observation." It is "within us." We can only "see" it and "enter" it by being "born again." It is not ceremonial observance, but "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Its "mystery" can alone be appreciated by subjection to it. It is so inestimable that we must "seek it first." 2. This kingdom is not in "word," a mere proclamation—it is in power. This is a thing very difficult to define. To tell us that it is ability, capacity, strength, is idle repetition. It will better reveal its true meaning in the facts which the text will identify. I. RELIGION IN ITS HOLD AND OPERATION UPON THE HEART IS NOTHING LESS THAN THE KINGDOM OF GOD. 1. You must lay aside all notion of empires and thrones. You must remove all your ideas to the soul which once belonged to the kingdom of Satan. In our conversion God's reign begins. The atonement slays our enmity, and gives us our true and perfect law of liberty. We are "willing in the day of His power." 2. The kingdom of God supposes the constant operation of authority, and of the sense of law. To the most sinless creatures this is the ever-present idea. There can be no excellence without such guide and commandment. In keeping such commandment is heaven's great reward. Heaven is a kingdom, and only they who do His commandments have right to its tree of life. 3. It is well known with what a graceful fervour human fealty has often borne itself. A generous devotion has sustained it. The darker the eclipse which greatness suffered, the steadier was its faith. And does not such loyalty shame our coldness, little short of treason, to Jesus our King? Where are our efforts and sacrifices for His throne? Would we die in His cause? II. THIS KINGDOM RESTS IN A MIGHTY INFLUENCE. 1. The ultimate sanction of every government is force. But that force is indicated by pageantry and weapon. Yet is it, at a very early stage, a barren spectacle. Carried to its furthest, it can kill the body. Within the still smaller limit its command is feeble. It cannot decide opinion or fetter conscience. If benevolent, few are the blessings which it can supply; if tyrannic, as few are the ills which it can inflict. It is a narrow thing. The soul defies it. But the kingdom of God in an embodiment of august ascendency. It is not indebted to the adventitious and the external appendage. It wants not palaces, courts, armies. It is great in the greatness, it is strong in the strength, of its King. 2. Christianity made its early boast of this attribute. A signal power attended its outset. The Saviour taught as having authority. His favourite disciples did not taste of death till they had seen the kingdom of God come with power. Glorious victories were won. It was the visitation of a new life. Nothing withstood it. It grew up into a vast intellectual and moral dominion, diverse from every other government, having no local confines, brooking no selfish jealousies, converting the rebel soul and restoring it to God. It was in power. 3. We would not for a moment suppress the fact that if the gospel comes not in word only, but in power, it is because it comes in the Holy Ghost, the "Spirit of power!" But the "power" which is ascribed to the kingdom of God in the text, though always depending upon the Divine influence, is not the same with it. It belongs to the theme itself. It grows out of it, and is its legitimate due. It is a moral power. And there is power of the highest created order wherever there is mind. Knowledge is power (Prov. xxiv. 5). How mind acts upon mind! It is impossible to measure that impetus

and confirmation which Christianity has given already to human intellect. It alone awakens man. Through its precepts he gets understanding. The entire soul is knitted into strength. The religion of Christ alone brings out the stamina of our mental and moral constitution. We can do all things through Christ Jesus strengthening us. 4. But in contending for the moral power inherent in the gospel of the kingdom, we may be asked, What can be the influence of the mere word? Let us illustrate. The great masters of antiquity have long since passed away. But their lore and eloquence have found some record. It is dead letter, it is mere word. But do they not exercise a mighty dominion over nations of which they had not heard? Paul penned his arguments and censures. "His letters, said they, are powerful." So all that belongs to our religion, even that which is most external, is in power. Its words, they are spirit and they are life. III. THE QUALITIES OF THIS POWER. 1. It is a power of truth. "The truth" is its sublime designation. The gospel founds itself upon facts. "With great power," therefore, "gave the apostles" their "witness." "The word of the truth of the gospel" impresses its own seal upon our soul. So adapted is it, that the Spirit of truth exclusively employs it in the new birth. And it is equally operative in the growth of Christian character and experience; when we receive it "not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God," then "it worketh effectually in us who believe." 2. It is a power of authority. It is Divine obligation. (1) The authority of the gospel alone can impart confidence. It is God's provision; here is our security: it is God's will; here is our warrant: it is God's command; here is our duty. (2) It will manifest itself in our exertions to promote it. Content yourselves with the idea that Christianity would be a general blessing, that its extension is therefore desirable, and what would be the vigour of our missionary institutions? But when we feel that "the mystery is to be made known to all nations according to the commandment of the everlasting God," we cry, "Necessity is laid upon us," &c. 3. It is a power of realisation. It affects strongly and vividly. It arouses every earnest feeling. It substantiates its own truths and places them in a distinct perceptibleness. It realises God, and we "endure as seeing Him who is invisible." It realises futurity, and "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." 4. It is a power of intuition. Though man is grossly self-ignorant, yet he feels the truth when brought home to him. We see ourselves as in a glass. The secrets of man's heart are made manifest. He wonders at the detection and exposure: "Whence knowest thou me?" "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did." 5. It is a power of relief. With royal liberality Christianity makes full provision for all the wants of all. There is no escape nor exemption which the sinner needs, but it secures. There is no remorse nor shame which he suffers, but it soothes. It is a feast for the hungry, a fountain to the thirsty, a wardrobe for the naked. 6. It is a power of exemplification. Sign and wonder attest it. But there is a still more decisive corroboration. A change has ever been going on in countless minds which science, legislation, moral suasion, never could achieve. 7. It is a power of absorption. It takes hold of man's soul, occupies and engrosses it. Like the leaven, it assimilates the mass into which it is thrown. 8. It is a power of courage. Christianity is the parent and nurse of the true heroic. It is great and it excites greatness. Its language is to reiteration, Be strong. It trains us to hardness; to the sacrifice of life when higher interests are at stake. Pusillanimity may be too natural to us, but it belongs not to our cause. True to it, we faint not. 9. It is the power of support. Afflictions are not held back from the Christian: but "strong consolation" only feebly expresses his support. He glories in tribulation. He is more than a conqueror. We are partakers of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. 10. It is the power of influence. The gospel clothes its believers with an incalculable ascendency. It is impossible to limit their power of doing good. Who can measure the usefulness of a thought, the efficacy of a prayer? 11. It is the power of diffusion. In Christianity there is nothing sluggish and inert, nothing cold and narrow, but all is glowing, intense, stirring, and expansive. (*R. W. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Polish without power*:—The other Saturday evening, feeling tired and overworked, I went to the Turkish Baths to get freshened up for the Sunday services. I sat in the beautifully-furnished heating-room, quietly waiting my turn to go through the mysterious process of cleansing, when my attention was called to two gentlemen, whose conversation I was obliged to hear. "Well," said the shorter of the two, "I don't get much out of his preaching now." "How is that?" asked the other; "does he neglect the sermon preparation?" "No. I think he prepares too much; he says he wants more time

for study, and he can't visit the old folks like he did when he came fresh from college." "Perhaps he feels running dry," significantly remarked the little man, as he wiped the perspiration from his face. "I tell you what it is, Mr. S——," said the first speaker, with emphasis, "our minister thinks a lot too much about polish; he makes splendid sentences, but there's no power in them. He used to quote the Scriptures at first, now he puts in bits of poetry: all are very nice and pretty, but no power. What is the good of preaching when there's no power about it? I like polish, but I like it on something." I went to take my turn in the bath, but not to forget the old man's words about polish and power. (*Sword and Trowel.*) *The power of the gospel:*—In the city of Shanghai, a convert to the gospel kept a store for selling rice for the daily food of the purchasers. When he was received into the Church he was told he could not sell rice on the Sabbath, he must close his store on that day. This would endanger his business, as his patrons, if they could not buy at his store on the Sabbath, would go to some other one, and would not come back to him. He, however, kept the Sabbath, and, to the surprise of others as well as himself, his business increased on the other days of the week, and he prospered. As he gained some money, he determined to build a church in which to preach the gospel to those who did not believe. He built the church at his own expense; and, as he has grown in knowledge of the gospel, as well as prospered in his business, he himself preaches in this church every Sunday, and thus gives, not only his money, but his own personal labour, to the extension of the gospel of our Lord. This shows that this gospel is the power of God wherever it is preached, to the Gentile as well as the Jew, and that it everywhere brings forth fruit to the praise of Divine grace. (*S. S. Chronicle.*) **What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod or in love?**—Observe—I. THE OCCASION OF THIS APPEAL; pride, contention, &c. (see foregoing chapters). II. THE SPIRIT OF IT. The apostle speaks as a father. 1. With love. 2. With authority. III. THE DESIGN. To produce—1. Submission. 2. Amendment. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Discipline in the Church:*—1. The apostle had the power of using the rod. 2. This is sometimes needful. 3. It is a ministerial duty. 4. It was reluctantly employed by Paul, and should be spared where possible. 5. Must be administered in the spirit of love. (*Ibid.*)

CHAPTER V.

VERS. 1–13. **It is reported that there is fornication among you.**—*Gross scandals*—1. May arise within the Church. 2. Occasion grievous reproach. 3. Should be instantly investigated and removed. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The duty of the Church in cases of open immorality:*—I. To ITSELF. 1. Humiliation. 2. Sorrow. 3. Purgation. II. To THE OFFENDER. 1. Separation from the Christian fellowship. 2. Yet in earnest hope of repentance and amendment. (*Ibid.*) "*That wicked person*" (text, and 2 Cor. ii. 5–11; vii. 8–13):—I. HIS SIN. 1. He had married his stepmother. Such a marriage, though forbidden by Moses, was, under certain conditions, permitted by the Scribes. Hence it has been thought that this man was a Jew. But from the gravity of Paul's censure it is more probable that he was a Gentile who had availed himself of the easy law of divorce and the licence of Corinthian manners. In itself the sin was not so heinous as many which were committed in that wicked city every day. 2. But there were circumstances which aggravated its guilt. (1) The father of this young man was alive and keenly resented the wrong (2 Cor. vii. 12). (2) Though Roman law and manners were loose, yet throughout the Empire the act was branded as a public scandal. (3) This man was a church member and therefore bound to walk by a higher law than that of Rome; and to create such a scandal in such a city might be fatal to the Christian society. 3. Let us, however, do him bare justice, and we shall find him a man like ourselves, open to similar temptations, and falling before them as we fall. From St. Paul's references to him he appears to have been of a sensitive passionate temperament. A few weeks after his expulsion he was in danger of being "swallowed up by a swelling and excessive sorrow" (2 Cor. ii. 7), and the apostle trembled lest he should sink into despair, and vehemently urged his restoration (2 Cor. ii. 5–10). Now a man of such temperament might be led almost unwittingly into the gravest

sin. His mother is dead and he is deprived of her counsel and sympathy. His father brings home a new wife—a heathen apparently, probably young and fair, given to him by her parents because he is a man of wealth and position. By and by we discover that she is divorced from him and married to his son. Does it require a novelist to suspect that behind these facts lay a romance or a tragedy? The young man may have loved this girl before his father, and while she favoured him her parents may have favoured the elder suitor. Once married, she may have taken out a divorce, as for almost any reason she was able to do, and have given herself to the man she loved. Or, having willingly married the elder man, her heart may have gone over to the younger before she knew she had lost it. Or, more probably still, she may have been one of those fascinating, fatal women with a strange power for taking men captive, and a wicked delight in using it. On any one of these hypotheses the man at once becomes human to us and alive, and while we cannot palliate his sin, it must have had a strong motive, and being a man of like passions with us he does not stand outside the pale of our sympathy. II. HIS SENTENCE. 1. He had a terrible awaking from his brief passionate dream. One evening he leaves the fair heathen who has bewitched him and goes down to church. The brethren are at their common evening meal. An unusual animation prevails among them. Titus is there with a letter from Paul, and sits at the board with a clouded, anxious face. The meal over he unrolls the epistle and begins to read. We know how the letter opens. And then, after all this kindly weather, the storm breaks (chap. iv. 21). Up to this point all may have listened with tolerable composure. No one had been singled out for blame. But here, surely more than one back must have shivered with prophetic twinge. Probably, however, the young man had no presentiment of what was coming. If so, so much the worse for him; for now the rod falls in earnest. It is impossible to describe the agony of shame with which a sensitive, impulsive man would listen to the sentences which follow. 2. There can be no doubt that St. Paul intended to supply the church with a formula of excommunication, and that they used it. After due consultation, and when the vote of the church had been taken—not an unanimous vote, as it proved (2 Cor. ii. 6)—we must suppose that the young man was summoned before the elders of the church, and that they pronounced over him the solemn words, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we deliver thee, So-and-so, to Satan, for the destruction of thy flesh, that thy spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." And we may well believe that the sentence fell on the offender like the doom of death. Not that the apostle meant to shut him out from the common requisites and courtesies of life, or to make him a son of perdition; he meant—(1) To have this open offender against the law of Christ cast out from the communion of the church, at least for a time, and so brought to a knowledge of his sin and sincere repentance. St. Paul habitually conceived of the heathen world as the domain of Satan, the prince of this world, and therefore to cut a man off from the church and cast him back on the world was to "deliver such an one to the power of Satan." (2) He habitually conceived of pain, disease, loss, obstruction, &c., as the work of the evil spirit, as indeed does all Scripture. Is any good purpose crossed? Satan hindered (1 Thess. ii. 18). Is he tormented with a disabling malady? An angel of Satan buffets him (2 Cor. xii. 7). He had the highest authority for his conclusion (Luke xiii. 16). Probably, therefore, just as Job was given over into the hand of Satan for a time to be tried, or just as a darkness fell upon Elymas, so also when the Corinthian was excommunicated there came on him a succession of cruel losses. Perhaps even the loss of the fair heathen woman, or some disease which purged out the fever from his blood and brought him to himself. How all this differs from the ban to which the Church has again and again exposed the heretic, and from the mystic spiritual doom which some have discovered in this formula! For—(3) The apostle expressly says that the "destruction" was intended not for damnation, but for salvation (see also chap. xi. 32; 1 Tim. i. 20). III. HIS ABSOLUTION. If "the end crowns the work," who that has "seen the end of the Lord" with this young man can deny that even his excommunication was a work of mercy? His conscience was roused. He confessed and renounced his sin; his sorrow for it swelled till it threatened to prove fatal. And when Titus brings Paul the tidings, the heart of the apostle is profoundly moved (2 Cor. ii. 5-7). And in this passion of forgiving love to the penitent, Paul was a faithful expounder of the very spirit of the gospel. If there was mercy even for the wicked person no man need despair. (*S. Cox, D.D.*) *The socially immoral in churches*:—Note—I. THAT THE SOCIALLY IMMORAL SOMETIMES FIND THEIR WAY INTO CHRISTIAN

CHURCHES. A case of fornication had been reported to Paul. One of the members had actually married his stepmother. Such a piece of immorality would be regarded with the utmost abhorrence, even in heathendom. How such a character became a church member must have been through imposition on the one hand, and the lack of scrutiny on the other. It is to be feared that the admission of the socially immoral into churches has in every age been too common. How many churches are there in England entirely free from those who every day outrage the golden rule? There are merchants that cheat their customers, lawyers their clients, doctors their patients, politicians their constituents; masters and mistresses that oppress their servants, and servants unfaithful to their employers. The Church is a field in which grows the tare as well as the wheat, a net in which there is the "unclean" as well as the "clean." II. THAT CHURCHES IN THEIR INTERNAL RELIGIOUS DISPUTATIONS ARE IN DANGER OF OVERLOOKING THESE (ver. 21). Probably there were those who were proud of this man: perhaps he was eloquent, rich, or influential. We have known joint-stock swindlers who have been made chairmen of religious meetings, and who have been cheered to the echo. Party feeling was so strong, and religious disputation so rife, that such immoralities escaped notice. Creeds are more thought of than character, heretics dreaded more than rogues. Hence the saying, sooner trust a man of the world than a professor of religion. III. THAT THE EXCLUSION BY THE CHURCHES OF SUCH IS AN URGENT DUTY. A true church is a community of Christly men, and the presence of such in it is an outrage. 1. Their expulsion should be practised with the utmost zeal. It would seem that no sooner did Paul hear of this abomination than he determined to put an end to it (ver. 3). 2. The expulsion should be practised not to destroy, but to save the offender (ver. 5). All punishment should be reformative (Gal. vi. 1). (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Ecclesiastical excommunication*:—Note the several grounds on which it is based. I. REPRESENTATION (ver. 4). There is but One whose condemnation is commensurate with God's. Nevertheless, as the representative of that ideal man which Christ realised, the Church condemns. As representative, human punishment is expressive of Divine indignation. "To deliver unto Satan." I cannot explain such words away. I cannot say the wrath of God and the vengeance of the law are figurative, for it is a mistake to suppose that punishment is only to reform and warn. In our own day we are accustomed to use weak words concerning sin. The Corinthians looked on at this deed of iniquity, and felt no indignation. They called it perhaps "mental disease," "error," "mistake of judgment," "irresistible passion." St. Paul did feel indignation; and if St. Paul had not been indignant could he have been the man he was? And this, if we would feel it, would correct our lax ways of viewing sin. Observe, the indignation of society is properly representative of the indignation of God. So long as the Corinthians petted this sinner, conscience slumbered; but when the voice of men was raised in condemnation conscience began its work, and then their anger became a type of coming doom. But only so far as man is Christlike can he exercise this power in a true and perfect manner. The world's excommunication is almost always unjust, and that of the nominal Church more or less so. II. THE REFORMATION OF THE OFFENDER (ver. 5). Of all the grounds alleged for punishment, that of "an example to others" is the most unchristian. Here the peculiarly merciful character of Christianity comes forth; the Church was never to give over the hope of recovering the fallen. To shut the door of repentance upon any sin, and thus to produce despair, is altogether alien from Christ's Spirit. And so far as society does that now it is not Christianised, for Christianity never sacrifices the individual to the society. Christianity has brought out strongly the worth of the single soul. Yet it would be too much to say that example is never a part of the object of punishment. The severe judgments of society have their use. Individuals are sacrificed, but society is kept comparatively pure, for many are deterred from wrong-doing by fear who would be deterred by no other motive. III. THE CONTAGIOUS CHARACTER OF EVIL (ver. 6). Who does not know how the *tone* of evil has communicated itself? Worldly, irreverent, licentious minds, leaven society. You cannot be long with persons who by innuendo or lax language show an acquaintance with evil, without feeling in some degree assimilated to them, nor can you easily retain enthusiasm for right amongst those who scoff at goodness. IV. BECAUSE TO PERMIT GROSS SIN WOULD BE TO CONTRADICT THE TRUE IDEA OF THE CHURCH. Let us distinguish. The Church invisible is "the general assembly and Church of the First-born" (Heb. xii. 23). It is that idea of humanity which exists in the mind of God. But the Church visible is the actual men professing Christ, and exists to represent, and at last to realise, the Church invisible. In the first of

these senses the apostle says "ye are unleavened"; *i.e.*, that is the idea of your existence. In the second sense, he describes them as they are, "puffed up, contentious, carnal, walking as men." Now, for want of keeping these two things distinct, two grave errors may be committed. 1. Undue severity in the treatment of the lapsed. Into this the Corinthians fell, and so did the Church in the third century, when Novatian, laying down the axiom that the actual state of the Church ought to correspond with its ideal consistently, demanded the non-restoration of the lapsed. But the attempt to make the Church entirely pure must fail: it is to be left to a higher tribunal. *Cf.* the parable of the wheat and the tares. Only as a Church visible she must separate from her all such foreign elements as bear unmistakable marks of their alien birth. 2. An over-rigorous puritanism (vers. 9, 10). Note the dangerous results of that exclusiveness which affects the society of the religious only. (1) The habit of judging. For, if we only associate with those whom we think religious, we must decide who are religious, for which judgment we have absolutely no materials. (2) Consciousness: for we must judge those who are not religious, and then the door is opened for all the slander, &c., which make religious cliques worse than worldly ones. (3) Spiritual pride; for we must judge ourselves, and so say to others, "I am holier than thou." (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Discipline in the Corinthian Church*:—I. THE OCCASION. 1. Common report not always reliable. 2. In this case was lamentably true. 3. Was aggravated by the conduct of the Church. II. THE JUDGMENT WAS—1. Easy. 2. Authoritative. 3. Decisive. III. THE EXCOMMUNICATION was carried into effect—1. By the assembled church. 2. In the name and with the power of Christ. 3. By apostolic direction. 4. Included a special penalty. 5. Left hope of recovery. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Church discipline*:—I. WHO SHOULD EXERCISE IT—the minister in connection with the church. II. HOW FAR IT EXTENDS—to exclusion from the Christian fellowship with its consequences. III. WHAT IS ITS OBJECT? 1. The purity of the church. 2. The amendment of the individual. (*Ibid.*) *Christians ought to be solicitous about the spiritual condition of others*:—"Tom, you're the sort of Christian I like." The speaker was a young man of no religious profession. His companion was a church member in good and regular standing. "You're the sort of Christian I like. You never seem to bother yourself about a fellow's soul." The words were lightly spoken, but they pierced like an arrow. One who was passing Tom's chamber door that night heard something like this: "O God, forgive me that I have seemed indifferent to the welfare of my friends! Help me to trouble myself more and more and more about them! Make me hungry and thirsty for the salvation of those about me! Give me a passion for souls!" *Church not to be judged by her hypocrites*:—Was there ever a club in all the world without disreputable persons in it? Was there ever any association of men that might not be condemned if the fool's rule was followed of condemning the wheat because of the chaff? When with all our might and power we purge ourselves of deceivers as soon as we detect them, what more can we do? If our rule and practice is to separate them wholly as soon as we unmask them, what more can virtue itself desire? I ask any man, however much he may hate Christianity, what more can the Church do than watch her members with all diligence, and excommunicate the wicked when discovered? It is a foul piece of meanness on the part of the world that they should allege the faults of a few false professors against the whole Church: a piece of meanness of which the world ought to be ashamed. Nevertheless, so it is. "Ha! ha!" they say. "So would we have it!" The daughter of Philistia rejoices, and the uncircumcised triumphs when Jesus is betrayed by His friend, and sold by His disciple. O deceitful professor, will not the Lord be avenged upon you for this? Is it nothing to make the enemy blaspheme? Oh, hardened man, tremble, for this shall not go unpunished. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned.**—*The deplorable and the commendable in a Church*:—1. THE DEPLORABLE. Self-inflation, viz., when the Church prides itself on the gifts, wealth, &c., of its members, and when the members boast of the prestige and power of their Church. This is deplorable—1. In itself. (1) It is opposed to common sense. What has a Church which it has not received? The richer its gifts the greater its indebtedness. (2) It is a flagrant transgression of the law of Christ. "He that would be chief among you let him be your servant." (3) It is opposed to the example of Christ who "humbled Himself." 2. In its consequences. (1) A man who carries his head too high is apt to overlook matters that may bring both his head and himself to the ground. So with an inflated Church. The Corinthians, through obliviousness of the immorality practised by some, it may be,

of its gifted members, have been a bye-word for nineteen centuries. (2) A man inflated by his self-conceit of health, strength, &c., may easily overlook humble facts and conditions which may easily prove fatal to the strongest and healthiest. So a Church conscious of its antiquity and connection may ignore certain little sources of weakness which in their after flow cover it with infamy. A little leaven leavened the whole lump. What is the reputation of the Church of Corinth to-day? II. THE COMMENDABLE is set before us rather by implication. 1. Humility. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The Church must stoop to conquer. Absolute subordination to and reliance on its Divine Head is the secret of its triumph. 2. Repentance for shortcomings. The manifest duty and interest of the Church is to face the facts. A fool's paradise is a desirable abode neither for the individual nor the Church. Having faced the unwelcome facts it is the duty and interest of the Church to lament and confess them. 3. Reformation. "That he that hath done this deed," &c. Without this repentance and humility will be vain. When abuses exist the Church must not think its duty is done when the members recognise and deplore existing evils. Those evils, whether they consist of customs or persons, must be rigorously expelled. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Want of discipline in a Church*—I. IS A SERIOUS EVIL. 1. It degrades all. 2. Indicates declension of zeal, watchfulness, love, purity. II. IS COMMONLY ASSOCIATED WITH PRIDE. 1. The offender may be respectable; or—2. The offence ignored. III. IS A JUST CAUSE OF SORROW. 1. For the dishonour done to Christ. 2. The injury done to souls. 3. The discredit wrought upon God's cause. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **As absent in body, but present in spirit.**—*Absent in body, but present in spirit*:—Much as Paul loved his converts he could not, at this period, think of visiting them. Their conduct so distressed and disappointed him that he felt constrained to be absent from them. But this did not imply any lack of interest in them or their proceedings. On the contrary, there was a sense in which he was really with them. I. THE SPECIAL INSTANCE OF THIS PRINCIPLE FURNISHED HERE. In what sense could the apostle deem himself present with them "in spirit"? 1. By his teaching. He had long laboured here, and his teaching laid the foundation on which Apollos and the others had built. This teaching included many precepts and motives to holiness, and had sunk into the hearts of the spiritually susceptible. By it the apostle still summoned them to purity. 2. By his authority. He spoke by the Spirit of the Lord, and what he directed the Corinthians to do would be sanctioned by the Head of the Church. In vindicating the purity of the Christian communion, and in cleansing the stained robe of Christ's Bride they were to feel that Paul was with them inspiring and corroborating their action. II. THE GENERAL OPERATION IN THE LIVING CHURCH. 1. Christ, its Founder and Saviour, is absent in body, but present in Spirit. He assured His disciples that it was expedient for them that He should go away, &c. 2. The action of the Church when in accordance with Christ's instructions must be recognised as prompted by His Spirit and sanctioned by His authority. His presence is promised, and should be realised, to teach, comfort, and authorise the actions of those who do His will. (*Prof. J. R. Thomson.*) **In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together . . . to deliver such an one unto Satan.**—*Exclusion from Christian fellowship where duly inflicted*:—I. IS A TERRIBLE PENALTY. Enforced—1. By Christ. 2. His ministers. 3. The Church. II. ENTAILS SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES. 1. Loss of privilege. 2. Exposure to evil. 3. In this case possibly bodily affliction. III. IS MERCIFUL IN ITS DESIGN. 1. To condemn the sin. 2. To save the sinner. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The power of excommunication* must be exercised—I. IN THE NAME OF CHRIST. According to His command and direction. II. BY THE CHURCH. With its knowledge and consent. III. IN THE APOSTOLIC SPIRIT. With zeal for God's honour and love for the offender. IV. WITH THE POWER OF CHRIST. With His authority. V. FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FLESH. Its sinful tendencies. VI. THAT THE SPIRIT MAY BE SAVED. By timely repentance and reformation. (*Ibid.*) *The extreme penalty of the Church*—1. Is reserved for notorious offenders. 2. Implies serious consequences. 3. May be mercifully overruled for good. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 6–13. **Your glorying is not good.**—*The true Church a feast*:—These verses lead us to look upon the true Church—I. IN ITS INTERNAL ENJOYMENTS. The association of Christly men is a "feast," because it contains the choicest elements for—1. Spiritual nourishment. The quickening and elevating ideas current in such fellowships constitute a soul banquet, "a feast of fat things." 2. Spiritual gratification. What higher delight than the loving intercourse of kindred souls.

The true Church is not a melancholy assemblage, but is the most joyous fellowship on earth. II. IN ITS EXTERNAL RELATION TO THE UNGODLY. There is a connection with ungodly men—1. That it must avoid. As the Jews put away leaven at the Passover, so all corrupt men must be excluded from the Church feasts. Their presence, like leaven, would be contagious. No Church that has such leaven in it has any occasion for exultation (ver. 6). 2. That it cannot avoid (ver. 10). You cannot attend to your temporal affairs without contact with the ungodly, and as Christians you are bound to go among them to do them good. Over such you have no jurisdiction; they are "without," and God is to judge them, not you. But if they creep into the Church you are to deal with them (ver. 11). Observe here—(1) That sin takes many forms. What is temptation to one man is not to another. One is tempted to be a "fornicator," another a "miser," &c. (2) In whatever form this leaven shows itself it must not be tolerated for one moment. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The evil of self-complacency*:—I. THE SPIRIT CONDEMNED. 1. Self-complacency. 2. Vanity. 3. Pride. II. THE EVIL OF IT. 1. Foolish, man has nothing to glory in. 2. Sinful in itself, often in its occasion. 3. Pernicious, it brings shame, humiliation, ruin. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.**—*The leaven of sin* works—1. Constantly. 2. Imperceptibly. 3. Powerfully. 4. Perniciously. (*Ibid.*) *Sin a malignant leaven*:—I. IN ITS NATURE. 1. Corrupting. 2. Spreading. 3. Assimilating. II. IN ITS EFFECTS—1. Upon communities. 2. Upon individuals. (*Ibid.*) *Purging out the leaven*:—"What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Evermore in Scripture the doctrines of grace are married to the precepts of holiness. Salvation in sin is not possible, it always must be salvation from sin. The apostle, while he was showing the Corinthians how wrong they were to tolerate an incestuous person, compared the spirit of uncleanness to an evil leaven; then the leaven suggested the passover, and turning aside for a moment he applied that, so as to make his argument yet more cogent. Hard by any Scripture wherein you find the safety of the believer guaranteed, you are sure to see needful holiness set side by side with it. The purity of the house from leaven went side by side with its safety by the blood. 1. THE HAPPY CONDITION OF ALL TRUE BELIEVERS IN CHRIST. "Christ our passover," &c. The habitual state of a Christian is that of one keeping a feast in perfect security. Observe how the apostle puts it: Christ is our passover—that by which God's wrath passes over from us who deserve its full vengeance. Christ is sacrificed, for He gave Himself for us. No new victim is expected or required. Let others offer what they will, ours is the Lamb once slain, and there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. This completeness of sacrifice indeed is the main part of the festival which the Christian should perpetually keep. If there were anything yet to be done, how could we celebrate the feast? "Therefore," says the apostle—and it is a natural inference from it—"let us keep the feast." 1. The paschal lamb was not slain to be looked at, to be laid by, or merely made the subject of conversation; but it was slain to be fed upon. So it is your daily business to feed upon Christ, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed. At the paschal supper the whole of the lamb was intended to be eaten; and thou art to feed upon the whole of Christ. No part is denied thee, neither His humiliation nor His glory, His kingship nor His priesthood, His Godhead nor His manhood. 2. A feast is not only for nourishment, but for exhilaration. Let us in this sense also keep a lifelong feast. The Christian is not only to take the doctrines which concern Christ, to build up his soul with, but he may draw from them the new wine of delight. At the passover the Jews were accustomed to sing. Let us keep the feast in the same way. Let your praises never cease. 3. At the passover the devout Jew was accustomed to teach his family the meaning of the feast. Let it be a part of our continual festival to tell to others what our Redeeming Lord has done. This precept does not refer merely to the Lord's Supper; it is of continuous force. Let us keep the feast always, for the Lamb is always slain. II. A HOLY DUTY COMMENDED TO US. "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven." "Let us keep the feast; not with old leaven," &c. 1. Leaven is used in Scripture in every case but one as the emblem of sin. This arises from—(1) Its sourness. Sin, which for awhile may seem pleasant, will soon be nauseous even to the sinner; but the very least degree of sin is obnoxious to God. We cannot tell how much God hates sin. (2) Its corruption and corrupting influence. Sin is a corruption, it dissolves the very fabric of society and the constitution of man. (3) Its spreading character. No matter how great the measure of flour, the leaven will work its way. Even thus it is with sin. One woman sinned, and the whole human race was leavened by her fault. If the leaven

of evil is permitted in a Church, it will work its way through the whole of it. (*a*) A little false doctrine is sure to pave the way for greater departures from truth. The doctrines of the gospel have such a close relation to one another, that if you snap a link you have broken the whole chain. "He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all." (*b*) The leaven of evil living, too, tolerated in one it will soon be excused in another, and a lower tone of thought with regard to sin will rule the Church. 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. In those days one piece of rag carried the infection into a whole town. 2. This leaven must be purged out. In consequence of the command the head of the household among the Jews, especially when they grew more strict in their ritual, would go through the whole of the house on a certain day to search for every particle of leavened bread. With as scrupulous a care as the Israelite purged out the leaven from his house we are to purge out all sin from ourselves and in our conduct. (1) The Jewish householder would very soon put away all the large loaves of leavened bread, just as we gave up at once all those gross outward sins in which we indulged before. (2) Then perhaps the stray crusts which the children had left were put away. So there may be certain minor sins in the judgment of the world which the Christian man, when converted, may not put away the first week; but when they are seen he says, "I must have done with these." (3) But the most trouble would be caused by the little crumbs. We must not retain even a crumb of the evil leaven; we must earnestly desire to sweep it all out. (4) The whole house was searched. A Christian man may feel that he has got rid of all the leaven from his shop, yet it may be there is leaven in his private house. (5) A candle was used to throw a light into every corner of the house, that no leaven might escape notice. Take you the candle of God's Word, the candle of His Holy Spirit. (6) To purge out the old leaven many sweepings of the house will be wanted. For, mark you, you are sure to leave some leaven, and if you leave a little it will work and spread. It is hinted in the text that there are forms of evil which we must peculiarly watch against, and one is malice. I have known believers who have had a very keen sense of right, who have too much indulged the spirit deprecated here, *i.e.*, they have been severe and censorious. Take good heed also that every form of hypocrisy be purged out, for the apostle tells us to eat the passover with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Let us leave off talking beyond our experience, let us never pray beyond what we mean. III. THE HAPPINESS OF THE BELIEVER ACTS UPON HIS HOLINESS, AND HIS HOLINESS UPON HIS HAPPINESS. 1. The happiness acts upon the holiness. (1) If I feed upon Christ, who has been sacrificed for me, the happiness I feel leads me to say, "My sins slew my Saviour, and therefore will I slay my sins." (2) Sitting as you do within the house, and knowing that you are all safe because the blood is on the lintel outside, you will say, "The firstborn sons of Egypt are slain, and I am preserved. Why I must be God's firstborn, and must belong to Him." "Ye are not your own," &c. (3) Moreover, the Christian is encouraged to put away his leaven of sin because he has the foresight of a profitable exchange. The Israelite gave up leavened bread, but he soon had angels' food in the place of it. (4) The Christian, too, who knows that his sin is forgiven, feels that the God who could put away his load of sin will surely help to conquer his corruptions. 2. Holiness produces happiness. How quiet doth the soul become when the man feels, "I have done that which was right, I have given up that which was evil." What is it that makes God's people look so sad? It is the old leaven. "Let us keep the feast"; but it is useless to hope to do so while we keep the leaven. Conclusion: There are some here who are not saved. Notice how salvation comes—not through purging out the leaven; that operation is to be seen to afterwards, but because the Paschal Lamb is slain. Do not begin at the wrong end, begin with the Cross. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The purification of the Church*:—I. ITS NECESSITY arises from—1. The existence of sin (ver. 1). 2. Pride. 3. Disregard of the corrupting tendency of sin. II. ITS MEANS. 1. The removal of that which offends. 2. Renewal. 3. Through the sacrifice of Christ. III. ITS MOTIVES. 1. The full enjoyment of fellowship in Christ. 2. Which is interrupted by malice and wickedness. 3. But enhanced by sincerity and truth. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Little sins*:—No man reaches at once an extremity of sin; the descent is not abrupt, but sloped. Little sins must creep in before great sins can find room. First the thin end of the wedge, to make way for the broader part. The ordinary laws of motion seem to apply to the spiritual case; the speed increases fast after a time. So is the chain of sin slight at first and weak, like a single thread that seems scarcely to hold the soul, and

which the soul hardly feels; and then it changes into a twisted skein, and then into a corded rope, and then into links of iron. So it is like a little leaven, that works on from part to part, till it has leavened the whole lump. Speak of a murder to a boy, and he will start in horror at the very word, and his blood run cold, as he thinks of tales of violent death. Yet the murderer was once a boy shuddering at the sight of a little blood, putting his hand with an uneasy conscience to some little sin. Little sins grow into great, first as it were a mere scratch on the flesh, and then a putrefying sore. Satan works like the leaven, not spreading his net over every part at once, but stealing his way to the dominion of our souls. So have we seen a little stream creeping through the fields, and then it has gathered other streams like itself, and these being joined to one another, have gone down together widening into a mighty river, that has swept down to the sea with its broad breast of waters and its strong rushing tide. Even so have we seen a small seed cast into the fruitful earth, and before long the seed has put forth its arms and opened for itself a way through the yielding soil, and the little stalk has risen with its green head above the earth, and the stalk has gradually broken forth into a strong plant, and the plant into a tree overshadowing the field. Allow little sins, suffer them to stay for a moment in our souls, and little they will not remain; open the door of our souls ever so little to any sin, and the sin will be soon master of the house and all that is therein. (*J. Armstrong, D.D.*) *Little sins—their injuriousness*:—Some brittle gold, having been accidentally melted with a quantity of well-refined and tough gold, was found to have rendered the whole mass brittle with a highly crystalline fracture, and therefore useless for coinage. The impurity causing brittleness in the whole 75,000 ounces was a small fraction of an ounce, probably one three-hundred-thousandth, or less, of the original weight. It will be seen from this that the saying holds good in metallurgy as well as in morals, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," rendering it totally unfit for current uses, until it has been passed through a purifying process. (*I. C. Booth, LL.D.*)

Vers. 7, 8. **Purge out therefore the old leaven.**—*The old leaven*:—I. ITS NATURE AND OPERATION. II. THE IMPERATIVE NECESSITY OF ITS REMOVAL. 1. By repentance. That ye may be a new lump. III. THE MEANS AND MOTIVE—that we may enjoy Christ—our true passover—sacrificed for us. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Leaven* represented the pollutions of the idolatry and vices of Egypt with which Israel had broken in coming forth from it. As Israel had providentially carried to the desert that night only unleavened bread, the permanent rite had been borrowed from the historical circumstance (Exod. xii. 39; xiii. 6–9). The apostle spiritualised the ceremony. As Israelites at every passover feast were bound to leave behind them the pollutions of their Egyptian life, in order to become a new people of God, so the Church is bound to break with all the evil dispositions of the natural heart, or that which is elsewhere called "the old man." The desired result of this breaking on the part of each one with his own known sin will be a renewing of the whole Church, "that ye may be a new lump." Another allusion to Jewish customs. On the eve of the feast a fresh piece of dough was kneaded with pure water, and from it were prepared the cakes of unleavened bread which were eaten during the feast. "New" does not signify quality, but time—"recent." The whole community, by this work of purification wrought on itself, should become like a piece of dough newly kneaded. Has not the awakening of a whole Church been seen more than once to begin with submission to an old censure which weighed on the conscience of one sinner? This confession draws forth others, and the holy breath passed over the whole community. (*Prof. Godet.*) *Old leaven to be purged*:—There is a test point about you somewhere. Perhaps it is pride; you cannot bear an affront; you will not confess a fault. Perhaps it is personal vanity, ready to sacrifice everything to display. Perhaps it is a sharp tongue. Perhaps it is some sensual appetite, bent on its unclean gratification. Then you are to gather up your moral forces just here, and, till that darling sin is brought under the practical law of Christ, you are shut out from Christ's kingdom. (*Bp. Huntington.*) *All sin to be removed*:—If a physician were called to see a patient who had a cancer on his breast, the only thing to be done would be to cut it out from the roots. The physician might give palliatives, so that the patient would have less pain, or he might make his patient believe it was no cancer, or forget that he had a cancer near his vitals; but if the physician were to do this instead of removing the evil, he would be a wicked man and the enemy of his patient. The man's case was such that the only favour which could be conferred upon him would be to cut out the cancer. Now all agree that sin is the great

evil of the soul of man. Nothing can make man more spiritually happy here, or fit him for happiness hereafter, but the removal of sin from his nature. Sin is the plague-spot on the soul, which destroys its peace, and threatens its destruction unless removed. It is therefore certain that if the love of God were manifested towards man, it would be in turning man from sin which produces misery, to holiness which produces happiness. (*J. B. Walker.*) *The leaven of malice to be purged:*—It is said of the serpent, that he casts up all his poison before he drinks. It were to be much desired that herein we had so much serpentine wisdom as to disgorge our malice before we pray, to cast up all the bitterness of our spirits before we come to the sacrament of reconciliation. *Purging out the old leaven:*—A friend once described to me this process as he saw it in a carpenter's shop in Nazareth. The carpenter would not allow him to witness the search in the house lest his presence should defile the home; but he allowed him to enter the shop and witness the search there. The man went about the work with a will; he was evidently thoroughly in earnest; he girded up his loins as if he had a day's work before him, and then proceeded to search with the utmost zeal. Carefully and conscientiously he turned over every board, he moved all his tools, he swept out the whole place, he opened every drawer, looked into every cupboard; there was not a crevice or a cranny in the wall that was not inspected lest there might be a tiny crumb of leaven anywhere in the shop. As he drew towards the close of his search my friend suddenly heard him utter an exclamation of horror, and looking round he saw him standing as though he had seen something most alarming. If he had found a viper or a cockatrice he could not have been more horrified than he seemed to be. What was it? In the last corner that he had visited, under some shavings, he had come across a little canvas bag, and in this little bag there were a few crumbs of leavened bread; one of the workmen had left it on some former occasion. It was enough; it defiled the whole place. With the utmost possible gravity and solemnity, and with a most anxious expression of countenance as though it were a most critical and important business, the man took hold of two pieces of wood, and using them as a pair of tongs he raised up the bag, and holding it off at arm's length, marched out of the shop and dropped the leavened crumbs, bag and all, into the centre of a fire that he had burning outside ready for such a contingency, and so he purged out the old leaven. (*W. Hay Aitken, M.A.*) **For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast.**—*Christ our passover:*—I. THE INFERENCE. 1. That sin has the true qualities of leaven. (1) Offensive sourness. Nothing is so distasteful to God; indeed nothing can displease Him but sin. How can it be otherwise when it is professedly opposite to Divine justice? Even the conscience, which is God's taster, finds it abominably loathsome: how much more God! Did God find sin in His angels? He tumbles them down out of heaven. Did He find sin in our first parents? He hurls them out of paradise. Yea, did He find our sins laid on the Son of His love? He spares Him not (Isa. liii. 5). The more loathsome we find our sins the nearer we come to the purity of the Holy One of Israel (Psa. xlv. 7). What shall we say, then, to those who find no savour in anything but their sins? Let us, then, hate sin (Psa. xcvii. 10) and take heed of being leavened with it. (2) Diffusiveness. It began with one angel and infected legions. It began with one woman and infected all mankind. Let it take hold of one faculty and it will infect soul and body. Let it seize on one person in a family and it will corrupt the whole house. From thence it spreads to the neighbourhood, and taints whole cities and regions (2 Tim. ii. 7). Since, then, our wickedness is of so spreading a nature—(*a*) How careful we should be to resist its very beginnings! It is much easier to keep the floodgates shut than to drain the lower grounds when they are once overflown. (*b*) How wary we should be of joining the society of the infectious, whether in opinion or manners (ver. 11; Titus iii. 10). (*c*) How much it concerns all public persons in Church or State to improve their authority to the utmost for the prevention of vice, and the expurgation of leavened persons (Psa. lxxi. 4, Heb.). 2. This leaven must be purged out if we would have any interest in Christ our passover. In vain should any Jew talk of keeping a passover to God if he would eat the lamb with leavened bread. In vain should any Christian talk of applying Christ to his soul while his heart willingly retains any of the leaven of any known sin (Psa. xxvi. 6). II. THE PROPOSITION. 1. That Christ is a passover. The word is taken from the time of the solemnity (Acts xii. 4); for the sacrifices offered in the solemnity (Deut. xvi. 4); for the act of God's transition (Exod. xii. 11); for the lamb to be offered and eaten (2 Chron. xxxv. 11, and here). (1) The lamb is the passover. Which may appear far-fetched. Here was a double

passing over—that of the angel over Israel, that of Israel out of Egypt: both were acts, one of God, the other of men. The explanation is that the thing signed is usually put for the sign itself (Gen. xvii. 13; 1 Cor. x. 4). Now what a mercy was it for God to pass over Israel when He slew the Egyptian firstborn. For this they were indebted to the blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled on their doorposts. Had they eaten the lamb and not sprinkled the blood they had not escaped. The reality of this figure is that by Christ's blood sprinkled on our souls we are freed from the vengeance of the Almighty. As then Israel were never to eat of the paschal lamb, but they were recalled to the memory of their deliverance, so neither may we ever behold this sacramental representation of Christ's death but we should bethink ourselves of the infinite mercy of God in saving us. (2) That Christ is that Paschal Lamb in regard to—(*a*) Choice as to, first, nature. A lamb is noted for innocence and gentleness. Christ is the Lamb of God. What perfect innocence and admirable meekness He displayed (Isa. liii. 7). Secondly, quality. Any lamb would not serve: it must be a lamb without blemish. Could Christ have been capable of the least sin, so far from ransoming the world, He could not have saved Himself. (*b*) Preparation in respect to, first, killing. The lamb to make a true passover must be slain: so there was a necessity that Jesus should die for us (Luke xxiv. 25, 26). Secondly, sprinkling his blood. Thirdly, roasting. So did the true Paschal Lamb undergo the flames of His Father's wrath for our sins. (*c*) Eating. Note, first, it was to be eaten with bitter herbs to teach us that we may not hope to partake of Christ without sensible disrelishes of nature, without true contrition. Secondly, the whole lamb must be eaten. Many a lamb did the Jews eat in the course of the year besides; these were halved and quartered as occasion served. Whosoever would partake of Christ must take the whole Christ. There are those who will be sharing and quartering Christ; one will allow His humanity, but not His Deity; another His prophetic character, but not His priesthood, &c. In vain do these partake of Christ while they thus set upon Him by piecemeal. (*Bp. Hall.*) *Christ our passover*:—I. THE ANTECEDENT. 1. What is meant by Pascha? (Exod. xii. 26.) Passing over is, of itself, a thing indifferent; it is good or bad according to what passes or is passed over. If any good pass over us we are the losers; if any danger the gainers. Again, if we pass from better to worse it is a detriment; if from worse to better a benefit. This is a benefit. Evil—the destroying angel—passed over Israel. They passed out of Egypt well, but the Egyptians ill. 2. What is this to us? We live in a world of which Egypt is but a corner and was a type; our Pharaoh is the devil; God's wrath is the destroying angel; death is our Red Sea through which all must pass, some well, some ill. Our abode is as dangerous as theirs; we need a *Pascha* to escape God's wrath and to pass well over death. Their passover, again, was nothing to ours. Theirs was but the deliverance of one poor nation from a passing bodily danger; ours frees all mankind from the destruction of body and soul, and that for ever. And what comparison is there between Canaan and heaven whither Christ shall make us pass? 3. Who is it? A sacrificial lamb—the figure of Christ, the Lamb of God, who became our passover when He was offered to bear the sins of the world. What is sin but a transgression or passing over the duty set before us in the Law of God? But for it no destroyer would have power over us: Christ was a passover from first to last. His birth was a passing over from the bosom of His Father to the womb of His mother: His resurrection a passing over from death to life; His ascension a passing over from the world to the Father. But in His death God took over our sins from us and laid them upon Him. II. THE CONSEQUENT. "Let us keep the feast." A fast rather, one would think; but by His resurrection we know that Christ is well passed over, and so we may keep our feast with joy. And a double feast it is. By His death He made the destroyer pass over us; by His resurrection He makes death passable by us. In the sacramental feast we—1. Remember Him our Sacrifice. 2. Apply the sacrifice to our salvation. (*Bp. Andrewes.*) *Christ our passover*:—I. WE ARE IN DANGER OF DESTRUCTION. The angel of wrath has commission to destroy all the workers of iniquity. This destruction is certain, fearful, and will come in the darkness at an hour we look not for it. II. THERE IS NO OTHER MEANS OF ESCAPE. We cannot bar our doors or windows against this minister of wrath. We cannot propitiate or resist him, or bear up under his avenging stroke. III. ESCAPE IS PROVIDED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. 1. This is the only means. 2. The efficacious means. The angel entered no door sprinkled with the blood. 3. It must be applied. It is not enough that it has been shed. 4. The application of this blood gives not only security, but a sense of safety. Doubtless all degrees of confidence were felt by the

Israelites. Some slept without anxiety; others trembled at every sound; others pressed their firstborn to their bosoms and longed for the morning. So with sinners sprinkled with the blood. All are secure, but the measure of their confidence is very different. The want of confidence arises from the want of faith. IV. THE PASSOVER SECURES ENTRANCE INTO CANAAN. Christ not only delivers from death, but gives an abundant entrance into heaven. V. THE PASSOVER WAS TO BE COMMEMORATED AS LONG AS THE OLD ECONOMY LASTED. The death of Christ is to be commemorated till He come. VI. THE PASSOVER WAS CELEBRATED WITH EVERYTHING INDICATIVE OF SEPARATION FROM EGYPT. The old leaven was purged out. So the death of Christ binds us to holiness. What would have been thought of a Hebrew who, after such a deliverance, had clung to his fetters? (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Christ our passover*:—I. CHRIST IS TYPIFIED HERE UNDER THE PASCHAL LAMB. Read Exod. xii. Note—1. The victim—the lamb. No other creature could so well have typified Him who was "holy, harmless," &c., and a sacrifice for sin. (1) It was a lamb without blemish. And was not Jesus Christ even such? Born of the pure Virgin, begotten of the Holy Ghost, His soul was pure, and His life was the same. In Him was no sin. Ye who have known the Lord, say, can ye find any fault with your Saviour? (2) "A male of the first year." Then it was in its prime. And so our Lord had just come to the ripeness of manhood when He was offered. He did not give Himself to die for us when He was a youth, for He would not then have given all He was to be, nor in old age, when He was in decay. And, moreover, at His death, "He cried with a loud voice," &c., a sign that His soul was strong within Him. And does not the thought rise up—if Jesus gave His all to me, should I not give my little all to Him? 2. The place where this lamb was to be killed. The first passover was held in Egypt, the second in the wilderness; but there were no more until Israel came to Canaan. And then (Deut. xvi. 5) God no longer allowed them to slay the lamb in their own houses, but appointed a place for its celebration, viz., Jerusalem. In Jerusalem our Lamb was sacrificed for us; it was at the precise spot where God had ordained that it should be. If that mob at Nazareth had been able to compass His death, type and prophecy could not have been fulfilled. 3. The manner of its death. It was to be slaughtered, and its blood caught in a basin. Next it was to be roasted, but it was not to have a bone of its body broken. Now nothing but crucifixion can answer all these three things. Crucifixion has in it the shedding of blood—the hands and feet were pierced. It has in it the idea of roasting, which signifies a long torment. Moreover, not a bone was broken, which could not have been the case with any other punishment. II. How WE DERIVE BENEFIT FROM HIM. 1. By having His blood sprinkled on us for our redemption. Note that the blood of the paschal lamb was not sprinkled on the threshold, but on the top of the door, on the side-post, for woe unto him who trampleth under foot the blood of the Son of God! His blood must be on our right hand to be our constant guard, and on our left to be our continual support. It is not alone the blood of Christ poured out on Calvary that saves a sinner; it is that blood sprinkled on the heart. It is not enough to say "He loved the world, and gave His Son"; you must say, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." There is an hour coming when God will say, "Angel of death, thou knowest thy prey. Unsheath thy sword." If we have the blood on us, when we see the angel coming, we shall smile at him. "Bold shall I stand in that great day," &c. 2. Christ is not only a Saviour for sinners, but He is food for them after they are saved. We must live on Christ as well as by Christ. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ our passover*:—I. A lesson of SAFETY. 1. Emerson says, "Commit a crime and the earth is made of glass. It seems as if a coat of snow fell on the ground such as reveals in the woods the track of every partridge and fox and squirrel and mole. You cannot recall the spoken word. You cannot wipe out the foot-track. You cannot draw up the ladder so as to leave no inlet or clue." That is no news. "Be sure your sin will find you out" is written in the Bible of the moral nature and in the Scriptures. 2. But man wants to know something more than Emerson's philosophy can teach him. This is man's passionate question—Is there nothing which can come between himself and the doom of sin? The passover was God's answer in type; Christ is God's answer in reality. There was one hindrance on that fatal night that the death-angel could not pass—the blood of the lamb on the door-posts. The barrier which wards off the penalties for sin is the blood of Christ. 3. Only there must be personal appropriation of the atonement. It was not simply the lamb slain in general sacrifice that brought safety. And this involved faith in what God had said, and obedience correspondent to the faith. The application is

evident. II. A lesson of STRENGTH. 1. Look at those Israelites. Their staffs are in their hands; their loins are girded, &c. Before them an exhausting march, behind them a sleepless night. But God has provided that they be strengthened. The slain lamb must be eaten. The Christian life is a pilgrimage. It is under burdens; it must meet conflict. But Christ is our passover for strength; we must subsist on Him. Thus in Christ shall there be strength for us. (*Hom. Monthly.*) *Christ our passover*:—We shall—I. TRACE THE ALLUSION. Note—1. The victim. (1) It was a lamb—the most gentle of creatures of the type. (2) "A male of the first year"—that is, in its highest state of physical perfection. And Jesus was led to the altar in the flower of His age. (3) "Without blemish" (Heb. ix. 13, 14). (4) The paschal lamb was previously selected and set apart four days before it was slain. The service required forethought and preparation, which suggests that the Lamb of God "verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world," and actually entered Jerusalem four days before He suffered. (3) The point of dissimilarity is that the lamb was unconscious of its approaching fate. But Jesus saw the end from the beginning. Yet He pressed forward with unbending resolution until He could say, "It is finished." 2. The appropriation of the blood. (1) The means of protection to Israel was the blood. Without this they had been equally exposed with the Egyptians. And what is it that affords security to the sinner against the more fearful judgments of the Almighty but the blood of the heavenly Lamb which was shed upon the Cross? (2) But the blood of the paschal victim afforded no protection till it was sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop. And here we are reminded of the necessity of a believing application of the gospel remedy. (3) The blood sprinkled answered the end of its application because of the Divine ordination. If the sacrifice of the Cross were merely the device of man, it would possess no virtue, but because it is of Divine origin and appointment it will ever prove "the wisdom of God and the power of God." (4) The blood of the victim was not to be cast upon the threshold, to be trodden under feet as a thing of nought. And beware how you treat the gospel remedy (Heb. x. 28, 29). 3. The ceremony of eating it. (1) The flesh of the lamb was designed for food. And what says Christ? (John vi. 53–57.) (2) The whole lamb was to be eaten. And Christ must be received in all the extent of His official character and relations. (3) It was to be eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. The benefits of Christ's redemption can only be enjoyed in connection with the exercise of that "godly sorrow which worketh repentance." And "the old leaven of malice and wickedness" must be purged out, that we may "keep the" gospel "feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (4) It was also to be eaten in haste and in a departing posture. Christians, this is not your rest. Ye are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Stand, therefore, having your loins girded about with truth, &c. II. EXAMINE THE FACT. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us—is slain not merely for our good—that we might have the benefit of His example and the confidence arising from His testimony—but in our room and place. 1. This principle characterised the paschal sacrifice. The lamb was virtually and in effect, if not strictly, a substitutionary victim. There was life for life. Herein is typified the death of Christ, by which a way has been opened for our escape from the doom to which we are exposed and our enjoyment of everlasting life. Hence the death of Christ is uniformly represented as the meritorious cause of our redemption. All the blessings of the gospel are ascribed to this as the means of their procurement—the reason of their bestowment—and the consecrated medium through which they flow. Pardon (Eph. i. 7). Justification (Rom. v. 9). Purity (Heb. ix. 13, 14). Access to God (Heb. ix. 19). Victory over Satan (Rev. xii. 10, 11). Peace and joy (Rom. v. 1, 2, 11). Final introduction into the presence of God in heaven (Rev. vii. 14, 15). 2. The fact, then, is one of no common character or trifling consequence. For if Christ was not "sacrificed for us," I am left without a refuge, with no ground of confidence or of hope when anticipating the transactions of the last great day. But I cannot thus surrender my hope. (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*) *The Christian passover*:—I. THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST is—1. Deprecatory, or designed to ward off threatened judgment. Of this nature was the paschal sacrifice, by which the Israelites were protected from the destroying angel. 2. Expiatory, in which the innocent died for the guilty, and thus offered satisfaction for the sins of the world. On this ground God can justify the ungodly without relaxing the strictness of His law, infringing the truth of His word, or degrading the dignity of His throne. 3. Precatory. Such sacrifices were offered to secure the restoration of forfeited benefits. Hence the sacrifice of Christ is a "redemption" which not only delivers

from merited punishment, but recovers every forfeited good. 4. Vicarious. Christ endured death not merely for our instruction, or that He might seal the truth of His doctrine with blood, and set us an example of the spirit with which we should suffer. No! If He suffered, it was for our sins, the just for the unjust. 5. Eucharistic. In sacrifices of this class the victim was eaten with thanksgivings. Of this kind was the passover; and Christ is the true paschal lamb, who has not only sacrificed His life, but now offers Himself in every promise and ordinance, to be received by penitent faith, as the living bread. This is particularly represented in His last supper. II. THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST A PASSOVER. Observe the correspondence between the type and antitype more particularly in—1. The sprinkling of the blood. As the Israelites sprinkled the blood outside the door, it ought to appear that we are inwardly pure by our being outwardly holy. 2. The eating of the lamb, by which the bodies of the people were nourished and supported. The teachings of Christ's Spirit satisfy the desire for spiritual knowledge; the joys and consolations of His love satiate the hungry desires after happiness; and the fulness of His spotless mind breathed into our souls meets the vast capacity of our nature; we are strengthened with all the might of God, and grow up into Him in all things. 3. The consequent deliverance. III. THE MANNER IN WHICH WE MUST CELEBRATE THE CHRISTIAN PASSOVER. Let there be—1. Purity. "Purge out the old leaven." Every one who would receive Christ as his Saviour, and receive worthily His supper, should put away the "old leaven." The leaven of the Sadducees was error, that of the Pharisees was hypocrisy; these must be purged out; so must the old leaven of every besetment and sin. 2. Compunction, typified by the bitter herbs with which the paschal lamb was to be eaten, and which fitly describe the sorrow of a broken spirit. Without eating these bitter herbs we shall never feel the appetite of strong desire which hungers after Christ, nor taste the sweetness of His salvation. 3. Sincerity. We must embrace Christ, not merely that we may escape from future condemnation, but with sincere desire to enjoy Him savingly, to know Him experimentally, to love Him supremely, to submit to Him cheerfully, and devote ourselves to Him entirely. 4. Unreservedness, *i.e.*, Christ must be taken wholly. Every family, under the law, was required to sacrifice a lamb, and that family must use or burn it; not even a bone was to be broken. So every soul needs a full Christ for himself—all His power to save; all His merit to cleanse; all His wisdom to guide; all His grace to invigorate; and all His sacred presence to fill the soul and constitute its heaven. 5. Promptitude. The Israelites partook of the passover in haste, their shoes on their feet, and their staves in their hands. Now, as everything depends on the present moment, receive Christ in haste. Just now, "What thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." 3. Joy. The Jews kept their passover as a season of great joy, because instituted in memory of their greatest deliverance. So should the Christian commemorate the death of his Lord as the greatest deliverance earth ever saw or heaven ever witnessed. (*W. Atherton.*)

Christ our passover:—I propose to present some of the shapes in which this destroying angel appears, and, by Christ our Redeemer, is dismissed. But, first, I must meet one or two objections. Some may think this passing over, by the destroying angel, of a part of the world—that part, namely, visited by the light and salvation of the gospel—seems partial and unequal. To this I can only answer, God proceeds in His revelation as He does in all His providence. We feel God's goodness; and for His equity our inmost conviction and highest intuition stands voucher. We might ask why God has made one of His creatures an angel, and another a worm; why He has caused one to dwell under the tropic line, and another at the frozen pole; why He has ordained one to be born of a poor, and another of a prosperous parentage; why, for thousands of years, He delayed discoveries so important to darkened and suffering humanity, such as the press, the compass, the bright sky-marks of a trackless voyage, or the ether-breath under which the piercing knife is painless. Enough that, at length, we have these passovers of the Divine mercy. Enough, above all, that we have in Christ the chief passover of the keenest agonies of the human heart. But this doctrine of the passover, marvelled at by the sceptical, is resented by the proud, fancying they are unwilling to receive such gratuity. They would emancipate themselves from the miseries that assail human life; they would slay the monsters of danger for themselves; nor superfluously accept a heaven they have not earned. Ah! poor pride, empty claim of independence, infatuated denial of that grace of God which is the source of all we have or enjoy! Truly, we should have begun sooner to sign off and separate, if we meant to complain of the free grace and unmerited favour

of God. It is too late. We are baptized in goodness and immersed in love from our infancy. For all things, temporal or spiritual, we are beggars, dependent on God. But it is important to observe that this passover is no contradiction or exemption of true morality. It is no passover for our exertions of virtuous fidelity. It only modifies the character of our virtue to exalt and refine it. For that show of wisdom in will-worship, which the apostle rebukes, it substitutes the at once gentler and holier virtue of that devotion to God, to right and duty, which Christ the passover inspires. Indeed there is nothing immoral or dangerous to character in the doctrine of the text. The passover, at Christ's bidding, of the destroying angel, is for no license, but for our sanctity. For the contemplation of that sacrifice, producing this passover, stirs affections in the breast from which flow sweeter virtues and more winning charms of spontaneous worth than all the self-confidence of sages and all the austerities of the stoic. Christ our passover, by His Spirit, stimulates us to leave the bondage of our oppressive sins. Thus, seeing the idea of Christ the passover, not as a mere figure of rhetoric, but, beyond all objections, resting on a foundation of eternal truth, we may consider its practical applications; for we, as much as captive Jew or old Gentile, need the Divine passover. The destroying angel comes in many ways to close in a struggle with our safety and peace. 1. As we meditate in solitude or muse by the wayside he often springs upon us. Sometimes, a gigantic spectre of doubt, he fearfully overhangs our thoughts and duskily obscures our path. He darkly queries with us whether all these spiritual things which we, in our words of fine discourse, make such account of, are not mere imagination and surmise. The shining mansions above fade away into mist and vacuity; and temples and closets, songs and supplications, turn to a vain pretence or a hypocritical mockery. But Christ the passover comes through His Spirit to make the heavenly glory shine again on the world, and gleam through our thoughts by His truth. 2. Again, in the gloomy and menacing shape of remorse, comes the destroying angel. He arrays before us all our wrong-doings and omissions of duty. He throws in our face all the shortcomings of the past. He stings our memory into the recollection of unworthiness we had forgotten. He lifts his ghostly, resistless hand, to cast us down into hopeless dejection over the remaining sin that clings to our nature, and into utter despair of the mercy of God. But Christ appears with His look of kindness; He speaks the pardoning love of God, and the destroying angel's condemnation is silenced. 3. In the shape of a mourner, too, as well as a doubter and accuser, comes the destroying angel. He sits by the fireside, at the table, and the grave, when dear objects have gone, and raises a miserable cry that all comfort and joy and reciprocity of affection are gone and lost with them. But Christ comes, and the destroying angel passes over. The Cross of Christ rises in sight. The sepulchre of Christ discloses its broken door. Now grief may do its worst. We are superior to it. It can lay waste the earth, and commit havoc in the abodes of men; but all its desolations are more than repaired. Christ is our passover, for He presents God as our Father. Now no father wishes his children to die; least of all the real Father, the Father of spirits, who hath power to give His children life. Therefore death, the huge but hollow semblance, must pass over. Christ hath taught us that we can love God, and how to love Him. But love is a bond of endurance according to all the ability of both its subject and object; with God it is a bond of immortality. Therefore death, with his mere masque and presumption of tyranny, must pass over. Matter ceases to be all. Knowledge, love, will, becomes all. The vast creation becomes but the theatre, wherein the intelligences which the Great Parent for ever inspires act out their thoughts and affections. (*C. A. Bartol.*) *The Christian passover*:—"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." The human mind is never more elevated with joy than in the case of those who have just escaped some great danger. Almost all our strong feelings and perceptions are due to strong contrasts; light is never so bright as when it arises out of darkness; health never so sweet as when it follows upon sickness; and safety never so precious as when realised in the presence of danger. Conceive the children of Israel on the night when the first passover was kept, standing with their staves in their hands and their shoes upon their feet, eating their last meal in the house of bondage. Who was there that did not feel, as on no previous occasion, the blessed security of being in covenant with God? Would not the consciousness of the awful danger that was abroad deepen and solemnise that sense of security? We say, "Let us keep the feast." We understand this to be something more than an exhortation. It was a command to the Israelites of the most positive kind. God intended to distinguish

them by an act of special mercy from the Egyptians; but this distinction was all made to hinge upon their compliance with the directions about the paschal lamb. If it be possible to conceive an Israelite so infatuated as to neglect those directions, we need not tell you what the consequences would have been. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Oh! beware, I earnestly beseech you, beware of trifling in a case like this! Recollect, "it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life"; it is the life of your souls. Shall we put this matter to the proof? We have described the feelings of the Jewish family while keeping the passover: there were mingled feelings—fear of the danger which they knew to be so near, gratitude to God who had spread the shield of His protection over them, and reverence for that mysterious blood which God had appointed as the distinguishing mark between those whom He would protect and those whom He would destroy. Now on this great day of the feast does your state of mind resemble theirs? Have you a sense of the nearness of appalling danger? No one can estimate the greatness of the deliverance wrought who has not felt, personally and deeply, the greatness and the nearness of the danger incurred. What was it that made the feast of the passover, at its first celebration, so intensely interesting to the Israelites? what, but the knowledge that the angel of death was at their very doors? They never kept the passover so heartily afterwards; they never afterwards had such a sense of deliverance from actual and imminent danger. (*J. E. Hankinson, M.A.*) *Our passover:*—I. OUR PASSOVER SACRIFICE. The death of the paschal lamb saved at least one life in the household, and was the security of them all. Because it died, the firstborn did not die. The blood sheltered and preserved; and the angel passed over the household whose posts were tinctured with the ruby pledge of safety. And so, distinctly and clearly in the apostle's mind here, the one conception of Christ's death which answers to this metaphor is that which sees in Christ's death a death of expiation; though not so distinctly as in other instances, a death of substitution. Because He dies, the destruction and punishment does not fall on the man who is housed behind the shelter of His blood. II. OUR PASSOVER FEAST. The slaying of the lamb provided in the old ritual the material for the feast; and, says Paul, in effect, so it is with us. The Christ who has died as a sacrament is the nourishment and food of our souls. We live on the sacrifice; "let us keep the feast." What Paul is thinking about here is the whole Christian life which he compares to that passover feast. And his exhortation, "Let us keep the feast," is, in fact, first of all, this—Do you Christian men and women see to it that your whole life be a participation in the sacrifice of the slain Lamb. "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you." And how are we to feed upon a slain Christ? By faith, by meditation, by continual carrying in grateful hearts, in vivid memories, and in obedient wills, the great sacrifice on which our hopes build. Let your minds feed upon His truth, and your love feed upon His love; let your wills feed upon His commandment; let your consciences feed upon His great cleansing sacrifice; let your whole hopes fasten on His faithful promise; and bring your spirits in all their parts into contact with His Spirit, and the life will pass from Him to you. As our Christian life should be all a feast of continual participation in Christ, so it should be all a memorial of Him. The passover was the perpetual calling to mind year by year of that great deliverance. What tenacity of national memory is shown in that continual observance of it till this very day! So should we ever carry in our remembrance the dying of the Lord Jesus, and whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, do all in memory of Him, moulding all our lives by the pattern and for the sake of His dying love. III. OUR CHRISTIAN PURIFYING. "Purge out the old leaven." Think of the scrupulous Jewish householder the night before the passover, with his lighted candle, searching through every corner of his house, where there was any chance of a bit of leavened matter being concealed. That is the sort of thing we have to do. Better cultivate a conscience that is over-scrupulous than one that is over-indulgent. And, mind, it is you that have to do it. God will do it if you ask Him; God will help you to do it if you will let Him; but God cannot do it without you, and you cannot do it without God. Therefore, two things, a large part of our cleansing must be our submitting ourselves to His cleansing and cultivating the faith which unites us to the cleansing power. Second, a part of our cleansing must be in reliance upon His Divine help, ourselves taking the brush into our hands, and ourselves scrubbing vigorously till we get rid of the pollution. And, beyond that, remember further, that this self-purifying is

an absolutely indispensable condition of your keeping the feast. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" is but the same teaching as that of my text: "Purge out the old leaven, that ye may keep the feast." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christ our passover:*—Observe—1. God's greatest mercies to His Church are attended with the greatest plagues upon their enemies. The passover was the salvation of Israel and ruin of Egypt. 2. God provides for the security of His people, before He lays His wrathful hand upon their adversaries. 1. CHRIST IS OUR PASSOVER. Christ is only designated in the New Testament as a Lamb, as being significant of the innocence of His person, the meekness of His nature, His sufficiency for His people. 1. The design of the passover was to set forth Christ. All the sacrifices which were appointed by God as parts of worship, were designed to keep up the acknowledgment of the fall of man, and to support his faith in the promised Redeemer. Christ is the real accomplishment of all; He is our mystical, spiritual, heavenly, perfect Passover. And, indeed, if we consider all the circumstances in the institution, they seem not worthy of the wisdom of God if they be not referred to some other mystery: and what can that be but the Redeemer of the world represented thereby? Why should so much care be in the choice and separation of a lamb? How can we think God should appoint so many ceremonies in it, lay such a charge for the strict observation of them, if He designed it not as a prop to their faith, a ground to expect a higher and spiritual deliverance by the blood of the Messiah, as well as a trial of their obedience, a memorial of their temporal deliverance, and a sign for the direction of the angel in the execution of his commission? 2. The believers in that time regarded it as a type of the Messiah (Heb. xi. 28). 3. The paschal lamb was the fittest to represent Christ. It was a sacrifice and a feast—a sacrifice in the killing it and sprinkling the blood, a feast in their feeding upon it. It represents Christ as a victim satisfying God, as a feast refreshing us; He was offered to God for the expiation of our sins, He is offered to us for application to our souls. The truth of this proposition will appear—(1) In the resemblance between the paschal lamb and the Redeemer. (*a*) A lamb is a meek creature. It hurts none; it hangs not back when it is led to the slaughter—no greater emblem of patience to be found among irrational creatures. How strange was our Saviour's humility in entering into such a life! How much more stupendous in submitting to such a death, as shameful as His life was miserable! From this paschal lamb typifying the Redeemer the Jews might have learned, not to expect a Messiah wading through the world in blood and slaughter, and flourishing with temporal victories and prosperity, but one meek, humble, and lowly, suiting the temper of the lamb which represented Him in the passover. (*b*) It was to be a lamb without blemish (Exod. xii. 5). It was to be entire in all its parts, sound, without bruise, scab, or maim; and the reason why it was separated four days before the killing of it was that they might have time to understand whether it had any spot or defect in it. So is the Lamb of God; He was holy in the production of His nature as well as in the actions of His life. From the first moment of His conception He was filled with all supernatural grace according to the capacity of His humanity; His union with the Divine nature secured Him against the sinful infirmities of our nature, and made all supernatural perfections due to Him, whereby He might be fitted for all holy operations. As He was "that holy thing" in His birth (Luke i. 35), so He was righteous to the last moment of His life. The law of God was within His heart, signified by the tables of the law laid up in the ark. (*c*) The lamb was to be chosen, and set apart three days, and killed the fourth in the evening (Exod. xii. 6). Our Saviour was separate from men, manifested Himself in the work of His prophetical office three years and upwards, before He was offered up as a sacrifice in the fourth year, after He had been solemnly inaugurated in the exercise of His office. It was ordered by God to be killed in the evening, to signify the sacrifice of the Messiah in the evening of the world. He was crucified at the end of the second age of the world, the age of the law, and the beginning of the third age, that of the gospel, which is called in Scripture the "last times" (Heb. i. 2). (*d*) The lamb was roasted with fire whole (Exod. xii. 4, 8, 9), not sodden. To put them in mind of the hardship they endured in the brick-kilns of Egypt, and as a type of the scorching sufferings of the Redeemer. Probably alluding to this roasting of the paschal lamb. He bore the wrath of that God who is a consuming fire, without any water, any mitigation or comfort in His torments. It may note also the gradual rising of the suffering of Christ. As His exaltation was not all at one time, but by degrees, so were His sufferings, by outward wounds, cutting reproaches, and inward agonies. (*e*) Not a bone of the paschal lamb was

to be broken (Exod. xii. 46). This was fulfilled in our Saviour (John xix. 36). Death had not a full power over Him, He was not broken to pieces by the greatness of His sufferings. (2) There is a resemblance in the effects or consequents of the passover. (*a*) The diverting the destroying angel by the sprinkling of the blood upon the posts, to be a mark to the angel to spare the firstborn of such houses, was the main end in the institution (Exod. xii. 12, 13). It is only under the warrant of this blood that we can be safe. The Redeemer's blood shed for us, and sprinkled on us, preserves our souls to eternal life. As the destroying sword did not touch the Israelites, so condemning wrath shall not strike those that are under the protection of it: death shall have no power over them. (*b*) Upon this succeeded that liberty God had designed for them (Exod. xii. 31). As it secured them from death, so it was the earnest of their deliverance, and broke the chains of their slavery. The death of Christ is the foundation of the full deliverance of His people, and the earnest of the fruition of the purchased and promised inheritance. This was the conquest of Pharaoh, upon which soon after followed his destruction. The Israelites' slavery ended when their sacrifices were finished; the efficacy of this Divine passover delivers men from a spiritual captivity. (*c*) After this passover they do not enjoy their liberty, but begin their march to Canaan, the promised and delightful land. So by the merit of the sacrifice of Christ the true Israelite turns his face from earth to heaven, from a world that lies in wickedness to an inheritance of the saints in light, and travels towards Canaan. Is Christ called our passover? Then—1. The study of the Old Testament is advantageous. The Old Testament delivers the types, the New interprets them: the Old presents them like money in a bag, the New spreads them and discovers the value of the coin; the Israelites in the Old felt the weight of the ceremonies, believers in the New enjoy the riches of them. 2. Upon what a slender thread doth the doctrine of transubstantiation hang! Christ is here called the passover—was the paschal lamb therefore substantially the body of Christ? 3. The ancient Jews were under a covenant of grace. Christ was the end, the spirit, the life of their sacrifices. The passover, rock, sacrifices, manna, were the swaddling-bands wherein He was wrapped. They had the sun under a cloud, we the Sun at noon-day in His glory. 4. In the security Christ procures. The destroying angel was not to enter into any sprinkled house, no passage was afforded to him. The wrath of God, or the malice of the devil can have no power over them that are sprinkled with the blood of Christ. In the efficacy. The blood of the lamb was but a sign of that deliverance of the Israelites, but could not purge their defiled consciences; but the blood of our Lamb hath merited our salvation, can cleanse our consciences from dead and condemning works to serve the living God. This comfort is the greater by how much the tyrant we are delivered from is more dreadful that Pharaoh, whose design is not only like his to afflict our bodies but tumble our souls and bodies into the same hell with himself. It is from the wrath of God our passover hath delivered us; and what is the anger of Pharaoh to the fury of an offended Deity? It is true deliverance is yet but begun; it is not yet perfect; miseries and spiritual contests are to be expected. Pharaoh will pursue, but shall not overtake; death shall not swallow up those who are sprinkled with this holy blood. 1. Thankfully remember this passover. 2. Inquire whether He be our passover. He is a passover, but is He a lamb eaten by us, owned by us? He is ours by the gift of God, but is He ours by the acceptation of our souls? This Lamb is ours in the liberty, life, glory, and rest He hath purchased, when we are like Him, when we learn of Him. 3. Have faith in the blood of Christ. The killing the lamb signified the death of Christ, the sprinkling the blood signified the application of it by faith. It was not the blood contained in the veins of the lamb or shed upon the ground, that was the mark of deliverance, but sprinkled upon the posts: nor is it the blood of Christ circulating in His body or shed upon the Cross, which solely delivers us, but as applied by faith to the heart. That was sprinkled upon every house that desired safety, and this upon every soul that desires happiness. Had an Israelite's family neglected this it had felt the edge of the angel's sword; the lamb had not availed him, not by a defect of the sacrifice, but by their own negligence or contempt of the condition. Or had they used any other mark, they had not diverted the stroke: no work, no blood but the blood and sufferings of the Redeemer, can take away the sin of the world. 4. Let us leave the service of sin. The Israelites after this passover did no more work at the brick-kilns of Egypt. They ceased to be Pharaoh's slaves, and began to be the Lord's freemen. II. CHRIST IS A SACRIFICE. I shall lay down some propositions for the illustrating of this doctrine. 1. Sacrifices

were instituted as types of Christ. (1) They were instituted by God. (2) No other reason can be rendered of the institution of them, but as typical of the great sacrifice of the Redeemer. (3) Christ did really answer to these types. 2. The sacrifices thus instituted were of themselves insufficient, and could not expiate sin; they must, therefore, receive their accomplishment in some other. But being shadows by their institution, they could make nothing perfect (Heb. x. 1, 11). (1) It was not consistent with the honour of God to be contented with the blood of a beast for an expiation of sin. How could there be in it a discovery of the severity of His justice, the purity of His holiness, or the grandeurs of His grace? (2) They have no proportion to the sin of man. The sin of a rational creature is too foul to be expiated by the blood of an irrational creature. (3) The reiteration of them shows their insufficiency. They were rather a commemoration of sin, and confessions of it, than expiations of any—rather accusers than atoners. (4) God had often spoke slightingly of them. He resembles them to the cutting off a dog's neck, when done with an unholy heart (Isa. lxvi. 3). He professeth He had no delight in them (Psa. xl. 6). And what is said of this may be said of all our duties and performances, the staves upon which men naturally lean for acceptation of their persons. 3. Such a sacrifice, therefore, is necessary for a sinful creature. No creature can be such a sacrifice. As the apostle argues, "If righteousness be by the law, then was Christ dead in vain" (Gal. ii. 21). (1) What is a sacrifice for sin must be pure and sinless. God will not accept a defiled offering. (2) An infinite sacrifice is necessary for a sin in some respects infinite, for every sin entrencheth upon the honour of an infinite God. (3) Necessary in regard of the justice of God, which is an immutable and infinite perfection of the Divine essence. 4. Christ only was fit to be this sacrifice. 5. It was necessary in regard of His office of priesthood, that He should be a sacrifice. 6. Jesus Christ, then, was a sacrifice in His human nature. 7. That whereby this sacrifice was sanctified, was the Divine nature. Every sacrifice was sanctified by the altar (Matt. xxiii. 19). 8. Upon the sacrifice of Christ all His other sacerdotal acts depend, and from thence they receive their validity for us. (1) This was the ground of His ascension and entrance into heaven as a priest. The high priest was not to enter within the veil without blood. (2) This is the foundation of His intercession. There are two functions of Christ's priesthood—oblation and intercession. (3) This is the foundation of all the grace any have. The conveyance of all the gracious love of God is through this channel. In redemption by His blood the riches of the grace of God abounded, and that with the marks of the highest wisdom (Eph. i. 7, 8). III. CHRIST WAS SACRIFICED FOR US—*ὑπὲρ* when joined with suffering for another, always signifies in another's stead and place; it is so used Rom. v. 7. This will be cleared if we consider—1. That Christ could not be a sacrifice for Himself. The Messiah was to be cut off, but not for Himself (Dan. ix. 26). He needed no sacrifice for Himself. 2. Sacrifices implied this. They had a relation to the offerer, and were substituted in his place. 3. The whole economy of Christ is expressed in the whole Scripture to have a relation to us. All things preparatory to His sufferings were for us. 4. Our sins were imputed to Him as to a sacrifice. Christ the just is put in the place of the unjust to suffer for them (1 Pet. iii. 18). Christ is said to bear sin as a sacrifice bears sin (Isa. liii. 10, 12). His soul was made an offering for it. (1) It cannot be understood of the infection of sin. The filth of our nature was not transmitted to Him. (2) But that our sin was the meritorious cause of His punishment. All those phrases that Christ died for our sins (chap. xv. 3), and was delivered to death for our offences (Rom. iv. 23), clearly import sin to be the meritorious cause of the punishment Christ endured: sin cannot be said to be the cause of punishment but by way of merit. If Christ had not been just He had not been capable of suffering for us. (3) Our sins were charged upon Him in regard of their guilt. Our sins are so imputed to Him as that they are not imputed to us (2 Cor. v. 19), and not imputed to us, because He was made a curse for us (Gal. iii. 13). (*a*) The apostle distinguishes His second coming from His first by this (Heb. ix. 28), "He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (*b*) He cannot be well supposed to suffer for our sins, if our sins in regard of their guilt be not supposed to be charged upon Him. How could He die, if He were not a reputed sinner? 5. The sufferings of this sacrifice are imputed unto us. He took our sins upon Himself, as if He had sinned, and gave us the benefit of His sufferings, as if we had actually suffered. The redounding of these sufferings to us, ariseth—1. From the dignity of the person undertaking to be a sacrifice for us, and the union of our nature with his. 2. From union with this infinite Person by faith. All believers

have a communion with Him in His death (2 Cor. v. 14). If Christ be a sacrifice - 1. We may see the miserable blindness of the Jews in expecting the Messiah as a temporal conqueror. 2. If Christ be a sacrifice, it shows the necessity of a satisfaction to the justice of God, and a higher satisfaction than men could perform. 3. Christ as sacrificed, is the true and immediate object of faith. 4. It is no true opinion that Christ died only for an example. 5. Comfort to every true believer. He was sacrificed for us. God counted Him a sinner for our sakes, that He might count us righteous for His sake. (1) As Christ hath been sacrificed for them, so He has been accepted for them. (2) This sacrifice unites all the attributes of God together for a believer's interest. (3) This sacrifice is of eternal virtue. (4) The effects of this sacrifice, therefore, are perfect, glorious, and eternal. 6. We must then lay hold on this sacrifice. 7. We must be enemies to sin, since Christ was a sacrifice for it. Unless sin die in us, we cannot have an evidence that this sacrifice was slain for us. (*Thomas Hacket.*) *The Christian passover*:—It is remarkable that this is Paul's only allusion to the Jewish Passover. Paul has been commanding the Corinthian Christians to cast out from their midst a grossly profligate person. He then desires to enjoin upon them to get rid of corruption in themselves as well as in others, and corruption suggests the thought of leaven, secretly, silently, victoriously spreading through the mass. And leaven suggests—in his way of going off at a tangent—the thought of the scrupulous search of the Jewish householder for it in his house in preparation for the paschal feast; and that suggests the paschal feast itself. And so without explanation, and quite incidentally, he drops, as it were by the way, this great thought. I. First, then, PAUL THOUGHT OF CHRIST'S WORK AS A SACRIFICE. It was a sacrifice, though of a very singular kind. The passover lamb was slain by the head of each household. It was offered upon no altar; it was prepared by no priest, but for all that it was a sacrifice, and that of an expiatory character. You may call it a gross, low, infantile conception. Be it so! It is the conception of the rite at all events. Paul lays his hand upon that sacrifice, and he says it meant Jesus Christ. So he implies two things, both of which are gravely contested by many to-day: the one that, whatsoever the date of these Jewish sacrifices, they had not only a symbolical but a prophetic aspect; and the other that the centre-point of their prophetic message in reference to Jesus Christ was His death, wherein and whereby men were free from the penal consequences of death in its sternest sense. Is there any theory about Christ and His death which warrants the application of these words "our passover" to Him, except one which frankly and fully recognises the sacrificial and atoning aspect of His death? Paul may have been right or he may have been wrong. That is what he believed, at any rate. But I have yet another step to take. Paul's Master took precisely the same point of view. I claim Christ as the first who taught us that He was our passover. And I point to the rite that He established as the great standing token that His conception of His work was the same as the apostle's. Now I do not want to pin you down to any doctrine of an atonement, but I do want to lay upon your hearts this, which I for one believe with all my heart, that no conception of Christ, His nature, His work, His life and death, is full toned and in accordance with His own teaching which does not proclaim Christ is our passover. And I ask you, Is that the Christ that you know and the Christ that you trust? II. IF CHRIST IS OUR PASSOVER OUR LIVES WILL BE A FEAST. If He indeed has, as our passover, secured for us safety and liberty, then, of course, all life will take a new aspect. And if we recognise the fact that the Lamb slain is the Lamb in the midst of the throne, administering Providence and guiding the world and the Church, and ever present with each of us, if we trust Him, to bless and keep us, then a flush of gladness will be diffused over all life. Just as when the year turns, and the sunshine begins to gather power, even a grim landscape undergoes a subtle change, and is a prophet of the coming summer, so we, if Christ is our passover, will be possessed, in the fact and in the recognition of the fact, of a charm which, if it does not annihilate, at least modifies all burdens and troubles, and which will bring into any life that is true to it a deep, quiet, calm joy far more real, noble, blessed, and the ally of great thoughts and deeds, than the surface ripple of laughter and of mirth which men baptize by that great name. But, brethren, remember that the words are a commandment, and that implies that the realisation of this gladness, which is the natural fruit of the conception of Christ's death of which I have been speaking, depends very largely upon ourselves. I do not think Christian people as a whole realise as much as they ought to do the sin of sorrow and the duty of rejoicing. But that is not all which is conveyed in this

thought of the feast which life becomes when Christ's death is recognised as our expiation. There is further involved the duty of participating in the flesh of the sacrifice. You have to feed upon the Christ who is sacrificed for you, or the sacrifice is of no avail. What Christ is it that nourishes a man? The Christ that taught great and wonderful things? Yes, in some degree. The Christ that walked before men, the sweet Example of all duty, and the sum of whatsoever things were lovely and of good report? Yes, in some degree, but I believe that the Christ who feeds the whole man, and who, being partaken of, gives immortal life to the man who feeds on Him, is the Christ who died and gave His flesh and His blood for the life of the world. Physiologists will tell you that it is possible to feed a man on foods which have so little power of supplying all the constituents necessary for the human body that he may eat them and be starved. And there is a version of the Christ which, if men live upon, they will live a very feeble life, and, as I believe, will come near starving. III. Lastly, IF WE FEED UPON CHRIST OUR PASSOVER WE SHALL BE PURE. There is no way of getting thoroughly rid of the old leaven except the one way of taking Christ for the food of our souls. If He is our bread as well as our sacrifice, then we are bound to serve Him in righteousness. What did He die to deliver us from? Sin. What did He die to make us? Pure and righteous. There is no reason for any man believing that Jesus Christ is his passover unless He is that man's purity. The obligation, the inclination, and the ability to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit are inseparably wrapped up with the conception of His death as the means of our life and safety. The Jew had first to cast out the leaven, then to partake of the passover. We have a better and an easier task; first to partake of the passover and then to cast out the leaven. Do not put the cart before the horse, as some of you do, and try to make yourselves better, in order that you may have a right to a share in Christ. Begin with eating the bread, and then in the strength of that meat, rejoice all your days, and purge yourselves from all iniquity. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christ our passover*:—The Rev. Dr. Bowman, of the Church Missionary Society, was enabled to erect a place of worship in connection with the Calcutta Leper Asylum, and an aged woman, over eighty-two years old, was there led by the preacher to the Divine Healer. A sceptic asked her if the many gods and goddesses of her own religion would not suffice, but she had an answer ready for him: "None of them died for me." *Christ's sacrifice a quickening truth*:—The sacrifice of innocence for guilt is the profoundest truth which God has ever exemplified in a human life. Yet not mere truth, but duty, not theology, but practice, is the end of revelation. Truth is not revealed or offered by prophets, Saviour, or apostles for truth's sake, but always for upbuilding in righteousness. There is no more dangerous falsehood abroad than the assertion that truth should be sought for its own sake. Yet a vast deal of this truth-seeking and hearing is an intellectual voluptuousness, a spiritual self-gratification, a selfish indulgence of pleasurable emotions, just as deadly to the soul as bodily sensualism. It is as truly immoral to seek truth out of mere love of knowing it as it is to seek money out of love to gain. It is an idolatry—setting of the worship of abstractions and generalities in the place of the living God. Truth is valuable to the degree that it makes us true. Truth that is not utilised as the Divine energy of one's being, that is not converted into aggressive goodness, is a smiting curse. Truths not taken into the soul, as fuel for the Spirit of God to kindle into a burning enthusiasm for service, are as virtueless in character-building and spiritual empowering qualities as so many bricks. Further, it is ruinous to have our good impulses quickened by truth, as it is manifested in the sacrificial life and death of Jesus, and then allow those impulses to die without being wrought out in Divine being and doing. The knowledge that Christ sacrificed Himself on our behalf will rise up in judgment as our condemnation if we evade sacrificing ourselves for the same end for which He offered up His life. *Let us keep the feast*:—Contemplate the paschal feast—I. IN ITS RELATION TO THE LORD'S SUPPER. I do not suppose that the apostle was actually referring to this, but he was speaking of that experience, to the necessity and importance of which our sacramental feast bears witness. 1. The word suggests—(1) The idea of a sacred season, and thus the old distinction is no longer to be drawn in our lives between things secular and things sacred: all is to be sanctified. (2) Enjoyment. Our life is to be a season of continuous festivity. In both these senses our lives are to be festal, and this holy ordinance has been appointed to keep ever before our minds the true idea of what our lives are to be. 2. Observe that—(1) The Jewish passover was a continuous commemoration of a deliverance wrought out for Israel. So

the Holy Communion is designed to be a perpetual remembrance of that wonderful deliverance wrought out for us on the Cross of Calvary. Human gratitude is apt to be short-lived, and only too many of us get out of the sight of the Cross. This feast was instituted by one who knew our human frailty, so that should we forget how much we owe to His dying love we may straightway be brought back again full in view of His Cross, and obtain deeper and clearer apprehensions of the benefits that redemption brings within our reach. (2) The paschal feast was furnished by the very lamb whose blood secured the safety of the household. So Jesus, the victim, is Himself the feast. (*a*) If the only object of the Holy Communion had been a commemoration, it would have been enough that the bread should be broken and the wine should be poured forth; for there was nothing in the fact of our Lord's crucifixion to answer to the eating and the drinking. The lesson, then, is that as our physical bodies are continuously dependent upon the material world, so the new life of the human spirit is constantly dependent upon a Divine supply. (*b*) But in order to receive real benefit something more is needed than the mere partaking of the consecrated elements. The outward act is designed to bring your faith to bear upon the thought that God is then and there through Christ communicating the Divine life to you; and as you bring your faith to bear upon that act of God's love towards you, you will be indeed a communicant. (*c*) But the question may occur, What is meant by the words, "This is My body, and this is My blood"? The words must be used in a spiritual sense. For if we could have partaken of Christ's material body and blood at the time of the crucifixion that would have produced no spiritual change. The substance so received would have simply assimilated itself to our bodily tissues in the usual way. Similarly, if a supernatural act of transubstantiation were to transpire at that holy table the mere reception of these would leave us, so far as our spiritual condition is concerned, just where we were before. II. AS AN EMBLEM OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. It was— 1. The feast of safety. The destroying angel was passing through the land, but the Israelites feasted in safety, because they knew that they were safe under the blood-stained lintel. They did not hope or think about it; they knew they were safe, because they had God's word for it. And if your life is to be a festal life you need a similar consciousness. Many religious people seem much more like keeping a funeral than a feast. They are always complaining of their doubts and fears. They are not quite clear as to whether they have sprinkled the blood, or, if they have done so, they do not take to themselves the full comfort which belongs to those who have; they don't rest upon the distinct declaration of eternal truth—"I will pass over"; "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life." We must thank ourselves for our miseries if we insist on doubting the Divine faithfulness. 2. A feast of deliverance. They were happy not only because they were safe, but because they were free. They were in the "house of bondage" still; but they felt the throbbings of national life, and their anticipations told them that, in spite of appearances, they were free. And it is even so with us. Romans vi. is just as true as Romans v. The latter tells us about our justification; the former about our deliverance from the tyranny of sin. I don't say that you are to have no more temptation. The Israelites had not done with enemies when they crossed the sea. Indeed, they had hardly got out of Egypt before Amalek attacked them; and you will not have gone very far along your spiritual journey before temptation will attack you. But it is a very different thing to be attacked by Amalek and to be kept in the slavery of Pharaoh. From the hand of Amalek they had to be delivered by the same God that had delivered them out of the power of Pharaoh. And even so now you are free in Christ you will have to guard your liberties by employing the same Divine power that set you free to defend you. 3. The feast of separation. The Egyptians were not allowed to keep it. Up to that time the Egyptians and the Israelites had lived as neighbours, but now there was a line of separation between them. If you have not sprinkled the paschal blood you have no right at the table of the Lord. Nor can you participate in that feast of life which the Christian is privileged to keep; for you belong to the world, and the world has no part in the paschal feast. And Christians cannot properly enjoy it unless they are content to be separate from the world. I meet with not a few Christians from whose life all happiness seems to have departed just for this reason. They are not willing to be separated, and so they cannot keep the feast. 4. The feast of purification. "Not with the old leaven," &c. Careful search was to be made, and all that was leavened was to be excluded from their habitations. And here is a very important lesson. We may be delivered from the tyranny of sin, and yet how much of latent evil may

still lurk within! But there is a Holy Spirit of burning who can and will consume the dross if we are only willing to be cleansed. 5. The feast of wayfaring men. They were to eat it in haste, with shoes on their feet, &c. And if you want to enjoy the passover you must realise that you are a wayfaring man, and shape your life accordingly. (*W. Hay Aitken, M.A.*) *The Christian feast*:—The text is justly supposed to have some reference to the institution, which has the same place under the gospel which the passover had under the law. The Lord's Supper was intended —I. AS A MEMORIAL OF THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST FOR HIS PEOPLE. This we learn from the words of Jesus at its first institution, and that we are to "remember" Him particularly as suffering for our sins is evident from "This is My body which is broken for you," &c. "Show forth the Lord's death till He come." It is to be looked upon, therefore, as a token of love, or memorial left by a friend at parting among his friends, that whenever they see it they may remember him. This remembrance of a suffering Saviour must be attended with—1. Suitable affections. 2. Self-examination. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread," &c. II. AS A BADGE OF OUR CHRISTIAN PROFESSION. Baptism is appointed for our initiation into the Christian Church at our first assuming that profession; and by partaking of this ordinance we declare our constancy in it, and that we do not repent of our choice nor desire to change our Master. III. AS A SEAL OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE, BOTH UPON GOD'S PART AND UPON OURS. 1. It is a standing evidence, obvious to our senses, that God is unchangeably willing to stand to the articles on His part; that He is ready to give His Son and all His blessings to such as believe, as He is to give bread and wine as signs and seals of them. 2. As to our part in receiving these elements, we signify our hearty consent to the covenant of grace, and, as it were, set our seal to it to confirm it. IV. AS A COMMUNION OF SAINTS. Our sitting down at the same table, partaking of the same elements, and commemorating the same Lord, are very expressive of this communion, and have a natural tendency to cherish it. In such a posture we look like children of one family, fed at the same table upon the same spiritual provisions. Hence this ordinance has been frequently and justly called the communion (chap. x. 16, 17). V. AS A FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD (1 John i. 3). This communion consists—1. In that intercourse which is carried on between God and His people. 2. In the community of property. 3. In the interchange of property. (*S. Davies, A.M.*) *The feast of joy*:—What is "joy"? The firstborn of love and the parent of peace—"love, joy, peace." And what was the far end of all our Redeemer's work on earth? "That your joy may be full." And how can the Church reach to its deep things of privilege unless it takes the right vessel to the cistern and "draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation"? Let us ask, Why ought we to be happy in the resurrection of Christ? Because—I. OUR LORD IS HAPPY. From the moment of His rising neither His body nor His mind appear to have been subject to, or even capable of, pain. When He said, "It is finished!" His sufferings were over. Now in proportion as our sympathy is with Him, our heart will always make the tone of our mind. Be glad, then, because your Lord is glad. Jesus is not "a Man of sorrows" now. He is a Man of joys. II. TRUTH HAS BEEN VINDICATED. To a well-ordered mind it is a great satisfaction to see any truth thoroughly established. The resurrection of Christ must stand or fall on revelation. In the Old Testament it is involved in the types and prophecies. Our Lord's own teaching showed it, and it was the mainspring of His whole life. And the apostles are emphatic—"If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain," &c. So that it is the end of all Divine truth; and the evidence is most exact and clear. The Bible is verified and the truth of Christianity placed beyond doubt. III. THE FATHER HAS ACCEPTED THE SACRIFICE OF HIS SON. Christ was "justified in the Spirit," which "quickened" Him. And in that He was justified, His atoning work is justified, and in that His atoning work is justified I am justified, and God Himself is justified to forgive me. IV. HONOUR IS PUT ON THE BODY. Some Christians, wishing to avoid the extreme into which they once ran, now disparage the body too much. But what is this body? The broken mirror of God, to be recast presently into a counterpart of the form of Jesus as He is now in glory—the temple walls of the Holy Ghost. This reflection is full of comfort. If the next world were to be peopled only with spirits, we might be called upon in vain to believe in the communion of saints. It would be almost impossible to realise anything so abstract; but now "in our flesh we shall see God." V. A WARRANT IS GIVEN OF A GLORIOUS RESURRECTION. Where the Head is, there must the members be. The tomb is not dark now, for Jesus left a light; not degrading, for it has been dignified by fellow-

ship with Him; not final, for it is open the other end. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The Eucharist*:—I. ITS NATURE—a feast, because of—1. The fellowship it affords. 2. The feelings it inspires. 3. The strength which it imparts. II. ITS REQUISITES. 1. Love to man. 2. Sincerity and truth before God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The obligation of Christians to observe the Lord's Supper*:—Let us keep this feast because—I. ITS OBLIGATION RESTS ON THE REDEEMER'S DYING COMMAND. An injunction is always rendered more binding—1. When it comes from the lips of one we love, and who has shown a deep interest in our welfare. We naturally pay a respectful deference to the request of a neighbour or acquaintance; but what is this in comparison with the command of a parent? The observance of the Lord's Supper is the solemn injunction of One who has proved Himself to be infinitely more than the best and fondest on earth. 2. When it is conveyed at some exceptionally solemn or momentous season. Surely if there be a time more sacred or impressive than another it is at the hour of death. "Do this in remembrance of Me" was as much Christ's dying legacy as the "Peace I leave with you." II. IT IS A BEFITTING PUBLIC DECLARATION OF OUR CHRISTIAN PROFESSION. Beautiful must have been the spectacle when Israel assembled to give public testimony on the slopes of Ebal and Gerizim. More solemn and interesting still when, year by year, they went to celebrate the appointed feasts. The Psalmist puts special emphasis on paying his vows "in the presence of all God's people" (Psa. cxvi. 14, 19). Let none of us be guilty of false shame in shrinking from an open declaration of the infinite debt of gratitude we owe to redeeming love. Even the soldiers of pagan Rome gloried in ascending the steps of the Capitol to the Temple of Victory, with their votive offerings, swearing by the gods allegiance to their imperial master. And shall we Christians be found cowards to Christ? "Whosoever is ashamed of Me," &c. III. BY NOT KEEPING IT WE INCUR SPIRITUAL LOSS. We never can be careful enough in discarding the unscriptural idea that there is any peculiar grace or virtue in the Sacrament. All grace flows from Christ (Zech. iv. 12). But we must not undervalue the ordinance as a means of grace. It is doubtless one of the Divine channels for the conveyance of spiritual good. God works by instrumentalities; and if we neglect those of His own express appointment we cannot expect otherwise than to suffer spiritually. Conclusion: You object, We are not warranted to approach the table of Communion, because—1. We are not prepared for it. My answer is, The same reason which makes you unfit for the Communion renders you unmeet for death. Is it not because we are sinners, and unworthy, that we are invited to come to the feast, and there to celebrate the infinite worthiness of "the Lamb that was slain"? 2. Some venture who have no right to be there. But your duty is independent of any such intruders. You are not responsible for the sin and presumption of others. (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) *The celebration of the Lord's Supper a Christian duty*:—I. THAT CHRIST CRUCIFIED IS THE TRUE PASSOVER, OF WHICH THE JEWISH WAS A TYPE. 1. The passover was of Divine appointment. It did not originate with Moses and Aaron, or any of the elders or people of Israel. It was not the offspring of human policy, but of God. 2. The passover was appointed for the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage and death. 3. The passover would benefit none unless the blood were applied. 4. The passover was not only to be slain, and its blood sprinkled, but it was also to be eaten. II. THAT AS THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER WAS TO BE CELEBRATED BY THE JEWS, SO THE EUCHARIST OR LORD'S SUPPER IS TO BE CELEBRATED BY CHRISTIANS. The Jews were to celebrate it—all the Jews and proselytes (Exod. xii. 47, 48)—but none else (ver. 43); it was to be celebrated as long as their dispensation should continue (ver. 24); as a memorial of their deliverance from Egypt (ver. 27). So the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated by all Christians. All Christians ought to celebrate it. 1. Because Christ has commanded it (Luke xxii. 19). Whatever He has commanded must be implicitly obeyed. 2. Because it keeps alive the important doctrine of salvation through the death of Christ. 3. Because it eminently tends to excite holy affections. Godly sorrow, arising from a conviction, that our sins, in common with those of others, occasioned the sufferings and death of Christ. Ardent love to Christ. Grateful obedience. III. THAT IN ORDER TO ITS ACCEPTABLE CELEBRATION SEVERAL THINGS DEMAND ATTENTION. 1. We should have correct views of its nature. 2. We should not ascribe an efficiency to it which it does not possess. Many substitute it in the place of regeneration. 3. We should celebrate it with suitable dispositions. Not with malice. Not with wickedness. But with sincerity and truth, with purity of intention, and with an agreement between our principles and outward profession. Conclude by answering a few objections. 1. I dare not keep

the feast, for it is a solemn ordinance. For the same reason you should neither pray, read the Scriptures, sing God's praises, nor hear His gospel preached; for they are solemn. 2. I am not prepared to receive it. 3. I have kept the feast formerly, but since then I have relapsed into sin. (*Sketches of Sermons.*) *Let us keep the feast*:—I. IT IS TO BE KEPT FOR THE GREAT AND GENERAL PURPOSE OF COMMEMORATING CHRIST'S LOVE. II. FOR THE MORE ESPECIAL PURPOSE OF HOLDING IN REMEMBRANCE HIS DEATH. III. FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING A PUBLIC PROFESSION OF OUR BELIEF IN CHRIST, AND OUR DEVOTION TO HIS SERVICE. When the Christian kneels at the table of the Redeemer, he virtually, in the view of God, of angels, and the Church, declares that he believes in the mysterious constitution of the Saviour's person, and that he confides on Him, and on Him only, for deliverance from hell and elevation to bliss. He attaches himself to the standard of the Leader of the Faithful; he engages to fight against the powers of darkness, and in the interest of heaven. (*W. Craig.*) **Sincerity and truth.**—*Sincerity*:—I. THE NATURE OF GOSPEL-SINCERITY. 1. A single intention and aim to please God, and approve ourselves to Him through our whole course. 2. An impartial inquiry into our duty. 3. An entire and universal application to the practice of duty, as far as it is known, without stated and allowed reserves and exceptions. 4. A correspondence and harmony between inward sentiments and the words and actions. II. OF WHAT IMPORTANCE IT IS THAT THIS QUALIFICATION SHOULD ATTEND US IN ALL THE EXERCISES OF THE CHRISTIAN TEMPER AND DUTY. 1. It is expressly required by Divine precept in the several branches of our duty. The new man in general, which Christianity teaches us to put on, is, "after God created in true holiness" (Eph. iv. 24). The first and great commandment of godliness is thus prescribed (Matt. xxii. 37). 2. It is indispensably necessary to our acceptance with God. How can that be expected to meet with a favourable regard from God, which was not in intention done to Him? 3. This qualification alone can minister solid satisfaction to ourselves upon reflection. One man may possibly reach his ends with another by disguise; but how low and empty a satisfaction will that produce, if he cannot be satisfied from himself? So the truly good man alone is (Prov. xiv. 14). 4. Sincerity will be the easiest method of conduct. What art and pains are needful to wear a disguise tolerably! 5. Herein we shall copy after the most illustrious and excellent examples. Insincerity, on the other hand, is most directly the image of the devil, that false and lying spirit, who, from his craft and deceitfulness, is called "the old serpent," and represented as assuming all shapes and disguises to carry on his designs. This subject may very fitly be applied various ways. 1. As a subject of sorrow for the evident violations of sincerity among those who wear the name of Christians. 2. As a measure of judging ourselves, whether we are in a state of acceptance with God. 3. As a ground of humiliation to the best for the defects in their sincerity, as well as in every particular branch of goodness. 4. As an engagement to cultivate and advance in this excellent qualification. (*J. Evans, D.D.*)

Vers. 9–13. **I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators.**—*Avoid the company of sinners*:—I. IS THIS PRACTICABLE? 1. Not absolutely: we must have intercourse with the world. 2. Yet practically: we need have no fellowship or familiarity with them. II. IS IT NECESSARY? 1. Not indispensably, in reference to the world, whom we may not judge, but must leave to the judgment of God. 2. Yet positively in reference to false professors, who must be exposed and excluded. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The company of sinners to be avoided*:—When a man is known to suffer from a sadly contagious disease none of his friends will come near the house. There is little need to warn them off, they are all too alarmed to come near. Why is it men are not so much afraid of the contagion of vice? How dare they run risks for themselves and children by allowing evil companions to frequent their house? Sin is as infectious and far more deadly than the small-pox or fever. Flee, then, from every one who might lead you into it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Christian law of association with evil*:—I. COMMON, EVERYDAY ASSOCIATIONS WITH EVIL HAVE TO BE MAINTAINED IN—1. Family. 2. Business. 3. Society. Yet in all these the earnest Christian need never find it difficult to make a firm witness for truth, righteousness, and charity. II. SPECIAL RELATIONS WITH EVIL WE MAY NOT MAKE. 1. For our own sake. 2. For our friends' sake. 3. For the sake of others who may observe our friendship. 4. For Christ's sake, who said through His servant, "Come out from among them," &c. (*R. Tuck, B.A.*) *The limits of fellowship*:—"No man liveth unto himself."

Attempts have been made to build a science of human nature and a scheme of human life on individualism, but they have failed. Man is born into, lives in, and is inexplicable apart from society. For good or for evil we are with one another. I. CHRISTIANS ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE SOCIETY OF THEIR FELLOW-CHRISTIANS. Paul was full of "sanctified common sense." He saw clearly that if a man eschewed all intercourse with those who differed from him he would have to "go out of the world." 1. The example of Christ and His apostles sanctions intercourse with general society. 2. The assumption of superior sanctity repels, while such intercourse may lead to a desire for the gospel. 3. Opportunities occur in social intercourse for introducing directly or indirectly the truths of religion. "A word spoken in season," &c. II. CHRISTIANS ARE RESTRAINED FROM FREE INTERCOURSE WITH UNWORTHY FELLOW PROFESSORS. 1. It must not be supposed that we are confined to the fellowship of those whose character is mature and blameless. This would be to set up in the Church an aristocracy of the worst kind. 2. Those whose company is forbidden are such as by their violation of the moral law prove their insincerity. 3. The reasons for this prohibition are obvious. Intimacy with such would—(1) Be injurious to our own moral nature. (2) Be interpreted by the world as a condonation of sin. (3) Encourage the sinner in his sin. (*Prof. J. R. Thomson.*) *Converse with the ungodly*:—I. IN OUR ORDINARY LIFE WE MUST ASSOCIATE MORE OR LESS WITH THE UNGODLY. Our legitimate business and our duties as citizens leads us amongst such. If we kept ourselves apart we should have "to go out of the world." 1. Christianity is not designed to drive us out of the world. We are to live among men righteously. Here we have an argument against monasticism. 2. Christ mixed freely among men. 3. We have many opportunities for witnessing for Christ in the world. Private Christians may thus become missionaries, and reach classes beyond the ordinary means. Still any association with the ungodly has its perils, and we must not shut our eyes to them. When we go into the world we should go armed, and never without Christ. II. WE ARE NOT TO ASSOCIATE WITH A PROFESSOR WHO WALKS DISORDERLY. 1. The case is here altered. Those outside are strangers, though we mix with them; this one we know and have been identified with. Those outside are left to the judgment of God; but we have jurisdiction in the case of our offending brother (vers. 4, 5). If this were not so—(1) The force of Church discipline would be seriously weakened. (2) The effect upon the offender would be lessened. Church discipline does not lose sight of his welfare: it is directed towards his recovery. (3) It would seem as though the evil were lightly esteemed, which would bring great scandal amd contempt on Christianity. (4) There would be much peril to the other members of the Church—(*a*) In the association. There is often more peril in the society of a false professor than in that of an open evildoer. (*b*) In the conviction that they could sin with comparative impunity so far as the Church was concerned. III. WHAT KINDS OF SIN INVOLVE SEPARATION. The apostle gives a list of transgressors. 1. Fornicators. The unclean: professing purity, practising impurity. 2. The covetous. Those who made a god of the things of sense. Heart idolatry. 3. Idolaters. Those who, being professing Christians, compromised like Naaman, and like those who now pay homage to "the god of this world." 4. Railers or revilers. Those who say they have a clean heart, but keep a foul mouth. 5. Drunkards. 6. Extortioners. Greedy souls who overreach others, but overreach themselves pre-eminently. We may not company with such, but we may pray and labour for them. (*W. E. Hurndall, M.A.*) *The snare of worldly conformity*:—There is something ominous in the good terms on which Christians are now able to live with their worldly neighbours, when they are not only tolerated in worldly circles, but can make bosom companions of, and even be united in marriage to, those who, knowing nothing of spiritual life, and being habitually and ostentatiously regardless of unseen realities, are still of the world, in the truest and strongest sense of these words. The cause of these amicable relations is not that the world has changed its character essentially; for that it will never do until it ceases to be the world, by being born of God. And must it not be, therefore, that in the Christians who live with it on such intimate terms, there is little or nothing of the spirit of Christ? I would utter no sweeping assertion. But there is in this new bearing of the world to the Church enough to awaken the gravest inquiry in all who are really disciples of Christ, and jealous for the honour of their Lord. Nor is it evident that such inquiry honestly conducted would not lead to the conclusion, that while Christian principles have somewhat influenced the world, the spirit of the world has far more powerfully influenced the Church; and

that we have secured the world's favour, by compromising our Christian character in compliance with the world's demands. Good John Bunyan, were he now to visit Vanity Fair, would find it very different from what it was when he conducted his pilgrims through it, and described the cruel treatment they received. He would find its hostility to the pilgrims wonderfully abated, but he would also find the spirit of the pilgrims wonderfully changed; and that the truce between the two has been procured, not by the concessions of Vanity Fair only, but by the concessions of the pilgrims as well. He would find that while the inhabitants of Vanity Fair have little objection to going to church as the best place for displaying their vanities, many of the pilgrims have become much less like travellers through the town, than residents in it; that some of them do a very flourishing trade there, and can scarcely be distinguished from other traders except from their occasional use of a religious phraseology, not at all from the principles on which their trade is conducted; that they patronise their places of amusement, scarcely avoiding even the most disreputable, and appear there in the attire common to those who frequent them; that they build their villas and mansions there, and enjoy the good things of the place, and altogether seem more likely to spend their days in Vanity Fair, than to induce the inhabitants of Vanity Fair to accompany them in their journey to the celestial city. And though he might find it difficult to say how far the pilgrims ought or ought not to avail themselves of the altered feeling, and take their share of the good things which the place supplies, I fear he would not think the present an unqualified improvement on the time which he so graphically described. (*W. Landels, D.D.*) *Danger of worldly intercourse*:—None can pretend to say how far you may intermix in worldly company, says the Rev. R. Cecil, and get no stain or soil. Situation, circumstances, &c., must all be taken into consideration. But this may be said, that he only mixes with the world with safety who does it not from inclination, but necessity. As to amusements, and what are called recreations, a really awakened Christian will neither find taste nor leisure for them. Religion furnishes the mind with objects sufficient to fill up every vacancy. Yet as you name them I would have you mark carefully everything that disposes or indisposes the mind to holy pursuits. Persons of tender health are very careful to avoid whatever is hurtful, such as damps, infectious rooms, blighting winds. They attend to the injunctions of their physicians, the cautions of their friends, &c. If people were but as careful about their spiritual health as they are of their bodily health, we should see much stronger and taller Christians.

VERS. 12–13. **For what have I to do to judge them also that are without?**—*Without and within*:—I. THOSE WITHOUT. 1. Have no share in Church privileges. 2. Are exempt from Church jurisdiction. 3. Are liable to the judgment of God. II. THOSE WITHIN. 1. May be unworthy of fellowship. 2. Are subject to discipline. 3. Must be excluded when their wickedness is proven. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The judgment of God and the judgment of the Church*:—1. The one is limited, the other universal. 2. The one is partial, the other absolute. 5. The one is disciplinary, the other infallible. 4. The one is provisional, the other will be final. 6. The effects of the one are temporary, of the other eternal. (*Ibid.*) *Limitations of apostolic discipline*:—1. Even in that age of Divine intuitions and preternatural visitations Paul limits the subjects of expulsion from the Christian society to gross and definite vices. No encouragement is given to pry into the secret state of the heart and conscience, or to denounce mere errors of opinion or judgment. 2. Even when insisting most strongly on entire separation from heathen vices, he still allows unrestricted social intercourse with the heathen. He forbears to push his principle to an utopian extravagance: he acknowledges the impracticability of entire separation as a decisive reason against it, and regards the ultimate solution of the problem as belonging not to man, but to God. 3. Whilst strongly condemning the Christian quarrels as in themselves unchristian (chap vi.) he yet does not leave them without a remedy, and so drive them to the objectionable course of going before heathen judges. He recognises the fact, and appeals to their own self-respect to induce them to appoint judges of their own, thus giving the first apostolic sanction to Christian courts of law; in other words, departing from the highest ideal of a Christian Church in order to secure the purity of its actual condition. 4. He lays down the general truth that between all other outward acts and the sin of sensuality there is an essential difference; that the liberty which Christianity concedes to the former, it altogether withholds from the latter; that those sins are utterly inconsistent not merely with any particular relation existing

between Christianity and heathenism, but with the very idea of Christianity itself. (*Dean Stanley.*)

CHAPTER VI.

VERS. 1–8.—**Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust?**—*On going to law*:—The Greeks were not only quarrelsome, but derived an excitement pleasant to their frivolous nature in going to law. The Christians seemed not to have discarded this taste. St. Paul has been telling them they have nothing to do with judging the heathen; he now proceeds to remind them that they ought not to be judged by them. How could he preach the superiority of Christianity if Christians had so little common sense, so little *esprit de corps*, that they must call in a heathen to settle their disputes for them? St. Paul's reasons are important. I. THE SAINTS ARE DESTINED TO JUDGE THE WORLD AND ANGELS. Shall they not then be considered fit to judge little worldly matters of £ s. d.? 1. St. Paul meant that ultimately holy men will be at the head of affairs, acknowledged as the fittest to discern between right and wrong. We shrink from such a thought; not, indeed, that we are slow to pronounce judgment upon our fellowmen, but to do so officially, with definite results, seems too heavy a responsibility. But why? If we submit ourselves now to those who have knowledge of law we may well be content to be judged by the perfectly holy by and by. 2. If holiness shall eventually be supreme, it ought now to be regarded as competent to settle the petty disputes which arise among us (ver. 3). The future kingdom of God can only be perfect as its subjects carry into it characters tending towards perfection. The future is not to make us, but we the future. Earth is not heaven only because men decline to make it so. And as all possible differences in heaven will be adjusted by an all-reconciling authority, there ought to be among the heirs of heaven no going to law now. 3. A vast proportion of legal business is created by changes from which the future life is exempt: death, marriage, disasters, &c. It is often in the power of a lawyer to give a man advice which will save his conscience and bring comfort into a family instead of heart-burning and penury. If the legal mind deals with the reality of things, and tries to see what equity requires, and seeks to forward the well-being of men, then surely there is no profession with such opportunities of earning the beatitude of the peacemakers, none in which men may better be prepared for the higher requirements of a heavenly society in which some are made rulers over ten cities. II. IS THERE NOT A WISE MAN AMONG YOURSELVES? "A wise man" was the technical term for a judge in the Hebrew courts. 1. Among the Jews there was no distinction between Church and State. In the synagogue and by the eldership offenders were both tried and punished. The rabbis said, "He who brings lawsuits of Israel before a heathen tribunal profanes the Name, and does homage to idolatry; for when our enemies are judges (Deut. xxxii. 31) it is a testimony to the superiority of their religion." This idea passed over from Judaism to Christianity. And even a century after Paul's time the rule of the Church was, "Let not those who have disputes go to law before the civil powers, but let them by all means be reconciled by the elders of the Church, and let them readily yield to their decision." And as late as our own day we find an Arab sheikh complaining that Christian Copts come to him, a Mohammedan, to settle their disputes, and "won't go and be settled by the priest out of the Gospels." 2. Did Paul, then, mean that such legal cases as are now tried in our civil courts should be settled by non-professional men? Did he foresee none of the great evils that have arisen wherever Church or State has not respected the province of the other? No one can suppose that this was his meaning. He taught men to submit themselves to the powers that then were, and he himself appealed to Cæsar. He had no notion of subverting civil courts, but he would fain have deprived them of much of their practice. He thought it might be expected that Christians would never be so rancorous or covetous but that their disputes might be settled by private and friendly advice. Courts of law are necessary evils, which will be less and less patronised in proportion as Christian feeling and principle prevail. 3. This rebuke is applicable even to a community like our own, in which the courts of law are Christian. It is felt even by nations that if a dispute can be settled by arbitration this is the better way of getting justice done.

Christian people may need legal advice; but when two Christians go to law in a spirit of rancour this only proves that their worldliness is stronger than their Christianity 4. But some one will say, "All this is romance." Just as if the world could be regenerated by anything that is not apparently romantic! If a greater good is to be reached, it must be by some way that men have not tried before. And if any one says, "But if there is to be no going to law, we must continually be losers," the reply of a Kincardineshire lawyer might suffice, "Don't go to law if yielding does not cost you more than forty shillings in the pound." And from a different point of view St. Paul replies, "Well, and what though you be losers? The kingdom you belong to is not meat and drink, but righteousness." If a man says, "We must have some redress, when a man takes a coat we must summon him, or he will take our cloak next," St. Paul replies, "It is quite probable that if you act as your Master did, you will be as ill off in this world as He was. But is that any reason why you should at once call Him your Master and refuse to obey His precepts and follow His example?" St. Paul then shows no hesitation about pushing his doctrine to its consequences. He sees that the real cure of wrangling, of fraud, and of war is not litigation, but meekness and unselfishness. The world's remedies have utterly failed. Law is necessary for restraining the expressions of a vicious nature, but is insufficient to remove the possibility of these expressions by healing the nature. This can only be done by the diffusion of unworldliness and unselfishness. And it is Christians who are responsible for diffusing this unworldly spirit. Conclusion. 1. Those laws which are to be our sole rule when we are perfect cannot always be immediately applied now; but there must be a striving towards the perfect state in which there shall be no going to law. 2. Paul knows that the Christian conscience is with him when he declares that men should rather suffer wrong than bring reproach on the Christian name (ver. 9). And yet how little do men seem to take to heart the great fact that they are travelling forward to a state in which nothing uncongenial to the Spirit of Christ can possibly find place! (*M. Dods, D.D.*) *Law, going to:*—A sheep, separated from the flock, was overtaken by a storm. To shelter itself from the rain it crept into a thorny bush, and remained there until the rain had ceased. It had much trouble in getting rid of the thorns. It, however, brought it about after many efforts, and got out from the bush without being wet; but the poor creature lost almost all its wool. A like fate is his who seeks redress in law. *Why a Christian should not go to law with his brethren:*—I. IT IS TO DEMEAN CHRISTIANITY BEFORE THE WORLD, which teaches peace, forbearance, unity, love. II. IT IS TO CEDE TO WORLDLY MEN AN OPPORTUNITY OF JUDGING CHRISTIAN CHARACTER—the complainant as well as the defendant. III. IT IS TO DENY THE COMPETENCY OF THE CHURCH TO ADJUST DIFFERENCES AMONG ITS OWN MEMBERS. IV. IT IS TO PREFER LAW TO EQUITY. V. IT IS TOTALLY OPPOSED TO THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The litigious spirit in the Church:*—This the apostle rebukes because—I. THE CHURCH SHOULD DECIDE ITSELF THE DIFFICULTIES OF ITS MEMBERS. "The saints shall judge the world," *i.e.*, this earth shall be one day a kingdom of God. 1. We cannot tell how, but one day "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God," &c., and legislation become Christian. And more, a time is coming when statute law shall cease, and self-government supersede all outward or arbitrary law. That will be the reign of the saints. Let us examine the principles of this kingdom which is to be. 1. The supremacy of goodness. The word "judge" does not mean that the saints shall be assessors with Christ at the day of judgment, but that they shall rule the world as Gideon, &c., "judged" Israel. Successively have force, hereditary right, talent, wealth, been the aristocracies of the earth. But in that kingdom to come goodness shall be the only condition of supremacy. 2. The best shall rule. The apostles "shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," which is not to be taken literally; you lose your time in investigating theories about the restoration of the ten tribes, &c. The spirit of the passage means, and typically expresses, that in that kingdom the best shall rule. 3. That there each shall have his place according to his capacity (see chap. xii. 28). Each man took his position in the Church according to his gift. Here was a new principle. So in the kingdom to come we shall not have the anomalies which now prevail. Men are ministers now who are only fit to plough; men are hidden now in professions where there is no scope for their powers. But it shall all be altered there. These are the things that must be hereafter. And it is only in such a belief that human life becomes tolerable. 4. This is the future destiny of the Church. Are these principles, then, to be alto-

gether in abeyance now? In the highest spiritual matters the Church shall decide hereafter. Therefore, in questions now of earthly matters, Paul argues, the least esteemed among them should be able to decide. "I speak to your shame; where are your boasted teachers? Can they not judge in a matter of paltry quarrel about property?" (1) Let us not, however, mistake the apostle. He did not mean to say that the Corinthians should have ecclesiastical instead of civil courts. The question here is not between ecclesiastical and civil, but between law and equity, litigation and arbitration. The difference between the worldly court of justice and the Christian court of arbitration is a difference of diametrical opposition. Law says, You shall have your rights; the spirit of the true Church says, Defraud not your neighbour of his. Law says, You must not be wronged: the Church says, It is better to suffer than to do wrong. (2) And now, Can any principle but this heal the quarrels of the world? While one holds out as a matter of principle, the other appeals to law, and both are well assured of their rights, what must be the end? "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." Whereas if we were all Christianised, and ready to endure injuries, law would be needless—there would be no cry of "my rights." You will say, perhaps, "But if we bear, we shall be wronged." You forget if all felt thus there would be no wrong. There is no remedy for the world's miseries but the cure of its selfishness. Men have attempted to produce a peaceful and just state of society by force, by law, by schemes of socialism, and all have failed, must fail. There remains, then, nothing but the Cross, the Spirit of Him who conquered the world by being the victim of its sin. II. IT CONTRADICTS THE CHARACTER OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. A true kingdom of Christ should be altogether free from persons of this character. His argument runs thus:—"You ask me how quarrels are to be decided except by law; how the oppressed are to be freed from gross oppressors, except by an appeal to legal justice? I answer, the Church does not include such persons in the idea of its existence at all. The Church consists of men washed, sanctified, justified, &c. I cannot tell you how to legislate for drunkards, revilers, &c., for such ought not to be in your society at all. This is what you were as heathens; this is not what you are to be as Christians." St. Paul insists on man's dignity. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Litigation among Christians: evil of*:—I. IT DEGRADES CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. 1. By subjecting it to an earthly tribunal. 2. By denying the competence of Christian men to judge in the smallest matters. 3. By ignoring the dignity which Christ has conferred upon His saints. 4. By putting Christ's cause to shame before unbelievers. II. IT INDICATES A SELFISH AND UNCHRISTIAN SPIRIT. Litigation—1. Would often be spared by concession, by a little sacrifice of personal right, although this must have its limits. 2. Is usually occasioned by a selfish desire to overreach another; which—(1) Is opposed to brotherly love. (2) Excludes a man from the kingdom of God. (3) Makes the grace of Christ of none effect. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Litigation among Christians to be avoided*:—I. WHY? Because it is inconsistent with—1. Their profession (ver. 1). 2. Their dignity (vers. 2, 3). 3. Self-respect (vers. 2, 3). II. How? (vers. 4–6). 1. By not appealing to a worldly tribunal; this occasions reproach. 2. By referring the matter to Christian brethren; that will bring honour. 3. By abstaining from open strife. III. IN WHAT SPIRIT? The spirit of love, which—1. Excludes selfishness. 2. Prefers patient sacrifice to contention. 3. Gives no just occasion of offence. IV. ON WHAT GROUNDS? (vers. 9–11). Because every act of unrighteousness—1. Must exclude a man from the kingdom of God. 2. Encourages self-deception. 3. Is totally opposed to all Christian experience. (*Ibid.*) *Litigation to be avoided*:—A very learned judge was once asked what he would do if a man owed him ten pounds and refused to pay. His reply was worth remembering. He said, "Rather than bring an action against him, with its costs and uncertainty, I would give him a receipt in full of all demands; yes, and I would send him five pounds over, to cover all possible expenses." *Litigation to be avoided*:—Lord Erskine, when at the bar, and at the time when his professional talents were most eminent and popular, having been applied to by his friend Dr. Parr for his opinion upon a subject likely to be litigated by him, after recommending the doctor "to accommodate the difference amicably," concluded his letter by observing, "I can scarcely figure to myself a situation in which a lawsuit is not, if possible, to be avoided." *A lawsuit discouraged*:—Dr. Miner, of Trenton, N.J., who was formerly a pastor at Springfield, relates that when Abraham Lincoln was practising law in that city a farmer went to him to secure his services in a lawsuit pending between

himself and a neighbour. Lincoln said, "Now if you go on with this it will cost both of you your farms, and will entail an enmity that will last for generations, and perhaps lead to murder. The other man has just been here to engage me. Now I want you two to sit down in my office while I am gone to dinner, and talk it over and try to settle it. And to secure you from any interruption I will lock the door." He did so, and he did not return all the afternoon. The two men, finding themselves imprisoned, burst out laughing, and being thus put in good humour, came to a settlement before Mr. Lincoln returned. The example may be commended to the attention of Christians. *Lawsuits prevented*:—Mr. Oatts remarks: "Peter the Great frequently visited the magistrates in the various cities of his vast empire without giving them any previous warning of his intention. Having in this way arrived at the city of Olonez, he went first to the governor and inquired of him how many suits were pending in the Court of Chancery. "None, sire," was the reply. "What! none? How does that happen?" "Sire, I endeavour to prevent lawsuits, and to conciliate the parties. I act in such a way that no traces of quarrels remain on the archives. If I be wrong your indulgence will excuse me." "Wrong! No. I wish," exclaimed the Czar, "that all governors would act on your principle. Go on as you are doing. God and your sovereign are both satisfied." The work of every child of God should be that of a peacemaker, reconciling man to God, and man to his fellow man. **Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?**—*The world judged by the saints*:—The apostle condemns their going to law, and would have them cease their quarrels one against another before the unjust and unbelievers, and that by four arguments. First, by the shamefulness of it (ver. 5). "I speak it to your shame." Are you such fools that you cannot take up these matters among yourselves? Secondly, from the scandalousness of it. It is a thing so scandalous and offensive to those that are without that I wonder any of you dare be so bold as to go to law one with another. What will the world think? What! Are these the men that profess the gospel? Are these they that have the wisdom of God in them and that are led by the Spirit of God? Thirdly, from the unseemliness of it in the second verse. Do you not know that the saints shall judge the earth? What! hath God made you judges of the world, and do you go to be judged by the world? Fourthly, from the strangeness of it. Dare any of you? What! is there never a wise Christian amongst you? never an understanding professor, that is able to take up a controversy, or judge between his brethren? What a strange thing this is! Then he backs it with four arguments. 1. Because they were brethren (ver. 6). 2. Because it was about things of this life. What! hath God made you judges of heavenly things, of angels, and are you unfit to judge of the things of this life? 3. It was about small matters (ver. 2), whereas you shall sit upon men and angels, and the weightiest matters in the world, the greatest things of God's law, judging them. 4. And lastly, because it was about such things as the meanest Christian in the town might have taken up and have ended: set up them that are least esteemed. Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? The doctrine is, that the saints shall judge the world. It is an old truth, yea, as old as the world itself: you may read it in the fourth verse of Jude's epistle. That Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints. God will not only come to judgment Himself, but He will come attended with all His saints, even with all the godly, to execute vengeance upon all the world, so our Saviour told St. Peter (Matt. ix. 18). How shall the saints judge the world? Not by pronouncing of judgment upon the world, for that Christ only shall do. But the saints shall judge the world these four ways. 1. They shall judge the world by their consent unto Christ's judgment. God trains up His children in this world and teacheth them how they may judge the world hereafter; He teacheth them in this life how to assent with His proceedings in the world, so that they are able to say, "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and just are Thy judgments" (Psa. cxix. 137). Now the law saith that consenters are agents, and therefore because the saints shall consent to the judgment of Christ, therefore they are said to judge the world. 2. The saints shall judge the world by their applause of Christ's judgment; they shall not only give consent unto the judgment of Christ, but they shall also commend it. They shall sing, "Hallelujah, salvation, and honour, and power, be to the Lord our God, for true and righteous are His judgments" (Rev. xix. 1, 2). Let the wicked go accursed as they are, for it is a righteous sentence passed on them. 3. They shall judge the world by their majesty. Then shall the righteous shine as the stars in the firmament, and the wicked shall be astonished at the sight

of them. 4. They shall judge the world by their lives and conversation. Then is the world judged by them when as the courses and manners of the world are not found upon them. Their faith shall judge the world's infidelity; their repentance shall judge the world's impenitency; their accepting of the Lord Jesus shall judge their rejection and neglect of Christ Jesus; their zeal shall judge the world's lukewarmness, and their holiness shall judge the world's profaneness. 1. Because of the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and His saints. He is the Head and they are His members. Now that which the head doth we ascribe it to the whole body. Secondly, in regard of compassion. I speak not of pity but of compassion, of suffering with Christ, seeing that Christ was reproached, hated, and condemned by the world, the saints are likewise with Him; seeing they partake of the afflictions of Christ here they shall also be made partakers with Christ in His glory. Thirdly, for great terror to all wicked men at the day of judgment; for as it is with a thief, not only when the judge shall command to hang him, but all the justices and all the country shall cry out, Hang him! he is judged the more terribly. Fourthly, the saints shall judge the world because God shall so convince them that their mouth shall be stopped, they shall have never a syllable to excuse themselves withal when they shall see men as themselves are, that have lived in the same town, enjoyed the same ordinances of God, lived in the same family that did partake of the same blessings and of the same crosses and afflictions with themselves, subject also to the same corruptions and sins as themselves, when they shall see these at Christ's right hand. The first use, then, is for instruction, whereby we may learn that the saints by their now being saints do now judge the world (Heb. xi. 7). Secondly, this teacheth us that when there is one sinner converted from the wickedness of his ways, and is become a saint, then all the world may know that there is a new judge come to sit upon them. It may be God hath converted thy brother and sister, and thou art not converted, thy own brother and sister shall condemn thee if thou do not repent and come out of thy sins. Thirdly, we may learn that it concerns all the world to take notice of every grace in God's children. There is never a grace of God in any of His saints, but it shall condemn the world if it be void of it. The ways of the Lord are all judgments, because they judge them that will not walk in them. You may know a crooked thing by laying it to a straight line, and by that it is judged to be crooked. Is the child of God humble? His humility shall judge thy pride. Is the child of God meek and patient in suffering wrong and injuries? His meekness and patience shall judge thy revenge. Hath the child of God the spirit of prayer given him? It shall condemn thee that prayest only with thine own spirit. Doth his speech and communication administer grace to the hearers? It shall condemn thee that speakest of vain and idle things. Fourthly, learn hence, that all the texts of Scripture, all the whole Word of God, that is it that begets these saints, and therefore they must needs judge the world. The Scriptures are called judgments (Psa. cv. 5), and our Saviour saith, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge you in the last day" (John xii. 48). Fifthly and lastly, hence it follows, that all the ministers of the Word of God shall also judge the world. Son of man, wilt thou judge the bloody city? "Yea, thou shalt show her all her abominations" (Ezek. xxii. 2). This, then, serves to condemn three sorts of men in the world. First, all those that despise the saints, and that see not amiableness in their faces. All the country doth reverence the face of the judge when he rides his circuit. 2. Shall the saints judge the world? Then what fools are the wicked that prepare not for these judges! When the judge comes to an assize all men prepare for him. Lastly, it condemns all those who do not see glory and majesty in the faces of God's saints. There is majesty in the face of a judge; yea, a man may discover in them a kind of sovereign majesty. Surely the wicked shall never escape condemnation, for—1. God the Father, who judgeth by way of authority, He will condemn thee; all judgment cometh originally from Him. 2. God the Son, He will judge thee, who judgeth by way of dispensation (Acts x.). First, Christ preacheth to thee repentance and remission of sins, to which if thou yield not, then know that there is a day appointed wherein He will judge thee. 3. God the Holy Ghost will judge thee; that Spirit that now thrives with thee. 4. The Word of God shall judge thee, and that by way of form, it being the platform according unto which Christ will judge the whole world. There is never a text throughout the whole Scripture that commands you to leave and forsake your sins, but it shall judge you if you do not. 5. All the ministers of God shall sit as justices in common, from the first preacher of righteousness unto the last; Moses shall judge thee. Joshua, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Daniel, Paul, Peter,

&c., they shall judge you. There will be no way for the wicked to put off their judgment; then the sons of Eli shall have none to advocate between God and them, none to cloak their wickedness. Would they send out excuses? The saints shall cut them off. Would they in the first place say, Alas! I was ignorant, I knew not how to pray, or to read, or to meditate on the Scriptures, nor to catechise my family? A second excuse is poverty. I have no means to live on; if I should run after sermons I should beg my bread. Thirdly, they shall have no excuse by employment. I am a servant, I am commanded to do this or that, I find so much business to follow that I cannot find any time for such things. Fourthly, they shall have no excuse from their callings and trades. I am an innkeeper, and if I should not suffer drinking and swearing and gaming I should not live. Another faith: I am a tradesman, and if I should ask at first just so much as I could take, I should never bring customers to my price, and so I should not live of my trade. Fifthly, they shall have no excuse from the times they live in. Alas (saith one)! I live in wretched times, all the world is given to sin. This, then, first condemns all unholiness in the lives of them that be saints. Beloved, if we did but live like the saints of God in holiness and purity the Lord would put such splendour upon us that would even daunt the very face of our enemies and make them stand amazed at saints. Secondly, this condemns the little difference that is betwixt the wicked of the world and some saints in their lives and manners. Beloved, is there so little difference between the judge and the prisoners that any one need to come and say, "I pray you, sir, show me which is the judge and which is the malefactor"? Thirdly, it condemns the scandalousness of many professors in their behaviours and actions. (*W. Fenners.*) *Judgment given to the saints*:—The apostle seems to refer to something in Christian doctrine well known then, but very obscure now. He asks with a tone of surprise, "Do not ye know?" We always look forward to being judged, not to judging others, and if the words stood alone, indeed, we might think that they only spoke of "judging" in the sense of "condemning" by contrast or example, as the men of Nineveh the generation in which Christ lived. But this reference to future judgment does not stand alone (see Dan. vii. 22; Matt. xix. 28; Rev. xx. 4; ii. 26). Looking to all that is said about the judgment to come, I suppose that Christians will first be judged according to the new nature of which they have been made partakers, and the new light which has been accorded to them; that afterwards the *heathen* "world," according to other standards and other necessities; and that in this judgment the saints will bear a part. Now, if it be so, does it not anticipate a frequent difficulty, the eternal fate of the heathen? Know this, thou shalt be consulted concerning these very heathen, if only thou be found worthy as a Christian. Only live as it becometh saints, and no sentence shall be passed without thy consent, or contrary to thy sense of justice, for the saints shall judge the world. The saints are also to judge angels, bad angels; for it does not appear how the others would be liable to any judgment at all. If it be asked why this should be so, it may be replied that their probation and fate has ever been mixed up with our own. In the days of our Lord they found a solace and a certain fierce joy in possessing themselves of the bodies of men, and only abandoned them at His almighty word. And these are now finally cast down to Tartarus and reserved under chains of darkness for the judgment of the last day. Contemplating their long connection in guilt and degradation with us children of men, shall we wonder if their final sentence also shall not be passed without us? (*R. Winterbotham, M.A.*) **Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another.**—*Christian faultiness*:—The word may mean—1. A moral defeat sustained by the Christian soldier in his campaign and spiritual march for the heavenly prize of the kingly crown and judicial throne. 2. The loss or damage to the Church, more litigant than militant in the eyes of observant heathendom. (*Canon Evans.*) *Lawsuits among Christians* indicate a want of—1. Brotherly love. 2. Christian sacrifice. 3. Christian morality. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Why do ye not rather take wrong?**—*A true Christian may not always insist on his own right*:—I. IT MAY INDICATE A WANT OF CHRISTIAN LOVE. 1. This is evident where brethren sue each other. 2. Even the party wronged should rather yield than encourage strife and hatred. 3. To press his cause before the world is to dishonour Christ. II. IT IS THE FIRST STEP TO ACTUAL SIN. 1. It breeds selfishness, wrong, fraud. 2. And that among brethren. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 9–11. **Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom**

of God?—*Persistent self-deception* :—Sometimes we persistently deceive ourselves. We insist upon pursuing a policy for our benefit which all but ourselves clearly see to be absurd and useless. We cling to a pet project and nurse a worthless conceit long after the folly of both is recognised by everybody else. But we are not altogether to be blamed. For instinct itself is sometimes at fault, and its powers are uselessly applied. A hen will sit with the greatest tenacity on rounded pieces of chalk ; and the Hamster rat breaks the wings of dead birds as well as of living ones before it devours them. Insects also occasionally err on the same principle, as when the blow-fly lays its eggs on the flower of the stapelia, deceived by its carrion-like odour. A spider, deprived of its egg-bag, will cherish with the same fondness a little pellet of cotton thrown to it. (*Scientific Illustrations and Symbols.*) *Who shall enter into the kingdom of God* :—1. The kingdom. 2. The danger of delusion in reference to it. 3. The certain exclusion of all unrighteousness. 4. The necessity of a change in those who enter it. 5. The means by which this change is effected. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Our inheritance in peril* :—I. WHAT OUR INHERITANCE IS—"the kingdom of God," present, but chiefly future (2 Pet. iii. 13). Heaven is rest, joy, purity, vision. This inheritance is in a sense the inheritance of all, since Christ died for the sins of the world. We disinherit ourselves. II. THE HINDRANCES TO IT. 1. Sins of sensuality. 2. Idolatry. If we serve false gods how can we expect a reward from the true? Some have keen eyes for injuries done to men ; idolatry is a pre-eminent sin against God. What is it that occupies the throne of our heart? 3. Theft, covetousness, extortion. These are much upon a par. Yet many a man who would be horrified at the thought of being a thief thinks nothing of covetousness or extortion. But what is covetousness but theft in the bud? and extortion but theft in the blossom! A man who steals mentally is as guilty as if he stole actually ; for nothing but the restraints of society and the dock keep his hands still. Many a theft is committed in a court of justice with the assistance of counsel: *e.g.*, when a man is striving to get more than his due. 4. Drunkenness. The curse of our land. What men lose by it—health, respect, friends, wealth, and the kingdom of God. 5. Foul language. Reviling, railing, sins of the tongue. Foul lips speak a foul heart. Plainly we are here taught that a nominal faith cannot save us. All the profession in the world will not secure our inheritance. III. THESE HINDRANCES MAY BE REMOVED. Here is consolation for great sinners—and who are small ones? When a man is deeply convinced of sin he is often tempted to despair. Can I, the unclean, &c., enter the holy heaven? It seems impossible. But the apostle turns upon his converts and says—"And such were some of you." Of greatest sinners God has sometimes made the greatest saints. The barriers insuperable to man may be cast down by the might of God. No sickness is beyond the skill of the great Physician. IV. THE MANNER OF REMOVAL. Paul speaks of "washing" in its twofold character. 1. Justification, which we receive through Christ (ver. 11). 2. Sanctification, which we receive through the operation of "the Spirit of our Lord" (ver. 11). V. A CAUTION IMPLIED—"And such *were* some of you." Are ye becoming so again? Our great inheritance may be lost after all, and will be unless we endure to the end. (*W. E. Hurndall, M.A.*) *Genuine reformation* :—Reformation is an object most earnestly pursued by all who are alive to the wrongs of life. Some, however, are of questionable utility, and none of much value but that of the text. This reformation is—I. OF THE MORAL CHARACTER OF MANKIND. Sin which may be defined as self-gratification is here presented in a variety of forms. The principle of sin, like holiness, is one and simple, but the forms are multifarious. These morally corrupt Corinthians were changed in the very root and fountain of their character. II. INDISPENSABLE TO A HAPPY DESTINY. "The kingdom of God"—the reign of truth, purity, love. To inherit that empire, to be in it, not as occasional visitors, but as permanent citizens, is our high destiny. For this we were made. Hence Christ urges us to seek it first. There is no getting into it without this moral reformation. III. EFFECTED BY THE REDEMPTIVE AGENCY OF CHRIST. They had been cleansed from their moral foulness, "washed"; consecrated to holiness, "sanctified"; made right in their being and relationships, "justified." And this "in the name," &c. Nothing on earth will effect this moral change but the gospel; not legislative enactments, or scientific systems. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **Nor drunkards.**—*Drunkenness* :—1. No pestilence has ever wrought as much devastation and misery as the pestilence of drunkenness. Even its physical destructions are simply terrific. It is the origin of many of the worst forms of disease. Nor are the moral and social devastations of drunkenness less terrific than its

physical devastations. Drunkenness extinguishes the fires of shame, profanes the shrines of self-respect, enfeebles the forces of resistance to evil; stifles conscience. And what shall we say of drunkenness in its ravages upon religion? And what is true of Christian work in foreign lands is not less true of Christian work at home. Drunkenness is a fearful hindrance to Christian enterprise. It counteracts, if it does not overweigh, all Christian endeavour to ameliorate the moral and social condition of the people. 2. The causes of drunkenness, it seems to me, are seldom sufficiently inquired into and considered. Some races of mankind, *e.g.*, are constitutionally more temperate than others; and some climates foster intoxication more than others. Both the race and climate of Sweden, *e.g.*, are eminently favourable to drunkenness. The Swedes are Goths, and the Goths are a proverbially drunken race. The long, cold, dark winter of Sweden are also calculated to encourage habits of intoxication. On the other hand, in many southern climates, where the people, under the genial influences of the radiant sun, feel little natural desire for stimulants, a strong artificial desire has been created by the facilities with which ardent spirits have been commercially introduced. There are also two other causes of drunkenness which, although in themselves irremovable, are yet capable of being brought under favourable control. These two causes are—(1) An hereditary disposition to drink; and—(2) A highly wrought nervous constitution. In both cases alike total abstinence is, I believe, essential, and moderate drinking impossible. And when I speak of total abstinence, I speak of it not as an irksome restraint but as a charter of freedom. But the cause of temperance is not exclusively the cause of total abstinence. Total abstainers need all the co-operation they can receive from non-abstainers in their crusade against drunkenness, and particularly in removing the causes of drunkenness wherever those causes are removable. It is said that "people cannot be made sober by Act of Parliament." Whether this be so or not it is certainly true that multitudes are made drunk by the unnecessary and over-numerous temptations which are permitted by Act of Parliament. But the Licensing Laws are not the only removable cause of drunkenness. The most fruitful of all causes of drunkenness is, I believe, wretchedness; wretchedness social, moral, and personal. Look at the way our poor are herded together in our crowded towns, without air or light, with no comforts or recreations! Can you wonder they are drunken? Drunkenness is the Nemesis, the avenging punishment, of the utter selfishness of modern civilisation, which cares so little for the overcrowded poor. In other cases, also, wretchedness is the cause of drunkenness. Think of the wretched, empty, stagnant condition of many human lives. Think of the long, dreary hours which some operatives have to work; hours which leave no time for self-improvement or recreation. Can you wonder that such persons drink? Nor is the guilt of the sin wholly theirs. It is partly yours and mine for allowing such a frightful state of things to continue to exist. Three other causes of drunkenness only will I mention; viz., selfishness, the stings of an uneasy conscience, and the wretchedness of many homes—homes capable of comfort, peace, and joy, but homes made utterly miserable by indolence, stubbornness, evil tempers, artificial worries, and want of love. 3. These are, I think, the principal causes of drunkenness; and in most instances the remedies suggest themselves. We need great and fundamental reforms in our Licensing Laws. We need to Christianise our civilisation in the direction of ameliorating the lives of the multitudinous poor. We need less rush and more repose in daily life. We need a sounder and more indignant public opinion concerning drunkenness. We need also a great revival of the Christian ideals of marriage and domestic life—ideals which, when wrought in practice, make home the mirror of heaven on earth. We need, lastly, and above all things, to inculcate the eternal truth that wilful and deliberate drunkenness is sin; sin which brutalises every part of man's nature; sin which, if unforsaken, shuts the door of heaven against the drunkard. (*Canon Diggle.*)

Vers. 11, 12. **And such were some of you, but ye are washed ... sanctified ... justified.**—*The great contrast:*—Note—I. THE PAST STATE OF THE REDEEMED. "And such were some of you." 1. They were void of moral rectitude. Their conscience was burdened with guilt. 2. They were subject to impure influences. Their affections were defiled. When conscience loses its authority there is nothing to prevent the soul becoming the slave of the most debasing influences. 3. They were slaves of wrong habits. "Their deeds were evil." When both the conscience and affections are wrong, the deeds must be inconsistent with truth and righteousness. 4. They were incapable of spiritual enjoyment. "Know ye not that the unrighteous

shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" The unrighteous have no capacity, taste, or fitness for it. II. THE PRESENT STATE OF THE REDEEMED. "But ye are washed," &c. Note—1. The change. (1) An initiatory act. "But ye are washed." There is probably an allusion here to baptism, the emblem of moral cleansing. But as the water of baptism cannot wash away sin, the apostle evidently refers to the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart. (2) A progressive development. "But ye are sanctified." This does not imply faultless perfection, but consecration. Christian graces, like living plants, gradually mature. 3. A beautiful completion. "But ye are justified." This act, though mentioned last, is generally considered the first. There are three great causes at work in man's justification. (1) The merits of Christ. "Being justified freely by His grace," &c. (2) The faith of the believer. "Man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (3) The influence of the Holy Spirit. "And by the Spirit of our God." Think of a man who, having fallen overboard, is carried away by the current. At last a rope is thrown towards him—he eagerly grasps it—and he is thereby rescued. We have here a combination of causes. The kind friend who threw the rope—the rope itself—and the man's own eager grasp. Thus the Saviour's merits, the penitent's faith, and the influence of the Spirit are necessary to secure the salvation of the soul. 2. The means. "In the name of the Lord Jesus." Nothing but that has sufficient power to change the heart. 3. The agency. And by "the Spirit of our God." It is He that gives effect to the word preached—moves the heart, destroys the yoke of sin, and creates the man a new creature in Christ Jesus. (*J. H. Hughes.*) *The power of the gospel in changing the hearts and lives of men*:—I. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS ABUNDANTLY SUFFICIENT FOR SAVING THE GREATEST SINNERS. 1. The salvation of a sinner consists in his deliverance from the guilt and punishment of sin; and his recovery to the Divine image, *i.e.*, his justification and his sanctification. Let either of these blessings be wanting, and his salvation would be unfinished. But in both these respects the gospel remedy is abundantly sufficient. 2. The instance in the text is to the point. Surely, if there could have been any sinners, whose case the gospel remedy would not reach, these Corinthians would have been the persons. If you require any more witnesses, look at many celebrated in the Scripture for their piety, and see what they had formerly been. What had the Ephesian converts been? (Eph. ii. 1, 3, 12.) What had Matthew, Onesimus, and St. Paul himself been? But for all these the gospel proved sufficient, for the thief upon the cross, for the jailer at Philippi, for thousands among the wicked Jews—for tens of thousands among the idolatrous Gentiles. 3. Let us then apply the truth—(1) For correcting a common error respecting others. When we see a person notoriously evil, how apt are we to speak of him as being past recovery! But remember that the same grace, which was sufficient for the Corinthians, will be sufficient for him. (2) For consolation and encouragement to convinced and humbled sinners. Are you filled with anxious fears for your safety? Well, suppose that your former state has been as bad as that of the Corinthians, yet He who saved them can save you. But while the truth speaks comfort to the penitent. it leaves the impenitent without excuse. Is the gospel sufficient for saving the greatest sinners? Then why do any of you continue in the practice of sin? Is it not plain that you "love darkness rather than light"; that you prefer slavery to freedom; that you "will not come to Christ, that you may have life"? II. A MAN'S RELIGION IS TO BE TRIED, not by what he was, but by what he is. 1. True religion makes a real change in a man. Would we then know whether a man be truly religious or not, we must inquire what is his present conduct. 2. Let this truth then correct a too general practice. When a man begins to take up a serious profession of religion, nothing is more common than to hear all the irregularities of his former life charged against him as proofs of his present hypocrisy. 3. But while we apply this truth for correcting our wrong judgment of others, let us also use it for forming a right judgment of ourselves. Are we still the servants of sin? Or have we been made free from sin? (*E. Cooper, M.A.*) *Triumphs of the gospel at Corinth*:—One of the most common and powerful objections against Christianity is that many who profess it are by no means affected with it; that such professors cannot therefore believe it, or if they do, it must be destitute of moral power. But the badness of the copy is no proof of the badness of the original; the baseness of the counterfeit coin is no proof of the baseness of the genuine. Let the religion of Jesus be compared with its own standards; let it be tried by its own rules. With the crimes of religious professors we have nothing to do but to deplore and avoid them. What Corinth was, we know. To this focus of all that is horrible St. Paul

went, and he did not preach in vain. What these Corinthians had been, St. Paul tells us in the context: but now they were washed, &c. I. THE FEARFUL STATE OF UNCONVERTED MEN. 1. Nothing can be more clear than the doctrine of universal depravity; but this depravity exhibits itself under various aspects, and in various degrees. These Corinthians had been uncommonly vile. Nor they only. We know of the thief who was pardoned on the tree. This, indeed, is not uniformly the case. For in the characters of multitudes we see much that is pleasing, even the grace of God. There are many who are "not far from the kingdom," and who yet appear never to reach it. 2. We ought to regard the depravity of man with deep sorrow and compassion, but not with despair. The very glory of the gospel is that it is a message of pardon and mercy to the guilty, the bankrupt, and the undone. But perhaps some of you may despair, not of the conversion of others, but of your own. Such should remember these Corinthians, and the apostle who converted them. II. THE RENEWED STATE OF THESE CORINTHIANS. 1. "Ye are washed." Since sanctification and justification are mentioned directly afterwards, perhaps this refers to baptism. 2. "Ye are sanctified," *i.e.*, ye are more and more alienated from the world, and conformed to the image and the will of God. 3. "Ye are justified," *i.e.*, your sins are pardoned, and you are accepted as righteous before God, through faith in Christ. III. THE DIVINE METHOD OF SANCTIFICATION AND JUSTIFICATION HERE EXHIBITED. "In the name of the Lord Jesus" means—1. Doing anything by the authority of Christ. "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name." 2. Doing anything for the honour of Christ: thus St. Paul says—"Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," &c. 3. Receiving anything from the Father, through His dear Son: thus our Lord says—"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name," on account of My merits, "He will give it you." The text, then, teaches us that the only method by which we can approach God, the only method by which God can display His grace and love to man, is through Christ. (*G. Weight, M.A.*) *Cleansed by the Spirit*:—There is a lonely little pool of water on the mountain side near Tarbet, Loch Lomond, called the Fairy Loch. If you look into it you will see a great many colours in the water, owing to the varied nature of the materials that form its bottom. There is a legend about it which says that the fairies used to dye things for the people round about, if a specimen of the colour wanted was left along with the cloth on the brink of the pool at sunset. One evening a shepherd left beside the Fairy Loch the fleece of a black sheep, and placed upon it a white woollen thread to show that he wished the fleece dyed white. This fairly puzzled the good folk. They could dye a white fleece any colour, but to make a black fleece white was impossible. In despair they threw all their colours into the loch, giving it its present strange look, and disappeared for ever. This may seem a foolish fable, but it has a wise moral. What the fairies could not do beside the Fairy Loch, the Spirit of God can do beside the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. He can make the blackest soul white. (*Hugh Macmillan, D.D.*) *The great change*:—A piece of canvas is of a trifling value. You can buy it for a few pennies. You would scarcely think it worth picking up if you saw it lying in the street. But an artist takes it and draws a few lines and figures on it, and then with his brush touches in certain colours, and the canvas is sold for a large sum. So God takes up a ruined, worthless human life which has no beauty, no attractiveness, but is repulsive, blotched, and stained by sin. Then the fingers of His love add touches of beauty, painting the Divine image upon it, and it becomes precious and glorious. (*J. R. Miller.*) *Moral transformations*:—There are marvellous transformations in the material as also in the moral world. Look in the material world. The full-fed maggot, that has rioted in filth till its tender skin seems ready to burst with repletion, when the appointed time arrives leaves the offensive matters it was ordained to assist in removing, and gets into some convenient hole or crevice; then its body contracts or shortens, and becomes egg-shaped, while the skin hardens, and turns brown and dry, so that, under this form, the creature appears more like a seed than a living animal; after some time passed in this inactive and equivocal form, during which wonderful changes have taken place within the seed-like shell, one end of the shell is burst off, and from the inside comes forth a buzzing fly, that drops its former filthy habits with its cast-off dress, and now, with a more refined taste, seeks only to lap the solid viands of our tables, or sip the liquid contents of our cups. Look again into the moral world. There you see a transformation as wonderful. The selfish debauchee, whose horrid taste has grubbed in every sort of immoral filth, and become habituated to the harsh, the cruel, and the dishonourable, has been brought

into contact with the necessary spiritual conditions for a change, and behold from one stage to another he passes until at last his tastes are entirely altered, his existence is changed, and even he is able to soar in the light and purity of the world. Elsewhere, behold, the miser is transformed to the philanthropist, the coward into a hero. We watch the fly's aerial circlings in the sunbeam, and remember with wonder its degraded origin. The preacher looks over his congregation, and he sees those who have become noble and virtuous, he is able to take heart for new work; for as he remembers in their presence the debased and the wicked who are yet to be transformed, he says, "And such were some of you; but you are regenerated by the higher Power," and those others may be changed likewise. (*Scientific Illustrations and Symbols.*)

Vers. 12–20. **All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient.**—*The lawful and the expedient*:—I. WHAT IS LAWFUL FOR US IN LIFE? All things indifferent, *i.e.*, not evil in themselves. The Christian has the widest liberty. He is not under the restriction of the older economy. To him every creature of God is good (1 Tim. iv. 4). He must abide within the limits of the lawful; nothing that seems expedient outside those limits must be touched by him. II. WHAT IS EXPEDIENT WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE LAWFUL. 1. The Christian must not use his liberty indiscriminately; he must consider probable results. The end does not justify the means, but the end often determines whether means, justifiable in themselves, shall be used or not. Means good enough in themselves may under certain conditions lead to most undesirable ends. Those ends foreseen determine that those means should not be employed. 2. The Christian has to select the truly expedient out of the truly lawful. Unlawful means ruin thousands; lawful means, unlawfully used, tens of thousands. Nowhere does the devil build his chapels more cunningly than by the side of the temple of Christian liberty. A Christian, before availing himself of his liberty, had need ask what will be the effect—(1) On myself. Shall I be made less spiritual and useful? (2) On my liberty. Liberty may commit suicide. Undue indulgence of liberty results in slavery. Paul was anxious "not to be brought under the power of any," even lawful things. (3) On my fellows. Will it aid or hinder them? (chap. viii. 13). (4) On God. Will it glorify Him? (*W. E. Hurndall, M.A.*) *The practical distinction between things lawful and expedient*:—The text leads us to the contemplation of two very important particulars, the latter illustrative of the former, and closely connected with it, yet demanding separate consideration. The first is the practical distinction between things lawful and expedient; the second, the universal inexpediency of all those things which, by bringing us under their power, I will just remark that while the former of these particulars leads us to guard against the evils arising from external events and influences, the latter points more immediately at such as exist within us: the former has most direct reference to the effect of our conduct generally, and perhaps, in a principal degree, to its effect on others; the latter has relation chiefly to its operation upon ourselves. We may be led by both to the avoidance of one and the same evil; but they will present it under different aspects: the first as manifestly irreconcilable with our integrity or our profession, or injurious because of its obstructing the great purposes of our life; the last as insidious, as tending to lower the standard of our views and feelings, abating the energy of our resolutions; enfeebling the operation of our loftiest motives; making us, in short, less holy, less spiritual. These remarks will be confirmed by a simple reference to the text, which, in the most forcible manner, places the two points unitedly in our view. Of lawful things there are some it describes as to be avoided by a Christian, because they are not expedient; others it warns us to shun, because they would bring us under their power. Rather, perhaps, we ought to say, it speaks of the same objects, and leads us to regard them as connected with a twofold evil; that they are unprofitable in their direct influence, and calculated, in their indirect, to impair our spiritual and mental freedom. We may apply the passage in either way, and in both with manifest advantage. In some cases these evils are separate, in others they coincide. There are some things that merely hinder and obstruct our usefulness, and are for that reason inexpedient; there are others that have a perpetual tendency to debase us, and to bring us into vassalage under their power; but the greater number of inconsistencies unite both these effects, and are therefore to be avoided not only as improper in themselves, but because they will make us feel enslaved by them for the future. Having thus glanced at the general bearings of

the subject, we shall now confine ourselves to the former of these particulars. We proceed, therefore, to exhibit the practical distinction between things lawful and things expedient. Is it asked, then, what is the foundation and essential nature of virtue? what the ultimate standard of morality? The answers to this question are various, and each appears supported by an array of the most specious reasonings. All cannot be true. They may, and do in many points, coalesce; but as far as they differ, they afford a presumption that each of them is imperfect, if not erroneous. It is said the standard is expediency; the tendency of every action to promote or hinder the general good: that those actions are right which advance, those unlawful which impede, the happiness not of the individual only, but of the whole. Thus morality is made the same thing with expediency, and the only reason for which any particular conduct is right, is because it is calculated for the increase of the general good. Now, against this principle there are very strong objections, and some which involve the most extensive consequences. When, in reply to such inquiries as these, "Why am I obliged to speak the truth?" (proposed by Dr. Paley himself, the author of the system referred to); or, "Why is falsehood to be accounted criminal? When this limited answer is given, "Only because they are contrary to the general good," we apprehend there is involved a serious and fundamental error, the substitution of what is secondary and adventitious for what is primary and in its nature essential. Surely there is a distinction, prior to all considerations of utility, between truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, probity and baseness, spotless chastity and brutal indulgence. Surely there is another and an earlier reason for which to condemn some of these things, and to approve the opposite. We apprehend, also, that even if the principle were true, it would be practically inapplicable and useless; for it could be known only to God what actions were really calculated to advance the happiness of the whole. The ultimate consequences of every action are obviously beyond our knowledge, demanding a comprehensiveness of thought not less than that of Omniscience itself. Again, it appears to us to imply what can never be admitted in practice: that such considerations should, in many cases, prevail as relate to the general and last consequences of our actions, in opposition to all those which connect themselves with the individual and his present circumstances; for certainly no man is bound to sacrifice his personal welfare, and all that is most dear and necessary to himself, from a vague regard to the increase of the general happiness, nor yet to suspend all reference to the present, whatever its character may most imperiously require, till he shall have traced out the issue of his determinations in a distant and unknown futurity. Yet this impracticable and visionary principle is truly involved in the question of ultimate expediency as the law of our conduct. We will add only once more that this standard cannot be applied to the actual and immediate determination of men's conduct, and hence is of no practical utility even if it were ever so well established by argument. Before we could act according to this rule we must first balance and examine all the results of our conduct, through the wide extent of all connected being, and the long series of all even collateral and accidental consequences. But this is impossible, and the system which requires it cannot, as we think, be true. It is worthy of observation, then, that in the text there is an evident distinction made between the expediency and the lawfulness of actions, for it affirms that those things may be lawful that are not expedient. May we venture to deduce the converse—that some things may be, or seem, expedient, which yet are not lawful? We are aware that the advocates of the system to which we now object would demur to this suggestion, and say that nothing can be truly expedient, that is, truly and in the largest sense useful, which is not in itself good; and we admit that the statement is well founded, but it will not prevent the most mischievous mistakes in practice. He that shall make expediency alone, whether political or religious, or of whatever kind, his guide in conduct, will be betrayed inevitably into the most dangerous errors. When what is useful is substituted for what is just, or made identical with it, and the standard of rectitude is abandoned for that of utility, the door is opened to a thousand evils. There are not wanting those who will plead for the worst abuses, the greatest perversions of principle and practice, upon the pretence that they are productive of advantage more than sufficient to outweigh the evil of their own nature. What other plea is adduced by those who disguise or modify their own Christian profession, lest they should give offence to the unthinking and the profane, on whom they may choose to be dependent? Paul resolves not, "I will perform those things that are expedient, though they be not lawful; but I will not venture even upon lawful actions, if they be not expedient." I fear

there is but too little of this strictness of principle amongst us. Many, alas! are willing to make a sad commutation of the just, the honourable, and the lawful, for the convenient, the profitable, and the agreeable, both in religion and in common life. Suffer me now to call your attention to the import of that striking expression in the text employed to characterise the things that are thus to be avoided; they are "not expedient"; rather, "they are not profitable." They will not coalesce with that great purpose of the Christian life which alone is worthy of our desire and our exertions: that we may advance the glory and the cause of God; that we may be useful to our fellow-creatures. To the generous mind of the apostle nothing else seemed honourable or happy. Like his blessed Lord he had made it his meat and his drink to do the will of God. You behold, then, illustrated in the personal history of the apostle, the extent of his own language, and you will need no further comment on the phraseology of our text. Do you for a moment ask what is it that he disavows as inexpedient? You are prepared yourselves to reply; all that is thus unprofitable; or, as he has varied the expression in another place, "All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not" (chap. x. 23). All things are inexpedient which are found to be unprofitable—not those alone which may issue in direct injury. Whatever hinders his preparation for the exercises of religion, for the duties of common life, for the endurance of the Cross, for the resistance of temptation, and for his entrance, even in its very performance or enjoyment, into the world above, is thus manifestly unprofitable and inexpedient. That, too, is inexpedient which would restrict the usefulness either of our direct exertions or our general example, impairing the uniformity, the completeness, and the accuracy of our representation in practice, of all that constitutes the Christian character. For the same reason we must avoid what would, in any measure, interfere with the fullest and most unembarrassed discharge of every obligation, whether official or personal. There ought to be no disguise, no mystery, nothing dark and unintelligible, in one who is not of the night but of the day. Many things which the men of the world allow in others, they deem unsuitable to the character of a Christian. We should respect their judgment. We should watch over our actions with a godly jealousy. There remains one other class of cautions more momentous than the whole, which we have not hitherto presented. We must abstain, then, from the things that we have specified, not merely as tending to diminish our personal happiness and piety, or to lessen the effects of our example in promoting that of others, but as operating in a pernicious manner upon the cause of God and the honour of the Redeemer. Little do we often think how much our conduct is identified with that of Christianity itself, in the estimation of the world around us. We shall suppose the principle, then, to be admitted. You readily subscribe to the sentiment that if any action be found to be unprofitable and inexpedient it must therefore be avoided, even though it be not absolutely unlawful; and now you have no other duty remaining but to propose to your own conscience, as in the sight of God, the following practical inquiries. Is the indulgence in question such as would, in any measure, oppress or agitate my feelings, and indispose me for the duties of the sanctuary, or the family, or the closet? Should I reflect on it with approbation, or with regret, upon the bed of sickness, or in the chamber of death? Would it tend to the diminution of my present usefulness, bringing a cloud to hide the lustre of my character in the sight of the world; and so presenting an imperfect and inadequate, not to say positively erroneous, view of the Christian life? (*R. S. McAll, LL.D.*) *Liberty in the use of the lawful:*—Our aim, in the former discourse, was to excite you to Christian vigilance and to a high appreciation of the obligations and effect of Christian consistency. We now proceed to a somewhat different view of the same subject, founding our remarks not on the former but the latter clause: "All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any"; and our object is to show that there is a necessity of caution in the use of even lawful things from their probable effect upon ourselves; that many may be dangerous which are not originally criminal. We shall endeavour to convince you that there are many things which, in single instances and acts, may not be very censurable, which yet, when suffered to become habitual, would tend to diminish or to destroy the holiness and elevation of a Christian character. You will be reminded that all the powers of men are in a state of imperfection and disorder; that they naturally incline to the corruptions of that state through which we now are passing. We shall call on you to recollect how hard it is to retrace our steps—to regain the path from which we may have wandered. The design which we shall principally pursue is to warn you against yourselves—against the allowance of too

great a latitude to your natural tastes and inclinations. There may be some to whom the exhortations of our former discourse might seem inapplicable. They may reason thus: "It is true that such indulgences as I delight in, and think it no crime to enjoy, might be most unseemly for a man of piety; but I have made no such profession; I am not, and I wish not to appear, a pious man." Now, in such circumstances, our text is fitted to afford a most instructive lesson. You are in the greater danger, and require the more scrupulous caution. You are the more liable to fall beneath the power of those indulgences which you think not sinful. What if in such as you they be not unlawful, are they, therefore, expedient? Will they involve you in no exposure to evil? And is there no need of watchfulness in one, that, even according to his own confession, is without God in the world—a man left to himself? Are you safer, then, while you are destitute of the grace of God than such men are with it? But, you reply, it is not the danger to their principles that would render such things inexpedient, neither is that danger to be apprehended to your own; it is the incongruity of their performance with the name they bear, and the superior strictness they are pledged ever to maintain. Still, the sentiment of our text applies to you; for that sentiment supposes that there is danger even in lawful things, and that the form wherein it is most to be apprehended is that they bring us insensibly "under their power." And, besides, the question solemnly recurs, Why are you not a follower of Christ? Is sin not sin, then? Are trifling and dissipation and folly free from the charge of evil? But I must recall your attention to the subject immediately before us. There may be some who reflect that the cautions we have already given are suited only to the circumstances of such as are advanced in life; that they apply, with the greatest force to those in public stations, and of a conspicuous character; but that they are exempt. Their state of life is humble and obscure, or their age excuses them from the burden of so great a responsibility. Their example will not be productive either of injury or good. Now, surely there is no man, whatever his age or station, that can plead exemption from the necessity of the caution we would thus enforce. It is often a happiness and a safeguard to feel that our circumstances call on us for vigilance. But, on the other hand, I scarcely know a more fatal mistake than, from undervaluing the effect of our example, to suppose ourselves at liberty to relax our watchfulness. I. We will briefly glance at the first of these particulars. It may perhaps surprise some to hear that we regard the text AS PRESENTING AN ENLARGED AND NOBLE VIEW OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY. They may fear, from the comprehensiveness of the terms, lest we are about to loosen the obligations of all morality, and maintain the pernicious dogma that there is no sin to a believer in Christ; that his transgressions are so fully visited upon his Surety, in their guilt and punishment, that they no longer attach to himself. We go as far as any man in maintaining the extent and absoluteness of the imputation of our sins to the Redeemer. But far be from us the impiety of saying, that in their case morality and immorality cease to retain their opposite and immutable nature. "All things are lawful to them." Surely not such as are in their own nature criminal; but all that are usually regarded as indifferent. To be a Christian is to be delivered from the obligation of all that is ritual and secular in the ordinances of religion, and to be brought into the enjoyment of a faith the most pure, simple, spiritual. Further, the impositions of all authority which is merely human are contrary to the genius and spirit of the gospel. Again, a Christian is not to be subject to the scruples and superstitious fears that so often perplex the mind, when it has conceived, in an inadequate manner, of the boundaries of its obligations and duty. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, and the man who has that Spirit is to preserve himself from bondage, with relation to those groundless apprehensions that perpetually haunt the consciences of many among the disciples of Jesus. Niceties of phrase and of observance, of dress and manners and external circumstances, reaching not to the vitals of Christianity. Good men sometimes encumber themselves with an unnecessary yoke, by the excess of their suspicion as to the lawfulness of many things to which no law can apply, and which can, in the strict sense, constitute neither a fulfilment nor a violation of our duty. There is a sickly tenderness of conscience, an excessive and shrinking sensibility, which not only exposes us to a large amount of pain such as it was never the design of our Master that we should be called to endure, but which also incapacitates us for the vigorous and efficient discharge of our duty. We may go on, then, upon our way rejoicing; and let no unnecessary fears harass and distract us. There are many gratifications and indulgences which the law of Christ has not forbidden, and of them therefore His

followers may freely and innocently partake. Yet they have been prohibited as sinful by the injudicious zeal and false prudence of some who call themselves His disciples. Christianity is not a system of restriction and oppression. There is nothing forbidden us but what is evil either in itself or in its influence. II. We proceed, then, to the second of the particulars, IN WHAT MANNER THAT CHRISTIAN LIBERTY OF WHICH WE HAVE SPOKEN IS TO BE PRACTICALLY SECURED; it is, in one word, by the exercise of Christian moderation. We are to say, with reference to every enjoyment, It is not unlawful, but it is inexpedient, and I will not be brought beneath its power. Are you solicited by gratifications that would consume your invaluable time, perhaps not in a very extensive degree in their single instances, but in their almost inevitable repetition; in their preparation and their consequences? Then stop; consider; calculate the results; ask yourselves whether you will gain or ultimately lose by such indulgence. Say if you have arrived at the conclusion that they will be hurtful in the end. They are lawful; I forswear them not. I could mingle, like others, delightfully in all the raptures they are fitted to impart; but I am a dying man; I know not how soon the frail thread of life may be cut off for ever; I must work while it is called to-day. Is the character of the delights you are tempted to participate, such as to excite, to undue and dangerous activity, any of the passions of our nature? Then they are inexpedient and hurtful. Let a Christian learn, in such things, to restrain his freedom that he may be truly free. There are forms of pleasure which, though innocent in themselves, yet place our conduct, in their ulterior consequences, injuriously in the power of others. They cannot be enjoyed alone, and hence they bring us into associations, the effect of which, though not immediately apparent, is to abridge our personal freedom by placing us in contact with the opposite sentiments and practice of those whom it is not safe to follow, in matters that even remotely affect religion and the concerns of the soul. But for such enjoyments, we might have remained in a happy separation from the ungodly. The recurring sight of what is evil, or even the habit of associating, without visible discrimination, with those who practise it, will tend to abate our positive disgust at its commission. In such instances, again, we behold the necessity of acting upon the salutary maxim presented in our text. It must be familiar to every serious and reflecting mind that there are many pleasures which, if they were in all other respects free from reproach, yet are on this account to be suspected; that they have a secret tendency to indispose and unfit us for the regular fulfilment of our duty. They exhaust the feelings; they impair our spirituality; they generate other and uncongenial habits; they are unfavourable to retirement; they produce a vagrancy of thought. I think it will be readily conceded by the candid hearer that our judgment, relative to the lawfulness or impropriety of many of our pleasures, is affected in a degree it would be very difficult to estimate, by our natural and constitutional temperament; by our tastes and aptitudes to the several diversities of sensitive or intellectual enjoyment. And hence arises a twofold fallacy. There are not a few who too severely condemn those whose gratifications they are themselves unable to participate. There are others who will at all hazards excuse and justify their own. Men of the former class need to be reminded that moroseness is not principle, and that a defective or a failing sense is a far different thing from Christian self-denial. And those of the latter must be warned that they extenuate not, in their own favourite department, what they would denounce with unmeasured condemnation in every other; that they do not substitute the impulses of natural feeling, or the pleasures of physical excitement for the joys of piety and the dictates of religion. Let them suppose the gratification in question to be one of another class, adapted to the indulgence of a different sense or a faculty which they have not cultivated, and then judge of their own as they would of that which their fancy has thus placed in its stead. Let the lover of music, for example, the man who professes himself exalted to the third heavens, while he listens to the deep and solemn strains of the pealing organ or the majestic choir; let him then, I say, while he feels the thrilling luxury of magic sound, and calls it worship and religion, imagine only that the lover of statuary or painting should, under the influence of the like excitement, describe the ecstasy of his enjoyments by the same appellation, and plead for the indulgences from whence they arise with the same earnestness, and on the same pretext. And, if he should plead by arguments like these for the introduction of objects calculated to afford him such delight in the same circumstances and on the same occasions, let the supposed devotee of music decide the question whether his plea were legitimate and his principles well founded; then let him transfer this judgment to himself,

and he will perhaps discover that it is not his conscience but his taste, that has hitherto determined him with reference to those pleasures that he has accounted sacred; and he may thus be guided to a more just decision; and so in every case. We are not concerned, then, to maintain that no emotions of piety, no sense of sacredness and reverence, may be connected with such enjoyments as we should account unseemly for a Christian, and from which it would be our counsel that he should conscientiously abstain, lest they lead him into danger, or fetter him in mental vassalage. From the whole subject we would briefly deduce the following practical exhortations. Bear ever in mind the intimate connection between your general consistency and the satisfactory evidence of your Christian character. Forge not that such consistency has an equal and inseparable connection with your habitual preparation for heaven. Reflect seriously on the awful consequences of being involved, through our unwise and dangerous indulgences, in the ruin and final condemnation of our brethren. Does any man object that we make the way of piety gloomy and difficult? We reply, this is at least more desirable than to leave it insecure. (*Ibid.*) *The Christian rule in things indifferent*:—I. IN THE ABSTRACT ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL. Because—1. Every creature of God is good. 2. May be used with thanksgiving. II. IN PRACTICE ALL THINGS ARE NOT EXPEDIENT. 1. It may rob us of influence, &c. 2. It may become a stumbling-block to another. III. IN GENERAL ALL THINGS MUST BE UNDER CONTROL. 1. Otherwise we become slaves. 2. Which is to degrade and imperil Christian character. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The limits of Christian rights*:—Men in the Corinthian Church, having heard the apostle teach the law of liberty, pushed that doctrine so far as to make it mean a right to do whatsoever a man wills to do. By these self-gratification was maintained on the ground of—I. THE RIGHTS OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY. Their watchword was, "All things are lawful." It is easy to understand how this exaggeration came about. Men suddenly finding themselves freed from the restrictions of Jewish law naturally went very far in their new principles. St. Paul met this by declaring that Christian liberty is limited—1. By Christian expediency. There are two kinds of "best." It is absolutely best that war should cease. Relatively, it is best under present circumstances that a country should be ready to defend itself. A defensive fleet is expedient, and relatively best, but not the absolutely Christian best. Now that which limits this liberty is the profit of others. 2. By its own nature. "I will not be brought under the power of any." It is that free self-determination which rules all things, which can enjoy or abstain at will. This liberty can manifest itself under outward restrictions. A Christian, as Christ's freed man, had a right to be free; but if by circumstances he is obliged to remain a slave, he is not troubled. He can wear a chain or not with equal spiritual freedom. Now upon this the apostle makes this subtle and exquisitely fine remark:—To be forced to use liberty is actually a surrender of liberty. If I turn "I may" into "I must," I am in bondage again. For observe, there are two kinds of bondage. I am not free if I am under sentence of exile, and must leave my country. But also I am not free if I am under arrest, and must not leave it. So too, if I think I must not touch meat on Friday, or that I must not read any but a religious book on a Sunday, I am in bondage. But again, if I am tormented with a scrupulous feeling that I did wrong in fasting, or if I feel that I must read secular books on Sunday to prove my freedom, then my liberty has become slavery again. It is a blessed liberation to know that natural inclinations are not necessarily sinful. But if I say all natural and innocent inclinations must be obeyed at all times, then I enter into bondage once more. He alone is free who can use outward things with conscientious freedom as circumstances vary; who can either do without a form or ritual, or can use it. II. THE RIGHTS OF NATURE. There is some difficulty in the exposition of this chapter, because the apostle mixes together the pleas of his opponents with his own answers. 1. The first part of ver. 13 contains two of these pleas. (1) "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats"—a natural correspondency. "Nature," said they, "herself says, 'Enjoy!'" (2) The transitoriness of this enjoyment. "God shall bring to an end both it and them." They do not belong to eternity, therefore indulgence is a matter of indifference. It is folly to think that these are sins, any more than the appetites of the brutes which perish. 2. To these two pleas St. Paul makes two answers. (1) "The body is not for self-indulgence, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body," He tells of a more exact mutual correspondency. He reveals a true and higher nature. There is much confusion and dispute about this word "nature." The nature of a watch is correspondence with the sun, perfect harmony of wheels

and balance. But suppose that the regulator was removed, and the mainspring unchecked ran down, throwing all into confusion. Then two things might be said. One might say, It is the nature of that watch to err. But would it not be a higher truth to say, Its nature is to go rightly, and it is just because it has departed from its nature that it errs? So speaks the apostle. To be governed by the springs of impulse only—your appetites and passions—this is not your nature. For the nature is the whole man; the passions are but a part of the man. And therefore our redemption must consist in a reminder of what we are—what our true nature is. (2) To the other plea he replies, The body will not perish. It is the outward form of the body alone which is transitory. Itself shall be renewed—a nobler, more glorious form, fitted for a higher and spiritual existence. Now here is the importance of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and an awful argument against sin. Our bodies, which are "members of Christ," to be ruled by His Spirit, become by sensuality unfit for immortality with Christ. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*)

Vers. 13–16. **Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats.**—*Christianity in relation to the body*:—The apostle here states, perhaps in answer to a question on the subject, that there is a limitation to Christian liberty. As the liberty which the Corinthians seemed to covet was to gratify the bodily appetites, he takes occasion to state certain things in relation to the body. Christianity recognises —I. ATTENTION TO THE NATURAL NEEDS OF THE BODY AS PROPER (ver. 13). 1. The body has appetites, and there are provisions intended to satisfy them. To act thus is in harmony with the constitution of nature. All animal existences act in this way. Christianity, instead of requiring you to starve the body by fastings, and to exhaust its energies by pilgrimages and self-mortifications, says, "Eat and be satisfied and strong; take care of your bodies." 2. Feeding the body, however, Christianity regards as temporary; both the food and the body must perish. They are not like spiritual existences, and spiritual supplies that have regard to an unmeasured hereafter. "All flesh is grass." II. INDULGENCE IN THE GRATIFICATIONS OF THE BODY AS WRONG. "Now the body is not for fornication," &c. This is not a necessity of the body, like eating and drinking, but an immoral indulgence of its propensities. Man should attend to his bodily propensities, as reliefs, not as gratifications. Hence intemperance, whether in eating or drinking, is a moral outrage. The crime and curse of men in all ages have been seeking happiness out of the gastric, the sexual, and other propensities of their physical being. III. THAT THE PROPER TREATMENT OF THE BODY IS TO IDENTIFY IT WITH CHRIST. 1. It is the property of Christ. It is not ours; we are its trustees, not its proprietors. We hold it "for the Lord," and we should use it according to His directions. It is to let in God to the soul, and to reveal God to our race. 2. It is a member of Christ (ver. 15). The Christian's body has a vital connection with Him. He had a human body which now raised to heaven is the model into which our bodies shall be changed. This being so, sensual indulgence is an outrage on the body (vers. 15–17). 3. It is a temple of the Holy Ghost (vers. 19, 20) in which He is to dwell, be revealed and worshipped. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The permanent element in our bodily organism*:—The apostle distinguishes two opposite elements in our bodily organism: the organs of nutrition, which serve for the support of the body, and to which, by a Divinely established correlation, there correspond external meats. The morally indifferent character of this domain appears from the fact of its approaching destruction; God will abolish those functions in the day of the redemption of our bodies. But it is not so with our bodies, strictly so called, which Paul identifies with our personality. This is the permanent element in our earthly organism, that which forms the link between our present and our future body. Now this element is that which is involved in the vice of impurity. And hence the profound difference between impurity and the natural functions of physical life. There exists between our body and Christ a moral relation analogous to the temporary relation which exists between the stomach and meats. The body is for Christ, to belong to Him and serve Him, and Christ is for the body to inhabit and glorify it. In consequence of this sublime relation, the body will not perish. As God raised up Christ, He will also raise the body which has become here below the property and the sanctified organ of Christ. The apostle says, "Will raise *us* also"; he thus expressly identifies our personality with the body which is to be its eternal organ. As the Church in its totality is the body of Christ, the organism which He animates with His Spirit, and by which He carries out His wishes on the earth, so every Christian is a member of this body, and consequently an organ

of Christ Himself. Hence the practical conclusion: This organ of Christ must not be taken from Him and given to a harlot. Therein is a double crime: on the one hand a revolt, an odious abduction; on the other an act of ignoble self-abasement and the acceptance of a shameful dependence. And hence the apostle's cry of indignation, "Let it not be so!" (*Prof. Godet.*) **Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord.**—*Fornication* is—I. INEXCUSABLE. On the ground of—1. Christian liberty (ver. 12). 2. Necessity. II. MORALLY EVIL. It is—1. To prostitute the property of God. 2. To incur a fearful penalty in the resurrection. III. DEGRADING. 1. To all. 2. Especially Christian professors, who dishonour Christ, themselves, and their bodies. IV. SACRILEGIOUS. 1. The body designed as the temple of the Holy Ghost. 2. Redeemed by Christ. 3. Consecrated to God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Fornication*:—1. In remonstrating with the Corinthians for their litigiousness, Paul was forcibly reminded how imperfectly they understood the moral requirements of the kingdom of God, and that they were quoting some of his own sayings in defence of immoral practices. If "all things were lawful" to them, then this commonest of Greek indulgences was lawful; if abstaining from the meat which had been killed in a heathen temple was a matter of moral indifference, then this other common accompaniment of idolatry was also a matter of indifference. 2. St. Paul therefore lays down two principles. First he insists that the question of duty is not answered by simply ascertaining what is lawful; we must also ask, Is it expedient? The Christian is a law to himself; he has an internal guide that sets him above external rules. Very true; but that guide teaches him to consider, not how much indulgence he may enjoy without transgressing the letter of the law, but how he can best forward what is highest in himself and in others. Again, "all things are lawful for me"; all things are in my power. Yes, and therefore "I will not be brought under the power of any." I am free from the law; I will not on that account become the slave of indulgence. There are several practices and habits which no one would call sinful, but which enslave a man quite as much as worse habits. And it is the very lawfulness of these indulgences which has ensnared him. He alone attains the true dignity and freedom of the Christian man who can say, with Paul, "I know both how to be full and to be hungry," &c. "All things are in my power, but I will not be brought under the power of any." 3. Paul then proceeds to apply these principles. The Corinthians argued that if meats were morally indifferent, so also a man was neither better nor worse for fornication. To expose this error Paul draws a distinction between the organs of nutrition and that body which is part of our permanent individuality, and which is to flower into an everlasting body. These two differ from one another; and if you are to argue from the one to the other, you must keep in view the distinction as stated in vers. 13, 14. The organs of nutrition have a present use; they are made for meats, and have a natural correspondence with meats. Any meat, therefore, which the digestive organs approve is allowable. Besides, these organs form no part of the future spiritual body. They pass away with the meats for which they were made. They serve a temporary purpose, like the houses we live in and the clothes we wear; and as we are not morally better because we live in a stone house, and not in a brick one, or because we wear woollens, and not cotton—so long as we do what is best to keep us in life—so neither is there any moral difference in meats. But the body as a whole—for what is it made? "For the Lord." He finds in it His needed instrument; without it He cannot accomplish His will. And "the Lord is for the body." Without Him the body cannot develop into all it is intended to be. Our adoption as God's children is incomplete until the body also is redeemed and has fought its way through sickness and death, into likeness to the glorified body of Christ. But this cannot be believed, far less accomplished, save by faith in the fact that God has raised up the Lord Jesus, and will with Him raise us also. And the Spirit of Christ within us inclines us while in the body, and by means of it to sow to the Spirit and thus to reap life everlasting. The only future of the body we dare to look at without a shudder is the future it has in the Lord. The Lord is for the body, and as well might we try to sustain the body now without food as to have an endurable future for it without the Lord. But if the body is thus closely united to Christ, then the inference is self-evident that it must be carefully guarded from such uses and impurities as involve rupture with Christ (ver. 15). And if any frivolous Corinthian still objected that such acts went no deeper than the eating of food ceremonially unclean, that they belonged to the body that was to be destroyed, Paul says, It is not so; these acts are full of the deepest

moral significance (ver. 18), *i.e.*, fornication is the only sin which by its very nature alienates the body from Christ, its proper Partner. Other sins indirectly involve separation from Christ; this explicitly and directly transfers allegiance, and sunders our union with Him. 4. These weighty reasonings are concluded by the statement of a twofold truth which is of much wider application than to the matter in hand (vers. 19, 20). We are not our own; we belong to Him who has loved us most; and His love will be satisfied when we suffer Him to dwell in us, so that we shall be His temples, and shall glorify Him. And it is the consciousness that we are God's temples which constantly incites us to live worthily of Him. In nothing can God reveal Himself as He can in man. It is not a building of stone which forms a fit temple for God; nor even the heaven of heavens. In material nature only a small part of God can be seen and known. But through us God can express and reveal what is best in Himeelf. Our love is sustained by His, and reveals His. Our approval of what is pure and hatred of impurity has its source in His holiness. But if so, what a profanation is it when we take this body, which is built to be His temple, and put it to uses which it were blasphemous to associate with God! (*M. Dods, D.D.*) *Fornication is an awful crime*:—1. It robs God of His property. 2. Dishonours the members of Christ's body. 3. Makes a man one flesh with the harlot. 4. Degrades a man's own body. 5. Profanes the temple of God. 6. Sins against the sacrifice of Christ. 7. Devotes body and soul, which are God's, to the devil. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **And God hath both raised up the Lord.**—*The resurrection of the body*:—I. IS POSSIBLE. Christ is risen. II. CERTAIN. 1. God has revealed it. 2. Is able to effect it. III. IS A POWERFUL ARGUMENT FOR THE RIGHT USE OF THE BODY. If God honours it, shall man dishonour it? (ver. 13, &c.). (*Ibid.*) **Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?**—*Christ and the body*:—I. HIS RIGHT OVER IT. 1. Not only by creation and redemption. 2. But by our union with Him. II. THE CONSEQUENT OBLIGATION. 1. To care for it. 2. To keep it pure. 3. To use it for His service. (*Ibid.*) *The thought of the love of Jesus for us the remedy for sins of the body*:—I. "THE WORD MADE FLESH," CHANGED BY THAT ACT THE WHOLE RELATION OF THE CREATURE TO THE CREATOR. Before they were distinct. God chose man to knit both together. Could there be envy in heaven, surely the angels must have envied our race; nay, it has been believed that Satan fell through envy at the incarnation revealed beforehand. Nothing so illustrates the self-forgetting love of those blessed spirits, as that they should joy to be passed over, and to see us the fallen preferred to themselves. True! the purpose of God is to unite both under and in one head (Eph. i. 10). Their ranks, it is a pious opinion, broken by the fall of the apostate angels, will be filled by redeemed men. But even this equality has not been enough. God has willed to give us a closeness of union with Himself, which He gave not to the Seraphim. And this for all eternity. II. THIS CONSTITUTES THE CLAIM OF JESUS ON OUR LOVE. 1. This is more than compensation for the fall of Adam. Jesus, in this special way, is ours; He is our near Kinsman, and more than brother. Jesus must love me with a special love, for He has not the nature of angels, but this of mine. 2. And how did He love us? What did He withhold from us, for love of us? His glory! He "emptied Himself" (Phil. ii. 7). He who was and is one with the Father, entered this mortal life. He began it an outcast, and ended it by "giving Himself to be numbered with the transgressors." In those dread hours on the Cross, what part of His sacred body did He reserve from suffering for us? (Psa. xxii. 14). And His Father's face was hid from His human soul. And what doth He now? He is in that unspeakable glory, "upholding all things by the word of His power"; governing also the Church and sanctifying her by His presence. But as something nearer to ourselves individually, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." Calvary lives on in heaven, and pleads for us still. And all this has been, is, shall continue to be done for us through the body. By taking our whole human nature, soul and body, God the Son gave us, in His own person, that special prerogative of nearness to Himself. III. WITH WHAT SACREDNESS DOES THIS INVEST OUR BODIES. 1. Limb by limb, they are the same bodies as that which God the Son took, which for us was crucified, which now is in glory at the right hand of God. All sin is misery, but sins of the flesh have yet this special misery, that they degrade that body which Jesus took. To sin as to the flesh is to insult Christ. 2. Trials you have or will have. But trials which are only of God's allowing injure neither body nor soul. He will give the victory who allows them (2 Cor. xii. 9). But now, if thou art liable to temptation, from which thou mightest have been blessedly free, or over which thou mightest have

had, by God's grace, an easy victory—(1) Observe well, whence mostly it begins now: from imagination? or from the eye? or from past memories? or from overfulness of food? For there the entrance of thy battle lies. (2) In the trial itself. I know but of one effectual remedy—to clasp the hands together, and pray earnestly to God for help. And when thou so prayest, think how Jesus hallowed this poor body; think how He suffered in this body for love of us. Look well at that holy frame, racked on that hard bed of the Cross. But above all, look at that thorn-crowned head, and that yet open, mild, forgiving eye, which won the blaspheming robber to sue for pardon from his Lord. Does it not say to thee, "Poor wanderer, this have I endured for love of thee; I loved thee and gave Myself for thee. Love Me at least now"? Wilt thou not look up to Him and say, "By Thy grace henceforth I will love Thee; let me rather die than again profane the body, which Thou didst so redeem, and wound Thy love"? Or look up and gaze on that glorious form at the right hand of God. All else is spirit. One body is there, above all, adored by all. There, with a special lustre of their own, stream forth the rays of Divine light and love from those two pierced hands, those once wounded feet, that opened side and heart. There, at that moment, the moment of thy temptation, they intercede for thee. There is that human eye resting still in love upon thee. Christ is not ashamed to wear in heaven the tokens of His humiliation; be not thou ashamed of Him and His service. Remember that He willeth to "fashion this our" now "vile body, that it may be made like unto His glorious body," and resolve by His grace to degrade no more the body which He so longs to glorify with Himself. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *Fornication*:—I. DESTROYS ALL PRETENCE TO CHRISTIANITY. 1. The body belongs to Christ. 2. Should be employed in His service. 3. To give it to another is to deny Him—and court destruction, which God forbid! II. DEGRADES THE MAN. 1. The harlot is the refuse of humanity. 2. To be joined to her is to be one with her—by a natural law. III. IS IMPOSSIBLE WHILE WE ARE JOINED TO CHRIST—we are one spirit with Him. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Ver. 17. **He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.**—The apostle was wont to associate the commonest duties with the highest motives. In dissuading from the sin of impurity, he might have adduced considerations drawn from physical laws and social conditions; instead of this he appeals to the loftiest principles of Christianity. Note—I. THE BOND WHICH UNITES BELIEVERS TO THEIR LORD is a bond of—1. Faith, "Whom having not seen," &c. Christians receive with cordiality the gospel concerning Christ; they receive Christ Himself to dwell in their hearts by faith. 2. Love. They are joined to Him as the bride to the bridegroom, in a spiritual affection, in love "stronger than death." 3. Affinity. Drawn to Jesus as sinners to the Saviour, they remain with Him as friends, congenial in character, disposition and aims. II. THE CONSEQUENT UNITY BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND THEIR LORD. 1. They are in a spirit of subjection to the Father, whose will and law are authoritative and supreme. 2. They are one in the love of all that is holy and morally admirable. The sympathy that exists regards the principles that animate and the aims that dignify the moral life. 3. They are one in the bonds of an immortal fellowship. "That they may be with Me where I am." III. THE PRACTICAL PROOFS OF THIS UNITY. 1. Repugnance to all which is repugnant to Christ; as, *e.g.*, those vices to which allusion is made in the context. 2. Cultivation of the spirit of brotherly love. The "one spirit" must needs be a spirit of true love, linking together the members of the mystical body of Christ, and disposing them to a sympathetic and harmonious action. (*Prof. J. R. Thomson.*) *The saint one with his Saviour*:—Note—I. A MYSTERIOUS DEEP. 1. There is a joining to the Lord—(1) In election. We were chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world. (2) In covenant, when Jesus became of old the Head of His Church. (3) In the incarnation. All this makes up a glorious joining unto the Lord, but the union taught here is vital and spiritual which is wrought in us when we are born again. 2. But what does that word "one spirit" mean? The union between Christ and His people is described by—(1) The marriage union. It is said, "These twain shall be one flesh"; but to take off the carnal edge of the metaphor "one spirit" is here substituted. (*a*) Christ and His people have one spirit. The Holy Spirit who quickens us anointed Him. The foot is baptized into the same spirit as the head. (*b*) We are of one spirit with Him, *i.e.*, we come to think and feel as Jesus does. (*c*) Yet the text saith not that we are of one spirit, but we are one spirit. This is a matter to be understood only by the spiritual mind, and not to be expounded in words. "I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect

in one." We have known on earth friends who have become one spirit; intimacy and mutual admiration have ripened friendship into unity, till the one seemed to be the complement of the other; one soul in two bodies. (2) The branch and the stem, which are one vine, and are nothing separated from each other, their life one and their design one. (3) The member and the body. If there be life in this finger, it is identically the same life that is in the head; and so in the whole Church the life and Spirit of Christ are the life and spirit of His people. II. A MANIFEST GRACE. 1. To be one spirit with Christ much more is needed than—(1) To bear the Christian name. Call a poppy a rose and you will not thereby give it perfume. (2) Mere outward profession. Ye may be baptized in water, but unless ye are baptized into the Holy Ghost, ye know not what union with Christ is, for Simon Magus though baptized had no part nor lot in the matter. (3) The performance of some apparently good actions and the use of religious words in conversation. The superficial, the nominal, and the outward will not suffice. Deep down in the very vitals of our being must this union with Jesus Christ most eminently reside. 2. As an illustration of what unity of spirit is take that rare conjugal union of those who realise the highest ideal of the married life founded in pure love and cemented in mutual esteem. Their wishes blend, their hearts are indivisible. By degrees they come very much to think the same thoughts. Intimate association creates conformity. So the true Christian grows to think as Christ thinks till the teachings of Jesus are plain to him. Blessed consummation when their hearts at last are all wrapped up in Jesus, even as the bush at Horeb was all on fire with God! 3. Where such union exists, what does it produce? They who are thus one spirit with Christ live—(1) For the same end—God's glory. (2) For the same reason—the love of the Father. (3) By the same means. By the conversion of souls: not by being made a king, not by being called rabbi. (4) By the use of the same modes—teaching, preaching, living, suffering, and dying. Some nowadays seem tired of Christ's plans, and hunt up more rapid methods. Jesus never strained after effect by animal excitement. (5) With the same emotions. Oh that we felt as He did the weight of souls, the guilt of sin, the terror of the wrath to come, and the tenderness of Divine mercy! 4. Let me add that if we are fully joined to our Lord, and of one spirit with Him, we shall have—(1) The same tastes. What He loves will charm us, what He hates we shall loathe. (2) The same will. (3) Oneness of aim in our service of God. We have a dozen aims now, but if we were of one spirit with Jesus we should have but one object in life. (4) Great force and fervour. Our prayers would be very different from what they are, and our public service of God would never be so sleepy as it now is. (5) Abiding pertinacity. Defeated in one place we should try in another. (6) Wonderful serenity of spirit. We should not be disturbed with little, petty remarks of men, nor should we even be moved by great calamities. Conclusion: 1. A word of rebuke. We have been joined to Christ, but have we been manifestly one spirit with Him? Angry — was that Christ's spirit? Worldly — was that Christ's spirit? 2. A word of hope. We want to have the same spirit as Christ. Well, our hope is that we shall have it, for we are joined to the Lord, and he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The true believer's union with Christ*:—I. THE EXPLICATION OF THIS TRUTH. 1. Who are "true believers"? (1) Not such as are united unto Christ by a mere external profession, sacramental admission, or presumptuous persuasion (John ii. 23, 24). These are dead branches (John xv. 2), sapless stakes in the Church's hedge, wooden legs of Christ's body (2 Tim. iii. 5; Rev. iii. 1). (2) But such as are united unto Christ by internal implantation. Living, fruit-bearing branches (John xv. 5); so that now Christ is in them, and they in Christ (John xvii. 21, 23). 2. What kind of union is this? (1) Negatively. (*a*) Not a corporeal union. Christ is in heaven (Acts i. 11; iii. 21), we on earth. (*b*) Not a hypostatical, personal union; such as that of the Divine and human natures in the person of Christ. Believers make not one person with Christ, but "one body" (1 Cor. xii. 13); and that not one body natural, but mystical. (*c*) Not an essential, substantial union; not such an union as makes believers in any wise partakers of the substance of Christ's Godhead. (*d*) Not such an union as mounts up believers to an equality with Christ in any respect. "In all things He hath," and must have, "the pre-eminence" (Col. i. 18). (2) Positively. (*a*) A spiritual union. (*b*) A mystical, profound union (Eph. v. 32; John xvii. 20). (*c*) And yet a true, real union. Not a fancy only (Eph. v. 30). As the head communicates real influences to the body, so Christ communicates to us His Spirit and graces (John i. 16). (*d*) An intimate union. Like that of the food with the body which it nourisheth (John vi. 54). (*e*)

A perpetual, indissoluble union (Rom. viii. 35). 3. What are the efficient causes of this union? They are—(1) Principal. This great work ascribed—(*a*) To the whole Godhead (chap. i. 9; 1 Pet. v. 10; John vi. 44, 45; Eph. ii. 6, 7). (*b*) But more especially to the Spirit of God. He it is that knits this marriage-knot (1 Cor. xii. 13; Titus iii. 5). (2) Less principal, or the means or instruments of union. (*a*) Outward. Generally all the ordinances of God (Zech. iv. 12). More especially—First, the word read, preached, meditated on, believed, improved. Second, the sacraments. Those spiritual seals and labels which God hath fixed to His covenant of grace. (*b*) Inward faith. Not a bare historical, dead faith; but a living, working, justifying, saving faith (Eph. iii. 17; John i. 12; chap. vi. 56; Gal. ii. 20). II. CONFIRMATION. That there is such a union appears—1. From those many equivalent expressions whereby the Scriptures hold forth this union. (1) Christ is said to "be in" believers (Col. i. 27; Rom. viii. 10), to "dwell in" them (Eph. iii. 17), to "walk in" them (2 Cor. vi. 16). (2) Believers are said to "abide in" Christ (John xv. 7), to "dwell in" Christ (John vi. 56; 1 John iv. 16), to "put on" Christ (Gal. iii. 27). 2. From those several similitudes by which the Scriptures shadow out this union. Believers are said to be—(1) "Lively stones" (1 Pet. ii. 4–6), Christ, the living "foundation, the chief corner-stone," on which they are built (Eph. ii. 20, 21). (2) "Branches" of Christ, "the true vine," into whom they are engrafted, and in whom they bring forth fruit (John xv. 1, 5). (3) The loyal, affectionate "spouse" of Christ (Eph. v. 31, 32; Cant. ii. 16, v. 1). (4) Christ's "body" (Eph. i. 23; v. 30), Christ being the believers' "Head" (chap. i. 22). In a word, the Head and mystical body are called "Christ" (chap. xii. 12). 3. From that communion which there is betwixt Christ and true believers. (1) Believers communicate with Christ—(*a*) In "His fulness" (John i. 16). (*b*) In His merits (2 Cor. v. 21). (*c*) In His life and graces (chap. i. 2). (*d*) In His privileges and dignities. Is He a King, a Priest? So are believers (Rev. i. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 9). Is He a Son, an Heir, by nature? Saints are so by adoption (Rom. viii. 17). (*e*) In His victories (Rom. viii. 37). (*f*) In His triumphs and glory; they share with Him in His throne. All that believers are, is from the grace of Christ (chap. xv. 10; Phil. iv. 13), so that they do not so properly live, as Christ in them (Gal. ii. 20). (2) Christ communicates in the believers' graces. All that they are is from Christ; and therefore all that they have is to Christ; what they receive in mercy they return in duty. III. APPLICATION. Information. Are believers thus closely united unto Christ? Hence see—(1) The crimson dye of their sin, who oppose and persecute them. In touching them, they "touch the apple of His eye" (Zech. ii. 8). (2) The quality of Christ's love to them beyond and above all others (Eph. iii. 18, 19). (3) The high honour which Christ casts upon them—an honour not vouchsafed to heaven's courtiers, the angels. They are Christ's servants, subjects; not His members. (4) Their stability and perseverance in their estate of grace. (5) A cogent and conclusive argument for their resurrection (chap. xv. 12–23). If the Head be got above, surely the body shall not always lie under, water. 2. Examination. To ascertain whether there be such a union betwixt our souls and Christ, let us ask—(1) Hath Christ given unto you His Holy Spirit (Rom. viii. 9; 1 John iii. 24). Now this Spirit is—(*a*) A praying Spirit (Zech. xii. 10). (*b*) A mourning Spirit. (*c*) A sanctifying Spirit (chap. vi. 11; 1 Pet. i. 2). (2) Doth "Christ dwell in thy heart by faith"? (Eph. iii. 17.) Namely, by such a faith as purifies the heart, works by love and overcomes the world. (3) Dost thou "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts"? They that are united unto Christ do so (Gal. v. 24; Rom. viii. 13). (4) Art thou "a new creature"? He that is in Christ is so (2 Cor. v. 17). Hast thou a new head, heart, lip, life? (5) Dost thou bring forth fruit? Every branch in Christ is a fruit-bearing branch (John xv. 5; Phil. i. 11). 3. Consolation. (1) With relation to Christ, to whom believers are united. On their union with Him, there redounds to them a peculiar interest—(*a*) In Christ's person. Christ Himself is theirs (Jer. xxxii. 38; Isa. ix. 6). (*b*) In Christ's properties. Has Christ an arm of power? It is for your protection. Has He an eye of knowledge? It is for your direction. Has He a stock, a treasury, of perfect righteousness? It is for your justification, &c. (*c*) In Christ's promises (2 Pet. i. 4). Which are the believers' *Magna Charta*, to the confirmation whereof God has been pleased to add both His oath and blood for seals (Heb. vi. 17, 18). (*d*) In all Christ's providences (Rom. viii. 28). (*e*) In all (chap. iii. 22, 23). (2) With respect to believers themselves. In a threefold regard; namely, of their persons, graces, duties. 4. Exhortation. (1) To sinners, that are as yet "without Christ, God, hope in this world" (Eph. ii. 12). Be persuaded to give your eyes no sleep

till you are united to Christ! Consider—(*a*) The dreadful, dismal danger of thy present estate. A soul not united unto Christ lies open to all danger imaginable. (*b*) Christ's condescending willingness to be united to thee. (2) To saints that are united to Christ. (*a*) Be very fearful of that which may in any sort weaken your union with Christ. (*b*) Wisely improve it. (*c*) Labour for a frame of spirit suitable to it. (*d*) Walk worthy of it. (*T. Lye, A.M.*)

Vers. 19–20. **What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?**—*The dignity and service of the body*:—I. THE DIGNITY OF THE BODY. The apostle speaks in the accents of surprise, as if to imply that they ought to know. 1. Many considerations may commend the sanctification of the flesh to God, *e.g.*—(1) The natural care for our bodies. (2) The possibility that the angels may have bodies resembling our own, since every angelic appearance in Scripture has been in human shape. (3) The fact that Christ ascended to heaven in a body of "flesh and bones." (4) The fact that the flesh is included in His redeeming work so that in heaven there will be glory and happiness for the body. 2. But the apostle takes higher ground. The body of a Christian man is claimed and taken possession of by the God who has redeemed it—and therefore to be treated with the same respect with which a heathen would regard the temple of his idol, or a Jew the holy of holies. 3. Of course this is not true of all men. It is true that the body is fearfully and wonderfully made in all, that there dwells within it an immortal soul full of noble gifts, that body and soul are actuated by a supernatural power. But in natural men that power is the power of God's enemy. It is to Christians alone that the text applies. 4. Now the idea of temple implies—(1) Presence. In the temples of idolatry there was a visible shape to represent the spirit supposed to be there. In the Temple at Jerusalem there was indeed no figure, but there the visible Shekinah dwelt above the mercy-seat. Thus if the body be the temple of the Holy Ghost it must be because He is actually there. What a solemn thought that is! (2) Presence, not by permission, but by right. Thus it is not that we ought from reverence or courtesy to render to God the use of a body which is our own, but it is that God assumes the use of a body which is His—bought with a price. We were God's by creation, and the right of property thus derived still exists. But we have given to Satan what is really God's; and the Spirit of God will not come back into a body where Satan's seat is, nor by force take the flesh, while the affections are bestowed elsewhere. But when His grace has won the heart back again, then God comes back to His own and takes full possession of the entire man. Try to realise the force of motive which this fact supplies for holiness. II. THE SERVICE OF THE BODY. The Christian who thus thinks of his flesh as the temple of God cannot fail to acquire a higher respect for it, and it is evident that this higher respect will show itself in small things as well as in great. Follow the drunkard or the profligate, who abuse their natural health by sin, and see if the result be not neglect of the body, and misery and suffering in the very flesh they pamper. But let the grace of God change that man's heart, and what a difference is seen! Now he holds his head erect and takes his place among his fellow-men. 1. We should jealously watch our bodies lest they be polluted with sin. 2. Respect for the body, as the temple of the Holy Ghost, should teach propriety of dress and manner, and even of bodily appearance. A saved body, destined for heaven, is neither to be neglected nor to be made into an idle gewgaw, but is to be treated with the serious propriety which becomes a house of God and the God who fills it. 3. We need to watch over all our habits, so as to keep the body in the fittest state possible to do God's will. This is the highest object of health, that the members may be instruments of righteousness unto holiness. 4. Learn the due use and place of the body in our worship of God. The real seat of worship is in the heart, but when the heart is right, the body must share the service. Hence arises the propriety of outward forms of worship, of the bended knees, &c. (*Canon Garbett.*) *The temple of the Holy Ghost*:—1. There is a great danger in religion—as there is in everything else—of a want of proportion. To the natural man the body is much more than the soul. He can see his body; his soul is a matter of faith. The body can give him immediate pleasure; the pleasures of the soul lie chiefly in the future. To the care of the body there is little or nothing to oppose itself; to the care of the soul, the opposition, both from within and without, is very strong. Hence, to provide for that body takes by far the greatest part of a man's life. When a man becomes religious these two things change places. The body goes into the shade; the soul is everything. The body is a thing to mortify. In all

this because it is extravagant there is a danger that there will follow a reaction, and the body may become again too important, because it was made too insignificant. 2. Now let us see how God's truth regards "the body." The whole man is "a temple": the body its walls; the senses its gates; the mind the nave; the heart the altar-piece; and the soul the holy of holies. And yet, as in common life, we call the walls and the doors the house, so "the body" is called "the temple," so important, so sacred is "the body." 3. Christ wore a body and wears it for ever. His discourses were very often about the body, and His miracles were chiefly upon the body. The body finds a place in our daily prayer—"Give me this day my daily bread." 4. We also know the close connection between the body and the mind! how the state of the one affects the condition of the other; and how the body reflects the inner life of the man. What are features, however delicately formed, without expression? And what makes the expression but thoughts—love, tenderness, sympathy! Or, equally, on the other side, sin lowers, vulgarises, spoils, even distorts the countenance. The real beauty of "the temple" after all is its consecration. 5. And when you are dealing with some fellow-creature, what a new character the whole transaction would assume—if you would recognise the fact that that person is "a temple." However poor, wretched, weak, wicked. Notwithstanding, the Holy Ghost may be in that man—working, striving. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The temple of the Holy Ghost*:—1. God does not influence us merely from the outside—play upon us as the flame flickers on the bar of the grate, but rather as the heat penetrates into the very heart and core of the iron. He enters the very centre of our being, and makes His influence felt throughout the whole. 2. This indwelling is not merely that natural indwelling which is a necessary attribute of an Infinite Being; it is gracious friendly indwelling (Isa. lvii. 15; John xiv. 23). The apostle employs this figure—I. To QUICKEN OUR ABHORRENCE OF SENSUAL VICE. Nowhere are disorder and neglect more unseemly than in a temple; but of all kinds of disorder and neglect the most repulsive is filth. For a Christian to indulge in sensuality is to commit an abomination to be classed with the sacrilege of Antiochus Epiphanes, who offered a sow on the altar of the Temple. II. To GIVE AN IMPULSE TO OUR DESIRES FOR GREATER PURITY OF HEART AND HIGHER SPIRITUAL ATTAINMENTS—for those especially which imprint themselves on, and give elevation to, the bodily features. Not only should the sensual look, the bloated complexion excite our loathing: we should seek for such a state of soul as shall give a pleasing countenance. Cathedral builders used to spend much time and pains on the doorway, so as to make it worthy of the building. The face is the doorway to the soul, and it becomes us to see that it does not discredit the temple. Christian men and women should feel that the dreary look of care, the peevishness of discontent, &c., do not befit those whose bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. III. To STIMULATE US TO RENDER GOD HIS DUE. The temple is a place of worship. Not that we can of ourselves provide offerings worthy of God; we must ask Him to give us of His own wherewith to serve Him. But if He dwells in us He will inspire with the feelings and produce in us the fruits that constitute the most acceptable offerings. His presence is not like that of a star in the firmament which, bright though it be, communicates nothing of itself to our distant planet. It is rather like the presence of the sun, which cannot shine without brightening earth and sky and sea; without giving its colour to the rose, its fragrance to the lily, its flavour to the peach; without ripening the golden grain and cheering and brightening the hearts of men. God cannot dwell in the soul without corresponding influences; without fostering love and purity; without making sin more odious and holiness more attractive; without giving it strength to banish the one and to follow the other. Conclusion: The Holy Spirit may be resisted and grieved, and in consequence withdrawn, and the painful discipline of separation and chastisement may be substituted for loving fellowship (Hos. v. 15; Isa. lvii. 17). No loss can be more grievous. Far better the keenest application of the scourge than the sentence—"Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone." (*W. G. Blaikie, D.D.*) *The redeemed sinner a temple of God*:—I. WHOSE THE CHRISTIAN IS. Before the apostle tells us this, he makes it evident that we must have some master. "Ye are not your own!" You are bondmen. And this is no mere figure of speech. I know that if we look around us, it does not appear true. Freedom, independence, is the boast of earth and the pride of man; but go into heaven, and the very sound of it would dismay. The creature's real glory and happiness consist in his willing dependence on the God who made him. And this the Christian feels. While

others are proudly asking who is lord over them, he knows himself to be God's property. And this is true of the Christian at all times. God says concerning every living soul and every clay-built dwelling-place a soul has occupied, "They are Mine." II. How HE BECAME GOD'S. There were several ways by which one man might become the property of another. 1. He might be born of a slave, and the owner of his parent would have a right to him also. And if Christian fathers could entail a glorious bondage on their children, what pangs and fears would many be spared! 2. He might be purchased. And this was a transaction so common that all would enter into the meaning of any illustration drawn from it. Money transferred the Greek slave from one master to another; so the blood of Jesus is the means whereby the sinner is rescued from his native thraldom, and brought "into the glorious liberty of the children of God." By sin he became the servant and property of Satan. The blood of Christ makes an atonement for the transgressor's sin; in a legal sense, it does away with it, and thus annihilates that on which Satan's title to him rests. III. WHAT GOD MAKES HIM. A temple, which imports—1. A rebuilding, a restoration. Man was originally the temple of Jehovah, but sin entered, and, in one short hour, this noble piece of Jehovah's workmanship became a mournful ruin. Some traces indeed of its original glory may still be discovered, but to what do they amount? They serve only to show the greatness of its degradation. His lofty understanding overthrown; his affections, which once rose to the skies, now grovelling on the earth; a spiritual being, and yet bounded in his ideas and enjoyments by material objects. But the blood of Christ having ransomed, now the grace of Christ transforms him. In the very hour when he becomes the Lord's, a work of restoration is commenced within him, that never ends till it brings shape and beauty and glory out of a mass of ruins. And this is sanctification. 2. Dedication. It is this which distinguishes a temple from every other building. The purchased sinner is consecrated to holy purposes. 3. Residence, the abode of the Deity within it, to whom it is consecrated. We must labour to take in the idea of God dwelling within us; not carrying on His work of mercy in the heart like a bystander, but as leaven works in the meal, mingling itself with the mass it is changing. To the man of the world this is all a mystery, perhaps a delusion. And no wonder. It is understood only by experience, and of things like this he has had no experience. To the man of God it is a blessed reality. God never enters the heart alone; blessings unspeakable follow in His train—light and purity and joy. IV. WHAT GOD EXPECTS FROM HIM—glory. Now the glory of God is not such a glory as results to a man from the circumstances in which he is placed; its source is to be found in God's intrinsic excellences. To glorify Him, therefore, is to bring these excellences into light. And the redeemed sinner does this. 1. Passively. His very redemption is an amazing exhibition of the Divine attributes. In this point of view, the creation of a world is as nothing to the salvation of his lost soul. 2. Actively. We are so to live and act that all who see us may be reminded by us of God. Now it is by the body chiefly as an instrument that the work must be done. The seat of religion is the soul, but its effects will be visible in the frame which the soul animates. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*)

The sacredness of the person:—1. The whole person of the believer is as sacred to God as the Temple was. Stronger language is impossible. (1) In both the plan is Divine. (2) In both human agency was called into requisition. In the building of the Temple and in the salvation of the soul man must work out the plan. (3) In both the work is transcendent. (4) But the chief point is the fact that the Temple was the dwelling-place of God typical of His indwelling in the regenerate heart. 2. Our endeavour will be to consider the sacredness and preciousness of the persons of the saints in the light of the price of our redemption. That we should take our stand by the Cross in order to obtain the highest view of human nature may not be consonant with the opinions of many. There are other standpoints. (1) There is the commercial standpoint. On this pinnacle you may stand for a lifetime to witness incessant activities in the hives of industry, which offer their tribute of praise to the greatness and dignity of human life. (2) Look also at the results of scientific research; what a mass of wonders meets your eye! (3) There is also the literary standpoint, whence we see mind, like a cataract, pouring its contents in numberless volumes. (4) Art is no less wonderful. But to none of these lights do we now ask you to come. Ascend Calvary where the noblest view of human life is obtainable. I. THE PURPOSE OF THE SAVIOUR'S LIFE WAS TO REDEEM MANKIND. Every great life has its purpose bound up in its very inclination and disposition. This is pre-eminently true of the life of Jesus. The purpose to save men preceded

every thought, and left its impress on every act. II. To RANSOM MANKIND WAS THE RULING PASSION IN THE LIFE OF JESUS. The life of the Saviour was unique in the fulfilment of its design. 1. His life was one supreme effort that men may feel that the salvation of the soul is the highest of all objects. 2. The cold reception He received did not damp His ardour. III. To REDEEM MEN JESUS LAID DOWN HIS LIFE. It was then the entire surrender of the price became apparent. IV. WHAT JEALOUS CARE MUST BE TAKEN TO GUARD THIS TEMPLE FROM THE INTRUSION OF SIN! God dwells in you; let no unhallowed thought enter. Let the body be pure. There are two steps in entire consecration—the Spirit of God must sanctify the soul, and the soul must sanctify the body. Therefore, touch no unclean thing. (*Weekly Pulpit.*) *The Christian's obligation to a holy life:*—Note—1. That sinners of every class are excluded from heaven (ver. 9). (2) That sinners of every class have been changed (ver. 11). 3. That those who have been changed are under immense obligatious to cultivate a holy life. The text teaches us—I. THAT THE CHRISTIAN'S BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF GOD. The body is frequently called so (chap. iii. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 22). Three ideas are suggested—1. Special connection with God. God is everywhere; but He had a special connection with the Temple of old. God is with all men, but "Thus saith the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity," &c. 2. Special consecration to God. 3. Special manifestation of God. Though the universe reveals God, yet, in the Temple was the Shekinah. There is more of God seen iu a good man's life than elsewhere throughout the world. II. THAT THE CHRISTIAN'S BEING IS THE PROPERTY OF GOD. "Ye are not your own." 1. This does not mean—(1) That your personality is not your own. You will never be absorbed in God. (2) That your character is not your own. Character is the creation of a moral being—an untransferable thing. 2. It means that our existence is absolutely at His command; that He has a sovereign right to do with us whatever is pleasing in His sight. The reason of this is assigned. "We are bought with a price." Christ has redeemed us, and has laid on us the strongest conceivable obligation to live a godly life (Rev. xiv. 5). III. THAT THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY IS TO GLORIFY GOD. Not to make Him more glorious than He is—this is impossible. A holy mind is glorified in the realisation of its ideals. St. Paul's Cathedral glorifies architecturally Sir Christopher Wren, inasmuch as it is the realisation of his idea. Man glorifies God when he realises in his life God's ideal of a man. All beings glorify God as far as they realise His idea of their existence. This includes two things—1. That the human body be under the absolute government of the soul. The crime and curse of humanity are that matter governs mind; the body rules the soul. 2. That the human soul be under the government of supreme love to God. Love always—(1) Seeks to please the object. (2) Reflects the object. (3) Lives in the object. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *God's Temple:*—When Pompey captured Jerusalem he entered the Temple. On reaching the vast curtain that hung across the "holy of holies," into which none but the high priest could enter, and that only on one day of the year, he wondered what the dark recess might contain. He drew the veil aside, but the glory had departed and there was nothing there. How many Christians to-day are like that? Temples without a God. All beautiful outside. But when we lift the veil and pass beyond it to where the glory should be, there is nothing to be seen. The glory is gone. This brings to our remembrance the old legend which tells us that on the night before the temple on Zion was burnt, the solemn words of the retreating Divinity were heard sounding through it, "Let us depart." "I will arise and return unto My place till they acknowledge their offences." Should this voice be heard to-day by you, let your cry be, "Abide with me, King of life and glory. Leave me not!" And the answer will come, "This is My rest for ever, here—mystery of love—will I dwell, for I have desired it, even the temple of thy heart." *The temple of God must not be defaced:*—What right has any man or any woman to deface the temple of the Holy Ghost? What is the ear? Why, it is the whispering-gallery of the human soul. What is the eye? It is the observatory God constructed, its telescope sweeping the heavens. What is the hand? An instrument so wonderful that when the Earl of Bridgewater bequeathed in his will £8,000 sterling for treatises to be written on the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, and Dr. Chalmers found his subject in the adaptation of external nature to the moral and intellectual constitution of man, and the learned Dr. Whewell found his subject in astronomy, Sir Charles Bell, the great English anatomist and surgeon, found his greatest illustration of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God in the construction of the human hand, writing his whole book on that subject. So wonderful are

these bodies that God names His own attributes after different parts of them. His omniscience—it is God's eye. His omnipresence—it is God's ear. His omnipotence—it is God's arm. The upholstery of the midnight heavens—it is the work of God's fingers. His life-giving power—it is the breath of the Almighty. His dominion—the government shall be upon His shoulder. A body so Divinely honoured and so Divinely constructed, let us be careful not to abuse it. When it becomes a Christian duty to take care of our health, is not the whole tendency toward longevity? If I toss my watch about recklessly, and drop it on the pavement, and wind it up any time of day or night I happen to think of it, and often let it run down, while you are careful with your watch, and you never abuse it, and you wind it up at just the same hour every night, and then put it away in a place where it will not suffer from the violent changes of atmosphere, which watch will last the longer? Common sense answers. Now, the human body is God's watch. You see the hands of the watch, you see the face of the watch; but the beating of the heart is the ticking of the watch. Oh! be careful and do not let it run down. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *Keep thyself pure* (sermon to young men):—1. Do not be surprised at the intensity of this remonstrance. Only think what a conception St. Paul had of the purity which Christ required; think what a sink of iniquity was the city of Corinth. It was London and Paris in one. It combined the worship of Plutus and Venus. The extravagance of its luxury was only matched by the depth of its licentiousness. Corinth was at that time the Vanity Fair of the Roman Empire. You might be tempted to say—Ah! no Christian could remain pure in such a place. So some of the young men of Corinth thought, and the apostle wrote to them that it was an entire mistake. I believe some of you young men have just the same notion that these Corinthians had. You say London is quite as trying to one's principles as ever Corinth was. Perhaps so; yet even in Corinth there were those who remained proof against contamination. The grace of God proved sufficient for them. 2. Of course, he is here writing to Christian men (ver. 11). It was of little use to exhort others to a life of purity. An unconverted man regards himself as his own property, and naturally feels that he may deal with that property as he chooses. The alternative is to be the redeemed of the Lord Jesus (ver. 20). Christ gave His life for our salvation, that all who accept of Him should be saved; and if we believe, He claims us as His own. This is not a hardship, but a joyous liberty. And the secret of it is, that He puts His Holy Spirit within us, making us new creatures, with new desires, new likings, new motives. 3. Our body then becomes the "temple" of this Divine Spirit, and all its members are under His control. It is a very solemn and suggestive metaphor. There is no consecrated edifice that is really so sacred as the body of a Christian. The temple at Jerusalem has for ages been laid in ruins; the only temples God now owns are the two which Paul so clearly defines in this epistle; first, the spiritual society of His own people in the aggregate (chap. iii. 16), and, secondly, the fleshly frame of each individual believer. 4. Perhaps the most common plea with which the impure quiet conscience is that which the apostle here challenges, "Our bodies are our own; we may do with them what we will." But they are not your own, says Paul; your bodies are the purchased property of the Lord, and are consecrated by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. What an argument against self-indulgence in any form! These are, as we are told in this chapter, sins "against the body"; desecrations of God's own temple! And if "any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." You recollect that, when Christ was about to visit the Jewish Temple of old, and found its hallowed precincts defiled, He made a scourge of cords, and drove out all the vile intruders. There are young men in some of our mercantile houses, respectable in appearance, and gentlemanly in bearing, who, through vicious indulgence, have already gathered a hell around them, from whose tortures they can find no escape. How did they begin? By being irregular in their habits, careless in making acquaintanceships, tampering with stimulants, and theatre-going, and gambling; and finally, every conceivable form of Satanic revelry! Ah! let me ask, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death." 5. Oh, the heartlessness of vice! It is not so long ago since a young man of good family, excellent prospects, and pleasing address, died miserably like a dog in Paris, with not one to shed a tear over his cold clay, of all the depraved profligates that had sponged him and joined in his hilarious orgies. 6. There are plenty who will try to persuade you that it is a sign of weakness to be pure, and call you verdant, or puritanical, and ask if you are still tied to your mother's apron-strings. And, unless you are prepared to stand that vulgar bluster, you are all but certain to be

caught; and from the gates of hell shall ascend another shout of victory. I remember what a thrill went through me, as I first gazed upon the gloomy walls of the Prison de la Roquette, in Paris, which is set apart for criminals that are condemned to be executed, and read over those huge, hideous gates the inscription, "Abandon hope all ye who enter here!" But hardly less hopeless are those who once enter upon the path of the profligate. *Facilis descensus Averni.* Oh, keep a thousand miles from the verge of the pit! Avoid everything that is likely to act as an incentive to sin. 7. Perhaps you think of these bodies as mere temporary tabernacles, soon to be taken down and dissolved. There is a certain measure of truth in this, of course. But in a higher sense, the Christian's body is not a tabernacle, but a temple, a permanent and enduring structure (Rom. viii. 11). Oh, with what a magnitude of interest and importance does this thought invest these fleshly temples! Some time ago an aged saint was being borne to his burial. He had been very poor, and with indecent haste they were shuffling his coffin out of their way, as though glad to get rid of him, when an old minister who observed it, said, "Tread softly, for you are carrying a temple of the Holy Ghost." (*J. Thain Davidson, D.D.*) **Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.** —*Ye are not your own*:—1. To be "our own" is our very greatest ambition. To be our own masters, that is nature. To feel bought with a price, to forego all independence, to own ourselves God's property, and to seek His glory—that is grace. 2. When Satan first attacked our first parents, nothing could have done so well as this, "Ye shall be as gods"; and, in that reach to be their own, they perished. 3. God has been pleased so to order it, that no man can truly say, "I am my own"; "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are," &c. Oh, we all know how we are trammelled by circumstances, there is not a single action in our life that is perfectly free. In what a higher sense this word is true of those to whom it was said, "Ye are not your own." 4. Of all the happy conditions upon earth, the happiest is to give up the whole heart to an authority which the whole heart can quite love and respect—an authority also which only needs proprietorship to make the relationship exquisite and the engagement perfect. Note—I. GOD'S PROPERTY IN YOU. 1. Had one whole world been given for your salvation the price would have been a large one; but the whole universe would not have given so great a sum as the death of Christ. One single life offered for you would have been vast, but Essential Life Himself was the ransom of your soul. Ought you to be a poor, wretched slave, to fear sin, death, and hell, when the Son of God took fear, sin, death, and hell into His own heart to make you free? 2. The art of man may contrive a thing, and he has a right to anything that he has made. But he contrives out of what he finds already made, not what he brings into creation. But God made your body, soul, and spirit. A father has a right to his child, but God has done more than made you His child, for He has given you the spirit of a child, to cry "Abba Father." A husband has a property in his wife—but marriage is only a type of the union between Christ and His Church. Every man has a right to his own body—Christ has more than a right to His body, being the Head, and we all members in particular; so that each condition of life teaches us with one common voice, "Ye are not your own." II. THE CONSEQUENCES ARISING FROM THAT FACT. 1. The great privilege which attaches to being the property of God. Whatever property one has, it entails certain duties upon the proprietors, and certainly God will not fail in fulfilling the great relationship in which He stands to His creatures. Are you "not your own," but God's? Then observe "all things are yours," &c. God holds Christ—Christ holds you—you hold everything. Then if "you are not your own," nothing which you have is your own, not your cares, griefs, or sins. God has undertaken for you in everything. The member may pass everything up to its Head—the thing possessed may refer everything to its possessor. 2. The duties which spring out of this great privilege. (1) God has made you a part of His Church, the body of Christ. In that Church we all belong one to another. Each has his particular gift to contribute to the mutual good, one has love, another intelligence, another experience—all belong to the Church. (2) This claim of God's proprietorship is not perfectly recognised. We may assign Him a part of our lives—a part of our money—a part of our time—a part of our energies—a part of our affections, but God will have no partnerships. He is too great to be a partner, He requires all of us. God is worthy of everything—yield all yourself to Him. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Man acting independent of God*:—The principle which is recognised in these words is the very reverse of that by which all men are naturally actuated. We reason, we act, not as if our bodies

and our spirits were God's, but as if they were our own. This is the fault of human nature. Man is a fallen creature, in a state of apostasy. He has cast off his allegiance to God. God is not in all his thoughts; God's authority is not acknowledged, His glory is not regarded, His law is not obeyed. And what is the cause of all this? Does he not know that he is God's? Is he ignorant that all he is, and all he has, are from God? If the authority of God can only be established in the conscience, if His right to reign in the heart, and to demand all we are and have, be once acknowledged, what solicitude, what sorrow for sin, what opposition to self, what efforts, what prayers, what gratitude, what submission, will be the result! And who can escape the conviction that the whole heart, and mind, and soul and strength, should be given unto God? I. What can more clearly show that we think ourselves our own, than PRESUMING TO DEVISE OUR OWN RELIGION? God has vouchsafed to us a communication of His purposes. He has favoured us with the inestimable blessing of revelation. Now what is the disposition with which we should receive it? We know that it is with meekness we should receive the engrafted word. But where is this meekness to be found? Truly not in natural men. It is not the religion which is most agreeable to the revelation of God, but most consonant with the opinions of the world, which they adopt. There is an amazing insolence and impiety, and casting off subjection in calling good evil and evil good, in adding to the Word of God or in taking from it, and thus in virtually finding fault with the instructions of Divine wisdom, which is in fact finding fault with God Himself, and expressing a wish that He were the reverse of what He is. It is saying, We are our own, and we will have a religion according to our own wisdom and our own wishes. It is a dangerous thing, however plausible, to contend for the right of private judgment, and to suppose that if we only follow the dictates of our own conscience, and adopt sentiments such as we think to be sound, we must be right. The rule of faith and the rule of practice remain uninfluenced by the changes of conscience, and immutably the same, whether conscience approves and disapproves, perfectly or imperfectly. And a man is equally responsible to God whether his conscience is enlightened or unenlightened, and every time he contends for the authority of conscience in opposition to that of God, he does in fact, like that man of sin, oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God, sitteth on the throne of God, showing himself that he is God. Error is far from being harmless. It has a most pernicious effect upon practice. And in proportion to the importance which is attached to sentiments is the evil which those that are erroneous produce. II. We act as if we were our own by DOING OUR OWN WILL. A respect unto all God's commandments is the only thing which can prove our regard to His will. If we keep the whole law, with the exception of one point, we are guilty of all. Whether, therefore, we are moral, or immoral, and whether we observe religious duties, or neglect them, we are, in all this, consulting our own will, and acting upon the supposition that we are our own. Nor is the case at all altered by our good conduct proceeding from conscientious motives and the fear of God's wrath. For a man's conscience may be awakened, and his fears excited, so as to constrain him to do many things with the view of conciliating God's favour, and saving his soul, while at the same time his partial obedience furnishes abundant evidence that his own will is still preferred to the will of God, and that, in the most plausible parts of his conduct, he is not actuated by any genuine principles of obedience. III. We act as if we were our own by SEEKING OUR OWN ENDS. Whatever we do in an unregenerate state, whether it be in itself good or bad, we seek in it an end that is not worthy of God. We have said that the true end of man is to glorify God. But men seek, not the honour of God, but their own honour. They not only do their own will, but they do it for their own purposes. The original depravity of man is so entire that it is a difficult and long-protracted business to make him, with all his new and Divine nature, propose the glory of God as the end of all his ways. (*M. Jackson.*) *God's right to our services on the ground of creation*:—I. BECAUSE WE WERE MADE BY HIM. The more we know of the structure of the human frame, how fearfully and wonderfully we are made, the more are we persuaded that it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves. And if we consider that we are made of the dust of the earth, that if God had not breathed into us the breath of life, we must have been nothing better than the dust under our feet; we shall see the propriety of glorifying God in our bodies which are His. And if we contemplate the rational understanding, the immortal spirit, by which we are distinguished from the beasts that perish, and assimilated to angels,

and to God, we shall perceive that these are a still higher ground of claim upon us for services the most spiritual. When human creatures use their bodies and their spirits for the low purposes of sensuality, vanity, and ambition, or without any view to the service and honour of Him whose they both are, they are guilty of an injustice to God and a robbery of God, which, if conscience were not stupefied or perverted, would fill them with horror and overwhelm them with fear. Who can calculate the value of an immortal existence and of a capacity for happiness, exalted as its Divine original, and lasting as eternity? Who can calculate his obligations to God for such an existence? And who, then, can calculate the extent of his wickedness in habitually forgetting that he is not his own in using that existence without any avowed aim to the will and glory of its Author? I need not say that the bodies of them whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, and who mind earthly things, are not used for the purpose of honouring God, for in all this God's laws are violated and His glory given to another. All who live in pleasure are dead while they live and dishonour God in their bodies. And it is equally clear that they who live in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another, as well as they who argue against religion and would discourage piety, are not glorifying God in their spirits, but openly dishonouring Him. Have you considered, and do you act upon the principle, that as all your faculties of body and of mind are God's, they ought to be employed for the promotion of His glory? II. WE WERE MADE FOR GOD. The great end of creation is the glory of God. And all things, but men and devils, do glorify Him. Angels in heaven glorify Him, and all things in heaven and earth, and in the waters under the earth, glorify Him, by manifesting His perfections. Fallen men and fallen angels only answer not the design of their creation. Now let this truth be remembered—that you were made for the purpose of glorifying God. And would you oppose and defeat the end of your existence? Shall there be no concurrence between the design of God in giving you life and your design in living? How great must be that guilt which is contracted by living in opposition to the great end of God in calling us into being! Few things excite more opposition in the human mind than the attempt to reinstate God upon His throne, to assert His right to reign in our hearts, the Sovereign of our thoughts and affections, and to maintain that it is our duty to resolve all we think, and speak, and do, into His will. This is being righteous overmuch; this is enthusiasm. Now, can anything show more clearly how completely we have departed from God, how totally opposed to Him we are in the spirit of our minds? Remember we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and how shall we dare to appear as usurpers before our Sovereign and our Judge? If you exalt yourselves against God He will bring you down, and who shall deliver? (*Ibid.*) *Not your own*:—1. The passion for freedom is probably the strongest. Nothing is more wonderful than the secret working of this passion in securing gradual emancipation. There have been times when ages of serfdom had apparently crushed it out; but at the first impulse from without it was seen that the fire of freedom did not smoulder; and when the impulse has grown strong the passion has sometimes maddened men, blinding them to all sense of justice. And so the spirit of freedom has in turn made slaves of them. It was so in Paris a hundred years ago. 2. A large proportion of the members of this church were slaves. You can imagine what a gospel the life of Christ would be to these. And, to the honour of those who organised the first churches, we must always remember that they were not afraid to welcome the slave. Well, then, you may say, "Was it not a cruel thing of the apostle to remind them that they were not their own?" Have you ever wondered why Paul should describe himself as "the bond-slave of Christ"? Was it not because the people to whom he was writing were slaves, and as if he would say, "I too am a slave; I too am bound, not with iron, but by love"? What a grand revelation that was to the slaves! "Ye are Christ's." No chains or bondage could alter that. Better the fetter and the chain with Christ than the purple and the throne without Him. 3. And now these words have just as splendid a ring for us to-night. The law has discovered that they are true in part. The other day they brought before a court of justice a frightened, miserable woman, who had tried to drown herself. She pleaded that her life was not worth preserving. She said it was hers, and she could do with it as she liked. But the law stepped in and said, "You are not your own. Your life is not your own. You have no right to squander it." This meant that the law is founded on the Christian principle that every man's life belongs to his fellow-men as well as to himself. And that was what Christ came to teach. His life was given for everybody. 4. But the

idea is not only what you may not do, but what you must do. If you are Christ's, then every thought, word, action, must be what Christ would have them be. When Peter and John first began to preach in Jerusalem they were thrown into prison, and strictly commanded not to preach any more in that name. But Peter answered "We *must*." It is not a question whether we should like an easy-going life. We must obey God, though it leads us to stripes, imprisonment, and the cross (see also Acts xxi. 11–14). 5. But perhaps you think that such claims are only strong when we reach manhood or womanhood. But think of Christ, at twelve years of age, saying, "I must be in My Father's house." Twelve years of age, but He felt the power of the Divine "must," and yet that One was Lord of heaven and earth. Surely if any one could go through life with no constraint it was He; but He saw that to redeem mankind, even Omnipotence could not refuse to take the cross from childhood to the grave. "Even Christ pleased not Himself." 6. And now what part has that Divine "must" begun to play in your life? Do you feel that it is stronger than the "must" of men? Young man in business, would you let the word of an earthly master outweigh the command of the heavenly Master? Do you think you can slight Christ on the week-day and make it up to Him on the Sunday? Young men, newly awakening to find how strong the streams of tendency are in this world, look at life in the light of Christ, and not in the light of what everybody says and does. It is no excuse for looseness of conduct that it is the fashion. Christ waged relentless war against many of the fashions of His day. Servants, remember whose you are and whom you serve. You can hire your souls out and no wages can recompense you for the loss of them. There may be some here who have received from the Master on trust certain talents which they have been hiding in the earth. If you are letting your lives rust, remember you are abusing another's property, for "you are not your own," &c. (*C. S. Horne, M.A.*) *Not our own*:—1. The first motives which influence us in Christian experience are usually self-regarding; and it is natural and right that they should be so. Salvation stands at the beginning of the Christian course, in order that our self-regarding interests may be set at rest, and that we may thus be left free to pursue an end that lies outside them, and yet is in perfect harmony with them. 2. We are not only redeemed from death, but purchased unto God. So long as we claimed to be our own, Satan possessed a certain legal right over us. He moved man to break away from his original relations with God, and to claim himself for himself. In doing so man became a spiritual outlaw, and as such fell under the supremacy of the prince of lawlessness. The great enemy held him by right as well as by might, because it is God's law that what we sow we reap. 3. But, on the other hand, since Satan owes his power against us to the operation of Divinely-ordained law, when once the necessities of law are satisfied, the claims of Satan against us are cancelled. Thus we are ransomed from Satan the moment that we are justified before God, and brought back to that position from which man fell of being God's and not our own. Only Adam belonged to God because He had made him for Himself; we belong to God because He has bought us back. Thus a new element is introduced into the case, and one that appeals to all the strongest emotions of our nature. He who robs a Divine Creator of that which He has made for His own glory commits a crime, no doubt; but he who has been brought back from the fatal effects of this crime by the death of his Benefactor, and then declines to recognise his obligation, is guilty of an enormity which casts that other crime into the shade. 4. As the result of redemption we come under the influence of Him whose will is law throughout the universe, and whose entrance into our nature insures our true moral freedom. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death. But here is a new property claim, a claim *de facto* where the others were claims *de jure*. His presence is our liberty, for "where the Spirit of God is there is liberty"; but it is the liberty which comes by full surrender of ourselves to Him. He does not enter our nature either as a conqueror, trampling down all resistance, nor as a mere auxiliary to help us out of a difficulty; rather as a constitutional Sovereign to reign according to the true laws of our ransomed nature. 5. But it is not by any means the rule that we apprehend His claims all at once. When the benefit that we seek has been obtained, it is only natural that, having been greatly forgiven, we should greatly love. But, alas! these warm feelings do not always last, when they subside the devotion subsides with them. It often happens, therefore, that after a considerable time has passed from the moment of conversion, the Holy Spirit leads us back, as it were, to the cross to learn more fully the lesson which we only partially learned. We find

perhaps that we have been acting as though God existed for us, instead of realising that we exist for God; and then comes the definite question leading up to an equally definite decision, Is it to be self or God? When the Spirit of God thus induces a crisis, it often happens that a very marked and definite act of consecration ensues, bringing about an entirely new epoch in our Christian life. (*W. Hay Aitken, M.A.*)

Ye are bought with a price.—*God's right to our services on the ground of redemption:*—If on the ground of creation God has a right to our services and may demand that we glorify Him with our bodies, and with our spirits because He hath made them, it must be evident that His right to them on the ground of redemption is still stronger. I. THE GUILT WHICH SOUL AND BODY HAD CONTRACTED. Jesus Christ hath not bought us with a price when innocent and deserving. His redemption supposes immeasurable guilt, the violation of a law which is holy and just and good, the rejection of Divine authority, the contempt of Divine majesty, the impeachment of Divine wisdom, the abuse of Divine godness, the defiance of Divine vengeance, the crime of injustice, and ingratitude, and rebellion, and sacrilege. Look at the defiled body and the polluted spirit, see in them everything that is earthly and sensual and devilish, and say if there is in them any quality to attract the Divine favour. Is there not everything fitted to excite the abhorrence of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity? And yet He redeems you! He redeems you from the vileness of your bodies, and the apostasy of your spirits. What, then, is the perverseness, the accumulated ingratitude and sacrilege of using bodies and spirits so redeemed for the purpose of still dishonouring Him! II. BUT CONNECTED WITH THIS GUILT IS DANGER. Every sinner is exposed to the curse of God, and, but for redemption, must perish eternally. It is redemption from ruin by which you are urged to glorify God, in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. Who does not feel the force of this argument? Who can feel that he owes his deliverance from ruin, his deliverance from even temporal distress, to the benevolent exertions of a friend, without feeling himself bound by ties of gratitude to serve him to the utmost of his power? And shall that be withheld from Christ and from God which is so freely yielded to man? III. CHRIST REDEEMS THE BODY AND SOUL, NOT ONLY FROM RUIN, BUT RUIN IMMEASURABLE. Who can calculate the misery of them who are destroyed both body and soul in hell? Is a cold and reluctant service an appropriate return for deliverence from everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power? IV. CHRIST HAS NOT ONLY REDEEMED BODY AND SOUL FROM EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION, BUT BY HIS REDEMPTION HAS PROCURED FOR THEM IMMEASURABLE FELICITY. Does the circumstance of our ears being familiar with the sound of fulness of joy in the presence of God, and of pleasures at His right hand for evermore, render the felicity of heaven less valuable? Substantiate all this felicity. View it as a reality, as a reality at hand, as that which yourselves must possess, or not possess, in the course of a few fleeting moments, and then say whether there is not a reasonableness, a suitableness in glorifying God in those spirits, and in those bodies, which are to be the subjects of this felicity through the efficacy of His redemption. V. THE GREATNESS OF THE PRICE WITH WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN BOUGHT. You were not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. And can you, after this purchase, question His right to your bodies and your spirits? Can you think that you are justified in withholding your services from Jesus Christ, in living to yourselves, in not inquiring into His will, in not devoting yourselves to His glory? Why should the principles of justice be recognised in your transactions with men, and renounced in your dealings with God? But God demands your services, not merely because He has bought them with a price, but because in buying them He extends to you—VI. THE MOST IMMEASURABLE MERCY. It is infinite mercy that redeems you from destruction the most awful, infinite mercy that exalts you to happiness the most inconceivable, infinite mercy that buys you with a price the most costly, by all this infinite mercy so manifested you are urged to glorify God. How fervent should be our love, how animated our exertions! Every thought and every affection should be God's. Were we suitably affected by His love, we should see sin and ingratitude in every thought and word and work. The insensibility and worldliness of our minds and the inadequacy of our best returns would humble us in the dust. And our disproportionate humility itself, for making returns so imperfect, would be numbered among our grievous offences. The more of heart and soul we put into our services the more of freedom and delight shall we enjoy. We can imagine no happiness equal to that of living as not our own, living to God only, con-

strained by gratitude, and directed by justice to serve Him whose we are. (*M. Jackson.*) *Redemption and its claims* (text and chap. vii. 23):—I. "YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE." 1. Redemption is a greater mercy than creation. It is no mean blessing to have been made, and to have been made a man rather than a dog, to have been blest with intellect and an immortal spirit; but for all that it would be better for thee that thou hadst never been born, if thou art not redeemed. 2. Providence also calls before our minds a great mass of mercies; but providence is second in its blessedness to redemption. 3. Redemption is that which gives effect to all the other great blessings of God. (1) Election, the well-head of grace, needs the conduit-pipe of redemption to bring its streams down to sinners. We are chosen of God, but unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. (2) Redemption is the foundation of all real peace. (3) It is through redeeming grace that we expect to enter heaven. II. THEREFORE REDEMPTION IS THE LORD'S PARAMOUNT CLAIM UPON US. Other claims, such as those of creation and providence, are forcible, but this claim is overwhelming. The love of Christ constraineth us. Think—1. What you were redeemed from. (1) Sin. (2) Its punishment. 2. Reflect most lovingly upon that dear friend who redeemed you. Not an angel, but Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever. 3. Then think of the price He paid. The text does not tell us about it, and surely the reason is that words cannot express the mighty sum. The famous painter, when he drew the picture of Agamemnon at the sacrifice of his daughter, felt that he could not depict the sorrow of the father's countenance, and therefore he wisely put a veil over it, and represented him as hiding his face from the fearful sight. So the apostle seems to have felt. This price has been fully paid. I have seen lands which have belonged to men who were reputed to be rich, but there was a heavy mortgage upon them. But there is no mortgage on the saints. "It is finished," said the Saviour, and finished it was. III. THE EXTENT OF THIS CLAIM. 1. The first text says—(1) That it includes—(*a*) The body. This body of yours is holy, and it will rise again from the dead. I charge you, by the blood of Christ, never defile this body either by drunkenness or by lust. (*b*) The spirit. Keep that pure too. Christ has not bought these eyes that they should read novels calculated to lead me into vanity and vice, such as are published nowadays. Christ has not bought this brain of mine that I may revel in the perusal of works of blasphemy and filthiness. He has not given me a mind that I may drag it through the mire. Your whole manhood belongs to God if you are a Christian. Every faculty, talent, possibility of your being—all were bought. (2) That consequently "Ye are not your own," which implies—(*a*) That I may not claim the right to do what I please, but what Christ pleases. I am to please my Master in everything. (*b*) That I may not follow my own tastes if in any way I should so bring dishonour to the name of Christ. (*c*) That I must not trust my own reasonings. If I were my own teacher, then, of course, I should learn my lessons from my own book; but I have a Rabbi, even Jesus, and I am resolved with meekness to learn of Him. (*d*) That I must not seek my own ends. I must not live in this world that I may trade and get riches, but it must be that I may use them for Him. 2. In my second text the apostle draws another inference: "Be not ye the servants of men." (1) Do not even follow good men slavishly. Do not say, "I am of Paul; I am of Apollos; I am of Calvin." Who is Calvin and who is Wesley but ministers by whom ye believed as the Lord gave unto you? (2) Do not pin your faith to anybody's sleeve. Keep close to Christ. (3) Do not give yourselves up to party spirit. (4) Do not give yourself to any scientific speculation, educational effort, or to any philanthropic enterprise so as to divert our minds from the grand old cause of Jesus and our God. (5) Do not follow the fashions of the world. (6) Let no man be your master. If ye have masters according to the flesh, serve them with all faithfulness; but as to any master over your spirit, allow no one to be so; consciences were made for God alone. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Redemption and its claims*:—There is within us a strange tendency to the acquisition of property, and therefore there is something startling in this announcement. We have been gloating upon our fancied proprietorship; it awakens us to the consciousness that we are only stewards. Nay, it lays hold upon ourselves, "Ye are not your own." And this may perhaps account for the comparatively trifling success with which religion has been favoured. It allows no compromise, it claims supreme and undivided homage. Notice—I. THE GREAT FACT ASSERTED, THAT WE ARE PURCHASED, AND THE POSITION INTO WHICH WE ARE BROUGHT BECAUSE OF THAT PURCHASE. 1. While we would insist upon this as the prime cause of our being the property of God, we would not be

supposed to invalidate others. "He has made us, and not we ourselves." He has, from the beginning, even until now, preserved the creatures He has made. But in redemption He has so impressively displayed His interest in our welfare, His yearning over His purchased possession. The apostle's language implies an acknowledgment of our fall, and refers to the provision of that covenant by which that fall was to be remedied. You will not fail to remark how Christ Himself spoke of those who believe on Him as peculiarly His own. "My sheep," &c. His great purpose was that He "might purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." If that people are spoken of in their collective capacity, they are as the Church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood. As to these declarations, the statement of St. Peter comes as a hallowed appendix. "Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things," &c. Now, surely there can be no more strictly legal title to property than this. 2. Note an exquisite fitness in the connection between the purchase, and the position into which that purchase brings us. Such is the grasping tendency of the human heart, that it must have something to lay hold of outside itself, and it will never willingly denude itself of any object of solicitude and love. Hence, if you would dispossess the mind of one object, you must overbear it with the preference of another. If you extirpate one affection you must introduce another into its room. We see this strikingly illustrated in the progress of human life. The tastes and habits of childhood depart, but the heart is not bereft; new tastes acquire their influence, new affections exert their ascendancy. So it is in reference to matters of a higher moment. You will never drive from a worldling the pursuit which engrosses him by a mere naked demonstration of its worthlessness and folly. All that you say is true, and the man knows it; but the spell is over him. And is it not natural, when you think of the feelings of the man, and of what you are wishing him to do? You tell him to cultivate religion: it is his abhorrence. You tell him to renounce the world; why, it is all he has. Here, then, comes the question. We cannot prevail upon the heart by the simple act of resignation to give up everything unpleasing to God. May we not induce it to admit a higher affection? Here it is that the fitness of the connection becomes apparent. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price." The heart, which all other means had failed to affect, is melted by the power of the Spirit, applying the gospel of God. We can deny the claim no longer; we acknowledge it at once as a natural and inalienable right, and we are bound to it with a tenderer tie, because He, to whom we are to swear our fealty, has been mysteriously one of ourselves. Our sense of possession is gratified. 3. Does not this point out the most effective method of preaching? It is not the demonstration of the moral law, but the preaching of Christ that prevails. This is the master spell; this, like the rod of the prophet, swallows up the enchantments of opposing sorcery. I announce it, then, as a natural and inalienable right. "Ye are not your own." Everything around you urges to a recognition of the claim. Nature reminds you of it, as in the fulness of her gleeful melody she wakes her hymn of praise, acknowledging her dependence on Him by whom she is sustained. Providence reminds you of it. It sounds from the tomb, where the forms you loved are sleeping. Above all, grace reminds you of it. "I beseech you, by the mercies of God." That is the culminating point even of an apostle's motive. II. THE COURSE OF CONDUCT WHICH A CONSIDERATION OF SUCH POSITION IS CALCULATED TO INDUCE YOU TO PURSUE. "Therefore glorify God," &c. We need not remind you that by no service of yours can you increase God's glory; but you may make it manifest. God is always glorified whenever He is seen. 1. Let your devotedness to God be entire. (1) Glorify God in your bodies, for they are His. Beware of regarding them as a number of organs and senses to be pampered, or as stately forms to be adorned and admired. The Spirit dwells not in an unhallowed temple. In your bodies, therefore, glorify God, by temperance, chastity, and the practice of every Christian virtue; by doing without weariness, and by suffering without murmuring; by letting your hands be active in the service, and your feet swift in the way of His commandments. (2) Glorify God in your intellects, for they are His. How often has science poured her treasures before him who knew not God, and how much of the choicest literary art is devoted to the service of the devil! In the midst of a perverse generation, bow yourself in unconditional allegiance to the Bible. Learn the true humility of knowledge. Stand out in all the nobleness of religious decision: spirits—students of the great Spirit; minds—drinking in the lessons of the immortal mind, which transforms them while they listen. (3) Glorify God in your whole nature, for it is His. Never mind the opposition with which you may

have to contend, nor think that you live to struggle alone. Your Saviour has sent His Spirit to help you, and that Spirit now worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. 2. Let your devotedness be benevolent. Spend yourselves in energetic effort for the conversion of your fellows, and for the spread of the gospel among them. And never, certainly, were we called upon more impressively to let our devotion be benevolent than now—now, when the conflict between sense and faith, between the ceremonial and the spiritual, between the idolatries and the ever-living has commenced, and a thousand voices of the universe are pealing out the challenge, "Who is on the Lord's side?" (*W. M. Punshon, LL.D.*) *Redemption and its obligations*:—I. THE PROPOSITION: "Ye are not your own." 1. Note here two things: (1) What this phrase implies—viz., That no being can be simply its own, but what is supreme, absolute, and independent; and that essence, which is its own, must be itself the end of all its actions. From these two principles it evidently follows that there is no being simply its own, but that which is the First Cause and the Last End of all beings—God. All others are—(*a*) Derivative beings, and flow from the Source of Being. (*b*) Dependent beings, and owe their continued preservation to the goodness of God. (*c*) Subordinate to the First; made for His ends and uses. (2) What it infers. If we are not our own, then—(*a*) We ought not to seek our own. But, when gain shall be preferred before godliness, what is this but a base self-seeking unworthy of a Christian—nay, of a man? (*b*) We are not at our own disposal. And this should teach us patience in all the crosses and sad occurrences of our lives. (*c*) We ought not to follow our own wills and affections. (*d*) We ought not to look upon anything as our own. (*e*) No sin should be our own. 2. Now, lest you should be put to seek for an owner, the apostle informs you who it is that lays in His claim to you, even the great and universal Lord of Heaven and Earth, whose all things are by a most absolute and indisputable right: Ye are God's. (1) As He is your Almighty Creator and Preserver. (2) Your Governor. (3) By covenant engagement and solemn promise. (4) By profession, and our own voluntary and free acknowledgment. (5) By the right of redemption, as in the text. Now the love and mercy of God, in redeeming us, is far more eminent than in creating us. And therefore His right and title to us, upon this account, is far greater. For—(*a*) Creation only gives us a being, and in this our sinful condition only capacitates us for woe. But redemption opens a way to happiness. (*b*) Redemption has been more expensive to God than creation. II. THE REASON: "For ye are bought with a price." 1. What this price is (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). 2. To whom this price was paid; to our great creditor, God. 3. What we are redeemed from. (1) From the wrath of God. (2) From the vassalage of the devil. (*a*) His tempting power is restrained. (*b*) His accusing power is rebuked. (*c*) His tormenting power shall be wholly abolished. (3) From the reigning and condemning power of sin. (4) From the curse of the law (Gal. iii. 13). III. THE INFERENCE: "Therefore glorify God," &c. 1. What is it to glorify God? 2. How we ought to glorify God. (1) By a most devout adoration of His infinite perfections. (2) By declaration of those perfections. (3) By conforming ourselves to the likeness of them. (4) By performing those duties which they oblige us unto; by being holy as He is holy, &c. (1) Now the true notion of holiness is a separation from all sin and impurity. 3. What force and influence the consideration of our redemption ought to have upon us, to oblige us thus to glorify God. (1) We are bought with a price, and therefore it is but justice and equity to glorify God. Consider—(*a*) The price He paid infinitely exceeds the value of all that thou art and hast. (*b*) All the use which thy Saviour can make of thee is only that thou shouldst glorify Him: and, by obedience shouldst serve to the setting forth of His praise (Titus ii. 14). (*c*) If thou livest not to thy Saviour, who by His death purchased thee, thou art guilty of sacrilege, the worst robbery and most branded injustice in the world. (*d*) If, instead of glorifying Him by thy obedience, thou dishonourest Him by thy rebellions and impieties, thou not only defraudest Him of His servant, but, what is infinitely worse, of the very price that He paid. (2) We are bound, not only in justice and equity, but in ingenuity and gratitude, to glorify God upon the account of our redemption. For consider—(*a*) What it is you are redeemed from. (*b*) With what price He hath bought us. For consider, first, if God had put the terms of thy redemption into thy own hands, couldst thou have offered less for the ransom of thy soul? Secondly, that Christ hath infinitely abased Himself to procure thy redemption; and therefore, at least, ingenuity and gratitude should engage thee to exalt and glorify Him. (3) In point of interest and advantage. IV.

APPLICATION. Consider—1. It is the great end of our beings to glorify God, and indeed the noblest end that we could be created for. And if thou dost otherwise—(1) Thou degradest thyself from the dignity of thine own being. (2) Thou degradest God too, and exaltest something above Him. 2. That God will certainly have His glory out of thee. If thou wilt not glorify His holiness by thy obedience, thou shalt glorify His justice by thy perdition. 3. By glorifying God we do indeed but glorify ourselves. For He hath been pleased so graciously to intwist His glory and ours together, that, whilst we endeavour to promote the one, we do but indeed promote the other (1 Sam. ii. 30). (*E. Hopkins, D.D.*) *Obedience the fruit of redemption*:—Consider—I. YOUR STATE. 1. "Ye are not your own!" You are not the masters of your own actions; the framers of your own condition; the proprietors of your own persons. No being can be his own, unless he be supreme, independent, self-existent. 2. Ye are "bought with a price." II. YOUR DUTY. This reminds us—1. Of our complex nature. 2. That the body is not to be excluded or undervalued in religion. It is the workmanship of God, and displays much of His perfection. He has redeemed it, and will glorify it. Religion is not only a real, but a visible thing. The form of godliness is nothing without the power; but when the form is produced by the power, it is comely and useful. 3. That in all the duties of religion we are indispensably bound to glorify God in our spirit, as well as in our body. 4. That we are to glorify God in our corporeal and spiritual powers respectively by exertions peculiar to each. (1) As to the body—we are to glorify God in guarding our health; in watching our senses; in regulating our appetites; in rendering our natural refreshments and our secular callings subservient to religion, "Whether, therefore, we eat or drink," &c. (2) As to the spirit. III. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN YOUR STATE AND YOUR DUTY, OR THE DERIVATION OF THE ONE FROM THE OTHER. "Therefore." The inference is natural. 1. Does not Justice demand this dedication? 2. If we do not glorify God, are we not chargeable with the vilest ingratitude? 3. Is not this glorification of God the very end of your redemption? Were you rescued from bondage to be lawless? or to become your own masters? 4. How can you determine your actual interest in this redemption, unless you have dedicated yourselves unto God? He is the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him. (*W. Jay.*) *Redemption by price*:—1. Attacks have often been made upon the doctrine of redemption, for it is well known to be the Redan of the gospel. These onslaughts have in many instances professed to be mere corrections of our phraseology. True, some may have carried ideas of the shop and the counter into their notion of redemption, but even these were nearer the truth than those who reduce the ransom paid by Christ to nothing. Paul, at any rate, was not afraid of the mercantile theory, for he writes, "Ye are bought with a price." And did not Christ say that He came "to give His life a ransom for many"? Though we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, the transaction was none the less real and effective. 2. It is a high honour to our fallen race that man is the only redeemed creature in the universe. Rebellious angels are left to their doom. Hence man cost God more than the whole universe beside. The Lord could speak worlds into existence; but to erect the new creation of redeemed men He must endure the loss of His own Son. 3. This work of redemption is many-sided. We have been redeemed—(1) In refersnce to Divine justice. We are justified, or reckoned as just, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. (2) From the power of evil (Titus ii. 14). (3) From ourselves—as the text suggests. We have here—I. COMPENSATION, AND YET GAIN. 1. Compensation. You have surrendered as believers your right and property in yourselves, for—(1) You live, whereas you were dead. (2) You have peace. Your sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. (3) You have joy. (4) You have a grand reversion—a hope of glory with Christ for ever. You have received for your little the fulness which is in Christ, who is all in all. 2. Actual gain. Our loss itself is an advantage. We are set free from self, that worse than Egyptian bondage, whose wage is death. We are set free from Satan, and is not that a gain? Once the world was our lord, but what gain it is to feel that we are no longer the servants of men! II. HIGH VALUE AND YET LOWLINESS. 1. Value is clearly here, for God thinks not lightly of man, but esteems him sufficiently to buy him with the richest price conceivable. You are not a thing to be trifled with. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." Never, therefore, give up your body to idleness or uncleanness. Use yourselves only for honourable purposes, for God puts honour upon you. 2. You are precious, but you must yet be lowly, for whatever value there is about you, you do not belong to

yourself. You are the goods and chattels of Christ: as you were once sold under sin, so are you now "bought with a price." Our honour lies in our owner. God forbid that we should glory in anything except that we belong to Christ. III. SECURITY AND YET WATCHFULNESS. 1. Security. He who owns you is able to keep you. If you were to perish, who would be the loser? Why, He to whom you belong. 2. Reason for watchfulness. Take great care of yourselves, for you are a king's treasure. If a thing is my own I may do what I like with it, but if it is entrusted to my care I must mind how I behave towards it, or else I shall be an unfaithful steward. IV. CONSECRATION AND YET PERFECT LIBERTY. 1. Consecration. You are to dedicate yourself wholly to the Lord, because you are not partly, but wholly redeemed. Do you keep back any faculty you possess from Christ? Is not this robbery? How would you like to think of that particular reservation as being unredeemed? Which portion is it which is to be unconsecrated? The body? What, have you an unredeemed body? never to rise from the dust? or do you give to Christ your heart, but reserve your mind? Have you, then, an unredeemed intellect? Withhold not your voice, but sing for Jesus, or speak for Him, if you can, &c. 2. But there is with this a perfect liberty. To be consecrated to Christ is the sure way to give to all our faculties the fullest play. If we are encased within the compass of the law we are no more restricted than a bird which is imprisoned in the air, or a fish in the ocean. Obedience to Christ is our element. V. SUBMISSION AND EXPECTANCY. 1. Submission. "Ye are not your own," and therefore God has a right to do whatever He wills with you. 2. Side by side with that comes expectancy. I could not do much for myself if I were my own, but if I am Christ's I expect that He will do great things for me. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Bought with a price:*—In one of the American slave markets an aged negro stood for sale. A gentleman asked him, "My man, to whom do you belong?" The slave glanced for a moment at his questioner, and then, straightening himself as best he could, said, "My flesh and bones and blood belong to old Massa Carl; but my spirit am a free-born child of God, bought by the precious blood of Jesus." This was an answer which thousands who sing "Britons never shall be slaves" could not give. Consider the word—I. BOUGHT. Learn that if God bought man—1. He values man. God has bought nothing else. All else belongs to Him, but only because He has made them. 2. He wants man. We seldom buy what we don't want. God wants the worst of us to make us better. II. PRICE. There are many things we cannot value in money. An epidemic was raging in a French town. The medical men resolved that a post-mortem examination should be made of the body of one of the victims. Who would volunteer and thus sacrifice his life? One came forward; he put all his affairs straight, performed the operation, wrote his report, put it into prepared spirit, and died. Who can describe the price he paid for the welfare of others? Again, a man was dying of poverty of blood, and could only be saved by the infusion of healthy blood into his veins. A medical student bared his arm and said, "Here it is; take what you want." They took a large quantity of his blood, and soon the sick man revived. By what system of accounts can you describe a price like that? Think, then, of the price of our redemption—"The precious blood of Christ." III. GLORIFY. In olden times men believed that they honoured God by punishing the flesh; but are we quite free from this error? Have we not cared more for souls than for bodies? Could we remember that the body should be used only for such purposes as God intends it would save a world of sorrow. Thousands are working their own bodies as they would never work their horses. Remember that they are God's, and to be cared for as instruments for His service. (*C. Leach.*) *Bought with a price:*—1. With what ardour does the apostle pursue sin to destroy it! He is not so prudish as to let sin alone, but cries out, in plainest language, "Flee fornication!" The shame is not in the rebuke, but in the sin which calls for it. He chases this foul wickedness with arguments (ver. 18). 2. He drags it into the light of the Spirit of God (ver. 19). 3. He slays it at the Cross. "Ye are bought with a price." Let us consider this last argument, that we may find therein death for our sins. I. A BLESSED FACT. "Ye are bought with a price." 1. "Ye are bought." This is that idea of redemption which modern heretics dare to style mercantile. Redemption is a greater source of obligation than creation or preservation. Hence it is a well-spring of holiness. 2. "With a price." This indicates the greatness of the cost. The Father gave the Son. The Son gave Himself; His happiness, glory, body, soul. Measure the price by the bloody sweat, the Cross, the heart-break. 3. Our body and spirit are both bought with the body and spirit of

Jesus. (1) This is either a fact or not. "Ye are bought," or ye are unredeemed. Terrible alternative. (2) If a fact, it is the fact of your life. A wonder of wonders. (3) It will remain to you eternally the grandest of all facts. (4) It should therefore operate powerfully upon us both now and ever. II. A PLAIN CONSEQUENCE. "Ye are not your own." 1. Negative. It is clear that if bought, ye are not your own. This involves—(1) Privilege. You are not your own—(*a*) Provider: sheep are fed by their shepherd. (*b*) Guide: ships are steered by their pilot. (*c*) Father: children loved by parents. (2) Responsibility. We are not our own—(*a*) To injure. (*b*) To waste, in idleness, amusement, or speculation. (*c*) To exercise caprice, and follow our own prejudices, depraved affections, wayward wills, or irregular appetites. (2) To lend our service to another master. (*c*) To serve self. Self is a dethroned tyrant. Jesus is a blessed husband, and we are His. 2. Positive. Your body and your spirit . . . are God's. (1) We are altogether God's. Body and spirit include the whole man. (2) We are always God's. The price once paid, we are for ever His. (3) We rejoice that we know we are God's, for thus—(*a*) We have a beloved owner (*b*) We pursue an honoured service. (*c*) We fill a blessed position. We are in Christ's keeping. III. A PRACTICAL CONCLUSION. Glorify God. 1. In your body. (1) By cleanliness, chastity, temperance, industry, cheerfulness, self-denial, patience, &c. (2) In a suffering body by patience unto death. (3) In a working body by holy diligence. (4) In a worshipping body by bowing in prayer. (5) In a well-governed body by self-denial. (6) In an obedient body by doing the Lord's will with delight. 2. In your spirit. By holiness, faith, zeal, love, heavenliness, cheerfulness, fervour, humility, expectancy, &c. Conclusion: 1. Remember, O redeemed one, that—(1) You will be closely watched by Christ's enemies. (2) You will be expected to be more gracious than others; and rightly so, since you claim to be Christ's own. (3) If you are not holy, the sacred name of your Redeemer, your Proprietor, and your Indweller will be compromised. (4) But if you lead a redeemed life, your God will be honoured. 2. Let the world see what redemption can do. 3. Let the world see what sort of men "God's own" are. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *God to be glorified by those bought with a price*:—The religion of the Bible relates to the two great branches of human duty, the things to be believed, and the things to be done. The doctrines and precepts of the gospel, though they may be distinguished, must not be separated. The objects of our faith furnish motives for duty; and duty cannot be rightly performed unless under the influence of the belief of these doctrines. Consider here—I. THE DUTY STATED. To glorify God. 1. The duty is "to glorify God with our bodies and spirits." Let us begin with the latter. How may we glorify God with our spirits, that is, with our rational souls? This we do—(1) By using our reason in contemplating the character of God as made known in His works and Word. (2) By believing and relying on all He has said. (3) By the constant and lively exercise of pure love. (4) By forming such purposes as are in accordance with the Divine will. (5) By patient submission to afflictive providences. (6) By constantly and deliberately promoting His glory. 2. Our bodies—(1) When we preserve them from impurity and intemperance. This was the very idea which the apostle had in his mind (ver. 19). (2) When we employ them in His service. (*a*) All the institutions demand the employment of our bodies. We must bow down before Him, and by external actions manifest our reverence, and praise Him with our lips. (*b*) God is glorified by every species of good works which require the instrumentality of the body. Our hands may be made to glorify God when they are opened in acts of liberality and beneficence. II. THE MOTIVE OFFERED. 1. The redemption of captives was an idea very familiar to the Greeks. As by the customs of war every prisoner was made a slave, it often happened that persons of wealthy families would be thus separated from their relatives; and it frequently happened that these relatives would send the ransom of their friend by a suitable person, who would redeem him and bring him home. What would be the feelings of a number of captives when it should be announced that a Redeemer had arrived? But when the fortunate captive heard his own name called, who can describe his exultation? 2. The deliverance of sinners by Christ bears a striking analogy to this. Men are taken captive by the devil. They cannot liberate themselves, nor can this redemption be effected by any one but the Son of God. But, though the analogy is striking, yet there are circumstances which distinguish it from that which obtains among men. (1) When one went to redeem his friend, though he might have far to go, still he had not to go out of the world; it was necessary for Christ to descend from heaven to earth—from the throne to a manger. (2) When an earthly redeemer set off in search of an enslaved son, or brother, he had to take with him a ransom of silver

and gold. But when the Son of God came into the world to redeem lost sinners He must lay down a ransom of blood. (3) By the nature of the sinner's bondage. He was first under a sentence of condemnation. Next, he was held in cords of iniquity, which no created arm could loose. And lastly, he was lying under the cruel tyranny of Satan, the worst of masters. From all these our Redeemer came "to save His people." He removed the curse of the law by bearing it in His own body on the tree. He saves His people also from their sins by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and He dispossesses Satan by His superior power. 3. Now those who have been thus redeemed owe a debt of gratitude which, without exaggeration, may be said to be infinite. No wonder Paul judged it unnecessary to urge other motives. Conclusion: 1. Let us reflect penitently on our culpable neglect of this great duty of glorifying God. 2. Let us endeavour to obtain a lively feeling of our obligations to the Redeemer. 3. Let us esteem it a great privilege to be the redeemed servants of the Lord. 4. Let us remember that the time which remains to us is short. (*A. Alexander, D.D.*) *Our duty to God urged from His right in us*:—I. AN IMPORTANT MATTER OF FACT TO BE BELIEVED AND LAID TO HEART. 1. "Ye are not your own," &c. As to the reason of this, we may observe—(1) We did not create ourselves. (2) We do not preserve or uphold ourselves in life or being (Acts xvii. 28; James i. 17). On these accounts, then, we are not our own, but the property of God. 2. "Ye are bought with a price." But if we were originally God's property, what need was there to buy us? (1) We had become ruined debtors, enslaved captives, and guilty criminals. We had sold ourselves into slavery; we had committed sins, and thereby exposed ourselves to condemnation and wrath. (2) The purchasers were, the Father, who gave His Son (John iii. 16; Rom. viii. 32), the Son, who gave Himself. (2) In reference to the price paid, we may observe, He gave His riches (1 Cor. viii. 9), His honour, His liberty, His life (Phil. ii. 6–8). In a word, He "purchased the Church with His own blood" (Acts xx. 28). All mankind are here concerned, all being redeemed (1 Tim. ii. 6; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; Heb. ii. 9), and hence are not their own, much less the world's; least of all, the devil's. The people of God are here especially meant, who, in a peculiar sense, are not their own, but the temples of God (vers. 13–20; chap. iii. 17–23). II. AN EXHORTATION TO DUTY GROUNDED THEREON. The end God had in view in purchasing us was that we might glorify Him (1 Pet. ii. 9). We must glorify God—1. "In our body," by temperance, purity, self-denial (ver. 13), and bringing it into His house, and consecrating it to Him as His temple to be kept holy. 2. "In our spirit." (1) By humility: considering that we have nothing which we have not received, and which has not been forfeited by sin. (2) By gratitude; He has given us all back again with great advantage. (3) By love. (4) By resignation; if we be His, may He not do what He will with His own? (5) By obedience; implying subjection to His will, and devotedness to His glory. Conclusion: Note—1. The real nature and great evil of sin. It is not only disobedience and ingratitude, but robbery of the worst kind. 2. The amazing worth of the soul of man, which, after it was enslaved, was ransomed at so great a price. 3. The great and inexcusable guilt of those who, after all this, still will perish. 4. The great encouragement we have to give ourselves to God, and employ ourselves for Him. If He bought us, He must be willing to accept, preserve, and bless us. (*J. Benson.*) *Full surrender to God*:—A friend of mine was having an earnest conversation upon the necessity of full consecration with a lady who professed to know Christ as her Saviour, but shrunk from yielding herself fully to Him. At last she said, with more outspoken honesty I am afraid than many who mean exactly the same thing display, "I don't want to give myself right over to Christ; for if I were to do so, who knows what He might do with me; for aught I know, He might send me out to China." Years had passed away when my friend received a most deeply interesting letter from this very lady, telling of how her long conflict with God had come to an end, and what happiness and peace she now felt in the complete surrender of herself to her Lord; and referring to her former conversation she said, "And now I am my own no longer, I have made myself over to God without reserve, and He *is* sending me to China." Do you think that this lady is less happy obeying the Divine call, and working the Divine will out yonder in China, than she was when she shrunk from that will, and preferred to live a life of worldly ease and self-indulgence at home? (*W. Hay Aitken.*) *All our faculties should glorify God*:—Christians are like fire-engines at night. They carry a powerful lamp in front, which casts a light far ahead, but in no other direction, leaving the everlasting snake-train which they drag behind them enveloped in darkness. This light corresponds to the Christian's

hope, which casts its rays heavenward, but leaves the long train of bodily appetites and necessities which go with him through life unilluminated. Men regard their worldly business and their family duties as distinct from their religion. They carry the light of hope on their brow, and that is what they call their religion; whereas, I understand religion to be this: the right carriage of body and soul, all together. I understand that no man is living a Christian life who is not a Christian in the world, in the family, in the Church, in his mind, in his soul, in the emotions and appetites of his nature, in his hand, in his foot, in his head—who is not a Christian everywhere, and in everything in him. To take every faculty or power God has given you, and bring it under Divine influences, and make it act right—that is being a Christian; and all partialisms, by just so much as they are partialisms, are, therefore, misunderstandings or misappropriations of Christian truth. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **Therefore glorify God in your body.**—*Glorify God*:—The phrase does not mean merely not to dishonour Him: it means to display positively in the use of our body the glory and especially the holiness of the heavenly Master who has taken possession of our person. Man has lost, in whole or in part, since his fall, the feeling which was, so to speak, the guardian of his body, that of natural modesty. Faith restores to it a more elevated guardian—self-respect as being brought by Christ the organ of the Spirit and temple of God. This is modesty henceforth raised to the height of holiness. (*Prof. Godet.*) *How God is glorified in the body*:—Real Christians are prepared to glorify God, for they are new creatures and temples of the Holy Ghost. And it is under the influence of that Holy Spirit working in them both to will and to do that they are to glorify God their Saviour. I. By subjecting the body to His law. It is essential both to genuine piety and the Divine glory, that what we do should be not only what is required by the commandments of God, but also that it be done from a regard to His authority. A consideration which robs thousands of all their pretensions to excellence! Men are easily satisfied with themselves. They look no further than their conduct. If that is good, they concern not themselves about the Divine will and glory. And as the design of glorifying God, and a regard to His will and authority in prosecuting or fulfilling that design, are necessary if we would glorify Him indeed, so further in our regard to His will we must beware lest we mistake that will. The things by which God is glorified are the things which He requires. When, however, we combine the things which have been mentioned, when we aim at His glory, when we regard His will, and when we indeed do it, and all this from the conviction that we are not our own but His, then, in the most ordinary acts, we glorify Him indeed, we do that by which He esteems Himself glorified, we please Him. Let these things be combined then, and under their joint influence present your bodies a living sacrifice to God, and this will be a holy, acceptable, and reasonable service. And remember that the more promptitude and pleasure and zeal you show in yielding your bodies unto God the more you shall honour Him. Let not your backwardness in presenting your bodies unto God betray any want of love and gratitude and honour. The more abundantly these bodies labour the greater readiness you manifest to spend and be spent, to magnify Christ in your bodies, whether by life or by death, the greater pleasure you take in your infirmities for Christ's sake, the more do you show your love to the Redeemer, and the more do you glorify Him in your bodies. II. By yielding it to His correction. Christians should endeavour to glorify God as well by suffering affliction as by obedience. And they should aim at glorifying Him, not only by patience, by fortitude, by resignation, by acquiescence, and by thankfulness; but as all affliction is sent for the purposes of improvement, by humbling themselves before Him, by inquiring wherefore the Lord contendeth with them, by putting away their iniquities, and by giving their hearts and devoting their lives unreservedly to His will. But the sufferings by which Christ is most glorified in the body are those which we have to endure for His name's sake. When we are persecuted for righteousness' sake, and glory in tribulation, and esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the world, when all afflictions, and persecutions for Christ's sake, instead of depressing our spirits give wings to our souls by which we mount up higher and higher in heavenliness of mind and of character, then, truly, we glorify God in our bodies, and may adopt the words of the apostle, "As unknown and yet well known, as dying, and behold we live," &c. The last act by which Christ is glorified in the body is the act of dying. And oh! who can behold a believer walking through the valley of the shadow of death without seeing that God is

glorified? (*M. Jackson.*) *Glorify God in your body*:—Easter is a season which emphatically belongs to the body. I. WE DO WELL, THEREFORE, TO GIVE SOME THOUGHTS TO THE BODY—for, do we not treat religion as consisting almost entirely of thoughts and feelings? and so we exalt the soul to the disparagement of the body. And yet I know nothing which you can say of the soul which you cannot also predicate of the body. Was the soul formed in the image of God? So was the body. No distinction is made in the narrative. Is the soul redeemed? So is the body. Did Jesus address Himself to the soul? Did He not equally to the body? How careful He was after His resurrection to identify His body. He ascended and will come again in His body. And at the last day the body is the leading feature of Paul's picture. Such honour does God give everywhere to the body. II. HOW CAN WE "GLORIFY GOD IN OUR BODIES"? 1. Generally. We should treat our body as something given us to enjoy and use for God. A part of our likeness to Christ; a part of our present being given us here to train for the services which it is to render in heaven. Such being, then, the body, we should pray about our bodies as much as about our souls. We should consecrate it in the morning to God, and deal with it all day long as a very sacred thing. You remember what St. Paul said about his body —"I keep under my body," &c. 2. In detail. (1) In the Old Testament very great stress indeed was laid on the keeping of the body very clean; and even in the New Testament we have it united almost as one with faith and conscience and truth (Heb. x. 22). And more than many people think a clean body is a help to purity of heart. We are bound to take care of the health of the body, for it is God's body; and we all know how greatly even a little disease of the body can disturb even our peace and joy, and faith, as illness stops work, and gives sorrow and expense to others. Therefore we should try to "glorify God" by the health of our body. (2) There is not a part of our frame which may not be the embodiment of spiritual things or the means for religious service. When I comb my hair the very hairs remind me that they are all numbered. And the eyes, are they not inlets wherewith I may first take into my very heart all the beautiful works of God in nature, and providence, and grace? And then by bright and loving looks spread peace and happiness. How much of Satan, how much of Christ there may be in the look of the eye. And the mouth! What action the mouth has for sin and self-indulgence, or self-denial and careful moderation for Christ's sake. And more than you are aware the mouth is the index of temper or of sweetness. Take care of your mouth. "Glorify God" with it. And the tongue! What a curse or a blessing it may be! And your ear! Learn when to shut it and when to open it. And your nerves. They are very good servants, but very bad masters. Take care of them. Pray constantly for more calmness. And all the senses—consecrate them. They are the Lord's. And all your members! Those hands, let them be busy, useful hands. And those knees. Let them fulfil the great design for which God gave you knees. And "the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." And your whole body! Keep every part of it for God. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Glorifying God*:—The motive to the duty set before us in this passage is the most solemn in the whole sum of human thought. "Ye are bought with a price," says the apostle; "therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." But how are we to fulfil this duty? 1. To glorify God is to think of God. It is evident that all human actions commence in the mind of men. The mind, under some impulse or motive, moves and then the man moves. For every act is, at first, a thought. From thence come the various actions of men pertaining to their fellows, and the other actions also which refer to God. We often say that some men do not think, but it is evident that if they did not think they would not act. But everybody does think. Men think about life and society, about dress and manners, about literature and science, about history and politics. But the great fault of man is that the range of his thought is temporal and carnal. He has but the fewest flights toward the heavens. And this is a great sin. Nothing can be more evident than the guilt of shutting out from the mind the grandest Being and the noblest idea which can reach the intellect—thought of the Infinite and Eternal One. Its sinfulness shows itself by a lower but similar transgression. What would you think of a child who lived day by day under the blessedness and the loving care of a devoted parent, and yet from design and purpose passed by that parent, day by day, year by year, and determinedly shut him out from all thought and consideration? First observe that a large portion of our fellow-creatures drop God from their thought, passively, through neglect, without intention, with no set and formal purpose to dishonour Him, but carelessly and indifferently. But another

class of men set God aside purposely and deliberately. They will not have the idea of God present in their minds. They will not let the things of God circle their brains, stimulate their lives, or influence their conduct. But to think carelessly of God is neglect; to think reluctantly of Him is vicious; to think angrily and repulsively of Him is monstrous, and amounts to abomination and ruin. To glorify God, then, implies as the very first thing that we think of Him. We are to begin by opening the mind, and craving the entrance therein of the thoughts of the Eternal. To think of God aright is to take Him, formally and solemnly, and put Him before the mind, and then to contemplate Him before and behind, in the depths and in the heights, in His attributes, in His decrees, in His covenants, in the great salvation of His Son, with reverence, with awe, with humility. This it is to think of God. This is the root idea of glorifying God. But this is not enough—it is only the beginning. 2. To glorify God is to take the convictions which come from right thinking and to turn them into aspirations. This is the next step toward honouring the Maker. We must not suffer thought to become bedridden in the soul. Few things are more injurious to the mind than that passive contemplation which fails to run out into active desires or stimulated hope. It will do no good for us to think about God if such thought is not used as a means to an end, but it will do us harm. It will make us insensible. It will make us irreverent. The insensibility will be the direct result of handling an awful and majestic idea without a spiritual purpose. The irreverence will come from taking liberties with the Divine name, perchance, for mere speculation. Thought concerning God, then, is legitimate when it tends to the elevation of the soul to a higher plane of being. To think, merely to think, would be somewhat as for a river to flow from its source, and then to flow back again to its original spring. It may be assumed as a principle of our being that all our acts, internal or external, are only then healthy and genuine when they reach forward to something beyond and nobler than themselves. We see this in nature. The illumination of the sun is not self-exhausted. It comes down to earth with vivifying fructification, diffusing life, and health, and joyous animation in all things and in all creatures. And that is its beneficence and its glory. The analogy is most exact with regard to the soul. Thinking about God is not the end of God-thinking. Thinking of God is the most glorious of all means to a nobler end, that is, the glory of God. When it is mere thinking—albeit God is the object of thought—it is, nevertheless, mere speculation on God. And mere speculation, as such, concerning God has no more value than speculation concerning a mountain or a mine. Never, perhaps, in the history of God's Church was there a man who thought so much, so deeply, so continually of God as David did. It was the occupation of his life. What was the result of this habit? What fruit sprung from this constant meditation concerning God? One single paragraph from the writings of David will show you. "Like as the hart desireth the water brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God." And here I return directly to the point from which I have slightly departed. Take the convictions which come from right thinking, and turn them, as David did, into heavenly aspirations. Meditate constantly on the character of God. Bring His loving and majestic attributes vividly before you. You see, for instance, that God is good. Take, then, the fact, that is the goodness of God, out of the domain of thought, and make it an aspiration of your soul. Strive after goodness—God's goodness, as a personal possession, and run along the lines of excellence and moral beauty for the fashioning of your inner and your outer life. Take the purity of God as an object of admiration. Bring it down from the sphere of speculation, and then send it up to the throne of God—a living flame of desire for your own personal purity in body, mind, and spirit. Think of the righteousness of God! Hear it in the stern accents of Mount Sinai, in the thunders of the Law! Hear it in the expiatory plaints of sacrificed animals; see it in their flowing blood! Take the love of God. You can if you choose look at it as a distant object of thought and contemplation. But I exhort you to covet the spirit of love as your own personal possession. Indeed there is not a phase of the Divine existence, not an attribute of God, not a decree, not a commandment, however abstract it may be, but that, with the aid of the Spirit, may be fused with heat and fire from above, and become changed in our pure souls into burning desires and heavenly aspirations. 3. To glorify God is to realise the aspirations of the soul into the activities of life. This is practical religion; it answers the requirements of our blessed Lord that we do His commandments. And there can be no true religion without this habit of outward obedience. Mere conviction of the brain, or mere spiritual aspiration, separate from conduct,

are each, or both together, insufficient. We must do God's holy will. Just this test is laid down by our blessed Saviour—"If ye love Me keep My commandments." To talk of how we feel, or what we think concerning Christ, is an idle tale. No, what our Lord desires is something which has passed out and beyond mere human conceit into actual living reality. Did you ever think of that word reality? of its full meaning, of its mighty import, of its wide scope and bearing? Reality! that is religion made personal in the Christian life, act, word, conduct, and bearing of living disciples. I beg to commend the apostle's injunction to your earnest consideration. The master end of existence, whether in angel or in man, is the glory of God. Anything below this end is a ruinous and insulting prostitution of powers. (*A. Crummell.*) *Glorifying God with the body* (children's sermon):—"Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever." Look at my watch. It may be used for many ends—as a mere ornament, &c.; but its "chief end" is to tell what o'clock it is. What have you got your body for? God says, "Use it for Me." If you were to get a pound from your father or master, you would naturally ask, "What am I to do with it?" and you would know what was meant if he said, "Use it for me in such a way as to please me." I. WHY AM I TO GLORIFY GOD IN MY BODY? 1. Because He made it, and made it for Himself. When you have made a thing for yourself, you feel that you have the best right to it. If it were taken away from you, or turned against you, would you not think it very hard? During the French Revolution the guillotine was invented, and the first man who suffered by it was the man who invented it. Perhaps some one will say, "It was just what he deserved." But suppose it had been some contrivance for saving life. If that were turned against the man who designed it, or discovered it, would not every right-minded person cry "shame"? And who made that body of yours? The cleverest man in the world could not make it. None could make it but God. God made that hand of yours for His own use. Is it not a sin and a shame to turn it against Him? Take any book you are reading, and you will see on it the names of five people who were concerned in the making of it. On the title-page is the name of the man who wrote it; at the foot of the page, the name of the man who published it; on the other side of the page, or at the end of the book, the name of the man who printed it; on a little label inside the board at the end, the name of the man who bound it; and on another, inside the board at the beginning, the man of the man who sold it. All these get credit for what they have done. Every sheet of paper I write on has the "water-mark," as it is called, with the name of the man who made it. The very buttons on my clothes bear the name of their maker. And we all feel it quite right that it should be so. But it does not always need the name. Some people can take up a piece of cloth, and say, "this is so and so's make," or a picture, and say, "that is such and such a painter's piece," or a book, and say, "this is written by such a man, I know by its style." And do we need any kind of mark or stamp on our body to tell us who made it? No. See that wonderful tubular bridge which stretches from Wales to Anglesea, and you will hear of its maker—Stephenson, the great engineer: it glorifies him. See St. Paul's Cathedral, and people will tell you of its great architect, Sir Christopher Wren: it glorifies him. Go to the National Gallery, and the artist's work, in each case, may be said to "glorify" him. And shall I not seek to glorify God with my body? (Exod. iv. 11; Psa. xciv. 9; Prov. xx. 12). 2. Because He sustains it. Suppose your father were to take some poor sick beggar-boy off the street into his house—to nurse him, and to feed him, and to do everything to make him well and strong. What would you think if that boy were to forget your father? Take a stranger dog into your house, and feed it, and be kind to it, and before a fortnight is over, it will follow you everywhere. What would you think if your dog left you every morning whenever he got his breakfast, and ran after every strange boy on the street, and would not follow you, and only come in to his meals? Now God does all for your body that you do for your dog. And again I ask, may it not well be used for Him in such a way as He wishes? 3. Because He has redeemed it. Our body, like everything else about us, was forfeited; just like a thing that has been put in pawn. Is is no longer ours. It has meanwhile become the property of another. And it must be redeemed. And Jesus bought back our body, paid the price of His own blood for it, and so made it His own. Let me again ask how you judge of things that you have bought, your knife, &c., which you have saved your pocket-money to buy. You say of any of these, as you said of the money that bought it, "it is my very own. I may lend these things or give the use of them to others, but none has a right to

them like me." In the days of slavery, when one had bought a slave, he regarded that man's body, and all that the body could do, as his. You remember the story of the ransomed slave whom a British merchant purchased at a great price and then set free—how the liberated slave clung to his purchaser, and followed him wherever he went, and served him as no other did or could, telling, whenever he was asked the reason, "He redeemed me! He redeemed me!" Gratitude and love bound him, and made him, what I might call, in opposition to a bondman—a free slave. Now that is what Jesus has done; He has bought us, not with His money, but with His life. He has bought us and set us free. And we are His free slaves. II. How AM I TO GLORIFY GOD IN MY BODY? I claim—1. Your hands for God. You have no right to use them in the service of Satan, the world, or sin. Idle hands do not glorify God, nor mischievous hands, nor dirty hands, nor dishonest hands, nor unkind hands, nor careless hands. 2. Your feet. They should go only on His errands. When I see the little feet kicking or stamping in passion, or venturing into forbidden and dangerous paths, or loitering when they should make haste, I cannot help thinking: "These feet are not for God." "How beautiful are the feet, when they are for God!" 3. Your lips. What shall I say of profane words, untruthful words, coarse and vulgar words, angry and irritating words, unholy and impure words, light and jesting words, slandering and gossiping words? When we are going to speak of any one, it has been said there are three questions which it is well to ask—"Is it true? Is it useful? Is it kind?" 4. And so with the whole body. The ears should be for God, listening to nothing of which He would disapprove; and the eyes, turning away from all that He would not look upon. All should be for God. "Whether ye eat or drink," &c. And how is all this to be? The root of all lies in having the heart for God. (*J. H. Wilson.*) *Our bodies should glorify God*:—The employment of the parable may be traced, says Dr. Wright, to Hillel, the great rabbi, who died a few years before the Christian era. In the Midrash on Lev. xxv. 39, it is related that his scholars asked Hillel one day where he was going. "To perform a commandment," answered the rabbi. "What special commandment?" asked the disciples. "To bathe myself in the bath-house," said Hillel. "Is that one of the commandments?" inquired they. "Certainly," rejoined Hillel; "if the statues of kings placed in the theatres and circuses have to be kept clean and washed, how much more ought I not to keep my body clean, since I have been created in the image of God?" **And in your spirit.**—*How God is glorified in the spirit*:—I. WHEN THE UNDERSTANDING COMPREHENDS HIS CHARACTER. Total ignorance of His character, by implying contempt; partial ignorance of it, by implying neglect; and correct, but unoperative views of it, by implying enmity; all dishonour God. It is only when the views are both sound and practical, when the understanding is enlightened by the eternal Spirit, that we are able so to comprehend the things that belong to our peace, as to glorify God in our spirits. II. WHEN THE CONSCIENCE ACKNOWLEDGES HIS AUTHORITY. Whatever we may know of God, we dishonour Him, unless conscience be influenced by what we know; for all knowledge which God imparts has a direct reference to conscience, and addresses it in the most energetic terms. But when conscience moves and actuates you in all things, and is itself moved and actuated by God; re-echoes the voice of God addressing the soul on all that is great and tender, interesting and alarming, abasing and exalting, and hears and feels every word as the word of supreme authority, with reverence and submission—then the spirit glorifies God! III. WHEN THE AFFECTIONS EMBRACE HIS WORD. What spiritual eye can see men poor in spirit, and heirs of the kingdom, meek and inheriting the earth, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and filled with the Spirit; merciful, and monuments of mercy; pure in heart, and hoping to see God; persecuted for righteousness' sake, and anticipating glory and honour; reviled and persecuted, and all manner of evil spoken against them falsely for Christ's sake; and exceeding glad of this—who can behold them as the salt of the earth, as the light of the world, and remember it is the Word of God which is the instrument of all this excellence, without knowing and feeling that the giver of every good and of every perfect gift is glorified in their spirits? IV. WHEN THE WILL SUBMITS TO HIS LAW. This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. Who can imagine that God is to be glorified in the spirit while the will opposes Him? But let us not forget that every human will is opposed to God till renewed by grace, and that after it has been renewed it is still rebellious. The most advanced Christian has to complain, "When I would do good, evil is present with me." God only can hold us up. And when He is pleased in tender mercy to work in us both to will and to do; to enable us to

choose His commandments as the rule of our life, and to give us grace to obey them; we are then the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works: and all the honouring of God, which is implied in the relinquishment of our own will, and in the adoption of His, we cordially offer to Him; and others, seeing our good works, glorify our Father who is in heaven. (*M. Jackson.*)

CHAPTER VII.

VERS. 1–17. **Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.**—*Marriage*—I. IS NOT NECESSARY FOR ALL (ver. 1). 1. Instituted by God, sanctified by Christ, it is pure and holy. 2. Yet circumstances, such as times of calamity, personal duty, &c., may render it undesirable II. Is ADVISABLE FOR MANY (vers. 2–5). Because—1. Of the force of natural passion. 2. It is a shelter from temptation. III. IT IS NEVERTHELESS A MATTER OF CHOICE (vers. 6–9). 1. Paul only counsels, does not command. 2. The choice must be determined by the gift of God, which may render celibacy preferable, but every one must carefully estimate his case. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Marriage*:—There are two preliminary considerations which throw some light on this passage. 1. Paul had to speak about marriage as he found it. Hence he makes no allusion to that which with us is the main argument and motive, viz., love. In the marriages of Jews and Greeks, love had, as a rule, little to do. The marriage was arranged by the parents. 2. He was here only giving answers to some special questions, and not discussing the whole subject (ver. 1). Certain scruples about marriage had arisen. Among the Jews marriage was a duty, "so much so that he who at the age of twenty had not married was considered to have sinned." Among the Gentiles the tendency to celibacy was so strong that it was considered necessary to counteract it by legal enactment. The questions referred to Paul resolve themselves into two. So we have—I. PAUL'S COUNSEL TO THE UNMARRIED. This is summed up in ver. 8, "It is good for them if they abide even as I"; *i.e.*, unmarried. But if any man's temperament be such that he cannot settle to his work without marrying; and if he is so full of natural cravings which make him feel sure he would be less distracted in married life—then, says Paul, let such an one by all means marry. But he adds, I do not say you ought to marry; I say you *may*, and in certain circumstances *ought*. Those among you who say a man sins if he do not marry, talk nonsense. Those among you who feel a quiet superiority because you are married are much mistaken. Personally, I would that all men were even as I myself, only I know that to many men it is not so easy as it is to me to live unmarried; and therefore I do not advise them to a single life. 1. This proceeds, not from any ascetic tendency, but from the practical bias of Paul's mind. He merely thought that unmarried men were likely to be most available for the work of Christ (vers. 32, 33). No doubt a good wife may stimulate a man to liberality, and may greatly increase his tenderness towards deserving objects; but he who has seven mouths to fill cannot have so much to give away as if he had but one. With the unmarried man there need be no other consideration than this: How can I best serve Christ? With the married man there must always be other considerations. It is therefore to the unmarried that the State looks for the manning of the army and navy, that society looks for the nursing of the sick and for the filling of posts of danger, that the Church depends for a large part of her work, from teaching in Sunday schools to occupying precarious outposts in the mission field. 2. But Paul says also, Beware how you individually think yourself a hero, and able to forego marriage. Beware lest, by choosing a part which you are not fit for, you give Satan an advantage over you (ver. 35, *cf.* ver. 7). What is good for one man is not good for another; every man must ascertain for himself what is best for him. And this is precisely what is lacking in popular feeling about marriage. People start, and are encouraged to start in life, on the understanding that their happiness cannot be complete till they are married. Now, on the contrary, they should be taught to consider their own make and bent, and not to take this for granted. Marriage is but one path to happiness, and it is possible celibacy may be the straightest path for some. Above all life is very wide and multifarious, and to effect His ends God needs persons of all kinds and conditions. 3. This not only illustrates the judicial balance

of the apostle's mind, but gives us the key to the whole chapter. The capacity for celibacy is a gift of God which may be of eminent service, but no moral value can be attached to it. There are many gifts of immense value which may belong to bad as well as to good men. In the Roman Church celibacy is regarded as a virtue in itself, so that men with no natural gift for it have been encouraged to aim at it, with what results we need not say. But while there is no virtue in remaining unmarried, there is virtue in remaining unmarried for the sake of serving Christ better. Some persons are kept single by mere selfishness; but all honour to that eldest son of an orphaned family who sees that it is not for him to please himself, but to work for those who have none to look to but him! There are here and there persons who from the highest motives decline marriage: persons conscious of some hereditary weakness, &c. We may be thankful that there are men and women of sufficiently heroic mould to exemplify the wisdom of the apostle's counsel. Such devotion is not for every one. There are persons of a domestic temperament who need the comforts of home-life, and nothing can be more ill-advised than to encourage such persons to turn their life into a channel in which it was never intended to run. But it is equally to be lamented that, where there are women quite capable of a life of self-devotion to some noble work, they should be discouraged from such a life by the false, foolish, and petty notions of society. No calling is nobler than marriage; but it is not the only calling. II. ST. PAUL'S COUNSEL TO THE MARRIED. 1. Some of the Corinthians seem to have thought that, because they were new creatures in Christ, their old relations should be abandoned. Paul had shrewdness enough to see that if a Christian might separate from an unbelieving wife on the sole ground that he was a Christian, this easy mode of divorce might lead to a large influx of pretended Christians into the Church. He therefore lays down the law that the power of separation is to rest with the unbelieving, and not with the believing, partner (vers. 12–15). It frequently happened in the early ages that when a man was converted in middle life, and judged he could serve God better without the encumbrance of a family, he forsook his wife and children and betook himself to a monastery. This directly contravened the law here laid down (ver. 20), which is of wide application (vers. 21, &c.). 2. But the principle to which Paul chiefly trusts he enounces in vers. 29–31. Whatever is temporary in our relation to the present world it is foolish so to set our heart on, for death may end all our joy and usefulness. The man who is sent abroad for five years would consider it folly to accumulate a large collection of the luxuries of life; how many times five years do we expect to live, that we should be much concerned to amass goods which we cannot remove to another world? This world is a means, and not an end; and those use it best who use it in relation to what is to be. It is the thought of our great future which alone gives us sufficient courage and wisdom to deal with present things in earnest. The very intensity of our interests and affections reminds us that we cannot root ourselves in this present life, but need a larger room. (*M. Dods, D.D.*) *Paul's conception of marriage:*—That it—I. IS NOT A DUTY BINDING UPON MANKIND—not a moral obligation like "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," &c. (vers. 1, 7, 8, 40). Some may feel that celibacy is best for them, then let them remain single; others that marriage is most desirable, then let them marry. Now does it seem strange that a condition upon which the continuation of the race depends should be thus left open? For were celibacy to rule, in about sixty years mankind would be extinct. But it may be replied that marriage is a law of nature and does not require a command any more than eating or drinking. II. IS PRIMARILY FOR SPIRITUAL ENDS (ver. 14). Those who enter on this relation from fleshly impulses and with fleshly ends misunderstand the ordinance. True marriage means such a mutual spiritual affection as welds two souls into one moral personality. III. INVOLVES MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS THE MOST SACRED. Mutual—1. Benevolence (ver. 3), each wishing the well-being of the other. 2. Identification (ver. 4). The two are one. The equal rights of husband and wife are everywhere recognised in the Bible. 3. Honesty (ver. 5). Deception is inimical to the true union of souls. Nothing cuts united hearts asunder so easily and effectually as artfulness. 4. Forbearance (vers. 12, 14). Should difference of religious opinion crop up, do not separate; for the believing may correct the unbelieving. 5. Concession of personal freedom (ver. 15). Conclusion: Paul's conception is wise and just. We have made marriage simply a civil contract; but its essence is the strongest sympathies and aims that one can have for another; the bond of marriage is the solemn mutual pledge. Those who are thus married are united by a cord finer than the finest web; too weak to fetter, yet too strong to

break. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Paul's view of celibacy*:—It is necessary to remember—I. THAT WE HAVE HERE ONLY HALF OF THE APOSTOLIC MIND. Had this passage stood alone, we might then have been justified in taking it as an absolute preference of the single state. But inasmuch as Col. iii. 18, 19; Eph. v. 22–33; Heb. xiii. 4; 1 Pet. 1–7; 1 Thess. iv. 4 speak of marriage with high commendation, it is obvious that this passage expresses only one side of the truth. And it is also clear that it is this passage which must be qualified by the others and *vice versâ*, inasmuch as he is here addressing himself to the answer of a particular question put under particular circumstances; in the others he is speaking without reserve on the general duties of a Christian life. This conclusion is confirmed by a consideration of this passage in detail. The preference for celibacy, although stated absolutely at first (vers. 1, 7, 8), is afterwards expressly founded on the impending calamities (vers. 26–31), and, apparently in connection with this, on the greater freedom thereby afforded from worldly cares (vers. 32–35). In one instance, that of recommending widows not to marry (vers. 8, 40). We have a precept (1 Tim. iv. 14) reversing this; and whilst there is no trace here of the superior sanctity of celibacy, the prohibition of marriage on that ground is in 1 Tim. iv. 1–3 classed among the signs of a false and dangerous system. II. THAT THE APOSTLE'S PREFERENCE MUST BE TAKEN WITH THREE STRONG QUALIFICATIONS. 1. As being the expression of his natural temperament (ver. 7). But he never confounds his individual peculiarity with Christianity itself. He warns us that it is he who speaks and not Christ, and claims for his recommendation no higher authority than the requirements of the time. 2. As given in expectation of calamities. 3. As given without regard to the moral purposes of marriage. To a certain extent the highest form of Roman marriage was a union for high moral purposes; and the same may be said of the Jewish marriages in the Old Testament and Apocrypha. But even in these the sterner rather than the gentler affections were called forth; and in the Greek and Eastern provinces generally marriage was little more than what the apostle describes it, good only as preventing great evils. And just as his denunciations of Greek wisdom must not be extended without qualification to that higher philosophy of Socrates and Plato; so his denunciations of marriage must not be extended without qualification to that intimate union of pure domestic affections which rose out of the combination of the Teutonic and Christian elements. III. THAT TAKING THIS PREFERENCE AS IT STANDS TWO PRACTICAL INFERENCES MAY BE DEDUCED. 1. That there are ordinary circumstances in Christian as well as in political life, under which the ordinary rules of right and expediency may be suspended or superseded by a higher claim. Philosophical historians have truly felt that the monastic system was to a great extent excused, if not justified, by the fact that it originated in an age when it seemed the only refuge from the dissolution of the existing fabric of society. An absolute dictatorship, whether of pope or emperor, has often been defended on the ground that it met the emergencies of a crisis of danger and transition. The enforcement of the celibacy of the clergy in the Middle Ages doubtless in part arose from the just instinct that they would else have sunk into an hereditary feudal caste. No one can deny that domestic ties must occasionally be severed by extraordinary calls, political, military, or religious. All these are instances of the adoption of a rule in peculiar circumstances which St. Paul's advice teaches us not to condemn at once, even though it may seem at variance with the broader principles of Christian life laid down elsewhere in the New Testament. Note in exact correspondence with this passage the declaration of Queen Elizabeth that "England was her husband and all Englishmen her children," and that she "desired no higher character or fairer remembrance of her than this inscription on her tombstone, 'Here lies Elizabeth, who lived and died a maiden queen.'" 2. That the highest duties of Christianity are compatible with every lawful condition of life. If the state of slavery be consistent with the cultivation of the true spirit of Christian liberty, if the great religious divisions of Jew and Gentile be alike compatible with the true service of God, then in all other states of life the spirit of the apostolic injunctions may be observed where, in the letter, they seem disregarded. Freedom from earthly cares may be maintained in the married as well as in the single state; indifference to worldly gain may exist in riches, no less than in poverty; our nearness to God depends not on our desertion of one religious community for another, but on our keeping His commandments. (*Dean Stanley.*) *Celibacy and marriage*:—I. CELIBACY. 1. In what sense is it called good? Not in the sense of being in itself and always superior to marriage which is the image of the union between Christ and His

Church (Eph. v. 23–25). "Forbidding to marry" (1 Tim. iv. 3) is a mark of false teaching. The law of consistency, then, bids us interpret Paul's statements here as in no sense depreciatory of the Divine ordinance of marriage. A single life is good in the sense of being in itself honourable, and in certain circumstances expedient. The apostle's "good" must always be read in the light of the "not good" of Gen. ii. 18. 2. When is it to be preferred to marriage? Leaving out of view considerations of physical health, which may in certain cases render marriage imprudent or culpable, three answers are given in this chapter. (1) In circumstances of peculiar distress (ver. 26). In times of persecution or dearth it may be wise not to marry. (2) When called to some peculiar service for the Lord (vers. 32, 33; *cf.* Matt. xix. 12). (3) Both these considerations must be taken with that in ver. 7. If a man has not the gift of continency, then his duty to marry is clear (ver. 9); if he has the gift, then he is free to give weight to reasons which may turn the balance in favour of celibacy. Even then, however, the higher ends of wedlock are not to be overlooked. 3. It is not to be made obligatory. The Church of Rome ascribes a peculiar excellence to the celibate state, as fitted to promote greater sanctity. There is no warrant for this here; while experience testifies to the dreadful evils to which it leads. II. MARRIAGE. 1. Is a safeguard against incontinence. The apostle is not treating of it in general, or in its higher aspects. Still the use here referred to is not to be overlooked in view of such licentiousness as prevailed at Corinth. 2. Implies the rendering of conjugal duty (vers. 3, 4). The one party exists for the other, and the other alone—the twain having become one flesh (Gen. ii. 24). 3. It is a union between one man and one woman. In polygamy the true idea of marriage is lost. The testimony of Scripture is all in favour of monogamy (Gen. ii. 24; Matt. xix. 4, 5; 1 Tim. iii. 2); and the statements of the apostle here take this for granted. Domestic bliss is not to be found in the haunts of polygamy. (*H. Bremner, B.D.*)

Vers. 6–9. **I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.**—*Revelation*:—1. BY PERMISSION. 1. Is still Divine and therefore authoritative. 2. Respects matters of expediency and private application. II. BY COMMANDMENT. 1. Is absolute. 2. Of immeasurable importance. 3. Universally binding. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **For I would that all men were even as myself.**—*The happiness of single life*:—I. EXEMPLIFIED BY PAUL. 1. Freedom from earthly care. 2. Entire devotedness to the service of God. II. DEPENDS ON SPECIAL GIFT. 1. The gift of continence. 2. Not conferred upon all. 3. Associated generally with special grace. III. MUST NOT BE INCULCATED UPON ALL. 1. Would violate the ordination of Providence. 2. Breed mischief and immorality. (*Ibid.*) **But every man hath his proper gift from God, one after this manner, and another after that.**—*Distinct gifts*:—Paul had peculiar natural powers, adapting him for a life of consecration and service. But it was a beautiful feature in his character that he did not expect or wish all Christians to resemble himself in all things. In fellow-labourers he recognised adaptation for usefulness. 1. HUMAN ENDOWMENTS ARE DIVINE GIFTS. The devout mind naturally looks up to the source of all. If to God we are to attribute providential favours, shall we attribute higher gifts to an inferior source? II. DIVINE GIFTS ARE BESTOWED UPON MEN IN GREAT VARIETY. 1. It is so in bodily constitution. One has muscular strength, another manual dexterity, &c. 2. It is so in temperament. One is calm and wise, another tender and sympathetic, a third impulsive and commanding. 3. It is so in intellectual character. One reasons with force, another persuades with fervour, a third speaks with eloquence. Where are two leaves, two faces alike? So in the Church—one has the gift to rule, another to teach, or to console, &c. One is fitted for a pastor, another for an evangelist. One is called to a public, another to a private position. III. THESE GIFTS ARE COMPLEMENTARY AND CO-OPERATE TO THE GENERAL GOOD. None can be spared. There is generosity, but not waste in the Divine benefactions. Pray for the qualified workman, and the work shall not be undone for the want of him. Because all things are Christ's, all things are ours. One supplies another's lack, and mutual sympathy and ministrations subserve the general good. Conclusion: 1. Gratitude should be cultivated as due to Him who is the Giver of all. 2. Pride should be repressed; for if one has his gift he has to remember that it is a gift bestowed in grace. 3. Forbearance and toleration are requisite. It is vain to expect all gifts to centre in the same person, to look for what God has not bestowed, to complain because a man has his proper gift and that only. (*Prof. J. R. Thomson.*)

Vers. 10-17. **And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband.**—*The marriage union: how disturbances of it are to be alleviated:*—I. IF BOTH PARTIES ARE BELIEVERS—according to our Lord's command. 1. Not by divorce. 2. But by mutual conciliation. II. IF ONE PARTY IS AN UNBELIEVER—according to apostolic prescription. 1. Not by divorce. 2. But by patience in the believing party, that by example, &c., the unbelieving party and the children may be saved. III. IF THE UNBELIEVING PARTY BRINGS ABOUT A SEPARATION. 1. By submission, love to God must predominate. 2. God can overrule it for good. 3. Every one must content himself with the appointments of Providence. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Unity in marriage:*—The Cherokee marriage ceremony is very expressive. The man and woman join hands over running water, to indicate that their lives are thenceforth to flow in one stream. *Divorce* is—I. A SAD EVIDENCE OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY. Except in the case of confirmed lunacy—1. It originates—(1) In marrying out of impure motives. (2) In the loss of affection. (3) In the unfaithfulness of one or both parties. 2. Is opposed—(1) To the express command of our Lord (Matt. v. 31, xix. 1-12), which is founded on the deep significance of the marriage bond (Matt. xix. 6; Eph. v. 32). (2) To the diffusion of the kingdom of God, as exerting a deleterious influence on the general welfare of mankind. II. CANNOT BE ENTIRELY DISALLOWED. 1. The Lord permits it in certain instances (Matt. v. 32), and the apostle extends the permission in an exceptional case (ver. 15). 2. Yet so long as there is hope of reconciliation, every means must be used to maintain an unbroken union. 3. Separation is therefore allowable when it is evident that a perpetuated union will only be a source of sin, or that it will prove perilous to the salvation of the innocent party. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Divorce: mixed marriages:*—Having spoken of celibacy and marriage, the apostle now deals with the case of those already married. I. WHERE BOTH PARTIES ARE CHRISTIAN. In this case Christ has decided, and Paul refers them to His words (Matt. v. 32, xix. 9). 1. The marriage bond is indissoluble. This arises from the relationship itself, as well as from the Divine appointment. Husband and wife are ideally one; the bond has no parallel in the world; God has made the union sacred by blessing it. 2. Separation is not to be final. The cause of separation (ill-treatment, &c.) may or may not be sufficient to justify it, but it must not be regarded as severing the tie. The wife must remain unmarried, or she must be reconciled to her husband. The latter is the desirable course, inasmuch as husband and wife cannot go apart without scandal to the Christian name. Let them reconsider their position, and remove every barrier to union. II. WHERE ONE PARTY IS CHRISTIAN AND THE OTHER HEATHEN. Christ had given no utterance on mixed marriages, and therefore Paul gives his inspired judgment regarding them. Consider the case where—1. The unbelieving partner is content to remain. The Christian spouse is not to seek a separation as if the marriage were unholy (ver. 14). The apostle does not mean that an unbeliever by conjugal union with a believer becomes personally holy; but that he or she is consecrated. As the altar sanctifies the gift (Matt. xxiii. 19), so the Christian reflects something of his character on everything connected with him. His property, business, family, are all in a sense holy as belonging to one who is in covenant with God, and are under His special protection. Hence the pagan partner is a privileged person on the ground of union with a Christian. The reason is significant (ver. 14). It was an accepted maxim that the children of such marriages were born within the Church. This principle was recognised among the Jews, as the case of Timothy shows (Acts xvi. 1-3). If, then, the children of such marriage are reckoned holy, the marriage from which they spring cannot be inconsistent with the law of God (Rom. xi. 6 and conversely). The children take their standing from the Christian parent, who is regarded as the nobler of the two. 2. The unbelieving partner refuses to remain. In this case the Christian is to acquiesce. For—(1) He or she "is not under bondage" (ver. 15). The marriage is not to be dissolved at the instance of the believing partner; but if the other refuses to remain, the contract is no longer binding. It would be a case of bondage if the one were held to a union which the other has wilfully broken up. (2) "God hath called us in peace." The gospel is not intended to produce strife; but if this be the result of the heathen partner continuing to dwell with the Christian, it were better to let him have his wish. (3) The Christian partner is not to prevent the departure of the other in the hope of being instrumental to conversion. This is at best uncertain, and peace is not to be hazarded therefore. And if such a union is not to be maintained for the sake of a possible conversion, much less is it to be contracted with that view. Conclusion: 1. This passage is

generally adduced as the Bible warrant for the view that wilful desertion is a sufficient reason for divorce. Such desertion is a *de facto* rupture of the marriage bond, and stands on the same footing as adultery. 2. The evil of mixed marriages. They—(1) Render the complete fellowship of husband and wife impossible. (2) Break up domestic peace. (3) Prevent family religion. (4) Interfere with the religious training of children. (*H. Bremner, B.D.*) *Christian casuistry*:—1. St. Paul makes a distinction between those things which he speaks by commandment and by permission; between what he says as being taught of God, and that which he speaks only as a servant, "called of the Lord and faithful." 2. It is plain that there are many questions in which right and wrong are fixed; while there are others where these terms depend on circumstances, *e.g.*, there may be circumstances in which it is the duty of a Christian to be married, and others remain unmarried. In the case of a missionary it may be right to be married; in the case of a pauper, unable to maintain a family, it may be proper to remain unmarried. No fixed law can be laid down upon this subject. 3. These, therefore, are questions of casuistry, which depend upon the particular case: from which "casuistry" is derived. On these points the apostle speaks not by commandment, but by permission. This distinction is not between inspired and uninspired, but between a decision in matters of Christian duty, and advice in matters of Christian prudence. God cannot give advice; He can only issue a command. When we come to advice the human element is introduced. 4. There are three main questions on which the apostle here gives his inspired decision. I. CONCERNING THE SANCTITY OF THE MARRIAGE BOND BETWEEN TWO CHRISTIANS (ver. 10). 1. Of all earthly unions almost this is the only one permitting of no change but that of death. It is that engagement in which man exerts his most awful and solemn power—that of parting with his freedom. And yet it is perhaps that relationship which is spoken of and entered into most carelessly. It is not an union merely between two creatures, but between two spirits; and the intention of that bond is to perfect the nature of both, by giving to each sex those excellences in which it is naturally deficient. 2. There is no earthly relationship which has so much power to ennoble (ver. 16). The very power of saving belongs to it, and that of ruin too. For there are two rocks on which the soul must either anchor or be wrecked. The one is the "Rock of Ages," on which if the human soul anchors, it lives the blessed life of faith; against which if the soul be dashed, there ensues atheism—the worst ruin of the soul. The other rock is of another character. Blessed is the man or woman whose life-experience has taught a confiding belief in the excellences of the sex opposite to their own. And the ruin is second only to perdition. And it is the worst of these alternatives which the young risk when they form an inconsiderate union, and which parents risk when they bring up their children with no higher view than that of a rich and honourable marriage. II. THE SANCTITY OF THE MARRIAGE BOND BETWEEN A CHRISTIAN AND A HEATHEN. 1. The question arose. Is not the marriage null and void? As if it were an union between one dead and one living. And that perpetual contact with a heathen, and therefore an enemy of God, is not that defilement? The apostle decides this with his usual inspired wisdom—the marriage bond is sacred still (vers. 12, 13). 2. Now for us the decision is not of so much importance as the reason in support of it, which amounts to this: If this were no marriage, but an unhallowed alliance, it would follow that the offspring could not be the children of God; but it is the instinctive conviction of every Christian parent, "My child is a child of God," or, in the Jewish form of expression, "My child is clean" (ver. 14). It follows if the children are holy in this sense of dedicated to God, then the marriage relation was not unhallowed, but sacred and indissoluble. The value of this argument in the present day depends on its relation to baptism. This question is whether we are baptized because we are the children of God, or, whether we are the children of God because we are baptized. Here the apostle's argument is unanswerable. He does not say that these children were Christian, or clean, because they were baptized, but because they were the children of one Christian parent. 3. Observe also the important truth which comes out collaterally from this argument—namely, the sacredness of impression, which arises from the close connection between parent and child. Possibly from the very first moments of consciousness we begin to impress ourselves on our children. There is scarcely one here who cannot trace back his religious character to some impression from one or other of his parents—a tone, a look, a word, a habit, or even, it may be, a bitter exclamation of remorse. III. EXISTING RELATIONS (vers. 17, 20, 24). Christian men were to remain in them,

and in them to develop the Christian life. Paul applies this principle in two ways. 1. Ecclesiastically (ver. 18). The Jews, after their conversion, were to continue Jews, if they would. Christianity required no change in these outward things. Paul circumcised Timothy, and used Jewish customs. It was not the duty of a Christian to overthrow the Jewish system, but to throw into it a Christian feeling. Let us apply this to modern duties. The great desire among men now appears to be to alter, and so have perfect institutions, as if they would make perfect men. Mark the difference between this feeling and that of the apostle (ver. 20). No man will get true rest for his soul in these days of controversy, until he has learned the significance of these wise words. 2. Civilly—to that relationship which, of all others, was the most difficult to harmonise with Christianity—slavery (ver. 21). Recollect—(1) That Christianity had made much way among slaves. No wonder that they embraced with joy a religion which taught the dignity of the human soul, and declared that rich and poor, master and slave, were equal in the sight of God. And yet it was to be feared lest men should be tempted to compel their masters and oppressors to do them right. (2) That all this occurred in an age in which slavery had reached its worst and most fearful form. And yet fearful as it was, the apostle says, "Care not for it." And hence we understand the way in which Christianity was to work. No doubt it will at length abolish slavery, war, &c., but there is not one case where we find Christianity interfering with institutions, as such: Onesimus Paul sent back to his master, but he told him of a higher feeling that would make him free with the shackle upon his arm. And so it was possible for the Christian then, as it is now, to be possessed of the highest liberty even under tyranny. It many times occurred that Christian men found themselves placed under an unjust government, and compelled to pay unjust taxes. The Son of Man showed His freedom not by refusing, but by paying them. His glorious liberty could do so without any feeling of degradation. Conclusion: It is possible from all this to draw a most inaccurate conclusion. Some men have spoken of Christianity as if it was entirely indifferent about public questions. This indifference is not to be found in the Apostle Paul. While he asserts that inward liberty is the only true liberty, he still goes on to say, "If thou mayest be free use it rather." Christianity gave to the slave the feeling of his dignity as a man, at the same time it gave to the Christian master a new view of his relation to his slave, and taught him to regard him "not now as a servant, but a brother beloved." And so by degrees slavery passed into freed servitude, and freed servitude, under God's blessing, may pass into something else. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) **But to the rest speak I, not the Lord.**—*Paul's inspiration*:—The distinction here is not between his uninspired and inspired commands. If we say that he usually writes under Divine inspiration, but that when he speaks about celibacy it fails him, to return suddenly when he enters on the question of divorce, again to desert him when he writes on the case of mixed marriages, inspiration becomes at once (1) arbitrary, because there is nothing in the nature of the subjects to account for the difference; and (2) mechanical, because it comes and goes independently of the writer's mental activity. The explanation is that on the question of divorce Christ had legislated (Matt. v. 32, xix. 9); but on the other questions gave no direct decision. The question of divorce touches the inmost nature of marriage, as it was instituted by God at the beginning, and afterwards connected by Christianity with the union between Christ and the Church. For this reason Christ, as the Divine lawgiver, rescinded the Mosaic permission to divorce for other causes than adultery, and restored the original idea of marriage. Paul never dared to rescind a law of Moses. Yet the apostle draws various inferences from the words of Christ. One distinction between the teaching of Christ and of His apostles must necessarily be that Christ always commands. He never arrived at a conclusion through a process of reasoning, much less discussed a question and left it unanswered. This absolute certitude is essential in the revelation of central principles. But it would be destructive of all that is valuable in human effort if it extended to the minute details of life; if it decided beforehand every possible case of conscience, and reduced our moral activity to a mechanical conformity with unswerving and merely authoritative regulations. The danger attaches to all books of casuistry; but in a book accepted by the doubting conscience as containing Divinely-inspired casuistry, the effect is fatal. The writings of the apostles abound, on the other hand, in argument and inference, which sometimes end in practical decisions, sometimes only in the expression of an opinion. The decision is often left to the enlightened conscience of the spiritual man (*cf.* ver. 25). But apart from the teaching of Christ, the *fons et origo*

of revelation, the inspiration of the apostles would have been an altogether different thing from what it is. We need not suppose that Christ gave the apostle an immediate revelation on the question of divorce. The general tradition of the Early Church and the narrative in the Acts points to an intimate connection between Paul and Luke. Indeed, our Lord's doctrine on that subject was in that age singular, and cannot fail to have been known among Christians throughout the world. (*Principal Edwards.*)

Vers. 14–16. **For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife.**—*The sanctification of an unbelieving partner*:—The Christian wife lays her heathen husband upon the altar of God; and in all her intercourse with him acts as God's servant, striving ever to accomplish His purposes. Therefore, whatever the husband may be in himself, he, in the subjective world of her thought and life, is a holy object; and her treatment of him is a sacrifice to God. Such intercourse cannot defile. Therefore his heathenism is not in itself a reason for separation. (*Prof. Beet.*) *The sanctification of mixed marriage relations*:—The unbelieving husband (or wife) is externally sanctified. His status is a hallowed one. For he dwells no longer in the profane and godless world, but stands upon the sacred threshold of the Church. Both he and his wife are in God's commonwealth: she incorporated, he merely attached; hers is a dedication of self, his a consecration of position; his surroundings only are hallowed; brought out of darkness he is in the light, but the light is not in him. United to a saintly consort he is in daily contact with saintly conduct; holy association may become holy assimilation, and the sanctity which ever environs may at last penetrate; for it is drop upon drop that hollows the rock and makes it a cistern; the circumstances are such that the man's will may be reached by God's grace, which by a Divine law moves in the sphere of theocratic consecration. But the man's conversion is not a condition necessary to the sanctity of the subsisting conjugal union. This being so, the children being the offspring of a hallowed union are themselves hallowed, *i.e.*, in a position meet for dedication to God's service in Holy Baptism. It is not easy to sound the deeper sense of this. We may imagine three concentric circles: the innermost circle of spiritual light, environed by a margin of theocratic twilight, the suburbs of the city of God; embracing this twofold sphere is the immense margin of outer cosmic darkness. Better the twilight than the outer darkness, for it is a state of hope and transition from the bad to the good, and one that furnishes opportunities of grace, and makes salvation accessible. The deeper causes of these boundary lines lie in the secret laws of the Divine government of the universe, and in the unknown partition of mundane realms among angels and spirits, good and evil. (*Canon Evans.*) **For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?**—*The conversion of an unbelieving husband or wife*:—1. Especially concerns those to whom they are united by marriage ties. 2. Should be intensely desired. 3. Should be earnestly attempted. 4. Confidently hoped for. 5. Thankfully acknowledged. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Advice to a pious wife*:—A lady in Germany, who was a sincere follower of Christ, but whose husband was still unrenewed, was very much afflicted on his account, and told a clergyman that she had done all in her power in persuading and beseeching him to turn from his evil practices, to no effect. "Madam," said he, "talk more to God about your husband, and less to your husband about God." A few weeks after, the lady called upon him, full of joy that her prayers to God had been heard, and that a change was wrought upon her husband. *Earthly relationships sanctified to heavenly uses*:—There were several weighty reasons why a Christian husband or wife should not leave an unbeliever partner; and the same hold good to-day. 1. An obligation has been undertaken from which only flagrant immorality can liberate either party. 2. Children may have been born during the union whose welfare depends upon its continuance. 3. Affection may have sprung up which it would be an outrage to check. 4. The continuance of the union may make the Christian the minister of spiritual blessing to the unconverted consort. I. AN ATTRACTIVE REPRESENTATION MAY BE FURNISHED OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. Moral excellence, as presented in the Bible or any other book, or from the pulpit, is far less impressive than when, embodied in a life, it speaks from the domestic hearth. Some virtues are peculiarly Christian, and their exhibition is likely to give rise to the inquiry, What is the secret of such a life? How many a husband has been won to Christ by his wife! II. AN UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCE MAY BE EXERCISED. Who can know, unmoved, that a dear consort is seeking his spiritual welfare? There is a tone

imparted to the intercourse of daily life by the habit of prayer. And there is a dignity, gentleness, and spirituality of manner and language which cannot fail to be observed and to have due effect. III. AN OPPORTUNITY IS GIVEN FOR EXPRESS PERSUASION WHICH MAY ISSUE IN SPIRITUAL GOOD. In many instances it is unwise to make formal effort; it may be better to leave religion to tell its own tale and do its own work. But Providence not unfrequently will open the way for effort. There are few ministers who could not tell of instances in which God has blessed the effort of husband or wife so that both have become heirs together of the grace of life. Yet all this being said, the mere hope of exerting such influence should never lead to an unequal union. (*Prof. J. R. Thomson.*)

Vers. 17–24. **But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk.**—*Every Christian at his post*:—I. God appoints every man his station and condition in life. 2. Has called him in it. 3. Requires him faithfully to fulfil its duties. 4. Allows of no exception unless when compliance is sinful. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The dignity of the true Christian*:—He rises above the circumstances—I. OF CASTE. 1. Externals are nothing. 2. Only conformity to the will of God gives true dignity. II. OF STATION. 1. As a servant he is free; serving God in his calling, contented to leave the improvement of his position to Divine Providence, rejoicing in the liberty of Christ. 2. As free he is unaffected by external advantage, and glories in being a servant of Christ. III. OF HUMAN SERVILITY. 1. He is redeemed by Christ. 2. Therefore not the servant of man. 3. Can in every condition abide with God. (*Ibid.*) *True contentment*:—I. RESPECTS—1. Our religious privileges. 2. Our earthly condition. II. ARISES out of the conviction—1. That we are redeemed. 2. Can serve Christ. 3. Enjoy fellowship with God. (*Ibid.*) *The true freedom and dependence of every Christian*:—I. HIS TRUE FREEDOM. 1. From an over-estimate of externals. 2. From pride of condition and false shame. 3. From servility. 4. In the service of Christ. II. HIS TRUE DEPENDENCE. 1. He knows that self-dependence is impossible. 2. Regards himself as Christ's property. 3. Accounts it his highest honour to abide in God. (*Ibid.*) **Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised.**—*The external and the real in religion*:—1. God calls us without any reference to our former condition. 2. Puts no value upon religious externals. 3. Requires holiness of heart and life. 4. Hence anxiety about mere forms is reprehensible. (*Ibid.*) *Why Christians should be contented with their circumstances*:—1. External circumstances are of no importance in the sight of God (vers. 18, 19). 2. God overrules them for our advantage (vers. 20–22). 3. By seeking to change them we may easily forget Christ and become the servants of men (vers. 23, 24). (*Ibid.*) **Circumcision is nothing . . . but keeping the commandments of God.**—*Forms* versus *character* (text, Gal. v. 6, vi. 15):—The great controversy which embittered Paul's life turned upon the question whether a heathen could come into the Church by the door of faith, or of circumcision. Time, which settles all controversies, has settled that. But the principles are eternal, though the forms vary with every varying age. The Ritualist and the Puritan represent permanent tendencies of human nature. These three passages are Paul's deliverance on the question of the comparative value of external rites and spiritual character. Note—1. THE EMPHATIC PROCLAMATION OF THE NULLITY OF OUTWARD RITES. 1. Circumcision neither is anything nor does anything. Paul speaks about baptism, in chap. i., in a precisely similar tone and for precisely the same reason. (1) Forms have their value. A man prays all the better if he bow his head, &c. Forms help us to the realisation of the truths which they express. Music may waft our souls to the heavens, and pictures may stir deep thoughts. (2) But then external rights tend to usurp more than belongs to them, and in our weakness we are apt, instead of using them as means to lift us higher, to stay in them, and to mistake the mere gratification of taste and the excitement of the sensibilities for worship. If there be as much form as will embody the spirit, that is all that we want. What is more is dangerous. All form in worship is like fire, it is a good servant but it is a bad master. Now, when men say about Christian rites that they are necessary, then it is needful to take up Paul's ground and to say, "No! they are nothing!" If you say that grace is miraculously conveyed through them, then it is needful to declare their nullity for the highest purpose, that of making that spiritual character which alone is essential. 2. Uncircumcision is nothing. It is very hard for a man who has been delivered from the dependence upon forms not to fancy that his formlessness is what the other people

think that their forms are. The Puritan who does not believe that a man can be a good man because he is a Ritualist or a Roman Catholic, is committing the very same error as the Ritualist or the Roman Catholic. There may be as much idolatry in reliance upon the bare worship as the ornate; and many a Nonconformist who fancies that he has "never bowed the knee to Baal" is as true an idol-worshipper as the men who trust in Ritualism. II. THE THREEFOLD VARIETY OF THE DESIGNATION OF ESSENTIALS. 1. By "keeping the commandments" the apostle does not mean merely external obedience, but conformity to the will of God. That is the perfection of a man's nature, when his will fits on to God's like one of Euclid's triangles superimposed upon another, and line for line coincides. When his will allows a free passage to the will of God, without resistance or deflection, as light travels through transparent glass; when his will responds to the touch of God's fingers upon the keys, like the telegraphic needle to the operator's hand, then man has attained all that God and religion can do for him, all that his nature is capable of; and far beneath his feet may be the ladders of ceremonies and forms and outward acts by which he climbed to that serene and blessed height. 2. But I can fancy a man saying, "That is all very well, but how can I attain to that?" Well, take Gal. vi. 15. If we are ever to keep the will of God we must be made over again. Our own consciences and the history of all the efforts that ever we have made, tell us that there needs to be a stronger hand than ours to come into the fight if it is ever to be won by us. But in that word, "a new creature," lies a promise from God; for a creature implies a Creator. We may have our spirits moulded into His likeness, and new tastes, desires, and capacities infused into us, so as that we shall not be left with our own poor powers to try and force ourselves into obedience to God's will, but that submission and holiness, and love that keeps the commandments of God, will spring up in our renewed spirits as their natural product and growth. 3. And so we come to Gal. v. 6. If we are to be made over again, we must have faith in Christ. We have got to the root now. External rites cannot make men partakers of a new nature. He that trusts Christ opens his heart to Christ, who comes with His new-creating Spirit, and makes us willing in the day of His power to keep His commandments; and faith shows itself living, because it leads us to love, and through love it produces its effects upon conduct. The keeping of the commandments will be easy where there is love in the heart. The will will bow where there is love in the heart. Paul and James shake hands here. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The one threefold essential*:—As with all deeply earnest men, the teaching of St. Paul grew out of the special events of his life. The crisis called out the struggle, and the struggle called out the word of command. For some years of his life St. Paul passed through a strange experience. The man who to us is a saint, the very type of all that is most exalted, the very man who now keeps the conscience of Christendom, and of whom it is a commonplace to say, "Follow him, as he followed Christ," this man, while he lived, was for many years regarded by religious men, and doubtless by devout women also, as a dangerous man, as lacking true reverence in things pertaining to God, as what we might call in these days an innovator and latitudinarian. "Circumcision," in the eyes of St. Paul's opponents, was the symbol of what they reverenced and what they accused him, rightly or wrongly, of disparaging. He called himself the Apostle of the Gentiles. He turned his back on his own race and training. He seemed eager not to bridge over the chasm which separated the new from the old, but to glory in the conviction, which, indeed, in one of these four Epistles he expressly enunciated, that "in Christ old things had passed away; behold, all things had become new." Now, how did St. Paul bear such comments, and the consciousness that they came not only from unscrupulous partisans, but also doubtless from devout and aggrieved souls? I think we may say that among all his manifold troubles he had no heavier cross to bear than this. It led him not only to justify himself—not only in various ways and at various times to make an *Apologia pro vita sua*—but to dwell earnestly, solemnly, may we not also say wistfully, and with something of a holy impatience, on the real stake at issue. Why all this battling about symbols, about outward things, about the things below, instead of the things above? Circumcision and uncircumcision, symbol and no symbol, conformity with the past, or no conformity, what were they in the sight of Him who is a Spirit, and knows no difference between Gerizim and Jerusalem? The essential thing is this—the keeping of the commandments of God; faith which worketh by love; a new creature. We may regard these as three essentials, or as one essential; but

here we have from a master of the spiritual life, at a time when he was attacked on every side by misrepresentation, besides that which came upon him daily, "the care of all the churches," an emphatic declaration of the essence of true Christianity; obedience to God's commands, faith working by love, a new creature. I. Whatever else may be important or unimportant in Christian teaching or discipline, this at least is essential, THE KEEPING OF THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD. The expression may mean almost anything, or almost nothing, according to our rank in the school of Christ. To the ripe scholar it means almost everything. "The keeping of the commandments of God." "Which be they?" "The same which God spake in the 20th chapter of Exodus?" Yes, of course, and much more. The same which the life and death of Christ have written, not on tables of stone, but on tables of the heart and conscience. The commandments which every development of thought, every discovery or half-discovery as to the origin or the mysterious interdependence of mind and body, nay, every acceptance, general or partial, of some moral half-truth or even honest heresy, have concurred in stamping upon an enlightened conscience. Wherever the spirit of the age is in harmony with the Spirit of God, wherever the increase of thought and knowledge points to wider sympathies and enlarged fields of human service, there are fresh provinces marked out for the empire of "the commandments of God." To learn these commandments, to accept them with ardour and intelligence, with the mind as well as with the heart—to "do them" ourselves and to "teach *men* so"—this is one of the essentials of a true Christian faith. II. "In Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but FAITH WHICH WORKETH BY LOVE." We are not content, surely, that these should remain merely technical words; we would have them living forces. To St. Paul faith is that outgoing of the whole being—mind, heart, spirit—which attaches itself to a Person; believes in Him, clings to Him, trusts Him, worships Him; finds in His will, and even more in His assured sympathy, the plainest guarantee of duty, and cannot, even in imagination, separate itself from His presence and His indwelling. By this test may we know whether we are Christ's disciples. In Christ Jesus faith working through love is an essential. We cannot live without regard to Him, as though He were nothing now to us beyond an illustrious Example. We cannot look at Him, speak of Him, criticise Him as from outside. We cannot think of Him as the citizens of a neutral power might think of the ruler or the general of some belligerent nation, sympathising perhaps in part with his policy, but still regarding it as outside their own. No! we are not outsiders. We are servants of One who has used the strongest language as to His claims upon His servants; One who has said, "He that is not with Me is against Me"; and again, "Abide in Me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me"; and again, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." "Faith which works by love," perfect trust in Jesus Christ showing forth its devotion by sympathy with those whom He calls His brethren—this is life eternal; this can never disappoint, never betray the soul that trusts it. III. "Neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but A NEW CREATURE." It is not easy, nay, it is morally perilous, to try to analyse, as in a laboratory, the essence of an expression wrung, one might dare to say, from the very heart, and steeped in the very life-blood of this great soldier of Christ, a "new creature," a "new creation." One thing is clear—we may interpret at least, if we hesitate to apply—that St. Paul must have meant to express by this phrase the greatest of all changes, not a mere improvement, the lopping off of a vice here, and an ambition there; not a taming down of the old wild nature under the yoke of some humanising and civilising charm: nothing so small as this, but a change comparable to a new birth, a new order of being, a new manifestation of life, with new aims, new conceptions, new ideals, new organ, new powers. To become a Christian, then, whether the change were from heathendom or Judaism, must, of course, have been something different from what it can be to the sons of Christian parents in the nineteenth century of the Christian Church, and at a place like this where the very stones are witnesses to the reforming and re-creating power of the name of Christ. But even now I venture to say that we do not know what true Christianity is unless we are able to recognise it as "a new creature." It is the "new creature" which "through peril, toil and pain," was to "overcome the world." It was the "new creature" which was to root out gradually all that was vile and refuse in humanity, and to present to Christ a changed society, worthy to be called His own bride, "a glorious

Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." (*H. M. Butler, D.D.*) **Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.**—*On the choice of a profession* :—In seasons of unusual religious excitement and earnestness men are tempted to regard all political and social distinctions, and all ordinary secular employments, as abolished or suspended. This apostolic injunction may be considered as directed in principle against a twofold form of error prevalent at such times. 1. In the first place it is directed against the error of making religion a business or profession by itself, leaving us no time or thought for anything else. Who is the best Christian? Not he who makes the loudest professions of Christianity, nor he who gives the most time to thinking about it, nor yet he who best understands its principles; but he who best succeeds in applying these principles to his daily cares and duties, and in filling his place in society, whatever it may be, in a Christ-like spirit. 2. Again, the injunction in the text is directed generally, and in principle, against the kindred error of supposing that there are many lawful callings or professions in which it is impossible to lead a Christian life. More difficult it may be, but not impossible, the difficulty only enhancing the virtue which has strength and resolution enough to overcome it. On the other hand, the clerical profession, to those who are fit for it, is generally thought, in a moral and religious point of view, to promise best of all; because the special business and object of the calling coincide so entirely with what ought to be the highest business and object of us all. But here also there is difficulty and drawback, showing that the difference in the eligibility of the various professions on moral grounds is not so great as is often supposed. Where the profession is religious, the danger is that the religion will become professional. Then, too, looking merely at the effect of his labours, I believe it is often possible for a layman to do more for religion than a clergyman, from the very fact that he cannot be suspected of a professional bias or bribe. We arrive, then, at the conclusion that all the great professions are open to choice, and that there is nothing in any one of them, in itself considered, to hinder a good man in certain cases from choosing it. But it by no means follows that all professions are equally eligible in themselves; much less, that all are equally eligible to every person and under all circumstances. All are open to choice; but this does not exclude the duty of making a wise choice, as being that on which, more perhaps than on any other one thing, a man's usefulness and happiness will depend. Let me begin by observing, that if the time for choosing a profession has come, it is not well, as a general rule, to postpone it by unnecessary delays. If you say, your mind is unsettled; I reply, in the first place, that in practical matters the will has more to do in settling the mind than arguments; and, secondly, that the probable effect of another year spent without an object will only be to unsettle your minds still more. To enter on the practice of any profession without being duly prepared for it is, I admit, a great error; but this is a reason for beginning the preparation as soon as may be; certainly it is no reason for unnecessary delays. So much impressed was Dr. Johnson with the mischief of fickleness on this subject, that he is half inclined to recommend that every one's calling should be determined by his parents or guardian; at any rate, he does not hesitate to conclude, "that of two states of life equally consistent with religion and virtue, he who chooses earliest chooses best." Another preliminary suggestion is, that in choosing a profession we should take care not to allow too much weight to local and temporary considerations;—considerations which will have no bearing on our future progress, except perhaps to narrow and limit it. I suppose there are those who can give no better reason for being in one profession rather than another than this, that they found it easier to get into it. But certainly our success and happiness are to depend, not on our getting into a profession, but on our getting on in it; that is to say, on our being able to fill it honourably and well. I know the common excuse. It will be said, that we are often placed in circumstances where we must do, not as we would, but as we can. We talk about what we can do, and what we cannot; but, after all, this is, for the most part, an arbitrary distinction. What one man calls impossible, another man calls merely difficult; and, with minds which are made of the right sort of stuff, difficulties do not repel or dishearten; they only stimulate to new and greater efforts. Hence we conclude, that every young man owes it to himself, at any sacrifice consistent with virtue and religion, to find, as soon as may be, his proper place and calling, meaning thereby the place and calling in which, with his education and abilities, he is most likely to become useful and happy. But how is he to find it? that is the great question. I answer generally,

By considering what he was made for, taking into view, at the same time, his intellectual aptitudes, and his moral needs and dangers. As regards intellectual or mental aptitudes, or what is sometimes called the natural bent of one's genius, two extreme opinions have found supporters, which seem to me to be almost equally removed from practical wisdom. The first is that of those who contend that a strong tendency to one profession rather than to another is to be considered; but only, that it may be crossed and overruled. Thus, if a person early manifests extraordinary talents for business and affairs, this is a reason why he should not be, by profession, a man of business and affairs, for he is enough of that already: he ought rather to go into the army or the Church, which will have the effect to call forth his latent qualities. I hardly need say that this doctrine, plausible as it may seem to some minds, is theoretically false, and practically absurd. It is theoretically false; for, though balance and harmony of character enter into the theory of what a man ought to be, these have nothing to do with an equal, or even with a proportionate development of his faculties. Moreover, to pursue this course would be practically absurd. Every man would do what he is least fitted to do; and the consequence would be, that the whole work of life would be done in the worst possible manner and under the greatest possible disadvantages. Nor is this all; for the subject has its religious aspects. When we refer to a man's profession as being his vocation, or calling, we suppose him to be called. Every man is calmly and impartially to consider what he was made for, what by the constitution of his mind and character he is best fitted to become, and to look upon this as a call from God—the voice of God speaking in his own nature, which, when distinct and emphatic, he has no right to disregard. Often, however, and I suppose I may say generally, the call is not distinct and emphatic, at least as regards most professions; and this leads me to notice the other of the two extreme opinions referred to above. It consists in supposing that every man has his place, and that everything depends on his finding that particular place, a mistake here being final and fatal. No such thing. We are not born with adaptations, but with adaptabilities; and these are such in most men that they can fit themselves as well, or nearly as well, for one as another of several professions. Leaving out of view eminence in the fine arts, which seems to require at the start a peculiar nervous organisation, I do not believe there is one man in ten whom nature has endowed with aptitudes and predispositions so special and marked that he might not succeed perfectly well in any one out of several pursuits. In a large majority of cases the battle of life is won, not by natural, but by personal qualities; by those personal qualities which invite favour and inspire confidence and insure courage and persistency in whatever is undertaken. Neither your profession nor your circumstances, but the quick eye, and the strong arm, and the iron will must work out for you the great problem of life. These qualities, however, are little better than brute force, unless inspired and directed by a high moral purpose; and this high moral purpose little better than a breath of air, unless it rests on religious faith; and this religious faith "unstable as water," unless accepted as the revealed will of God. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (*J. Walker, D.D.*) *Abide in your calling*, if it is an honest one. 1. It is God's own appointment. 2. God has blessed you in it. 3. It can be no impediment to a holy life. 4. Affords ample scope for the development of Christian character. 5. May be dignified by fidelity. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christianity universally applicable*:—It is—I. ADAPTED TO EVERY RANK AND CONDITION. II. INTERFERES WITH NO HONEST CALLING, but rather alleviates, dignifies, and makes it subservient to the noblest ends. III. TEACHES UNIVERSAL CONTENTMENT. 1. In the recognition of the Divine will. 2. By the enjoyment of the Divine blessing. (*Ibid.*) **Art thou called, being a servant?**—*The Christian slave*:—I. HIS PRIVILEGE—called. II. HIS DUTY—contentment. III. HIS EMANCIPATION—a lawful object of ambition. (*Ibid.*) *True liberty*:—I. DOES NOT CONSIST IN INDEPENDENCE. 1. A slave may be free. 2. The freeman a slave. II. IT CONSISTS IN THE SUBJECTION OF THE HEART TO CHRIST who—1. Makes the hardest service freedom. 2. Subjects the freest will by the force of love. (*Ibid.*) *The gospel*:—1. Emancipates the slave. 2. Captivates the free. (*Ibid.*) *The common lot the best sphere*:—In the "Records" of Dr. Raleigh's Life we meet with some striking thoughts suggested while he journeyed in Palestine. The following remarks are interesting and instructive: "It seems strange that events so great should transpire in a geographical area so small. Palestine is not much larger than Wales, to which, in some parts, it is not unlike, and not only is it small,

but rugged, even what men call 'common.' Some travellers come back almost oppressed with the 'commonness' of what they have seen. God does not need much earthly space, nor that the little should be of what men esteem the best, on which to prepare the scenes of the great drama, historical and celestial, which has been there unfolded. He does not want a continent with far-stretching plains and ship-bearing rivers. He wants only a strip of land running along the sea shore; a confused mass of mountain and high land and plain; a single river of moderate size, a lake, and a Dead Sea. Only so much—and the great drama may go on which has already culminated in a tragedy, and which is destined, on some future day, to end in a world-wide triumph. God has repeated that type and method of action often. Egypt is a river-bed. Greece is little else than rock and sea. Montenegro is an eagle's nest. Grandly the Divine action shows against a background of plainness! Beautifully the Divine idea is worked out in scenes of common life! The fisherman in his boat on the sea; the shepherd leading his flock along the hillside; sisters dwelling in a brother's house in a village—these, and such as these, are the characters illuminated for ever for the instruction of all the world. What can we do better than construct our life, and seek to have it inspired after the model of God's own action? Do our souls begin to hanker after the fat pastures, the broad acres, the rich estate, the ample, well-furnished house? And do we dislike the commonness, the ruggedness through which we must work our way? We are wrong, we need much less than we are apt to imagine, we must correct our ideal. We need only foothold—room to begin. We do not need selected and auspicious circumstances—we need just such as come. We may take the commonness and glorify it by our temper and spirit. We may vanquish the hardships of life by courage and industry, and fill all its scenes with a gentle and noble simplicity. We may put righteousness into it, strong as the bars of the mountains round about Jerusalem, and love in the heart of it, rising ever more like the waters of Shiloah, and so all our life will be a Holy Land." **For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman.**—*Deliverance from slavery*:—1. THE BONDAGE SUPPOSED BY THE GOSPEL, AND WHICH CALLS FOR ITS INTERFERENCE. It is a bondage—1. In which all are born. 2. Produced and perpetuated by an awfully evil agency from without. Satan exercises his dominion in a secret way, by adapting it to our own perverted inclinations. He moves us, not violently, but by means of exciting in a natural way, our depraved powers and propensities. 3. Toilsome and painful, profitless and punishable. II. THE NATURE OF THAT FREEDOM FROM IT, WHICH THE GOSPEL EFFECTS IN THE CASE OF ALL ITS CONVERTS. Every such one is "the Lord's freeman." Of this freedom the Lord Jesus is the author. He is the meritorious cause of its being bestowed; the agent of effecting it by His Spirit, and the leader of all who partake of it. It is a freedom of three steps and degrees. 1. It is a deliverance from the rightful power and custody of Satan. (1) Our bondage, because voluntary, is our crime. Satan does not force, but only draws, and we obey. Hence guilt is contracted, and guilt renders us amenable to the Divine justice. Thus guilt brings us under condemnation, and gives Satan a rightful power and custody over us, as the permitted executioner of the Divine displeasure. Such a power the law gives a jailer over the prisoner under sentence. (2) This is the state of which we are made aware when convinced of sin. Nor can we think of any plea for mitigating or removing the sentence of Divine justice. Finding ourselves in this dilemma, we are prepared for the revelation of Divine mercy. Jesus steps forth as an Almighty Deliverer. We see Him in the gospel offering His life, paying it into the hands of justice as a ransom for the deliverance of sinners. But this deliverance must be sued by us, accompanied with a reference by faith to the great ransom presented. Then it becomes applied, and we are set free. (3) Our sentence being cancelled, Satan loses his rightful power over us. He retains his vexing, tempting, accusing power, but his right is gone. By the removal of condemnation we are taken out of his custody for ever (Rom. viii. 1). 2. It is a deliverance from inbred sin, by means of new and holy tastes, inclinations, and principles. The faith by which we obtain deliverance from guilt and the power of Satan is a holy principle. There is a law in the mind now, stronger than the law of sin in the members, and overcoming its dictates (Rom. viii. 2). 3. It is a freedom of acting and moving in a noble and elevated condition. The converted person is the Lord's freeman. He serves Him in obeying His laws, reverencing His institutions, cherishing His image, cultivating His worship, and promoting His glory. This service is perfect freedom. It is the soul moving in its proper element, and feeling the pleasure which every creature

enjoys so moving. Conclusion: 1. Observe the noble character of Christianity. 2. Those who are partakers of the spiritual freedom of the gospel have three appropriate exercises allotted to them. (1) They should promote the natural and civil freedom of men, according to the dictates of the gospel, and in its spirit. The genius of the gospel is opposed to bondage and vassalage of every kind. (2) By teaching men in the highest ranks to be just, they can hold none of their fellow-creatures in slavish and ignominious subjection. The reign of Christianity, therefore, must be productive of liberty. (3) Anticipate for yourselves the liberty of heaven, and exult in the prospect. Your freedom is here only begun. You shall enter into full redemption. (*J. Leifchild, D.D.*) *Liberty and slavery*:—The ideas are antithetical; they therefore explain each other. We cannot understand the liberty spoken of until we understand the bondage, and *vice versâ*. Liberty is not freedom from restraint or authority. No creature is thus free. All rational beings are under the authority of reason and right. And as these are in infinite subjection to God, all creatures are under absolute subjection to Him. And this is the highest liberty. Consider—I. MAN'S SERVILE STATE. 1. In renouncing subjection to God man lost his liberty and became—(1) The slave of sin. This subjection is bondage because—(*a*) It has no right to rule. It does not belong to our normal state, and is inconsistent with the end of being. (*b*) It is independent of the will. We cannot throw it off. (2) The slave of the law. He is under the obligation of satisfying its demands or of bearing its penalty. This—(*a*) Is inexorable. (*b*) Reveals itself in the conscience. (*c*) Produces the slavish spirit—fear and anxious looking for of judgment. (3) The slave of Satan. We are in his power, subject to his control. 2. This subjection manifests itself in various ways. (1) It destroys the balance and power of the soul. (2) Not being subject to God, and being unable to guide itself, it submits to the world and public opinion, and to the priesthood and the Church. II. MAN'S FREE STATE. Christ is our Redeemer, and the author of our liberty. They only are truly free whom He makes free. He frees us—1. From condemnation. Until this is done nothing is done. A man in prison under sentence of death must be freed or he cannot be delivered from other evils. 2. From the law or the obligation of fulfilling its demands. 3. From the authority and power of Satan (Heb. ii. 14, 15). 4. From the reigning power of sin. 5. From a slavish spirit. 6. From all undue subjection to men. (1) By bringing the reason under subjection to His truth we are freed from their authority as to doctrine. (2) As we are subject to Him alone, as to the conscience, we cannot be subject to any other authority in deciding what is morally right or wrong. (3) As we have through Him deliverance from condemnation and acceptance with God, we are free from the priesthood. (4) As all we do is done in obedience to Him, lawful subjection to men is part of our liberty. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Slaves and free*:—This remarkable saying occurs in a remarkable connection, and is used for a remarkable purpose. The apostle has been laying down the principle that the effect of true Christianity is greatly to diminish the importance of outward circumstance. Paul says, "You will better yourself by getting nearer God, and if you secure that—art thou a slave? care not for it; if thou mayest be free, use it rather. Art thou bound to a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed? seek not to be bound. Art thou circumcised? seek not to be uncircumcised. Never mind about externals: the main thing is our relation to Jesus Christ, because in that there is what will be compensation for all the disadvantages of circumstances." I. First, then, note how, according to the one-half of the antithesis, CHRIST'S FREED MEN ARE SLAVES. Now the way in which the New Testament deals with that awful wickedness of a man held in bondage by a man is extremely remarkable. It might seem as if such a hideous piece of immorality were altogether incapable of yielding any lessons of good. But the apostles have no hesitation whatever in taking slavery as a clear picture of the relation in which all Christian people stand to Jesus Christ their Lord. He is the owner and we are the slaves. And all the ugly associations which gather round the word are transported bodily into the Christian region, and there, instead of being hideous, take on a shape of beauty, and become expressions of the most blessed truths. And what is the centre idea that lies in this metaphor, if you like to call it so? It is this: absolute authority, which has for its correlative—for the thing in us that answers to it—unconditional submission. Jesus Christ has the perfect right to command each of us, and we are bound to bow ourselves, unreluctant, unmurmuring, unhesitating, with complete submission at His feet. And His authority, and our submission, go far, far deeper than the most despotic sway of the most

tyrannous master, or than the most abject submission of the most down-trodden slave. For no man can coerce another man's will, and no man can require more, or can ever get more, than the outward obedience, which may be rendered with the most sullen and fixed rebellion of a hating heart and obstinate will. Absolute submission is not all that makes a disciple, but depend upon it there is no discipleship worth calling by the name without it. Bow your obstinate wills, surrender yourselves and accept Him as absolute, dominant Lord over your whole being! Are you Christians after that pattern? Being freemen, are you Christ's slaves? What does it matter what you and I are set to do? Nothing! And so why need we struggle and wear our hearts out to get into conspicuous places, or to do work that shall bring some revenue of praise and glory to ourselves? "Play well thy part; there all the honour lies," the world can say. Serve Christ in anything, and it is all alike in His sight. The slave-owner had absolute power of life and death over his dependents. He could split up families; he could sell away dear ones; he could part husband and wife, parent and child. And Jesus Christ, the Lord of the household, the Lord of providence, can say to this one, "Go!" and he goes into the mists and shadows of death. And He could say to those that are most closely united, "Loose your hands! I have need of one of you yonder. I have need of the other one here." And if we are wise, if we are His servants in any real deep sense, we shall not kick against the appointments of His supreme and yet most loving providence. The slave-owner owned all that the slave owned. He gave him a little cottage, with some humble sticks of furniture in it, and a bit of ground on which to grow his vegetables for his family. But he to whom the owner of the vegetables and the stools belonged owned them too. And if we are Christ's servants, our banker's book is Christ's, and our purse is Christ's, and our investments are Christ's; and our mills, and our warehouses, and our shops, and our businesses are His. We are not His slaves if we arrogate to ourselves the right of doing what we like with His possessions. And then, still further, there comes into our apostle's picture here yet another point of resemblance between slaves and the disciples of Jesus. For what follows my text immediately is, "Ye are bought with a price." Jesus Christ has won us for Himself. There is only one price that can buy a heart, and that is a heart. There is only one way of getting a man to be mine, and that is by giving myself to be his. And so we come to the very vital, palpitating centre of all Christianity when we say, "He gave Himself for us, that He might acquire to Himself a people for His possession." The one bright point in the hideous institution of slavery was that it bound the master to provide for the slave, and though that was degrading to the inferior, it made his life a careless, childlike, merry life, even amidst the many cruelties and abominations of the system. If I am Christ's slave it is His business to take care of His own property, and I do not need to trouble myself much about it. II. Then there is the other side, about which I must say, secondly, a word or two; and that is, THE FREEDOM OF CHRIST'S SLAVES. As the text puts it, he that is called, being a servant, is the Lord's freedman. A freeman was one who was emancipated, and who therefore stood in a relation of gratitude to his emancipator and patron. So in the very word "freedman" there is contained the idea of submission to Him who has struck off the fetters. I do not forget how wisdom and truth, and noble aims, and high purposes, and culture of various kinds have, in lower degrees and partially, emancipated men from self and flesh and sin and the world and all the other fetters that bind us. But sure I am that the process is never so completely and so assuredly effected as by the simple way of absolute submission to Jesus Christ, taking Him for the supreme and unconditional Arbiter and Sovereign of a life. If we do that, if we really yield ourselves to Him, in heart and will, in life and conduct, submitting our understanding to His infallible Word, and our wills to His authority, regulating our conduct by His perfect pattern, and in all things seeking to serve Him, and to realise His presence, then be sure of this, we shall be set free from the one real bondage, and that is the bondage of our own wicked selves. There is no such tyranny as mob tyranny; and there is no such slavery as to be ruled by the mob of our own passions and lusts. And that is the only way by which a man can be delivered from the bondage of dependence upon outward things. Christian faith does so, because it brings into a life a sufficient compensation for all losses, limitations, and sorrows, and a good which is the reality of which all earthly goods are but shadows. So the slave may be free in Christ, and the poor man may be rich in Him, and the sad man may be joyful, and the joyful man may be delivered from excess of gladness, and the rich man kept

from the temptations and sins of wealth, and the freeman taught to surrender his liberty to the Lord who makes him free. And if we are the servants of Christ we shall be set free, in the measure in which we are His, from the slavery which daily becomes more oppressive as the means of communication become more complete, the slavery to popular opinion, and to men round about us. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Freedom through Christ*:—Freedom! What a word! It has in it the music of the trumpet and psaltery, the harp, the loud cymbals and the high sounding cymbals of heaven and earth! I. AMBITION SPEAKS OUT BOLDLY. Feeling fettered by our present lot, our poverty, hard toil, obscure position and such like, we indulge the animus of discontent, pine to rise above penury, grinding toil and isolation. Independence affirms that freedom is her legitimate offspring. The boy at home, curbed in many ways, feels under restraint and dreams of liberty. And this spirit of reckless independence belongs to us all. One of our ruling passions is a desire to be our own master—to do as we like—set up on our own account—throw off all Divine control. II. But some will say, TO BE FREE IS TO BE EDUCATED. There is but one thing needed, we are told, to roll back the dark cloud of bondage from the race and cause the stars of liberty to stud every man's blue vault, viz., intelligence. Give the people a profound learning, a broad culture, and you give them freedom. All will concede the great blessing of education and the utter impossibility of lifting men up without it. But it must be borne in mind that never yet have a people been made free, in any true sense, by mere intellectual culture, however profound. I appeal to Greece of old, with her high scholarship represented by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, and to France in modern history with her Voltaire, Diderot, Beaumarchais, and Rousseau. After all their learning, Greece ended in corruption, and France in the horrors of revolution. Examples we have of men, bound in hand and foot and heart by chains of vice and ill-formed habits, bearing the most crushing yoke of bondage, yet highly educated in the sense in which the term is here used. Julius Cæsar was a great scholar, but he borrowed money, which he never paid back, to bribe the people in election times, and he made common traffic of female virtues. Aristotle was profoundly educated, but he classed working men with brutes, and made lewdness in woman excusable so long as she thereby accumulated wealth. Cardinal de Richelieu was one of the brightest intellectual stars of his age, yet he lived an immoral life, being a helpless slave to intemperance and uncleanness. And what are we to say of the defaulters, rogues, impostors, and backsliders from integrity so numerous in our midst and all over the country? Looking at the facts of the case, is it not the wildest absurdity to speak of education as the ultimate source of freedom? III. Once more, GOVERNMENT ASPIRES TO BE THE TRUE LIBERATOR OF THE RACE. Now it is an absolute monarchy for which the high claim is made, now limited monarchy, now an oligarchy, now a republic. In the name of freedom has every government of earth been set up. From the capitals of all the States and the seats of power of all nations has floated the silken banner of freedom. But oh, how often the breezes that have carried out these folds from the flag-staff have brought to the people themselves a pestilence of corruption, self-seeking, intrigue, and imperialism —bondage in its worst forms! IV. Over against government, education, ambition, vaunting independence, and every other such thing, I PLACE THE DECLARATION OF THE OLD SAGE OF TARSUS AS THE ONLY REAL SOURCE OF TRUE FREEDOM: "For he that is called of the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman." When a man is called of Jesus Christ into His kingdom as a regenerated soul through the power of the Holy Spirit, such an one is free, has come into possession of that liberty which knows no trammels save what his duty to God and to man puts upon him. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." But what is the freedom here taught? First of all, it is from sin. The essential element of all servitude and degradation and bone and heart crushing forces is sin. Here, then, is the first thing from which Jesus Christ gives freedom. But Christ in the soul not only emancipates from the polluting and condemning power of sin, but secures for us the joy and exercise of the highest freedom, notwithstanding the most hampering earthly circumstances. Paul had in mind this thought. He was thinking about what the gospel did even for slaves. In short, Paul says: "It makes no difference what your calling is or what your circumstances are; if Christ is in you, you are a free man, and your duty is to serve Him." How this argument rebuts what many affirm, that they cannot be Christians because of their peculiar lot in life; or they cannot serve the Lord because the state of their affairs will not permit them. Some plead poverty

as an excuse for not being Christians, or for taking no part in the service of Christ and the work of the Church. Not a few say they have no time for these things. Others again parade the wrong-doing of others, the hindrances placed in their way, it may be, by domestic infelicities. Over against this, the Scriptures declare that the grace of God is sufficient to save us, no matter what our lot or fortune may be, and being saved, we are, therefore, free men in Christ, and hence His servants. Art thou called being a slave—a poor person, a man crushed with cares and toil, a heart-broken husband or wife, mother or father—care nothing for it. Remember that God is greater than adverse circumstances, and He can straighten every one of them and make you free to enjoy and serve Him. Nothing is any more a thraldom when the soul has been born into the light and liberty of the gospel. With this liberty comes the duty of serving the Lord—a duty which is never irksome, but always a glorious delight, as all obligations springing out of a sense of true freedom ever are. "He that is called, being free, is Christ's servant." My text also involves freedom from all ecclesiastical trammels and sectarian and denominational rigidities. Not that we are to condemn Church forms and laws and observances, but these are not to hamper us in our service of Christ or, in any way, keep us from the largest possible usefulness. Then, too, political freedom is found in Christ. "Of one thing I am convinced," remarked a Brahmin, "do what we will, oppose it as we may, it is the Christian's Bible that will work the regeneration of India. Wise indeed is this confession of the learned Oriental. Applicable to every nation is the thing he says. The Bible is the world's emancipator. (*A. H. Moment.*) *In Christ, the servant the Lord's freeman: the free man Christ's servant:*—In Christ there is neither bond nor free. It is not what they are with respect to man that is thought of, but what they are with respect to Christ. Thus considered, the servant is the Lord's free man, the free man is Christ's servant. The apostle speaks to the bond as free. The man who is called being a servant, may remain so. And then in some sense he is still the servant of his earthly master, and in some sense he is not so. His freedom consists in his being Christ's. That one thing, while it sets him free from the dominion of sin, and thus brings him into the glorious liberty of the children of God, changes the nature of that service which he pays to his earthly master, and gives the character of liberty to that also. For in reality he has but one master, *i.e.*, the Lord; and the service which he now most dutifully renders to his master on earth, is but a part of the service which he pays to his Master in heaven. It may be still called service from the nature of the work, but it is freedom from the spirit in which it is done. As the servant of man, he once found his work drudgery, and did it unwillingly. But as the Lord's freeman, he finds it liberty, and does it with delight. He then served through fear. He now serves through love, and therefore performs every part of his duty better than ever he did. His joy is to approve himself to the Master whose he is, and whom he loves, as well as serves. His service is uniform, because Jesus is always the same, whatever be the changing humour of an earthly master. But now let us pass to him who has been called, being free. Of him it is said, that he is Christ's servant. He also is reminded that he has a master. In fact, he that is called being a servant, and he that is called being free, are both, after their calling, exactly in the same circumstances. Both are under the law to Christ, and neither of them under the law to man any further than the law of Christ permits. The servant, therefore, is bound no further than the superior will of Christ requires; and so far the free man, when he becomes the servant of Christ, is bound also. He is no longer his own. He has not himself only to please. He has talents committed to him, and he must employ them according to the will of Him who committed them. His time is not to be idled away, nor his health and strength wasted in frivolous employments, nor his substance squandered in selfish gratifications. And these, whether they be professional, or mercantile, or agricultural, are all appointed of God; and by them the servants of Christ, though they serve no one earthly master, serve the public at the command of their Master. Thus those who are not servants to men, are servants to Christ. They have to serve their generation by His will; and they have to receive the law from Him. And now let us endeavour to review the subject in as practical a manner as we may be enabled to do. We have already observed, that to be the servant of Christ, and to be the Lord's free man, are one and the same thing. Thus both were the servants of Christ, and both were free, because the service of both was a service of love. A service of love must be a free service, because it is childlike and willing,

delighting to do what pleases him whose person is loved, as well as his authority owned. But whence arises this love which makes the servant of Christ thus affectionately dutiful, the free man of the Lord thus willingly laborious? It is faith. The servant of Christ can then only be satisfied when he is conscious of being where he is, and doing what he does, according to the will of Christ. Hence will arise two benefits. 1. It is obvious that this habitual reference to the will of his Lord will very much tend to give him assurance, and to prevent doubts concerning his state. And it is absolutely necessary to this end. It is impossible for a man to hope assuredly who lives negligently. They who habitually acknowledge Christ as a Master will also steadily hope in Him as a Saviour. 2. And as this spirit of obedience, which leads a man habitually to consider himself as Christ's servant, is the best evidence of that faith and interest in Christ with which salvation is connected, so it gives a nobleness to every station of life, and every work of man, which is thus conducted. The magistrate on his bench, or even the monarch on his throne, has the most exalted, as well as the most just views of his office, when he considers himself as the minister of God, as the servant of Jesus Christ. 3. Lastly, I may observe, that Christ is too good a Master to let His servants obey Him for nothing. (*J. Fawcett.*) *Personal Christianity for the bond and the free:* — Personal Christianity — I. MAY BE POSSESSED BY BOTH BOND AND FREE (ver. 22). Many slaves were in connection with the Corinthian Church. Naturally enough some would desire their emancipation, and the more so as Christianity gave them a sublime sense of their manhood. Paul's advice is not to be too anxious about their enfranchisement, but rather to be anxious to "abide" in their "calling," their religion. Christianity is for man as man, not for him as bond or free; it comes to him as outward nature comes to him, with equal freeness and fitness for all. The physical, civil, or ecclesiastical condition of a man, therefore, in this life is no excuse for his not becoming a Christian; though bound in chains, his soul is free, and it is with the soul that Christianity has to do. Slaves were members of many of the first Churches, and religion reigned amongst a large number of American slaves. II. ITS POSSESSION, WHETHER BY THE BOND OR THE FREE, INVESTS MAN WITH THE HIGHEST LIBERTY. He is the "Lord's freeman," however manacled his bodily limbs. There is no freedom like this from the dominion and consequences of moral wrong—the "glorious liberty of the children of God." III. THIS HIGHEST LIBERTY AUGMENTS MAN'S OBLIGATION TO SERVE CHRIST (ver. 23). No creature owns itself. The highest angel has nothing in him that he can call his own. Man is not merely the property of God on the ground of creatureship, but on the ground of Christ's interposition (chap. vi. 19). This being the case, however free and independent of men, you must ever serve Christ heartily, faithfully, loyally, and for ever. His service is perfect freedom, it is heaven. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The subordination of love:* — Slavery is the subordination of one will to another will under the influence of fear; loyalty is the subordination of one will to another will under the inspiration of love. Here are two soldiers: one has been dragged by conscription and put in the army, and fights for fear, because there is a bayonet behind him; and beside him another man who loves his country, his flag, and he courts danger and death for love's sake—fear there, loyalty here. Here are two pupils sitting side by side in school: one afraid of his teacher, with his mind half on his book and half on his sports, eyeing his teacher and dreading the rod—slave, he! at his side another pupil who reveres the teacher, whose ambition it is to be such a scholar as this teacher and such a man as this man is—loyal pupil, he! Subordination to a larger, nobler, diviner will for reverence' sake and for love's sake is not slavery; it is the great emancipator of the world. The men who have believed in Divine sovereignty have not been the world's slaves, they have been the world's freemen. When a man has a conscience behind his will, and God behind his conscience, no man can put manacles upon his wrists. Submission is not the weak, invertebrate, jellyfish quality that men imagine it to be. Submission to fear is. But submission to love and loyalty is not. Men tell us that if a man yields his will to the sovereign and supreme will of Christ, he will be made gentle, amiable, peaceful, kindly, meek, but the heroic will be taken out of him. Ask history to answer the question. What sort of men were the Scotch Presbyterians? Not famous for meekness and gentleness and invertebrate qualities. What sort of men were the Swiss Calvinists? Not men famous for truckling and letting other people walk over them. What sort of people were the New England Puritans? Men who were strong because their will had behind it the Divine will, and they willed to do the will of Another. A

weak will is one thing, and an obedient will is another and a very different thing. To be a Christian is to take the Divine will as your will. (*Lyman Abbott.*) *Christ's freemen* :—If you are His servants you are free from all besides; if you give yourselves up to Jesus Christ, in the measure in which you give yourselves up to Him, you will be set at liberty from the worst of all slaveries, that is the slavery of your own will and your own weakness, and your own tastes and fancies. You will be set at liberty from the dependence upon men, from thinking about their opinion. You will be set at liberty from your dependence upon externals, from feeling as if you could not live unless you had this, that, or the other person or thing. You will be emancipated from fears and hopes which torture the men who strike their roots no deeper than this visible film of time which floats upon the surface of the great invisible abyss of Eternity. If you have Christ for your Master you will be the masters of the world, and of time and sense and men and all besides; and so, being triumphed over by Him, you will share in His triumph. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) **Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men** (see on chap. vi. 20).—*True freedom* :—Observe—I. THE IMPORT OF THE APOSTLE'S COUNSEL. "Be not under bondage to men." 1. This excludes—(1) Slavish fear. (2) Servility. (3) Unlawful submission. 2. A servant must maintain his Christian dignity as serving the Lord Christ. II. THE MOTIVE BY WHICH HE ENFORCES IT. Christ's claim upon us secured by redeeming grace—by the price of blood. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Ver. 24. **Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God.**—*The Christian calling* :—1. The word "calling" in a Christian sense is a condensed confession of faith. It means that our life is governed by a will above it, and is capable of receiving influences of attraction from the Spirit of God. 2. In its secular use, as a man's common employment, it discovers the same origin. It must have sprung up in days when it was believed that each man's business was sacred, and that he himself was on a Divine errand. 3. The expression stirs some feeling of mystery; yet a life without the sense of God calling it is far more perplexing than with that key to its changes. For severed from a Father it is not only a mystery but a contradiction, an enigma which neither genius nor sensuality nor stoicism, nor suicide can solve. Earnest minds, however, find rational comfort in it, and only triflers will ignore it altogether. So true is this that the world's great men have represented themselves as led on by a power beyond themselves—a genius, a destiny, or a deity. But the apostle refers to something higher and holier than this dreamy sentiment. It is God who calls. Christ has lived, and He asks living followers. He has died, and asks the spirit of sacrifice. 4. It is remarkable how perseveringly the New Testament clings to this conception (see Concordance on "called" and "calling"). Note its prominent teachings. I. THE BUSINESS OF A CHRISTIAN LIFE IS SOMETHING SPECIAL AND DISTINCTIVE. 1. It is a "calling" by itself. It is to be distinguished from all other occupations, systems, &c. It springs from its own root, grows by its own laws, bears its own peculiar fruit. 2. It is a Divine calling. Paul speaks as if no pursuit were to be thought of in comparison with it. II. THIS IDEA OF A CALLING INDIVIDUALISES THE CHRISTIAN PERSON. Paul had no conception of a social Christianity apart from the personal righteousness of the men who make up society, and therefore he uses personal language. It is quite vain for us to congratulate ourselves on a state of general integrity and order, if we tolerate depravity in ourselves, or excuse it in the usages of the class to which we belong. If we have a community of a thousand people, in which we want to see the Christian graces flourishing, our only way is to go to work and turn one and another into a Christian person, each beginning with himself. How weary God must be at hearing these Pharisaic praises of a Christian country, legislation, &c., from those who allow Christianity to conquer no one of their propensities. III. NOTWITHSTANDING ALL THIS, THE CALLING IS OF UNIVERSAL APPLICATION. It is not meant for a class here and there. "Whosoever will"; and its speciality is the very ground of its universality. For it addresses men—1. Of all kinds of mental equipment. 2. Of all varieties of outward fortune. 3. IN every time. Conclusion: The text appeals to—1. Families. 2. Parents. 3. Men of action. (*Bp. Huntington.*) *Abiding in our calling* :—The Christian must appear in the man of business. He is to abide with God. I. BY THE MODERATION OF HIS DESIRES AND EXERTIONS; not entangling himself in the affairs of this life; diligent in business, but not, by multiplication and complexity, injuring the health of his body and the peace of his mind, and compelling himself,

if not to omit, to curtail his religious duties. II. By UNVARIABLE CONSCIENTIOUSNESS; not content to keep himself within the precincts of legal obligation, but shunning everything that is mean and over-reaching; and exemplifying everything that is fair and honourable. III. By A DEVOUT TEMPER AND HABIT that will remind him of the presence of God; that will keep him from planning any enterprise without dependence upon Heaven; practically owning the agency of Providence in all the contingencies of his affairs; ascribing all to the blessing of the Lord. Conclusion: This secular life is Christianised, and the bounds of religion enlarged far beyond the district of what we commonly mean by devotion. In all situations, the cares of life demand the vaster part of his time and attention; but he must always walk before the Lord in the land of the living; and whether he eats or drinks, or whatever he does, he may do all to the glory of God. The spirit of devotion actuates him in the absence of its forms; and this principle, as is reported of the philosopher's stone, turns all it touches into gold. Thus his natural actions become moral; his civil duties become religious; the field or the warehouse is holy ground; and the man of business is the "man of God." (*Weekly Pulpit.*) *How to walk with God in our calling*:—I. A GOOD CALLING IS A GREAT MERCY, whether you take the word "calling" for the calling of condition, or for the calling of employment. For—1. A man is thereby kept—(1) From idleness, which is the nurse of all wickedness. (2) From busy-bodiedness. The more idle a man is the more apt he is to be meddling with others' matters (2 Thess. iii. 11). 2. A lawful calling is God's ground, inasmuch as no calling or an unlawful one is the devil's ground. II. A MAN HAVING A GOOD CALLING IS TO ABIDE THEREIN. 1. Therefore there is an aptness in us to change or lay down our callings, or why should the apostle three times call upon us to abide in them? 2. But it is not absolutely unlawful for a man to leave or to change his calling. For possibly a man—(1) May be qualified for higher employments. In this case, David left his calling of a shepherd and became a king; the apostles left the calling of their fishing and became apostles. (2) May see the same hand of God leading him out of his calling which did bring him into it. So when Noah had the same command to go out of the ark that he had to go in, then he went out. (3) May be forced through want to change his calling. Paul, though a preacher and apostle, was sometimes forced to work with his hands. 3. Though it be lawful in some cases to do so, yet ordinarily a man is to abide in his calling, for a good calling is the Lord's gift. (1) It is God that calls a man to it, and is it likely that God will bless him who deserts it? (2) There is no calling but God may be served and enjoyed therein (ver. 22). 4. But, says one, that is the reason why I would lay down my calling, because I cannot serve God so well therein. Are you sure of that? Luther tells us of a certain man that was given to anger, and who to avoid provocation would go live alone as an hermit; and going to the well with his pitcher something displeased him, and he threw down his pitcher, and he broke it in anger; which when he had done, he said, Well, now I see it is not in my condition, but in my heart, that doth cause provocation; therefore I will return to my calling again. III. IT IS THE DUTY OF EVERY MAN TO WALK WITH GOD IN HIS CALLING, and not barely to abide therein. 1. It was so from the beginning. Adam had a calling in the state of innocency, and therein he was to walk with God. 2. And if a man do not walk with God in his calling, how can he walk with God at all? A man is not said to walk with God because he prays in the morning or evening; walking is a constant thing. 3. Thereby a man is distinguished from men of the world. A man is not of another world because he deserts his calling that he may give himself unto his devotions. Christ Himself was in the world, "but not of the world." 4. This is that which will sweeten and elevate your callings: everything is raised or depressed as God is present with it or absent from it. 5. Every man is as he is in his calling; a man hath no more grace than he may or can use in his calling; and though I have all parts and gifts, yet if I be not gracious in my calling, they are but sounding brass and as tinkling cymbal. IV. WHAT SHOULD A MAN DO THAT HE MAY WALK WITH GOD IN HIS CALLING? 1. Negatively. (1) You must not be ignorant of the way of your calling; for if you take up a calling, and are ignorant of it, you may tempt God therein. Every man should be the master of his art. (2) You must not be negligent. Diligence in our callings is commanded, commended, and rewarded in Scripture. (3) You must not deal unjustly with men (Micah vi. 8). (4) You must not be too fond of your calling, or you will forget the God of your calling. You will go with an apron into your shop that you may keep your clothes clean, and hath not your soul as much need of an apron in your

calling? If the ivy clings too close unto the oak it hindereth its growth; so if your callings cling too close to you, and you to your callings, it will hinder your spiritual growth. 2. Affirmatively. (1) You must observe what those temptations are that are incident to your calling, and take heed thereof (vers. 23, 35). (2) You must live by faith in your callings. Thereby you shall be kept from covetousness and love of the world. "This is our victory," &c. (3) Whatever you do therein, do all to the glory of God. (4) Be sure that you so manage your calling that your general calling may not be a hindrance, but a help to your particular; and thus your particular calling may be no hindrance, but a help to your general calling. (5) Be sure that you turn as God turns, sweetly complying with His dispensations in the way of your calling. (6) You must judge of things in your calling as God judges. (7) You must spiritualise your particular calling with heavenly things; not put all upon a morning and an evening prayer. Conclusion: If you walk with God in your particular calliug, God will walk with you in your general calling. 1. Then shall your calling be a blessing to you indeed, and you shall have a greater reward than the wealth of your calling. 2. Thereby the knots and difficulties of your callings shall be taken off, and your way made easy. 3. Thereby you shall be kept from the sins and temptations of your calling. 4. Thereby shall your way of godliness be convincing and winning. (*W. Bridge, M.A.*) *The dignity of the secular calling*:—1. It is unfortunate that this chapter is mainly occupied with subjects the public discussion of which is in these days hardly possible. Few portions of his Epistles more largely reveal the far-sighted wisdom of St. Paul. He was the foremost statesman of the kingdom of heaven. The golden mean between extreme opinions to him was clear. How firmly he held the balance between asceticism and license! 2. The subject here is most difficult and delicate. Fanatics on either side were watching eagerly for a word which might support their views. A less able, wise, and self-controlled man might easily, with such a force as the gospel, have shattered the whole framework of civilisation. Well was it for the world that this tremendous power of revolution was in hands so wise, so calm, so firm. Note—I. THE EARNEST DESIRE OF ST. PAUL THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO VIOLENT, VISIBLE CHANGE IN THE RELATIONS OF CLASSES AND THE ORGANISATION OF SOCIETY. "These men, that have turned the world upside-down, are come hither also." But the marvel is that practically they overturned so little, and left so much peacefully and patiently to grow. Whatever has come forth from Christianity for human welfare and progress has come, not from without, by any rearrangement of classes or orders, but from within, by the renewing and reordering of individual arts. Christianity introduced an idea absolutely new into the world: "There is neither Greek nor Jew . . . for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Here was explosive matter enough to shatter society. This issue Paul's wisdom and firmness averted. Read the Epistle to Philemon. What a world of practical wisdom is there. Take this great question of slavery. The slaves bore the yoke uneasily, and in fact slavery in those days was eating out the very heart of the empire. Throw this new thought into their minds, It is hateful to God and wrong; all are equal before Him, and have the right from Him to contend for equality. It might have originated a new and more awful servile war, which would have reduced to ruin the whole structure of Roman society, ages before the German races were trained to occupy its room. But the gospel announced the principle, and yet maintained the order. II. PAUL'S DEEP CONVICTION THAT NO EXTERNAL CHANGE IN THE CONDITION AND RELATIONS OF MEN IS WORTH ANYTHING UNLESS IT GROW OUT OF AND CLOTHE A CHANGE DEEP DOWN IN INDIVIDUAL SOULS. Nothing can be more fallacious than the notion that in different circumstances you would be a different man. A bad slave would be a bad master; a bad child a bad parent; a bad man would be bad everywhere. Man cannot be content with the world as it is. But he dreams that the mischief is in things. God says it is in souls. And God sets up His kingdom in souls—in the heart of the mischief. The Jews thought the evil was in their condition, so they dreamed of a splendid Messiah's kingdom. God saw that it was in their spirits, and said, "the kingdom of God is within you." Paul would have had little hope of any great ultimate good if he could simply have struck the sceptre out of the hand of the brutal Nero, emancipated every slave in the broad Roman dominion; while no new life-blood was poured into the exhausted veins of society. No! it must go on struggling, suffering, while the inward renewing was working; then it might be lifted bodily into a clearer and brighter heaven. III. THAT THE CONDITION OF A MAN IN HIS PARTICULAR CALLING IS JUST THE INSTRUMENT WHICH GOD HAS FURNISHED, BY THE USE OF WHICH HE MAY TRAIN HIMSELF

FOR YET HIGHER THINGS. Do not be content to aspire, but grow. Do not demand things as abstract rights, win them by manifest power. Do not talk of being, or boast of calling, but be, and thus make your calling and election sure. And this runs through the whole scale of life. Have you capacity for higher things? Prove it by doing the lower more perfectly. Throw all your soul into your work; you are surely training yourself for the highest work of heaven (Luke xix. 16, 17). Despising the one talent it the most fatal folly. All faculty is like seed. Planted in work, it grows, and fills wide neighbourhoods with shade and fruit. The condition wherein a man is called is God's best school for him. Not by wriggling hastily out of it, but by working bravely and patiently in it, he is helping the progress of his own being and of mankind. IV. BUT A MAN MAY SAY, IT IS POOR WORK AFTER ALL. IS IT? "THEREIN ABIDE WITH GOD." Let the poorest remember that God abode with it; and that all that is most blessed for the universe came to it out of a poor workman's home. But the lot is a very humble one! Be it so. It is humble with Him. What is it to abide in our lot with God? Surely it means, Let a man abide in it with the full consciousness of all that he is, all that he has, all that he shall have, in Christ Jesus. 1. Let him dismiss all fretful impatience at the meanness of his figure and the poorness of his pay. Such matters are not, cannot be, vital to a man who is so rich in hope. He must calmly wait God's time. 2. Let him know that the Lord abides with him in his lot, and has a deeper interest and joy in his daily labour than in the debates of the world's most famous congresses, and the acts of its most splendid kings. 3. The man who abides with God in the lowliest condition makes that condition illustrious by the patient, strenuous discharge of its duties, and manly resistance to the temptations which beset it, and which drag many a helpless worldling down. 4. Such a man will wait for God's word, and not man's, to "go up higher." 5. Wherever he is, he will abide with dignity and patience, because assured of the supreme promotion at last. (*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*) *Godliness in all conditions of life*:—The text teaches—I. THAT MEN ARE FOUND IN VARIOUS CONDITIONS OF LIFE. Some are free men, some are slaves, &c. This variety—1. Affords scope for benevolent activity. If all men were in precisely identical worldly conditions, there would be manifestly no sphere for it. 2. Creates a bond of social unity. Gratitude is one of the strongest social ties, and hence the relation between the giver and the receiver, the helper and the helped, is generally close, tender, and strong. Were all men in exactly the same condition, there would be a spirit of reckless independency, and a state of social disorder. 3. Invests society with social charms. Variety is one of the charms of existence. II. THAT SOME OF THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE ARE OF DIVINE APPOINTMENT. Of some this cannot be said. People are found in—1. Matrimonial relations which God has not appointed. Two people are brought together for life whose instincts, temperaments, habits, are antagonistic. 2. Ecclesiastical positions which God has not appointed. 3. Commercial engagements which God has not appointed. Those who turn the ores of the earth into implements of destruction, and distil the fruits of the earth into liquids that drown the reason, ruin the health, and destroy the morals of a community, are not "called" to their sphere. III. THAT IN EVERY CONDITION OF LIFE MEN SHOULD PRACTISE GODLINESS. What is it to "abide with God"? It means constancy of supreme love and obedience to Him, and of devotion to His cause. Godliness is—1. Binding in all conditions of life. As much so in the market as in the chamber or the temple. God is everywhere, and your relation to Him remains intact in all circumstances. 2. Possible. Let no man say his conditions are such that he cannot be religious. If they really are, he must come out of them. If lawful, God knows them, and will help you in them. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The Christian life*:—Three times within the compass of a very few verses this injunction is repeated (vers. 17, 20, 24). 1. The reason for this emphatic reiteration is that there were strong temptations to restlessness besetting the early Christians. The great change from heathenism to Christianity would seem to loosen the joints of all life. Hence would tend to come the rupture of family ties, the Jewish convert seeking to become like a Gentile, and *vice versâ*, and the slave trying to be free. To all three the apostle says, Stop where you are. For if Christianity had become the mere instrument of social revolution, its development would have been thrown back for centuries, and the whole worth and power of it, for those who first apprehended it, would have been lost. Paul believed in the diffusion of the principles which he proclaimed, and the mighty name which he served, as able to girdle the poison-tree, and to take the bark off it, and the rest—the slow dying—might be left to time. 2. But, besides

this more especial application of the text, it carries with it a large general principle that applies to all. Our maxim is, "Get on!" Paul's is, "Never mind about getting on, get up!" Our notion is, "Try to make the circumstances what I would like to have them." Paul's is, "Leave circumstances to take care of themselves—or rather leave God to take care of the circumstances—and everything else will right itself." I. OUR CHIEF EFFORT IN LIFE OUGHT TO BE UNION WITH GOD. "Abide with God" means—1. Constant communion, the occupation of all our nature with Him. As we go to our work to-morrow, what difference would obedience to this precept make upon our lives? Before all else, we should think of that Divine Mind that is waiting to illumine our darkness; we should feel the glow of that perfect Love which, in the midst of change, treachery, is ready to fill our hearts with tenderness and tranquillity; we should bow before that Will which is "the good pleasure of His goodness and the counsel of His grace." And with such a God ever in our thoughts, love, and obedience, what room would there be for agitations and distractions? They die in the fruition of a present God all-sufficient, even as the sun when it is risen may wither the weeds that grow about the fruitful tree whose deeper roots are but warmed by the rays that ripen the rich clusters which it bears. 2. And then there will follow the recognition of God's will as operating in and determining all circumstances. When our whole soul is occupied with Him, we shall see Him everywhere, and connect everything which befalls ourselves and the world with Him. II. SUCH UNION WITH GOD WILL LEAD TO CONTENTED CONTINUANCE IN OUR PLACE, WHATEVER IT BE. You have been "called" in such and such worldly circumstances, which proves that these circumstances do not obstruct the highest and richest blessings. And that is the one point of view from which we can bear to look upon the world and not be bewildered and overmastered by it. Peace, a true appreciation of all outward good and a charm against the bitterest sting of outward evils, a patient continuance in the place where He has set us, are all ours—when by fellowship with Him we look upon our work as doing His will, and upon all our possessions and conditions as means for making us like Himself. The only question worth asking in regard to the externals of our life is, How far does each thing help me to be a good man, and open my understanding to apprehend God, and prepare me for the world beyond? Is there any other more satisfying, more majestic thought of life than this—the scaffolding by which souls are built up into the temple of God! And to care whether a thing is painful or pleasant is as absurd as to care whether the bricklayer's trowel is knocking the sharp corner off a brick, or plastering mortar on the one below it before he lays it carefully on its course. Is the building getting on? That is the one question that is worth thinking about. If, then, we have once got hold of that principle that all the antitheses of life are the product of His will, the manifestation of His mind, His means for our discipline, then we have the talisman which will preserve us from the fever of desire and the shivering fits of anxiety as to things which perish. III. SUCH CONTENTED CONTINUANCE IN OUR PLACE IS THE DICTATE OF THE TRUEST WISDOM. 1. Though you may change about as much as you like, there is a pretty substantial equipoise and identity in the amount of pain and pleasure in all external conditions. The total length of day and night all the year round is the same at the North Pole and at the Equator. It does not matter much at what degrees between the two we live, when the thing comes to be made up we shall be all pretty much upon an equality. What is the use of such eager desires to change our condition, when every condition has disadvantages attending its advantages, as certainly as a shadow; and when all have pretty nearly the same quantity of the raw material of pain and pleasure, and when the amount of either actually experienced by us depends not on where we are, but on what we are? 2. Whilst the portion of external pain and pleasure summed up comes pretty much to the same in everybody's life, any condition may yield the fruit of devout fellowship with God. 3. What is the need for my troubling myself about outward changes, when in Christ I can get all the peculiarities which make any given position desirable to me? Hear how Paul talks to slaves wanting to be set free (vers. 21, 22). If a man is a slave he may be free in Christ. If free, he may have the joy of utter submission to an absolute master in Christ. If you and I are lonely we may feel all the delights of society by union with Him. If distracted by companionship, and seeking for seclusion, we may get all the peace of perfect privacy in fellowship with Him. If we are rich and think that if we were poorer we should be less tempted, we may find all for which we covet poverty in communion with Him. If we are poor and fancy that

if we had a little more we should be happier, we may find all tranquillity in Him. 4. Think seriously of the antagonism between these principles and the maxims current in the world. Our text is a revolutionary one. It is dead against the watchwords that you fathers give your children—"push," "energy," "advancement," "get on whatever you do." If you, by God's grace, lay hold of these principles, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred you will have to make up your minds to let the big prizes of your trade go into other people's hands, and be contented to say, "I live by peaceful, high, pure, Christ-like thoughts." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Vocation*:—I want to take the general principle Paul lays down here and draw from it some lessons which I think it plainly teaches. 1. In the first place, then, we learn that our daily work may be work to which we are divinely called. Now that is not how many men think of their work. We may admit that the prophet, the reformer, or the patriot receive their calling from above—that a John Knox, a Joan of Arc, were called to their vocations in life; but to most people it seems a little ridiculous to say that a painter, a sailor, a manufacturer, or merchant has been called by God to do the work he is doing. The reason we think this is, I suppose, because of the hard definition we make between the sacred and the secular. That distinction should not by any means be an absolute distinction. In the tabernacle, in the Jewish temple, there was a "holy" and a "holy of holies," and yet they were both under the same roof, and formed part of the great Temple of God; and so it is with the things we call sacred and the things we call secular. We must admit that much of God's work is what we would call secular. He makes the sun to shine, the rivers to flow, the grass to spring: and if God is interested in work like that, the man ought not to feel he is bemeaning himself if God calls upon him to be a fellow-labourer in the same vineyard. For instance, we talk of God supplying us with food. But when we come to ask how it is that the world is provided with its meat, we find that God calls in human agencies. The farmer who grows the grain, the miller who grinds it, and the baker who makes the bread, have all been called by God. 2. There is another great lesson to be drawn from this principle, and it is—if this be true we ought to have a plain call to the occupation we follow, because it must be admitted that every occupation is not a Divine occupation. Sometimes a man is engaged in a particular form of business which his conscience tells him is wrong; such a man cannot think he is Divinely called. Again, a young man may be employed in a business that is worked on wrong principles. Another man may be employed in quite an honest calling, yet for which he is unsuited—sometimes a square man gets into a round hole—and if he gets a change to a vocation he likes, he should take the opportunity and enter into the calling he really cares for. How does God call upon us? Well, sometimes He gives us a bias for a special business. Another way in which God's guiding hand comes in is in our outward circumstances, because we must remember these circumstances are shaped by God's own hand, and sometimes our way is made pretty clear by circumstances alone. Another way in which God's voice can be heard is in the advice of our friends, and we ought to take the advice of those who can look at our character and work from a different standpoint than that we ourselves occupy. And now let me say this—that we should all choose our calling in the full light of the Word of God, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Then we must remember prayer. Remember that more things are done by prayer than people think of; that if we lift up our voices in prayer for guidance, that guidance will come. Again, I would remark that when we have received our calling we should abide in it. "Let every man abide in the calling wherewith he is called." No doubt, the statement might be twisted into a wrong meaning. It might be said that this was an advocacy of the great fallacy that whatever is, is right, teaching that man should have no aspirations after better things. Christianity is something that has the principle of revolution in it; and yet though Christianity has the revolutionary principle inside of it, it does not make its followers revolutionists. And now in the last place we are taught that, abiding in our callings, we should therein abide with God. It matters not what your duties are, however common, however merely secular, do them as under your great Master's eyes. (*J. C. Lambert.*) *Our calling*:—We are the subjects of two callings. There is our "high calling of God in Christ Jesus," that is the calling of grace; and there is our outward situation in life, that is the calling of Providence. In the text both these callings are mentioned, our temporal and our spiritual calling; and we are directed to abide in the same temporal calling, wherein we may be, when we are spiritually called. A Christian man is not

to murmur or be fretful and restless in that situation which the providence of God has assigned to him, but to be patient, quiet, submissive, and cheerful in it. Grace, when it takes possession of a man, does not alter his place in society, nor annul the obligations that pertain to it, unless it be intrinsically wrong and sinful, requiring of him a course of action which is immoral and injurious. If that be its character, it is the devil's calling and not God's, and we cannot too promptly abandon it at whatever sacrifice. Now what I wish to impress upon you is that our temporal condition, with that peculiar form of life which it imposes, is a calling, and is such because God has called us into it. I would remind you that the fashion of our existence in this world is not an accident, not the fruit of chance, nor of our own will, nor of the will of other men. God has assigned us our place. Whether we shall work with our brains or our hands, and in which of the various departments of human activity that belong to either, He has determined. How important, indeed, is the truth which we express in the naming our work in this world our vocation, or which is the same, finding utterance in homelier Anglo-Saxon, our calling. What a calming, elevating, solemnising view of the tasks which we find ourselves set in this world to do, this word would give us if we did but realise it to the full. What a help is this thought to enable us to appreciate justly the dignity of our work, though it were far humbler work even in the eyes of men, than that of any one of us present! What an assistance in calming unsettled thoughts and desires, such as would make us wish to be something else than that which we are! What a source of confidence when we are tempted to lose heart, and to doubt whether we shall be able to carry through our work with any blessing or profit to ourselves or others! It is our vocation, our calling; and He who called us to it will fit us for it and strengthen us in it. That the circumstances which frame our outward condition into its actual fashion are of God's ordering, none will doubt, who believe in the presence and agency of God in the affairs of the world. Our parentage, the period of our birth, the associations of our childhood, the events that betide us in our early days, the influences that act upon us as we advance to manhood, all the causes that co-operate to fasten upon our life the form it finally and permanently assumes, are of God's ordering and fixing. And thus the whole sum of society, in all its complicated framework, its mutual relations and dependences, its necessary gradations and shares of honour and advantage, will appear to be a visible outgoing of the Divine will, instinct throughout with a Divine presence, a Divine authority, and a Divine blessing; and every member of the same, in his own proper station and work, his special "vocation and ministry," believing God made his place for him and him for his place, will be enabled to walk in it with God, without pride in elevation, with self-respect in inferiority, in a spirit of cheerful submission, conscientious fidelity, and lowly hope. What we contend for is that every Christian should believe himself called to every work in which he finds his occupation and his livelihood; and that, except he believes this, the work of life, whatever it may be outwardly, will be unholy and cheerless, lack its best stimulus and its purest support and comfort, and be pursued without confidence in God, or any expectation of high and worthy fruit. The rich man who is exempt from the necessity of relying on some trade or profession for a living, is not so exempt in order that he may be an idler. He also has a calling, and a calling has always a work, and the work of his calling is by no means the least arduous and difficult; and if, because he is not driven to it by the stern pressure of necessity, he leaves it undone, and dies a mere loiterer, his will be the fearful reckoning of one who wrapped not one but many talents in a napkin and hid them in the earth. This view of our work as a calling communicates dignity and comfort to life, and this not in some of its ranges, but in all of them. The precious ointment on the head goes down to the skirts of the garments. There is no valley in life so low that the dew of Divine service does not visit and refresh it. The honour of the noble head pervades the family, stops not at the favourite of the lord, or chief officer of the household, but goes on till it reaches the bottom of the social fabric; and the lowest menial shines in the reflected lustre of his Master. And surely there can be no debasement in filling any station which God has created and assigned to us. It is an honour to serve Him in any place. It is looking upon our lot in life apart from God, viewing ourselves as the sport of a blind chance, or the victim of human tyranny, caprice, or injustice, that makes us despise and scorn it, view it with a bitter contempt and an indignant hatred. Only let us look at it as our calling, the utterance of God's will, and the appointment of God's wisdom, and we shall respect it and ourselves in it; for we shall see

that we are parts of a system, in which it is an honour to hold any position, of a mechanism so glorious, that the cog of the smallest wheel, or the cord of the obscurest pulley that is needful to its well-being and well-working, is honoured by its function. Nothing has so elevating an influence on men as to feel that they are members of a Divine economy in which honour depends not upon place, but upon faithfulness; so that some who are far down in it, may be higher in the estimation of Him whose judgment is its only rule of eminence, than many that are outwardly above them, as sweet violets lie low and nestle in the sod, overhung and hidden by tall, thrifty, but idle weeds, and gaudy but scentless blossoms. But if this view of the work of life as a calling confers on life a dignity that relieves and gladdens it, so does it also load it with a weight of responsibility which communicates to it a tincture of seriousness and solemnity. Seeing that all stations are of God, it is indeed a grave and awful thing to live in any station. God does not ask at our hands volunteer services, but prescribed and ordered services; and if in the final reckoning we undertake to recite our performances of the former kind, we shall be cut short with the inquiry, Who hath required this at your hand? how did you fill your station? A soldier who is appointed to stand sentry will not escape censure if he has left his post to reconnoitre the enemy's camp, or capture a solitary straggler. Nor will a farmer be satisfied with his servant who leaves his field unploughed to instruct his neighbour in agricultural science. When every man does his own work, the specific service of his place, then is the welfare of society most advanced, God's will best done, the gospel best recommended, and the souls of men best fitted for eternal life. (*R. A. Hallam.*) *Every-day religion:*—Learn—I. WHAT THE RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST REALLY IS. The godly man is the man who "abides with God." We use the term "religious" very loosely, meaning by it the observance of certain ceremonies or the reception of certain opinions, but religion in deed and in truth consists in a right state and action of the soul towards God. It is our knowledge of God in Jesus Christ leading us to aim at a Christ-like life. II. RELIGION SO UNDERSTOOD IS A RIGHT AND A REASONABLE THING. It is the exercise of our powers upon Him who is infinitely worthy of them all. It is the rendering to God His own what He is pleased to ask and require. The eye is no more fitted to see or the ear to hear than is the constitution of your nature fitted for religion; and just as the formation of the eye tells us that though there may be blindness, nevertheless, we were made to see, and just as the formation of the ear tells us that though there may be deafness the ear was constructed that men should hear, just so the very structure of our moral nature teaches us that, in spite of all the wanderings of the intellect and the worse wanderings of the heart, we are made, it is the very end of our being, to love and honour God. Regarded as a life, religion is the life a man is fitted to live. Regarded as a work, religion is the work a man is adapted and intended to perform. A man is not a man in the full sense of the term unless he is religious; he is other than he ought to be, he is less than he ought to be if he is not religious. He is a ground not tilled, a seed not sown, a perversion of power. III. THIS RELIGION MAY BE A MATTER OF EVERY-DAY LIFE WITH US IN EVERY CONDITION OF LIFE A MAN MAY BE CALLED TO OCCUPY. If it consisted in the observance of certain rites, then it would be a thing of times and places; but since it is a life, it cannot be restricted to times and places and conditions. Even slaves are told that whatsoever they do they do heartily as unto the Lord. Well, now, if the hard service of slaves may be a service of God, is it not perfectly clear that every-day religion must be possible to each one of us? (*J. Vaughan Pryce, M.A.*) *Home life and duties* (Mark v. 19, and text):—1. The first text is the reply of Jesus to the maniac out of whom He had cast a legion of devils. This man certainly had passed through a very remarkable experience; and we might reasonably expect that so remarkable a case would be made much of by Jesus. This man will at once be sent out into the world as a witness to the power of his Saviour. The man seems to have thought that something of this sort was called for in his case. He prays to be always with Jesus. But instead he is met by the quiet, tame words, "Go home to thy friends. They saw you go wrong, and are the ones, above all others, to be moved by the sight of your restoration. Go back to your former life, and from that centre work outward." 2. The same thought lies in the second text. The early Christians thought that in their conversion something unearthly, prodigious, had happened, and expected a complete translation from their past life. They had caught the significance of Jesus' words, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." No disruption of your life in the world is proposed, but simply to conduct that life to nobler issues by a

purified and sanctified spirit. So the apostle says to these restless Corinthians, "Go home to your friends and to your occupation." Your relations to your fellow-beings in the household, in the state, in the market and shop, are the very points of contact at which your new spiritual life is to get access to the gross life of the world. Let every man, therefore, abide in the same calling wherein he was called. 3. There is something perennial in the mistake of this maniac and the early Church, and it arises from a total misconception of our life. We have not two lives, but life. We have not two sides to our life any more than a ray of light or a current of electricity has sides. We live; that is all. If you would see the absurdity of this division of our life, carry it up to God, our Father. He is a Spirit, yet He is constantly carrying on the affairs of a material universe. Now has God two lives—one spiritual, when He is lost in self-contemplation, or when receiving the adorations of the heavenly hosts? The other life material, when He is conducting the minute affairs of a world or a constellation, tempering its climates, mixing its soils, ordering wars and overturnings here, prosperity and abundance there? All actions of a spiritual being are spiritual. We are the children of God, and to divide our life and call one part earthly, the other heavenly, is just as absurd as to attempt to draw such a line through the life of God our Father. 4. Now, this being so, it follows that the practical life is the only point of vital, spiritual contact with the world, and if you are to make yourself felt as a spiritual power, it must be in the practical life. What is the world to you and to me? It is just our own small circle of the daily life. Now just that is our point of contact with the great round world. A tree is a mighty growth, with thousands of leaves, presenting to the sun and atmosphere a vast area of surface. Now suppose a single leaf should busy itself with thinking of that vast surface of absorption and radiation, and forget that its own daily life was its world of absorption and radiation. And having made this mistake, it hastens to make another. It forgets that its own stem is the nexus, the point of vital contact with the great life of the tree, and whatever transactions it may have with light and air, the results must be communicated to the great life of the tree through its own stem. Our point of living union with the great life of the world is our daily practical life; that is the stem which joins us to the mighty tree. Whatever dealings we may have with the heavens, the result must be communicated to the world through that one point of union, that leaf-stalk, the practical life. *E.g.*, here is an humble, honourable craft—shoemaking. Now the average Christian shoemaker says to himself, My secular life lies in my craft. But my spiritual life lies in another realm. I must go apart there to do my praying and meditating, and get my spiritual nourishment. Now Christ meets that man in his so-called spiritual realm, and orders him off at once. "Go home to thy friends." And the apostle re-echoes the words of his Lord. You are joined to the great world at the point of your daily life. The need of the world for shoes is just as imperative, therefore as sacred, as its need for praying, and singing, and Bible-reading. If it imperatively needs shoes, it just as imperatively needs good shoes. You are called of God to minister to that honourable need. The principal part of your time, your thought, your labour, is held to that one point. If you are not spiritual there, then the principal part of your life is unspiritual. If you fail of a spiritual impression there, you have failed altogether, and any fine talk or earthly experiences which you may bring to your fellow-men from some other dreamy spiritual realm will be to them as chaff and dust. They turn upon you in just wrath, saying, Away with your religion. I needed you. I had a right to demand of you, and all that I asked of you was good work. You have lost your chance on me. And so the man loses his chance of spiritual influence upon the world. See to it that spiritual power goes into your work, through it and with it as it passes from your hands into the world. Genuine material, honest work; clean and sound thought and speech; these are the vehicles for transmitting spiritual power to the world. St. Paul was a tent-maker. I pledge you he made the best tents to be had in the country. (*J. H. Ecob, D.D.*) *Christian contentment*:—Observe—I. THE DANGER. —1. Of becoming discontented with our calling. 2. This is common. 3. It may be excited by the more enlightened views produced by conversion. II. THE DUTY. "To abide," &c. 1. This does not mean—(1) That a slave may not seek his liberty. (2) That a man must not relinquish a nefarious occupation. (3) That a Christian may not desire a position of greater advantage and usefulness. 2. It—(1) Inculcates contentment. (2) Teaches that every honest calling affords scope for Christian development, and that we should serve God in our calling. III. THE MOTIVE. God—1. Has appointed your condition. 2. Blesses you in it. 3. Can

easily improve it if desirable. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The need, choice, and use of a calling*:—The Christian calling doth not at all prejudice, much less overthrow, it rather strengtheneth those interests that arise from natural relations, or from voluntary contracts betwixt man and man. I desired to speak, and judged expedient for you to hear, concerning—1. The necessity. 2. The choice. 3. The use of particular callings. Points, if ever need to be taught, certainly in these days most. Wherein some habituated in idleness will not betake themselves to any calling: like a heavy jade that is good at bit and nought else. These would be soundly spurred up and whipped on end. Other some, through weakness, do not make good choice of a fit calling: like a young unbroken thing that hath mettle and is free, but is ever wrying the wrong way. These would be fairly checked, turned into the right way, and guided with a steady and skilful hand. A third sort, through unsettledness, or discontentedness, or other untoward humour, walk not soberly and uprightly and orderly in their calling: like an unruly colt that will over hedge and ditch, no ground will hold him, no fence turn him. The first sort are to be taught the necessity of a calling; the second, to be directed for the choice of their calling; the third, to be limited in the exercise of their calling. Of which three, in their order; and of the first—I. THE NECESSITY OF A CALLING. The necessity whereof you are to imagine not an absolute and positive, but a conditional and suppositive necessity. Not as if no man could be without one, *de facto*, but because, *de jure*, no man should be without one. And this necessity we are now to prove. And that—First, from the obedience we owe to God's ordinances, and the account we must render for every one of God's gifts. Amongst those ordinances this is one, and one of the first, that in the sweat of our faces every man of us should eat our bread (Gen. iii. 19; Eph. iv. 28), and woe to us if we neglect it. But say there were no such express command for it; the very distribution of God's gifts were enough to lay upon us this necessity. Where God bestoweth He bindeth; and to whom anything is given, of him something shall be required. We may not think the God of nature doth bestow abilities whereof He intendeth no use, for that were to bestow them in vain. Secondly, the necessity of a calling is great in regard of a man's self, and that more ways than one. For man being by nature active, so he must be doing. There is no Cross, no holy water, no exorcism so powerful to drive away and to conjure down the fiend, as faithful labour in some honest calling. Thirdly, life must be preserved, families maintained, the poor relieved; this cannot be done without bread, and bread cannot be gotten honestly but in a lawful vocation or calling. Fourthly and lastly, a calling is necessary in regard of the public. God hath made us sociable creatures; contrived us into commonwealths; made us fellow-members of one body. Every man should put to his helping hand to advance the common good. For which reason the ancient renowned commonwealths were so careful to ordain that no man should live but in some profession. It is the sin of many of the gentry whom God hath furnished with means and abilities to do much good, to spend their whole days and lives in an unprofitable course of doing either nothing, or as good as nothing, or worse than nothing. Manual, and servile, and mechanic trades and arts are for men of a lower condition; but yet no man is born, no man should be bred unto idleness. There are generous, and ingenuous, and liberal employments sortable to the greatest births and educations. But for our gallants who live in no settled course of life, but spend half the day in sleeping, half the night in gaming, and the rest of their time in other pleasures and vanities to as little purpose as they can devise, as if they were born for nothing else but to eat and drink and sport. The third sort of those that live unprofitably and without a calling, are our sturdy rogues and vagrant towns-end beggars; the very filth and vermin of the commonwealth. I mean such as have health and strength and limbs, and are in some measure able to work and take pains for their living. God is just, and will not call any man to that which is not honest and good. God is all-sufficient, and will not call any man to that which is above the proportion of his strength. God is wonderful in His providence, and will not call any man to that whereto He will not open him a fair and orderly passage. Somewhat by your patience of each of these. And first, of the course we intend. Wherein let these be our inquiries—First, whether the thing be simply and in itself lawful or no. Secondly, whether it be lawful so as to be made a calling or no. Thirdly, whether it will be profitable or rather hurtful to the commonwealth. Now observe the rules. II. Our first care past, which concerneth the calling itself, our next care in OUR CHOICE MUST BE to inquire into ourselves, what calling is most fit for us and we for it. Wherein our inquiry

must rest especially upon three things; our inclination, our gifts, and our education. III. Remaineth now the third and last point proposed, THE USE OF A MAN'S CALLING. Let him walk in it (ver. 17). Let him abide in it (ver. 20). Let him abide therein with God. It may seem he would have us stick to a course; and when we are in a calling, not to forsake it, nor change it, no, not for a better, no, not upon any terms. Perhaps some have taken it so, but certainly the apostle never meant it so. It is lawful to change it, so it be done with due caution. It is lawful, first, in subordinate callings. How should we do for generals for the wars if colonels, and lieutenants, and captains, and common soldiers might not relinquish their charges? It is lawful, secondly, yea, necessary, when the very calling itself, though in itself good and useful, doth yet by accident become unlawful or unuseful. As when some manufacture is prohibited by the State. It is lawful, thirdly, when a man by some accident becometh unable for the duties of his calling, as by age, blindness, maim, decay of estate, and sundry other impediments which daily occur. It is lawful, fourthly, where there is a want of sufficient men, or not a sufficient number of them in some callings, for the necessities of the State and country; in such cases authority may interpose. But then it must be done with due cautions. As first, not out of a desultory lightness. Nor, secondly, out of the greediness of a covetous or ambitious lust. Thirdly, nor out of sullenness, or a discontentedness at thy present condition. Much less, fourthly, out of an evil eye against thy neighbour that liveth by thee. But, fifthly, be sure thou change not, if thy calling be of that nature that it may not be changed. Wheresoever thy calling is, therein abide; be content with it. The second is faithfulness and industry and diligence. What is here called abiding in it, is at ver. 17 called walking in it, and in Rom. xii. 17, waiting on it. The third is sobriety, that we keep ourselves within the proper bounds and limits of our callings. For how doth he abide in his calling that is ever and anon flying out of it, and starting beyond it? like an extravagant soldier that is always breaking rank. But yet abide with God. The clause was not added for nothing; it teacheth thee also some duties. First, so to demean thyself in thy particular calling as that thou do nothing but what may stand with thy general calling. Magistrate, or minister, or lawyer, or merchant, or artificer, or whatsoever other thou art, remember thou art withal a Christian. God is the author of both callings. Do not think He hath called thee to service in the one, and to liberty in the other; to justice in the one, and to cosenage in the other; to simplicity in the one, and to dissimulation in the other; to holiness in the one, and to profaneness in the other. It teacheth thee, secondly, not to ingulf thyself so wholly into the business of thy particular calling as to abridge thyself of convenient opportunities to the exercise of those religious duties which thou art bound to perform by virtue of thy general calling, as prayer, confession, thanksgiving, meditation, &c. God alloweth thee to serve thyself, but He commandeth thee to serve Him too. It teacheth thee, thirdly, to watch over the special sins of thy particular calling. Sins, I mean not that cleave necessarily to the calling, for then the very calling itself should be unlawful; but sins unto the temptations whereof the condition of thy calling layeth thee open more than it doth unto other sins, or more than some other callings would do unto the same sins. (*Bishop Sanderson.*) *Christianity diffusive, not revolutionary*:—Paul reminds us of the moral act which has the power of sanctifying and ennobling every external position: the eye fixed on God, walking in His presence. This is what preserves the believer from the temptations arising from his situation, and what raises his humblest duties to the supreme dignity of acts of worship. This principle has been of incalculable importance in the development of the Church. It is by means of it that Christianity has been able to become a moral power, at once sufficiently firm and sufficiently elastic to adapt itself to all human situations, personal, domestic, national, and social. Thereby it is that without revolution it has worked the greatest revolutions, accepting everything to transform everything, submitting to everything to rise above everything, renewing the world from top to bottom, while condemning all violent subversion. Whence has the apostle derived this principle in which there meet the most unconquerable faith and the most consummate ability (see Rom. xii. 3)? Wisdom from on high did not less direct Paul the pastor than Paul the teacher; and it is not improbable that he was acquainted with the parable of the leaven. (*Prof. Godet.*)

VERS. 25–40. **Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord.**—*Concerning virgins and widows*:—The apostle advises—I. THE UNMARRIED OF BOTH

SEXES. As he has argued against the disruption of the ties between slave and master, Christian and heathen, so Paul now advises the unmarried to remain as they are. Not that he disparages marriage, but special circumstances make it inadvisable. 1. The present distress (ver. 26). This may refer to the Neronian persecution already commenced (A.D. 64), or to the troubles which were to usher in the second advent (*cf.* Matt. xxiv.). The injunction will hold in all similar cases; as when the soldier is called to dangerous duty, or when a man is approaching death, or during the prevalence of famine or pestilence. 2. Tribulation in the flesh (ver. 28), *i.e.*, distress which bears more hardly on the married than on the single. 3. The shortness of time (ver. 29). 4. The cares incident to the married state (ver. 32). II. FATHERS REGARDING UNMARRIED DAUGHTERS. In the East marriages are arranged by parents much more than with us: but how much even with us depends on the Christian wisdom of parents, who may sacrifice the highest interests for the sake of a union that offers worldly attractions. Faithful parental guidance may prevent an unholy alliance and lead to a happy union "in the Lord." The point before the apostle is—1. When permission to marry may be granted (ver. 36). (1) Generally, when the refusal would lead to anything unseemly. (2) In particular, if the girl is of marriageable age, and if she and her lover are bent on union, to enforce celibacy would be to put temptation in her way. The general advice not to marry because of present distress is overborne by stronger considerations (ver. 2); and in view of these the father will do well to put no barriers in the way. 2. When permission may be withheld. The elements determining judgment will be—(1) The presence or absence of the considerations mentioned in the previous case. (2) The temperament or inclination of the daughter in reference to marriage. (3) Her fitness for Christ's service in the single state. (4) Her general well-being temporal and spiritual. If in view of these he judges it best for his daughter not to marry he may resist the solicitations of her suitors. III. WIDOWS. This proceeds on the same lines as the advice to the unmarried. She is free, but she must only marry "in the Lord." Yet the apostle advises against a second marriage, on grounds already adduced in the case of virgins. A widow will be more free from care if she remain as she is. Conclusion: 1. The application of abiding principles is modified by changing circumstances. What is prudent in a Christian country may be imprudent elsewhere. 2. Christians should only marry "in the Lord." (*H. Bremner, B.D.*) *Works of supererogation and counsels of perfection*:—Theologians have inferred that Christians have power not only to give adequate obedience to the moral law, but also to do works of supererogation. This doctrine rests upon two assumptions—1. That God requires in His creatures, not perfect conformity with moral law, but only sincerity of endeavour. 2. That the actions supposed to be counselled but not commanded are moral, and not merely indifferent. But both assumptions destroy the essential nature of moral law, which must, in its very idea, be obligatory; and whatever is not obligatory is no part of morality, but belongs to the class of indifferent things. It follows that if the apostle imposes no command but simply gives advice in reference to abstention from marriage such abstention is not to be reckoned a work of supererogation. This distinction, however, between obligatory and supererogatory moral obedience must not be confounded with the distinction between precepts and counsels of perfection—the latter so called from the vulgate rendering of γνώμη in this verse. Counsels of perfection differ from works of supererogation in two points—1. They have always reference, not to actions in themselves moral, but to actions in themselves indifferent. 2. They are to be sought not in the words of Christ, but in the words of His apostles. Whatever Christ says in reference to practice is a command which men disobey at their peril. But the apostles, though they may often have authority to command, may be unable on occasion to arrive at a decision and, therefore rest content with the expression of an opinion, which Christians may, if they so judge, lay aside. The present passage is an instance of this. We need not discard the name "counsels of perfection." There are undoubted cases in which celibacy is helpful to spiritual progress, and other cases in which marriage is essential to it. The apostle says, "I give my advice, not frivolously nor as a wise man of this world, but with all the faithfulness and sincerity of one that has had the grace of salvation and apostleship." The advice is given with manifest reluctance. He is careful to prepare their minds for it by telling them that it is simply his own opinion, not the Lord's command, and that, on the other hand, he has formed his judgment under a sense of responsibility attaching to his office. (*Principal Edwards.*) *How to judge in difficult matters*:—I. MODESTLY (ver. 25). 1. Not dogmatically as

if we had a right to command. 2. Yet faithfully. 3. In dependence upon the mercy of God. II. WISELY. 1. With delicacy and discrimination (vers. 26–28). 2. With a due knowledge of times, circumstances, &c. III. IN THE FEAR AND LOVE OF GOD (vers. 32–34). 1. Even in ordinary life earthly ends are not to be the rule of action. 2. The glory of God must be the supreme aim. IV. KINDLY (vers. 35–40). 1. Not assuming anything to ourselves. 2. But respecting the liberty of our neighbour. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *How to give advice*:—1. MODESTLY—not with an assumption of authority. II. HUMBLY—as a matter of judgment, which must be tested by the Word of God. III. IN A CHRISTIAN SPIRIT—as those who have been forgiven. IV. FAITHFULLY—as the servants of God. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 29–31. **But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none.**—*The time is short*:—I. FOR THE DOMESTIC CONNECTIONS OF THE WORLD (ver. 29). 1. Man is the creature of the family. He is nursed and trained under its influence. When called to leave his first home the domestic instinct impels him to become the head of a family himself. And then amidst the infirmities of old age he becomes again the subject of domestic solicitude and sway. A well-organised family is earth's chief nursery and highest type of heaven. 2. But this relationship "is short." Few husbands and wives are allowed to climb the hill together, and fewer still hand-in-hand "to totter down." 3. If family connections are thus so transient, how ought the members to live in vital connection with that gospel which immortalises all human friendships. II. FOR THE SORROWS AND JOYS OF THE WORLD (ver. 30). 1. There are a weeping and rejoicing that will never end. The lost sinner will weep for ever; and the joy of a commending conscience will never end. 2. But there is a sorrow and a rejoicing that will end with life—the tear of worldly anxiety, and the joy of worldly success. This transitoriness is—(1) A consolatory thought to the good man; for all his sorrows end here, and all unsatisfactory joys. (2) A terrible thought to the wicked. Many of the sorrows he has now will make way for greater ones, and all the pleasures he has now will end for ever. III. FOR THE MERCANTILE TRANSACTIONS OF THE WORLD. "They that buy," &c. 1. The principle of commerce is adapted to unite men together; and by the exchange of the material commodities, to exchange kind and improving thoughts. Were London tradesmen all religious, they could export religion with their goods—the market would be the best Missionary Society for converting the world. 2. This material commerce will soon be over, but mental and spiritual commerce may go on for ever. Make, then, this temporary business subservient to your spiritual welfare; make the market a means of grace. In all your getting get that "wisdom which is the principal thing." IV. FOR THE RIGHT USING OF THE WORLD (ver. 31). 1. The world is abused when it is used chiefly—(1) With a sensuous end. To the brute, indeed, the world has no relation but to the senses. (2) With a secular end. When men value it on account of its fruit and minerals, *i.e.*, so far as it can be turned into money, then they abuse it. (3) With an intellectual end. The world teems with Divine thoughts, which it is our duty and interest to study. But to make this the end is to abuse it. 2. To "use" it rightly is to use it chiefly with a religious end. Religion warrants us to use it sensuously, for we have senses; secularly, for we need worldly good; intellectually, for we require truth; but it demands that we should subordinate it to the salvation of the soul—make it the means of grace—the temple of worship. 3. This religious use of the world makes it ours. The difference between the world to the worldly and to the Christian is, that the former is possessed by it, the other possesses it. V. FOR THE FASHION OF THE WORLD. 1. The world literally has a "fashion" that is passing away. The phenomena and forms of the world are ever shifting. 2. The fashion of the human world passeth away. (1) The political world has its fashions which get out of fashion, and others appear on the stage to meet the times. (2) The social world has its fashions, &c., they become obsolete, and others take their place. (3) The religious world has its fashions. Now one ism is in vogue, and now another. Now one popular preacher, and then another. Thus, there is nothing fixed. Conclusion: Let us not, then, put our confidence in forms, but in substances. You know that though the world changes, there are certain principles that remain for ever. It is for ever true, that without virtue there is no happiness, and that without Jesus there is no virtue; that "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesses." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The time is short*:—I. "THE TIME IS SHORT." All things tell us so. 1. The year tells it in its rapid flight. The seasons, how they come and go!

2. Life tells it. Look back, you who can remember many years! What seem they now? As a dream when one awaketh. 3. The grave tells it, opening for one after another of our friends. 4. Sickness and weakness, the body's gradual decay, tell it. 5. Every day, stealing by us so quickly and imperceptibly, giving us warning. We go forth in the morning; and in a few brief hours our work is done, and we lie down again to rest. II. WHAT GIVES TO THIS TRUTH ITS VAST IMPORTANCE? 1. Because time is the entrance to eternity. If we were formed for this world only, we might as well join with those who say, Let us have a short time and merry one. But this life has dread responsibilities, when viewed in relation to a life which is to come. To every one of us is committed the solemn trust, to have this immortal being prepared for its appearance before God. 2. And how may this be done? The way is revealed to us in the gospel. III. WHAT PRACTICAL LESSONS DOES IT ENFORCE? 1. Use this world as not abusing it. (1) To live in sin is an abuse of this life. Sin is a horrible disorder, brought into the world which God made good. (2) All who care only for the body, are abusing this life; who work, and eat, and drink, and sleep, and do no more. Why! the horse and the ass are as good as they—nay, better; for the brutes fulfil the purpose of God. (3) If we set our affections on the things of this world, we are abusing them. 2. Be not weary in well doing: for in due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not. 3. Whatever good "thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." (*E. Blencowe, M.A.*)

The time is short:—I. THE TIME OF THE WORLD. Christ is at hand to judge the quick and the dead. II. THE TIME OF OUR LITTLE WORLD; our particular judgment is near at hand. It shall be with us at the latter day as it is when we die. III. THE SEASON OF THE TIME. The opportunity of time is shorter than the time of life; for we have not opportunity of time all our life. 1. The time is short for doing and taking good. 2. It is uncertain; we cannot tell how short. If it were told any that within two days he shall die, it would make us look about us: but who of us all knows certainly that he shall live two hours? 3. It is irrecoverable when it is gone. It is a precious thing, given for great purposes; let us take heed what we do in it. We may do that in a little time that we may rue for eternity. We may do and get that good in a little time that may stand by us world without end. Conclusion: There are three main parts of this little time. 1. The time that is gone; let us repent of it, if it have not been spent well. 2. The time present is to do good in. 3. For the time to come, it is out of our power. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *Time: flight of*:—When young, our years are ages; in mature life, they are three hundred and sixty-five days; in old age, they have dwindled to a few weeks. Time is, indeed, the messenger with wings at his feet. Yesterday, he took my wife; to-day, my son; to-morrow, he will take me. (*Madame de Gasparin.*) *Time: how to use it*:—I. KNOW THE USE OF TIME; that it is a seed-time, wherein thou must go forth and sow, though in tears and showers. An husbandman will not lose his seed-time whatever weather it prove. True, our life is a moment, but on which eternity dependeth. And it is a time of traffic till the Master come: and is the Master's absence for eating, drinking, or smiting the fellow-servants? II. KNOW THE WORTH OF TIME, before the want of time. It is a very folly to be niggards of wealth and prodigal of time. It is the great sin of some that they cast away their short time in doing evil, or doing nought to the purpose: as little children who spend their candle in play, and are glad to go to bed by dark, and never perceive their childish folly till it be too late. But Christian wisdom is to set such a price on time as not to let it slip without making ourselves gainers of something better than itself. (*J. Taylor, D.D.*) *Time: its rapid flight*:—A Chinese preacher, wishing to impress upon his hearers the idea that time seems to pass more swiftly as we get older, used a telling illustration drawn from the incense-pan. The incense-pan is an article of furniture familiar to every Chinaman, young and old. It is a stand made to hold a great length of incense, coiled up like a clock-spring. The outer coils are by far the largest, the outermost being fifteen or eighteen inches in circumference; while the inner coils get gradually shorter, the innermost of all not being more than, perhaps, three inches in circumference. This spiral incense being fixed on the frame and lighted, the first round takes a long time to burn; the second round, being shorter, is completed quicker; the third round is completed more quickly still; and so, with accelerated pace, the smoking point courses round the shortening coils till the last is reached, which, being the shortest of all, is travelled round in a fraction of the time that was taken to consume the first. In the same way, said the Chinaman, our years seem to go, flying more swiftly the nearer we get to the end

of our life. *The shortness of life*:—1. The tone in which a man speaks often helps us to understand his meaning. "Brethren, the time is short," writes St. Paul, and there is no tremor of dismay or sadness in his voice. He was in the midst of work, full of the joy of living, and he quietly said, "This is not going to last long." It is what men often say to themselves with terror, clutching the things they hold all the more closely, as if they would hold them for ever. There is nothing of that about St. Paul. And on the other hand, there is no hatred of life which makes him want to be away. There is no mad impatience for the things which lie beyond. 2. It does not matter what St. Paul was thinking of. He may have had his mind upon death or the coming of Christ. And perhaps the very vagueness helps us to his meaning. For he is not, evidently, dwelling upon the nature of the event which is to limit the "time," only upon the simple fact that there is a limit. I. WHAT IS THE SHORTNESS OF LIFE? To the ephemera it looks like an eternity; to God it looks like an instant. How shall human life seem, then, to man? It depends upon where he stands to look at it. If he stands with the ephemera, his life looks long; if with God, his life looks short. If a man is able, that is, to conceive of immortality, he thinks his life on earth is short—and that we can do so is the pledge and witness of our nobility. II. THE SHORTNESS OF LIFE IS BOUND UP WITH ITS FULNESS. The day crawls to the idler, and flies to the busy worker. The shortness of life is closely associated, not merely with the greatest hopes of the future, but with the real vitality of the present. What then? If you and I complain how short life is, how quick it flies, we are complaining of that which is the necessary consequence of our vitality. And does not then the shortness of life cease to be our lamentation and become our privilege and glory? III. SUPPOSE A MAN HAS ACCEPTED THE SHORTNESS OF LIFE AS A CONVICTION, WHAT EFFECT WILL THAT CONVICTION HAVE UPON HIS LIFE? 1. Must it not make a man try to sift the things that offer themselves to him, and try to find out what his things are? Epictetus said that for each of men there is one great classification of the universe, into the things which concern him and the things which do not concern him. To how many men that classification is all vague. Many men's souls are like omnibuses, stopping to take up every interest or task that holds up its finger and beckons them from the side walk. Such indiscriminateness is almost legitimate and necessary in childhood. Then life seems endless. Then the quick experimenting senses are ready for whatever strikes them. But as the course goes on, as its limit comes in sight and we see how short it is, the elective system must come in. Out of the mass of things which we have touched, we must choose these which are ours—books, friends, pleasures, usefulness, &c., before we go. We come to be like a party of travellers left at a great city railway station for a couple of hours. All cannot see everything in town. Each has to choose according to his tastes what he will see. 2. It brings a power of freedom in dealing with the things which we do take to be our own (vers. 29–31). Not that they should not marry, &c. The shortness of life was not to paralyse life like that. But they were to do these things with a soul above their details, and in the principles and motives which lay beyond them. He who has only an hour to stay in some great foreign city will not puzzle himself with the intricacies of its streets or the small particulars of its life. He will try simply to catch its general spirit, to see what sort of town it is, and learn its lessons. He must tread its pavements, talk with its people, &c.; but he will not do these things as the citizens do them. He will do them as if he did them not. Just so he who knows he is in the world for a very little while, is not like a man who is to live here for ever. 3. In the shortness of life the great emotions and experiences assume their largest power and act with their most ennobling influence. Think, *e.g.*, of a great bereavement coming to a man. It comes in two forms. One is in the change of circumstances; the other is in the mystery of death and the distress of love. Now if the man who is bereaved sees nothing in the distance, but one stretch of living, it is the first of these aspects that is the most real. He multiplies the circumstances of his bereavement into all these coming years. But if, when we stand to watch the spirit which has gone away to heaven it seems but a very little time before we shall go too, then our grief is exalted to its largest form. Men's griefs are as different as men's lives. To the man who is all wrapt up in this world, grief comes as the ghosts come to the poor narrow-minded churl—to plague and tease him. To him to whom life is but an episode, grief comes as angels came to the tent of Abraham. The soul takes the grief in as a guest, and listens reverently for what it has to say about the God from whom it came. 4. The criticalness of life is bound up with its

shortness. That thought belongs to every limited period of being which opens into something greater. A boy feels the probation character of his youth just in proportion as he vividly realises the approach of his majority. And man is made so that some sense of criticalness is necessary to the best life always. Let me feel that nothing but this moment depends upon this moment's action, and I am very apt to let this moment act pretty much as it will. Let me see the spirits of the moments yet unborn watching it anxiously, and I must watch it also for their sakes. And it is in this that the strongest moral power of life is found. Now ask yourself, Could this have been if life had seemed so long to men as never to suggest its limits? It is when the brook begins to hear the great river calling it, and knows that its time is short, that it begins to hurry over the rocks and toss its foam into the air and make straight for the valley. Life that never thinks of its end lives in a present, and loses the flow and movement of responsibility. 5. When we know that our time of intercourse is short with any man, our relations with that man grow true and deep. Two men who have lived side by side for years, with business and social life between them, with a multitude of suspicions and concealments, let them know that they have only an hour more to live together, and, as they look into each other's eyes, do not the suspicions and concealments clear away? Oh, you who are letting miserable misunderstandings run on from year to year, meaning to clear them up some day; or letting your friend's heart ache for a word of appreciation or sympathy, which you mean to give him some day—if you could only know, all of a sudden, that "the time is short," how it would break the spell! How you would go instantly and do the thing which you might never have another chance to do. (*Bp. Phillips Brooks.*) *Life's brevity*:—No Christian will receive this as a sad announcement, or who has lost those whom he loves, and has a good hope beyond the grave. His only ground of regret is that the work he has to do is too great for the space in which he has to do it. And this is the thought which the word "short" most literally conveys. It means "shut in," "straitened for room." And this thought was natural to a mind like Paul's—so full, so busy, with large undertakings. I. THERE ARE THREE REASONS WHY TIME IS SHORT. 1. To the eye that has been dwelling on eternity, all time, everything we can measure, must be short. 2. Good occupations make shortness. There is a great deal to do. Alas! for the man who finds any day of his life too long. 3. No happy man complains that the hours run sluggishly; and happiness is every man's duty. To those who are infinitely happy there is no time at all. II. I SPEAK TO THOSE WHO WISH IT TO BE SHORT. 1. "This I say, *brethren*, the time is short," before the Elder Brother comes. The time is short for all your earthly brotherhood; and soon will be the heavenly brotherhood, when the whole family will meet in their Father's house. Already Jesus is on His way, and He travels quickly. 2. What makes time longer than it is, is to clog it with the past or encumber it with the future. If you desire that time should feel short, live straight to the present; the present duties, joys, trials. You have nothing to do but with the passing moment. Don't be long about anything. What is to be said, say it; what is to be done, do it; what is to be thought, think it; what is to be prayed, pray it; what is to be suffered, suffer it. Concentrate. Many persons are too long in their religious duties; they may do better by more condensation. 3. The time is too short—(1) To trifle with. (2) To be speculative; what we want is to be exceedingly practical. (3) For fretting about little things. The future we care about may never come; and if it comes will be only for a little while. (4) To hoard up, when "this night thy soul may be required of thee." (5) To quarrel, when we are all about to go in together to stand before His judgment seat. (6) To mourn for those who are gone when they will so soon come back again. (7) To weep—when God is so soon to "wipe away all tears from our eyes." 4. But it is not too short—(1) To pause and feel its shortness. (2) To do something for God before we "finish the work which He has given us to do." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Brief life is here our portion*:—The text does not say that *time* is short. That were very true. Compared with eternity, time at the very longest is but as a point. But the text says "*The* time is short," *i.e.*, the time of our life and opportunity. This is a truth which everybody believes; yet how few of us act as if we believed it! "All men think all men mortal but themselves." Ask the angel what he thinks of the life of a mortal, and he will tell you "Like the grass, scarcely have I gazed upon them ere they are cut down, withered, and gone." Or if you interrogate the oak or the elm they will tell you that man is but an infant of to-day. Or take counsel of the old man and he will tell you that when he was a boy he thought he had a wealth of time before him. Yet now he re-

members when, as it were but yesterday, he was himself a little child, and his grandsire clasped him to his bosom. And yet, perhaps, some of you hoary veterans need to be reminded that the time is short. Should five, or even ten years more be granted you, how quickly they must pass when seventy so rapidly have fled! Be parsimonious of minutes now, though you may have been once prodigal of years. But to estimate this oracle truly we must turn to the years of the right hand of the Most High. "A thousand years in His sight are but as yesterday," &c. "The time is short." I. IT WARNS. If ye knew the sterling worth of time ye would shrink from the smallest waste of so precious an article. It is too short—1. To squander upon unprofitable amusements. While recreation is needful to keep the mental and physical powers in working order, we can give no countenance to such gambols and gamblings as rather tend to enervate than to invigorate. 2. To lose it in senseless talk, idle gossip, or domestic scandals. 3. To plan a round of empty frivolities to while away an afternoon or an evening, as the manner of some is. It is said of Henry Martin that he never wasted an hour. I wish it could be said of us, that we wasted neither an hour of our own time, nor of other people's. 4. For indecision and vacillation. Your resolving and retracting, your planning and scheming, your sleeping and dreaming, are a mockery of life, and a wilful murder of time. If God be God, serve Him. Decide quick, speak sharp. If not, take the alternative—serve Baal. 5. For speculating upon nice points of controversial theology. You know how the school-men used to debate how many angels could stand on the point of a needle. There is a little of the spirit abroad now. Ministers will devote whole sermons to the discussion of some crotchet. I have generally noticed that the less important the point is, the more savagely will some persons defend it. I would sooner be able to proclaim the Cross and explain the Gospels than decipher the imagery of Ezekiel, or the symbols of the Apocalypse. II. IT SUGGESTS. Surely, then, I have some opportunity to follow out the work of faith, the patience of hope and the labour of love, though not the opportunity I once had. Some of you can never hope to receive the greeting that awaits such a faithful servant. You have lost the golden opportunity. But are there not children here to whom this is possible? I solemnly charge each young man to foster this aspiration. Prepare for the good fight of faith. Live to the utmost possible consecration of your entire manhood. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." III. IT INSPIRES. Now is the accepted time. The time to do the deeds that thou must do, or leave them undone, flies swiftly past. 1. Are your children converted? Pray with them to-night. "The time is short" for others as well as yourself. Do not wait, young man, to preach Jesus till you have had more instruction. You that mean to do something for the poor when you have hoarded up some more money, spend your money now. Be your own executors. "The time is short." Let it inspire you to pray for immediate conversions. 2. Seeing the time is short, let us bear with patience the ills that vex us. Are we very poor? Is consumption beginning to prey on our trembling frame? Have we to bear evil treatment from an ungenerous world? Why trouble yourselves about what you will do a month or two hence? You will probably not be here; you will be in heaven. Worldly-mindedness ill becomes us who have confessed that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. IV. IT ALARMS. And well indeed it may. It is a dismal knell I have to toll for the unconverted man, to whom life has been a joy, for he has prospered in the world. But what have you not done? You have not found salvation. How few the opportunities that remain! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Length of life:—Ten thousand human beings set forth together on their journey. After ten years, one-third, at least, have disappeared. At the middle point of the common measures of life but half are still upon the road. Faster and faster, as the ranks grow thinner, they that remain till now become weary, and lie down, and rise no more. At three-score and ten, a band of some four hundred yet struggle on. At ninety, these have been reduced to a handful of thirty trembling patriarchs. Year after year, they fall in diminishing numbers. One lingers, perhaps, a lonely marvel, till the century is over. We look again, and the work of death is finished. (*Bp. Burgess.*)

Only a little while:—The attitude of people towards a temporary state of affairs is very different from their attitude towards something permanent. No man fits up his room at an hotel as he does his home. When one is waiting in the vestibule of a public hall he does not give much thought to the inconveniences of his situation. The thing for which he has come is behind those doors. When a man rides in a street-car he would rather have a seat and less crowding; but he never thinks of making a serious matter of that. His object is to get down to

business. Now do we recognise the larger applications of the same principle? Suppose we set this life of sixty or seventy years over against the eternal life of the future. The two spaces are related to each other as the vestibule to the hall, the transit on the car to the day's business. But remember that Paul does not use the fact of the shortness of life to encourage a sense of indifference to life's duties. There may be in the ante-chamber some beautiful pictures and sculptures, &c. These things are for us: we may and ought to enjoy them. We are not excused from the courtesies of life, even on a street-car. The other world may be, and is, the prime fact; but this world is a fact, too, though a secondary one. If Paul says, "It remaineth that those who have wives be as though they had none," we are not to conclude that because a man expects to depart for heaven in a short time, he is therefore to treat his wife as though she were not. This being premised, note the bearing of this fact on—I. OUR DOMESTIC RELATIONS (ver. 29). These are the nearest and dearest of all earthly ties; they call out our deepest affections, our best energies. And God Himself instituted them, and Christ sanctified them at Cana; and Paul chooses them to illustrate the love of Christ for the Church. Yet it remaineth, that they that have wives be as though they had none. 1. If our earthly homes crowd out the attractions of the heavenly home, we are misusing them. When home ceases to be the nursery of consecrated power, a scene of preparation for heaven, and becomes, instead, a base for fashion and shallow pleasure, then it is time to face the hour when a voice shall call us forth from these beloved doors, to return no more. 2. And then, too, we know that often the family relation is not the type of heaven. We know how men make it the instrument of fostering their pride of birth, and how, for the sake of preserving a family name, loveliness and innocence are allied with senility and debauchery. 3. On the contrary, in the New Testament domestic life is always treated with special reference to the life to come. The institution of the family, beyond any human institution, points up to God. God Himself takes the name of the family head; marriage is to be in the Lord; children are to be trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. II. THE SORROW OF THIS WORLD (ver. 30). 1. Let us confine ourselves to one element—injustice. The innocent suffer; the bad prosper. Away back in the far past we find Job wrestling with the question. On the one hand, the reasoner asks, "How did it come to pass? Why is it allowed?" On the other hand, the man who is trying to live rightly asks, "What shall I do with it? How shall I adjust myself to it?" 2. Note the answers which are given to the latter question. (1) Rousseau tells us it is all the result of false training. Human nature is good; and, if you only educate it properly, its evil will be checked, and we shall have a reign of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The value of Rousseau's answer may be estimated in the lurid light of the French Revolution. (2) The communist says, "Only do away with all private interest, and merge all in the public, and all will be well." But, unfortunately, the history of Nihilism has some significant stories to tell of that experiment. (3) There was the Stoic, who steeled himself against injustice, and cultivated insensibility to pain, anger, and pity alike. (4) There was the Epicurean, saying, "I will keep out of all such relations with men as will engender injustice or cruelty." 3. All these views are strictly bounded by this life, and are opposed by that which is represented in our text. For the New Testament—(1) Shows no sympathy with Rousseau's view. It treats injustice as an evil that will exist so long as human society is not under the power of Divine love. (2) Does not give us a picture of any favoured man who escapes the world's injustice. On the contrary, the better its men the more they suffer at the world's hands. (3) Gives us no men of iron, insensible to suffering. The victims of the world's cruelty are real sufferers. (4) Puts every Christian in a positive attitude towards this fact. He cannot evade it; he must feel towards it in the right way. And if, as the gospel everywhere assumes, this state of things is passing away to give place to a better and more permanent one, then let the injustice and cruelty and sorrow be measured by the proportions of that larger life (2 Cor. iv. 17). We can be as though we wept not; *i.e.*, we can be as useful and as kindly as if we had no cause to weep. We may have lost what is ours; but the time is short, and heaven will give it back with interest. III. OUR JOYS (ver. 30). Not that we are to pass this life in gloom and sullenness because it is short. When the train goes through the tunnel let us be all the more cheerful because the sunlight will pour in by and by. But if there is grander joy in the life beyond this, it is not the part of wisdom to be too much absorbed in earthly joy. IV. THE BUYING AND SELLING, THE POSSESSING AND USE OF THE WORLD IN GENERAL (ver. 31). All these things, in New Testament thought,

have their value determined by two facts—the shortness of this life, and the overshadowing, transcendent grandeur of the life to come. Does it not become us to hold this world lightly in view of these two truths—so little time left, and eternity approaching? An old woman sat one day beside her apple-stand in a great thoroughfare. A well-known judge walked up and stopped for an apple. "Well, Molly," said he, "don't you get tired of sitting here these cold, dismal days?" "It's only a little while, sir," was the answer. "And the hot, dusty days?" "Only a little while, sir." "And the rainy, drizzly days, and your sick, rheumatic days?" "It's only a little while, sir." "And what then, Molly?" "Then, sir, I shall enter into that rest which remains for the people of God; and the troublesomeness of the way there don't pester nor fret me. It's only a little while." "But," said the judge, "what makes you so sure, Molly?" "How can I help being sure, since Christ is the way, and I am His? Now I only feel Him along the way; I shall see Him as He is in a little while, sir." "Ah!" said the judge, "you've got more than the law ever taught me." "Yes, sir, because I went to the gospel." "Well," said he, as he took up his apple, and began to walk off, "I must look into these things." "There's only a little while, sir." (*M. R. Vincent, D.D.*) *Life, its shadows and its substance:*—Is it, then, the aim of Christianity to turn this world into a dream-land? Are we to undervalue life's sweetest affections and deepest sentiments as if they were but appearances? Surely no! Such an interpretation misconceives this passage alone and the whole Bible teaching; for no other book is more intensely realistic than the Word of God, and nothing places more value on common life. I. LET US LOOK AROUND AND RECALL SOME OF OUR EXPERIENCES TO SEE WHETHER WE MAY NOT FIND A CLUE TO THIS REMARKABLE PASSAGE. 1. When, on some summer afternoon, parents watch the sports of their children and perceive their realisation of the game, do they not feel that to the child there is value in these things? And yet, when they consider the after-life of the child, do they not smile at his dream-land? It is to the parents as if it were not. And when the children grow up they feel that, when compared with the larger experience into which they have entered, that early joy was unsubstantial. In like manner, it is in the power of the ripened mind to look forward toward a coming state whose glory and perfectness shall cast all present realisations into such relative inferiority that they shall seem to be but shadows. 2. There are two states of mind in which men have an experience in business. The reality and importance of business is solemnly to be affirmed. And yet there are times when men feel disgust at wealth, and at all the means by which it is sought. But there are hours in which men feel, not that earthly treasure is despicable, but that there is a kind of treasure with which that which the earth affords bears no comparison. 3. He who has built a palace for his affections knows two experiences of the like kind. The earnest reality of heart-life—nothing can take from its importance. But there are times when there is a vision of the coming love in comparison with which all that we here know in respect to heart-love is but a germ, or a plant in its early years. 4. Some there are who will tell you that in sorrow there is a like experience. The reality, the power, and the dominion of sorrow no man disputes. Yet, as in storms, sometimes there are moments when the clouds part and let through the whole gush of the sun; so, out of anguish, often, the soul rises to a vision of the work which sorrow does for men. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous," &c. And in these higher moods we look back upon sorrows as if they had been no sorrows. Who remembers, when once his feet are upon land again, those weary storms that well-nigh rocked the life out of him but yesterday? 5. Thus in joy too we learn to rejoice as though we rejoiced not. We learn, blessed and beautiful as is the present, to wait for the more glorious disclosure that is just beyond. Have we not, then, in these and like experiences, the interpretation of this sublime truth of the sacred Scriptures? In another way John comes at the same truth, where he says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." You are to live as if all things here below were transient. You are not to rest in them as though you were satisfied with them. Let us live as though all these symbols of the life to come were but shadows and dreams. II. IN VIEW OF THESE ILLUSTRATIONS CONSIDER HOW THE DEEPENING AND ENNOBLING OF HUMAN LIFE DEPENDS, NOT ON THE IDOLATRY OF ITS PRESENT LOW ESTATE, BUT ON SO EMPLOYING ITS EARTHLY LETTER AS TO DESCRY WHAT IT IS GOING TO BE. 1. Take love, the finest feeling. We are to lift up our conceptions to a state in which our character will turn on this feeling, not occasionally, but as an ordinary experience. And when we have thus raised the ideal that ideal comes back to teach us how pure and noble

it ought to be. 2. Nothing else is a better guard against immoderation and the vulgarising tendencies of business than that habit of mind which the apostle here indicates. We take business too often as an ultimate end. We do not let it prophesy anything to us. The wickedness of this world is not that men are addicted to business, but that they look at it only on the earth side; that they fail to hear its testimony of higher things. So soon as a man is satisfied that there is higher wealth than this world affords; that his life consists not of the abundance of the things which he possesses, he is fitted to acquire wealth and administer it. 3. All the experiences which we have in our varied life of this habit of mind which the apostle enjoins, will tend, not to destroy our conscious enjoyment in the present sources of innocent good, but to give us a finer joy. Men, for the most part, do not know how to find the honey in the things of this world. You will never suspect where the honey of a flower is; or, if you did, too large is your hand to be thrust in to get it. But the bee draws out the hidden stores. Its very fineness gives to it what your coarseness withholds from you. We are not fine enough to discover the joy that is hidden in many of the relations of this life. 4. So, too, cares and disappointments, such as waste life, are forestalled and resisted by this habit of mind. "For I would have you without carefulness." Not without occupation, but without corrosive anxieties. He that feels that his life here is but transient, and that his true life is coming to him, lives above those annoyances. The higher our conception of life the easier will life become. 5. This view lifts us above those fluxes and refluxes of pain and suffering that come from death. What is death? When the apple-tree blossoms you laugh, and you do not cry when you pick the apple; but when man blossoms man laughs, and then, when God picks the fruit, he cries. In winter I planted under glass, and depended upon artificial heat, and waited for the time when I might remove my early plants. But now, in these June days, I have taken them into the broad, exposed garden, and put them where they are to blossom, and they did not weep when I put them there. Now God has raised us under glass, and nurtured us there, that we might bear transplanting into another and better sphere, and when He comes, and takes us, and plants us out in His open garden, is that the time for us to cry? Now let us thank God, not that men die, but that they live. Let us mourn as though we mourned not. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

The shortness of time:—"The time is short." To the serious Christian there is much of consolatory as well as exhortatory nature in this solemn declaration. There is much that meets the anxious sorrows of the weary and heavy laden; and much that meets the circumstances of a sleeping, loitering pilgrim on the road to Zion. I. IT REMAINETH THAT THEY THAT HAVE WIVES BE AS THOUGH THEY HAD NONE. The apostle would here caution Christians against the undue encroachment of domestic cares. We must take care that our affection does not degenerate into idolatry; that we love our partners and our children with a subordinate regard; fearing lest our hearts should be overcharged with the cares of this life, and so the day of our departure come upon us unawares. We must only sip at the stream as we hasten through the valley, and beware how we linger on its banks. II. THE SHORTNESS OF TIME SHOULD LEAD THOSE THAT WEEP TO BE AS THOUGH THEY WEPT NOT. There must be weeping of one kind or other in such a world as this. We must weep over the death of relatives: we must mourn the failure of our favourite projects, the treachery of professed friends, the pains and diseases of a corruptible body, the weariness and helplessness of old age. And however free we may be from immediate causes of distress, we must often mourn from sympathy, "weep with those that weep." But the most fruitful source of a Christian's tears is his sin. But the time is short; and it remaineth that those that weep be as though they wept not. I might well weep rivers of tears on the very possibility of losing my immortal soul and an eternity of bliss; but for the loss of everything in this world, surely there should be a sorrow commensurate with the narrow limits of its duration. What though we witness the departure of friends? They are only called home a little before ourselves, and soon we shall be for ever with each other and the Lord. What though we feel the adversities of life? Who can fret over a momentary privation, who has a good hope through grace of an inheritance in heaven? What though we feel the earthly house of this tabernacle dissolving? We have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where the inhabitants no more say, I am sick. III. THE SHORTNESS OF TIME SHOULD LEAD THOSE THAT REJOICE TO BE AS THOUGH THEY REJOICED NOT. To a certain extent many have a real enjoyment of human life. There is a temporary absence of disturbance, and a considerable competence of what nature relishes.

Things wear a prosperous and a pleasurable aspect; and for a season at least men seem at liberty to rejoice, and to let their hearts cheer them. But let us pause and be sober-minded. What is it that we are so fondly handling? Perhaps the cockatrice's egg. The object of our endearment is filled with the seeds of misery, and vanity, and corruption. We are leaning on a feeble reed. The longest season of earthly pleasure is, after all, but a fleeting summer's day. Let us rejoice with trembling, and only suffer our unrestrained elevation of spirit to be given to these objects, which will never fail us. Rejoicing in Christ Jesus—rejoicing in hope—rejoicing in the testimony of our conscience—here is a wide and satisfying field—here we may fearlessly rejoice, even with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. IV. THE SHORTNESS OF TIME SHOULD LEAD THOSE THAT BUY TO BE AS THOSE WHO POSSESSED NOT. Suspect something seriously wrong if you begin to think yourselves at home in this world. After all, you are but tenants of a day, and here have no continuing city. Let your loins then be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord. V. THE SHORTNESS OF TIME SHOULD LEAD US TO USE THIS WORLD AS NOT ABUSING IT. Such is the depraved propensity of human nature, that it turns into a curse what was intended for a blessing. Riches are abused to the purposes of covetousness or extravagance. The advantages of talents and education are abused to the furtherance of infidelity and error on the one hand, or pride and self-conceit on the other. Time, health, and every other possession are liable to the same alienation from its proper service. It is the fault and the misery of our nature that it is always making the creature the object of idolatrous regard. But we must watch against this propensity. We must reflect upon our situation. The time is short. We are hastening on our journey. We are travelling to our home. And shall we be unduly pleasing ourselves with the comforts of the inn of this world? or wantonly and excessively partaking of its provision, or longing to abide in it. (*W. C. Wilson, B.A.*) *The narrowed opportunity*:—If a woman take leaven and hide it in meal, the meal will be changed into bread; but the meal must work before the bread can be made. The end is a good end, but the process by which it is reached is not pleasant and seemly. The meal will heave and labour, and must. In like manner, when a new principle of life is infused into human society, when, for example, the gospel of Christ is brought into vital contact with a society like that of ancient Corinth, the new quickening principle must work in and upon it before it can be changed, and in order that it may be changed, into more wholesome and happier forms. To hasten the process, and to make the bread all the sweeter when it came, St. Paul threw in the salt of his good counsel. He answers the questions by which the Corinthians were troubled, and which they were not able to answer for themselves. A grown man, who is governed solely by maxims and rules, not by reasons and principles, is a pedant or a slave rather than a man. I. USE THE WORLD, BUT DON'T ABUSE IT. This is the broad general principle which covers, modifies, sanctifies all the details of practical life. Christ had said, "Be not of this world"; He had revealed a larger, fairer, more enduring world than the outward set of phenomena and conditions by which we are surrounded. And when the gospel came to the Corinthians, that spiritual world, which in its perfection is also a future world, seemed so attractive to some of them, so near, so momentous, that they heartily despised this present world and all that had once endeared it to them. This was one view of the case. And the other was: "If time be so short, and the world so near its end, let us make the most of them while they last, and take our fill of pleasure as long as we can. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Both these conclusions, opposite as they are, were drawn from the same premises; and each of them is equally remote from the true conclusion. St. Paul rebukes them both. To the Stoic conclusion, "Renounce the world," he replies, "Nay, but use the world"; to the Epicurean conclusion, "Live only to enjoy this world," he replies, "Nay, do not abuse the world." To all who held them he says, "All things are yours. You may use and enjoy them all. But give the best things the best place in your thoughts. Let that which is largest, fairest, most enduring, take the deepest, strongest hold upon your hearts." II. THE APOSTLE ASSIGNS TWO REASONS FOR THUS USING THE WORLD AS NOT ABUSING IT. 1. The brevity of time. "This I say, brethren, the time is short in order that henceforth . . . we may use the world as not abusing it." Time is a word whose value wholly depends on our construction of it. It is variable as a chameleon, and takes its hue from the moods in which we regard it. An hour is much to a child, little to a man. To the same man an hour at a merry Christmas feast is one thing, and an hour on the rack of pain or expectation is a very

different thing. Nay, so purely relative is time, that its length contracts or expands according as we look before or after. It is of little use talking to you of the brevity of the time to be; but look back on the years that have gone, and confess that "the time is short," that now, if ever, you must bring your life under law to God.

"The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the bird is on the wing."

But the words rendered "the time is short" mean literally "the season is contracted, the opportunity lessened." Every year, every season of life, brings its own opportunities with it, and these, once neglected, never return. Every day, moreover, carries off with it an indelible record of how you have either used or abused it—a record which can never be obliterated, or even modified. As an old Persian poet finely says—

"The moving finger writes; and having writ,
Moves on: nor all your piety and wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

2. The second reason which the apostle assigns for a wise use of life is the transitoriness of the world. In the Pauline vocabulary the word "world" includes nature, human society, and ecclesiastical forms, or, rather, it denotes all the visible and perishable elements of them. And all these change, and live by change. The more delicate and sensitive phenomena of nature vary even as we look upon them. The bare boughs put forth leaves of a tender green; the green shifts into yellows, browns, and crimsons; then the leaves fall, and the boughs are bare again. The birds come and go. The clouds shift and fly. The wind veers from point to point. The very rocks crumble. The sea eats away the land. The ice splits the mountains. And men change. The boy grows up into the man, the man marries and has children, sickens, dies. One generation goeth and another cometh. Modes of thought and government and the customs of society are for ever on the flux; "the old order changeth, giving place to the new." And we ourselves change. Our deepest impressions are fleeting unless they are continually recalled and retouched. Our most intense delight, whether drawn from some beautiful scene in nature, or from sacred human affections, or from fellowship with God, loses its edge and keenness as the months go by. There is no affection so sharp, there is no joy so pure, but that time dulls it. Let us, therefore, use the world as not abusing it. To-morrow becomes to-day so fast, and to-day yesterday, that we dare not attach ourselves to the present moment, and should not fail to avail ourselves of whatever grace or opportunity it may bring. We, changeful as we are, have an abiding life beneath all our changes, and though the world be changeful too, yet its various phenomena are the passing forms of an external substance. And the question for us is—Which shall we care most for, for which shall we most habitually and earnestly provide, that which is changeful and perishable in us and in the world around us, or that which liveth and abideth for ever? (*S. Cox, D.D.*) *The message of the closing year*:—Like the traveller who goes to sleep in the course of a long journey, and awakes astonished to find that he has traversed such a distance, so have we felt, when the approach of the year's end roused us to give attention to the matter. Here are two statements, and a series of practical inferences drawn from them. I. The first statement is pre-eminent for its brief point and solemn suggestiveness: "THE TIME IS SHORT." Time, as every one knows, is simply duration; but it may be either the duration of the world itself, or the brief space of an individual's life on earth; or it may be employed to specify the precise date of some important occurrence. 1. It is short, in itself considered; for, as the Psalmist sings, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten"; and this is rather the outmost limit than the general average of life. 2. It is short in comparison with the duration of the material universe. 3. The time of our life, again, is short as compared with the years of those who lived in the days before the flood, or even with those of the patriarchs immediately thereafter. They reckoned by hundreds; we do now, at most, by scores. 4. Again, the time of our life is short in comparison with the work we have to do in it. The old painters had an adage, which they derived from Hippocrates, the father of medicine, "Art is long, and life is brief." They felt in their pursuits what our great lexicographer has expressed, when he

declares, in reference to some matters about his dictionary, "that a whole lifetime might be devoted to them, and even a whole lifetime would not be sufficient." And so every true Christian feels regarding the work that is set before him. 5. But once more here, the time of our life is brief in comparison with eternity. II. The second statement here made is, that "THE FASHION OF THIS WORLD PASSETH AWAY." The figure has been taken, as is commonly supposed, from theatrical exhibitions. How rapidly, in a drama, does scene follow scene, and act succeed to act! Battles are fought and won, empires lost and gained, sudden elevation followed by swift misfortune, and the events of many years compressed into a few short hours; and then, after the foot-lights are extinguished, the place where, shortly before, there have been pomp and pageantry, is hushed in the silence of complete desertion; while, if you follow the actors to their homes, you may discover that he who stalked across the stage with the port of an emperor, lies down to sleep in an empty attic, or on the cold damp floor of a cheerless cellar. And such, indeed, is life: its changes as rapid, its possessions as fleeting, its joys as transient, and after it is over, there may be seen many contrasts far more striking than that between the actor in his sparkling finery on the stage, and the same man shivering in the cold nakedness of his home. In the estimation of others, however, the figure here is taken, not from the theatre, but from a public profession. But such a procession the whole race of mankind upon the earth has been. On the page of history men pass on and on in ceaseless motion; the costumes vary as the times do change; yet still we gaze, and still they pass: and then, when we come down to the day in which we live, we too fall in and follow them, joining thus "the innumerable caravan that moves" to the pale realms of shade. Thus it has ever been, thus it shall ever be. In solemn procession the race is moving on to death. "Passing away"—let us affix these words to the ornaments we delight to look upon, and the works of art we love to see. Briefly let us pass on now to the consideration of the practical inferences which are here drawn from these two solemn truths. 1. The first has respect to the relationships of life—"It remaineth that they who have wives be as though they had none." But let us not misunderstand our apostle. He does not mean that a man should desert his wife and children, and leave them to the cold cheer of the workhouse, or to the still more uncertain mercy of precarious charity. That is one way in which a man—nay, let me rather call him a human brute—having a wife, may be as though he had none; but that is not obeying the apostle's precept. Neither does he mean that a man should spend all his time out of his own house—whether in the fashionable club-room, or the genteel hotel, or the low public-house. That is another way in which he who has a wife may be as though he had none; but that is not obedience to the apostle's precept. Neither does he mean that a man should come to his home after business cross, testy, and cantankerous, so that he cannot be spoken to; and should sit down to his newspaper or book, with a foot on either side the fire, utterly oblivious that there is one by his side whom he has solemnly sworn to love. The meaning is that wife, and children, and earthly relationships in general, must all be subordinated to God. We must not build ourselves upon them, as if they were to be always with us, or we always with them. We must build thus on God alone. 2. The next inferences have respect to the sorrows and the joys of earth—"They that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not." Here, again, we must beware of supposing that Paul means to inculcate that stoical indifference to which all things come alike, and which can neither be melted to tears nor won into a smile. This was not the example which the Saviour set; for He joined in the mirth of a marriage feast, dropped a tear over the grave of Lazarus, and wept over the lost Jerusalem. He means that we must not allow ourselves to be swallowed up of sorrow, we must not nurse our grief until it become too strong for us to rise above it, nor brood over our sadness until it become murmuring. 3. The next inference has respect to the business of life—"They that buy, as though they possessed not." This, of course, does not mean that possessions impose no obligation, or involve no responsibility. The vastness of their possessions is to cause no pride; for what is it, after all, to the infinitude of God? The smallness of their earthly portion is to cause no envy; for, having God, what cause have they to complain? 4. Finally, these truths have an influence on the enjoyment of this world's goods—"They that use this world, as not abusing it." There is thus a legitimate use of the world. I have no sympathy with those who cry out against a proper employment and enjoyment of the good things of this life. No man has so good a right to enjoy these things as a Christian. The things of the world are not in themselves evil. They become so only when, by

the deceitfulness of our hearts, we seek to put them in an improper place; when we derive our entire enjoyment from them, or find our entire happiness in them. But, on the other hand, our noblest use of them is to employ them in the service of the Lord. If you have money, use it; do not let it lie rotting in idleness, but let it be employed in the promotion of God's glory, and the well-being of your fellows. If you have position, or rank, do not throw its weight into the scale of evil, neither seek to denude yourself entirely of it; but abide in it, and employ all the influence it gives you on the side of God. (*W. M. Taylor.*) *A drama in five acts*:—1. Holy Scripture gives not a special rule for each particular case, but rather instructs us by general principles applicable to all cases, otherwise a library would be required rather than a volume. The apostle had to answer several questions with regard to marriage. These he answers with an "I suppose," or again, "Howbeit, for this speak I, not the Lord"; as if he felt himself quite unequal to meet every case; but he lands here on sure ground, and seems to say, "Of this one thing I am quite sure; that the time is short, and therefore, whether ye are married or not, &c., &c., ye should act in all these things as knowing their temporary character." 2. This morning we shall go to a play, for the word "fashion" is borrowed from the changing scenes of the drama. I. THE DRAMA AS WITNESSED BY THE WORLDLING. I. Act I. introduces those that have wives. Scene 1. is a wedding. Scene 2. Domestic happiness and prosperity. Scene 3. Children climbing the father's knee and lisping their mother's name. "Now," says our companion, "I crave for nothing more than this." He is right in valuing the blessing, but wrong in making it his all. Will he see his error before the curtain falls? Scene 4. A cemetery, and the headstone, with "Here he lies." Alas, deluded wordling! Where hast thou now a home? What family hast thou now to care for? The first act is over; "This also is vanity." 2. Act II. introduces "they that weep." The cloudy and dark days have come. A beloved child dies. Anon, the merchant suffers a tremendous loss. Then the wife is smitten. Our man of the world, much moved, foreseeing his own sorrows therein, cries, "Surely this is real; you cannot call this a fleeting sorrow or a light affliction. Everything worth living for is gone!" Sympathising deeply, we nevertheless venture to say that these trials to the Christian are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Let the curtain drop—let us enter into an eternal state, and what and where are these temporary griefs? 3. Act III. presents us with a view of those who rejoice. The first-born son has come of age, or it is the daughter's wedding, or it is a gain in business, and the man is full of rejoicing. Our friend is smiling at this sunny picture. "There," says he, "is not that real? What more do you want?" If we gently hint to our friend that all this passes away he laughs us to scorn. 4. In Act IV. they that buy demand our attention. The merchant is neither a mourner nor a man of mirth; he is attending to the one thing needful, the most substantial of all concerns. There are his money-bags, the rolls of bonds, the banker's books, the title-deeds, &c. He has made a good thing of life, and still he adheres to business, and is still piling up his heap, adding field to field and estate to estate. "Is that all a shadow?" says our friend. "It will satisfy me at any rate." Alas, poor fool, the snow melts not sooner than the joy of wealth, and the smoke of the chimney is as solid as the comfort of riches. 5. In Act V. the rich man whom lately we saw married, then saw in trouble, then rejoicing and then prospering in business, has entered upon a green old age; he has retired, and has now come to use the world. Now he keeps a liberal table, excellent horses, and many servants, &c., and our friend says, "Ay, there is something very real here; what do you think of this?" When we hint that the grey hairs of the owner of all these riches betoken that his time is short, and that if this be all he has he is a very poor man, our friend replies, "Ah! ah! you are always talking in this way." O world, thou hast fine actors, to cheat men so well. The whole matter is a mere show, but yet men give their souls to win it. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?" II. THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF THIS DRAMA. Life is real; life is earnest to the Christian for activity for God; in the solemn responsibility which it brings; in the gratitude which we owe to God. The unreality of this world to him is found in the fact that time is short. This is the wand which touches the substance and makes it, before the eye of wisdom, dissolve into a shade. 1. When the apostle declares that they that have wives should be as though they had none, he does not teach us to despise the married state, but not to seek our heaven in it, nor let it hinder our serving the Lord. It is supposed that

a man without a wife—(1) Can give his time to the cause of God: the man with a wife should do the same, and so he will if God hath blessed him with one who will second his holy endeavours. (2) Has no care: a man with a wife should have none, for he should cast all his cares on God who careth for him. (3) Will find it easier to die, for there will be none of that sorrow at leaving his beloved family: the man with a wife and family should, by faith, find it just as easy since the promise runs, "Leave thy fatherless children, and let thy widows trust in Me." 2. Every Christian man must weep; but the apostle says that our sorrows are to be regarded by us, because time is short, as though they were no sorrows at all. A man who knows that his trials will not last long, can be cheerful under them. 3. The Christian has his rejoicings, indeed, he is commanded to rejoice. But still, believer, in all thy joys, remember to hold them with a loose hand. 4. So, too, in the matter of buying and possessing. It is not wrong for a Christian to trade and to trade well. But, still, while we buy and sell it should always be thus—"This is not my real trade; for my treasure is beyond the skies, where moth devours not, and where rust cannot consume." 5. The creatures of God are given us to be used, but the Christian must use them as though he did not use them, and learn in whatsoever state he is to be content. That man is the full-grown and true Christian whom circumstances cannot alter! III. THE CURTAIN WHICH IS SOON TO DROP bears the device, "Time is short." At what a rate we whirl along! Childhood seems to travel in a waggon, but manhood at express speed. As we grow older the speed increases till the grey-headed old man looks back upon all his life as but a day. We heard of one who had seen Wesley preach, and he knew others in his youth who told him of the yet older time, and going through the history of some ten or twelve persons you are carried back to the days of the Conqueror. But while time is thus short its end is absolutely sure. That curtain yonder must fall soon! It must fall; it is inevitable, and it may be very near. How soon it may be we cannot tell! And to those who have no God, death, while inevitable and very near, will be most awful. When men buy property on a short lease they will not give much for it; wherefore spendest thou thy soul to buy this world? What will it profit thee, if thou gain it, if thy soul be lost? IV. LET US WALK OUT OF THIS THEATRE OF UNREAL SHOW AND SEE SOMETHING REAL AND LASTING. There is—1. The soul. Then let me see to it and make my calling and election sure; for I shall have been of all fools the most mad if I shall have trifled with these things and yet have neglected my soul. The Roman emperor, Claudius, invaded Britain, but his performance only consisted of gathering pebbles and shells from the sea-coast. This shall be my triumph, if here in this world I live only to gather wealth. 2. Other men's souls. What am I doing for them? Dig up your buried talents and work while it is called day. 3. Christ's Church. The Church that is to shine like the stars in heaven for ever, what am I doing for her? As a member, do I contribute to its strength? 4. Christ Himself. Am I glorifying Him here on earth? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christian moderation*:—Men are often carried away by the desire for things inferior and insignificant, while they fail to realise the true value of things all-important. Note—I. THE OBJECTS SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED. 1. Social attachments. These are not to be despised. The relationship of husband and wife was sanctified even by our Lord Himself. The apostle was no ascetic. But even domestic love must not interfere with preparation for eternity. 2. Worldly sorrows. There is nothing more thoroughly wrecks a man than this. Hence the apostle saw it necessary to specify it as a special ground of danger against which the Christian man must guard. It manifests a worldliness which is incompatible with true piety, an idolatry which is inconsistent with one who fully worships God. 3. Worldly joy. There are many legitimate sources of joy. But if these are to be the only motive-powers of life, they will lead to a sorry end. It is quite possible to use them and not to be so engrossed by them. A man in a railway carriage enjoys the scenery, but he is not of it as is the owner or the farmer who is cultivating the fields. 4. Worldly business. This, perhaps, engrosses men's thoughts more intensely than anything else. It is engrossing in itself, and more particularly in its results; in many cases it is a sort of gaming for large stakes. This is not the Christian's view of trade. 5. The use of the world. There is no obligation to give up our use of the world as citizens, &c. For whom was this beautiful earth created if not for the Christian? But he must not prostitute it for his own pleasures or debasement. It is his. "All things are yours," but only in the higher sense. II. THE ARGUMENTS BY WHICH THIS COURSE IS ENFORCED.—1. The brevity of life. It is short in comparison with the age of the world and with the development of earthly

things. It is more particularly short in comparison with eternity. The average duration of life is only thirty-five years. A retrospect of life shows us painfully how terribly brief is its duration. 2. The changeableness of temporal things. The world is only a play. One after another the scenes pass away. What madness, then, to give our love and energies to that which must pass away from us when we step out of the doors of the playhouse, and we shall retain nothing more than the remembrance! Our duty is to attend to that real business of our existence—the eternal interests of our soul. (*J. J. S. Bird, M.A.*) *Moderation in everything*:—I. WHAT IT IMPLIES. 1. That our affections are subordinated to the love of God. 2. That our sorrow does not interrupt our joy in Him. 3. That our earthly joy is controlled by a consciousness of His presence. 4. That our transactions are governed by His will. 5. That our use of the world is regulated by His law. II. HOW IT IS TO BE ATTAINED. By remembering—1. That the world is evanescent. 2. That it is not the end of our existence. 3. That it must be used for the glory of God. 4. That it will soon come to an end, when every man will have to give an account before the judgment seat of Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian unworldliness*:—1. Christ had said of His disciples, "They are not of the world." It was a question therefore, Can a Christian lawfully enter the married state? Can he remain a slave and be a Christian too? &c. The apostle says in effect, You may, but I cannot judge for you; you must judge for yourselves. All that I lay down is, you must in spirit live above the love of earthly things. 2. Christianity is a spirit; it is not a mapping out of the chart of life, with every shoal and rock, and the exact line of the ship's course laid down. It does not say, Do not go to this, abstain from that, wear this, &c., &c. A principle is announced; but the application of that principle is left to each man's own conscience. 3. Herein Christianity differed from Judaism. Judaism was the education of the spiritual child, Christianity that of the spiritual man. You must teach a child by rules, but a man governed by rules is a pedant or a slave. Note—I. THE MOTIVES FOR CHRISTIAN UNWORLDLINESS. 1. The shortness of time. That mysterious word "time," which is a matter of sensation, dependent on the flight of ideas, may be long to one and short to another. The butterfly's life is long compared with the ephemeron's, short compared with the cedar's. An hour is long to a child, a year little to a man. Shortness a term relative—(1) To the way in which we look on Time. Time past is a dream, time to come seems immense; the longest night, which seemed as if it would never drag through, is but a speck of memory when it is gone. At sixty-five a man has on an average five years to live; yet his imagination obstinately attaches stability to them, though the sixty-five seem but a moment. To the young life is an inexhaustible treasure. But ask the old man what he thinks of the past. (2) To opportunities. Literally these words mean—"The opportunity is compressed—narrowed," *i.e.*, every season has its own opportunity, which never comes back. The autumn sun shines as brightly as that of spring, but the seed of spring cannot be sown in autumn. The work of boyhood cannot be done in manhood. There is a solemn feeling, in beginning any new work, in the thought, shall I ever complete it? (3) To eternity. The great idea brought out by Christianity was immortality. With this the Corinthian Church was struggling. The thought arose, "Oh! in comparison of that great Hereafter, this little life shrivels into nothingness!" All deep minds have felt this at some period or other of their career. Let but a man possess his soul with this idea of Time, and then unworldliness will be the native atmosphere he breathes. 2. The changefulness of the external world: "The fashion of this world passeth away." The word refers here to all that has form, and shape, and scenery; the visible in contradistinction to the invisible. (1) God has written decay on all around us. On the hills their outlines changing within the memory of man. On the sea-coast. On our own frames. Even in the infant the progress of dissolution has visibly begun. We stand amidst the ruins of other days, and as they moulder before our eyes they tell us of generations which have mouldered before them, and of nations which have crossed the theatre of life and have disappeared. We join in the gladness of the baptism, and the years roll on so rapidly that we are almost startled to find ourselves standing at the wedding. But pass on a few years more, and the young heart for which there was so much gladness in the future drops silently into the grave to make way for others. One of our deepest thinkers has told us, "All the world's a stage," &c. Look at our own neighbourhood. Those with whom we walked in youth are gone and others have filled their places. Every day new circumstances are occurring which call upon us to act promptly; for the past is gone. (2) "The fashion of

the world" passes away in us. Our very minds change. All except the perpetually repeated sensations of eternity, space, time, alters. There is no affliction so sharp, no joy so bright, no shock so severe, but Time modifies and cures all. Our memories are like monumental brasses: the deepest graven inscription becomes at last illegible. Of such a world the apostle seems to ask, Is this a world for an immortal being to waste itself upon? II. ITS NATURE. 1. The spirit or principle of unworldliness; to use this world as not abusing it. The worldly spirit says, "Time is short; take your fill; live while you can." The narrow religious spirit says, "All pleasure is a snare; keep out of it altogether." In opposition to the one, Christianity says, "Use the world," and to the other, "Do not abuse it." Unworldliness is not to put life and God's lovely world aside with self-torturing hand. It is to have the world, and not to let the world have you; to be its master, and not its slave. 2. The application of this principle—(1) To domestic life. The idea was just then beginning to be discussed, which was the higher state, the single or the married. In after ages this question was decided in a very disastrous way; for it was taught that celibacy was the only really pure and angelic life. Marriage was regarded as earthly and sensual, unfit for those who were to serve as priests. Now observe the apostolic wisdom. He does not say celibacy is the saintly, and marriage the earthlier state. He says, "In whatever state you can most undistractedly serve God, that is the unworldly one to you." God made man for domestic life, and he who would be wiser than his Maker is only wise in appearance. He is not the highest Christian who lives alone and single, but he who, whether single or married, lives superior to this earth. (2) To sorrow. This unworldliness consists of two parts: (*a*) The duty and the right of sorrow. "Weep." Christianity does not sear the human heart; it softens it. If joy be felt in the presence of the loved object, grief must be felt in its absence. Christianity destroys selfishness, makes a man quick and sensitive for others. Moreover, it imparts something of its own infinitude to every feeling. The Master wept. We may admire the stern old Roman heart; but we must not forget that the Roman stoicism is not of the spirit of Christianity. (*b*) The limitation of sorrow, "as though they wept not"; that is, as though God had already removed their grief. Familiarity with eternal things subdues grief, gives it a true perspective. Have you lost a dear relative? Well, you may weep; but even while weeping Christ comes to you and says, "Thy brother shall rise again." (3) To joy—earthly joy; for, if it had been spiritual joy, the apostle could not have put any limitation to it. Therefore Christians may have earthly joy. Christ had no sympathy with that tone of mind which scowls on human happiness: His first manifestation of power was at a marriage feast. Look round this beautiful world of God's. You cannot, except wilfully, misread its meaning. God says, "Be glad!" But now everlasting considerations are to come in, not to sadden joy, but to moderate its transports. We are to sit loose to all these sources of enjoyment, masters of ourselves. Respecting worldly amusements, the apostle does not say, You must avoid this or that, but he lays down broad principles. If your enjoyments are such that the thought of passing Time and coming Eternity presents itself as an intrusive thought, which has no business there; if you become secularised, excited, and artificial; then it is at your own peril that you say, All is left open to me, and permitted. Unworldly you must become—or die. (4) To the acquisition of property. Unworldliness is not measured by what you possess, but by the spirit in which you possess it. It is not said, "Do not buy," but rather "Buy—possess." You may be a large merchant, &c., if only your heart be separate from the love of these earthly things, with God's love paramount within. The amount of property is purely a relative consideration. You go into a regal palace, and perhaps, unaccustomed to the splendour, you say, "All this is worldliness." But the poor man comes to your house, and to him this seems worldliness too. No! we must take another test. The Christian is one who, if a shipwreck or a fire were to take all luxury away, could descend, without being crushed, into the valley. He wears all this on the outside, carelessly, and could say, "My *all* was not laid there." Conclusion: 1. Let there be no censoriousness. How others live, and what they permit themselves, judge not. It is work enough for any one of us to save his own soul. 2. Let there be no self-deception. This subject gives large latitude, and any one may abuse it if he will. "Remember, however, that worldliness is a more decisive test of a man's spiritual state than even sin. Sin may be sudden, the result of temptation, yet afterwards hated—forsaken. But if a man be at home in the world's pleasure

and pursuits, happy if they could but last for ever, is not his state, genealogy, and character clearly stamped? Therefore does St. John draw the distinction—"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father";—but "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) **Let those that have wives be as though they had none.**—*The marriage state, right views of:*—"Let those that have wives be as though they had none." What! to use them as if they had none? To care for them as if they had none? No; "but to be as if they had none." That is, let them be as resolute for God's truth as if they had no wives to hinder them; as willing to suffer crosses, as ready to good duties. Let them avoid distracting cares and worldly incumbrances, as if they had none; let them not pretend their marriage for baseness and worldliness, and for avoiding of afflictions when God is pleased to call them unto them; let them not pretend marriage for their doubling in religion and dissembling, "I shall undo my wife and children," "Let them be as if they had none," for Christ hath given us direction to hate all for Christ. A man is not worthy of Christ that undervalues not wife and children and all, for the gospel. If things stand in question, whether shall I stick to them or to Christ, my chief husband; I must stick to Christ. The reason is, the bond of religion is above all bonds. And the bond that binds us to Christ it abides when all bonds cease; for all bonds between husband and wife, between father and children, end in death; but the bond of Christ is eternal. Every bond must serve the main bond. We must so labour to please others, that we displease not our chief Husband. For the time will be when we shall neither marry, nor be given in marriage, but we shall be as the angels (Matt. xxii. 30); and that time shall be without bounds and limits, for eternity; and we must look to that. You know how it fared with him in the gospel, that pretended this, for his not coming to Christ; he that was married saith, "I cannot come." His excuse was more peremptory than the rest, "he could not." (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *How to use the world so as not to abuse it:*—I. I begin with remarking the wisdom of the apostle in teaching us HOW TO BEAR THE LOSS OF FRIENDS, BY FIRST TEACHING US HOW TO ENJOY THEM. These two points are very closely connected. If a man has enjoyed prosperity in a proper Christian manner, he will be prepared to suffer adversity with the least degree of distress. As he will not rejoice, like one intoxicated, with extravagant joy, so he will not be depressed by a grief that overwhelms him with intolerable anguish. On the other hand, I would remark also, that the proper use of adversity teaches us to bear prosperity aright. The Christian principle, then, to which I have alluded as equally enabling us to bear prosperity and adversity, is faith. By this we are taught to feel the vanity, the shortness, the emptiness of everything in this world, and to realise the views of eternal things which are given us in Scripture. A Christian is one who looks not at things which are seen, but at those which are unseen. But in order that this view of eternal things should have any considerable influence upon the mind, it is necessary that it should have two qualities. 1. It should be abiding. However vivid our impression of eternal things may be for a time, yet we know that such is the nature of the human mind that the very strongest impression will soon wear away if not repeated. Nay, a very slight impression, frequently repeated, will have more effect upon us than any single impression, however strong. Now the things of this life are perpetually before our eyes. They are, in this respect, like a force which is constantly acting. Will not the consideration of eternal things, therefore, require to be often set before the mind in order to counteract this force? From this constitution of things arises the necessity of continually hearing and reading the Word of God. It is therefore of the utmost importance to keep up a lively impression of eternal things on the soul; and this cannot be done without daily retirement, meditation, and prayer. 2. But in order that the things of the eternal world may become frequently the objects of contemplation, it is absolutely necessary that the view of them should be pleasant to us. No man loves to dwell upon painful or unpleasing objects: no man loves to meditate upon the shortness of life, whose prospects of happiness terminate here below. A man must therefore have a good hope beyond the grave before he can accustom himself to extend his view to this close of his earthly hopes. He that is afraid of God will not often meditate upon His power and His omnipresence. Now it is the business of the gospel, and of the gospel alone, to render the thoughts of death, of eternity, and of God, pleasing to the soul. Christ is there held up to our view as having made atonement for our sins and procured reconciliation with the Father, in order that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." But it will be asked, What has the con-

sideration of the next world to do with our concerns in this? I answer, Much. The proper use of this world depends wholly upon our views of that which is to come. II. THIS PRINCIPLE, THEN, RIGHTLY FELT, WILL TEACH US HOW TO USE THE WORLD WITHOUT ABUSING IT; HOW TO ENJOY THE SOCIETY OF OUR NEAREST CONNECTIONS, AND HOW TO SORROW IN THEIR LOSS. In the enjoyment of domestic relations, the rule laid down, "Let those who have wives be as though they had none," is not to be understood as if it excluded the gratification of social feeling, the pleasures of tenderness, or the indulgence of domestic happiness. But how, then, are we to be preserved from worldliness of mind, and from misery when we are deprived of our comforts? I answer, By the principle already laid down; by a deep and abiding impression of the superiority of things spiritual and eternal. Let me, therefore, while I enjoy all my domestic and temporal comforts with pleasure, and with additional pleasure because I receive them from Thee; let me still consider them as but subordinate and inferior to the blessings which Christ has purchased. While I have them, let me consider well their nature: they are transitory and vain; let the chief desire of my soul, therefore, be towards those things that are above. Apply the same principle to the losses we must expect to meet with in life. Let me address your feelings. You know that you hold all your temporal enjoyments by a precarious tenure. You that have wives, and in them all that gives enjoyment to life, consider how soon the stroke of death may tear them from you. (*J. Venn, M.A.*)

And they that weep as though they wept not.—*Religion in its relation to common life*:—I. TO ITS SORROWS. 1. It prepares for them. 2. Moderates their effect. 3. Mixes them with hope. II. TO ITS JOYS. It teaches us—1. To regard them as the gift of God. 2. To use them moderately. 3. To employ them as a means to invigorate us for the more serious business of life. III. TO BUSINESS. It inculcates —1. Diligence. 2. Contentment. 3. The vanity of earthly gain. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

Ver. 31. **And they that use this world, as not abusing it.**—*Using this world* (Election sermon):—1. It is the duty of a Christian, so long as he is a citizen of this world, to take a part in its concerns. "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world," &c. (chap. v. 10). How can salt season, or yeast leaven, if it do not come in contact with that which it is to season or to raise? 2. Christ was removed above all the conventionalities and systems of this world; and yet He conformed to them all. He touched on the political questions; He had teachings about Church and State, and gave His authority to the great principle of taxation. And yet how heavenly the tone of every word and act! I. THE BELIEVER "USES" THE WORLD, which conveys the ideas of—1. Elevation. What I "use," I am above. It is the implement I employ, and not the power I obey. That is just what the world is to a Christian. 2. Intention. What I "use" is never final. It is to work up to an end. Say it is an amusement—I use it, it is to fit me for something I have yet to do. Say it is money, it is that I may have greater power to do good. Say it is influence, it is that I may the better extend truth. Say it is public life, it is that I may throw weight into the side of good. Or say it is the whole world, it is with an eye to eternity, to make myself or others ready, for a higher state that is coming. II. WHAT, THEN, IS IT TO "ABUSE"? 1. If the world rule you, and you do not rule it—if you do not keep it within fixed bounds which your own conscience lays down—if you have not a further end in every natural thing beyond the immediate gratification—if that end is not worthy—then you are abusing the world. 2. If it separate you from Him to whom this whole world belongs, or if you use any part of it for any other end but the glory of the great Proprietor, you abuse the world. Conclusion: Now for present duty. In this representative country every man both legislates and governs. Therefore, it is no simple thing to exercise the franchise. 1. You will "abuse" and not "use" the power which the law has given you if you do not accept it as a solemn trust which has been committed to you by God, to be exercised for Him. Great things are at stake, and in your degree God has made you the arbiter of them. Therefore—(1) Discharge the duty calmly, according to your real conviction, bringing the best reflection you can to bear upon it, as before God. (2) Pray for a right judgment in this matter. (3) This done, it will help your decision, as to what line of policy will best promote the great ends that all have in view. Assuredly, the religious aspect of every subject ought to be the first considered. Therefore, regard should certainly be had to the religious character of the man whom you would entrust with power. He who would put first the glory of God, cannot rest in devolving high trust to one who has no such aim.

2. Let all be done with charity of judgment. Let no personal feeling embitter a great work. And then, whatever be the result, accept it as the will of God to you. And though the course of events may run counter with your wishes, still honour God by taking loving views of man, and trusting views of the future. And be they what they may, be loyal to the powers that be. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The use of the world*—I. IS LAWFUL. Its enjoyments, associations, business, &c., must be made subservient to the purposes of life and salvation. II. MAY BECOME SINFUL—1. By excess. 2. By abuse. 3. By making it the end of existence. III. IS ENFORCED BY THE CONSIDERATION OF ITS VANITY.—1. Its fashion changes. 2. Its joys wither. 3. Its glory must ultimately perish. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The use and abuse of the world*:—I. THE REASON WHY WE SHOULD NOT ABUSE THIS WORLD: the fashion of it passes away; literally, the scene changes. 1. The world itself is a stable thing. Its face changes, but its matter and laws are fixed. The same mountain-tops point toward the sky to-day that seemed to touch it when we were children. The same plain stretches out from the Pyramids that the Pharaohs saw from their summits. The inhabitant is often changed; the habitation remains the same. 2. But it does not remain the same to me. The green grass looks not so lightsome when those whom I loved are laid beneath it. This is not the world on which I trod so lightly when I was a child. It was a brighter world then. That fashion went out, and the one that came in after it, was hard and busy. Faster and faster it moved, and I moved with it, until I became giddy with the whirl. At the next change of fashion the breathless runner is left behind. 3. But, besides those which time inexorably brings to all, there are other changes peculiar to each. (1) The owner of a beautiful estate was conducting a visitor through his park. At a bend in the path a lofty beech-tree suddenly hove in sight, wanting one hemisphere of its once symmetrical and stately head. In the last winter's blast one of these twin boughs had been rent off, and the survivor, bare on the side where his marrow grew, seemed a stricken, widowed thing. "See," said the visitor, "the emblem of a husband standing alone in the world, after death has torn away the wife of his youth!" Then a stifled sigh revealed to the speaker that he had unconsciously hurt, by touching, a wound still green in his companion's side. (2) How many living victims are kept in continual torture! Clinging to wealth, when wealth is taking wings; to the trappings of beauty, when the beauty has gone; to the gaiety of youth, when age, unwelcome, unconfessed, is stealing quietly, quickly on. If you allow your heart-strings to twine around the fashion of the world, you are torn and tortured every day you live; for the fashion of the world is moving past you. The only possible method of living either pleasantly or safely on a shifting scene is to sit loosely on its surface. II. THE ABUSE OF THIS WORLD WHICH THE TEXT FORBIDS. When the gifts are turned aside from their wise and kind intent, the Giver takes it ill (Ezek. xvi. 19). The abuses of the world cannot be all named; let two or three suffice. 1. Day and night are precious constituents of "this world." To shuffle them out of their places is to abuse them. An assembly of dancing men and women in a heated hall, a merchant leaning over his ledger in the counting-house, a student before his lamp in the silent chamber, are all guilty of abusing the world, if they occupy the long dark night, and sleep on the morrow while the sun is running his race rejoicing. 2. The fruitful earth is systematically and to a great extent compelled to minister to the vice of men. Nothing in nature is lovelier than the poppy-fields of India. The best land, in the most sheltered situation, is appropriated to the cultivation of the plant, and its product—opium—is a most precious medicine. But when we presume to use it as an indulgence to an unhealthy craving, and force it upon an unwilling people on whom its effects can be only baneful, then we abuse it. At home, too, in a similar way, we abuse the world, by converting a large portion of the grain which it brings forth for the food of man, into a stimulant which is chiefly employed in ministering to his vices. 3. Civilised nations have long abused in the gross a whole continent of the world. Instead of buying from the Africans the products of the soil, so stimulating arts and industry, we bought the people—the weak from the strong—so stimulating war and rapine. III. THE USE OF THIS WORLD WHICH THE TEXT PERMITS AND ENJOINS. Observe how God uses this world, that we may fall in with His purpose. He has made it the dwelling-place of creatures formed after His own image, and capable of communion with Himself; but the grandest use of the habitation was made after the inhabitant fell by sin. Leaving behind all the shining worlds, the Son of God lived here; here the sons and daughters of the Lord obtained their birthright, and are prepared for their inheritance. Such are

the purposes for which the Father employs this world; and for these chiefly the dear child values it. This earth shines only in the sunlight: if it were dark it would be also barren. So, morally for man, the world in which we live owes its beauty and its worth to the light which reaches it from heaven. Christians—1. May use the world. Practical religion does not consist in denying ourselves the use of temporal good, or in tasting it with terror. Every creature of God is good. A Christian, with a clear mind and a good conscience, tastes more sweetness in this world than he who has no other portion. The relations of the family, *e.g.*, are touched in the context. He who has entered the family of God, has not thereby forfeited his place or his rights in the families of men. Make one thing sure, that it is the use of the world, not the abuse of it; and then use it with a will. 2. Must use it. Don't permit the riches, *e.g.*, to lie so long still that they shall rust. Whatever God may have given you of personal qualification, or social position, or material means, take the use of it yourself, and let your neighbours participate in the benefit. Conclusion: In vain do you tell a man that the fashion of this world passeth away, if you have nothing more to tell. A drowning man will grasp straws; and you cannot put an end to the useless effort by standing on the river's brink and proving that straws will not avail to make his body buoyant. How shall we persuade him to let them go? Heave him a life-buoy, and no persuasion will be necessary. When he feels the contact of the better preserver, he will throw away the worse. So no demonstration of the world's changefulness will keep a human soul from cleaving to its dust. Nothing but faith's possession of the better portion can wean our hearts from the worse. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *The use and abuse of the world*:—To "use" anything is to turn it to account in the direction of those ends for which it is really needed. To "abuse" is simply to turn a thing away from its true and proper use. This "world" has its "uses." According to the original purpose of God, it is a servant to minister to our wants, not a tyrant to oppress or degrade us. It may become a dangerous foe; but only when we stand in false relations to it. This world is designed to aid—I. IN REVEALING GOD TO US. "The heavens declare His glory, &c." What an "abuse," then, of the world it is, when men employ it to conceal God! An astronomer once said that what he found in the study of the starry sky was the "glory" of Newton, &c., and not the "glory of God." And it would seem as if some men deliberately try to forget God, by busying themselves about the things which God has made. They plunge into business and into politics, as if they would forget that the Most High has anything to do either with the growth of cotton or the growth of nations. Even the faces of their little children cease to speak to them of "The Father"; the selfish, worldly love they have for them becomes a pretext for ignoring the claims and commands of God. II. IN THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUAL CHARACTER. The material exists for the sake of the spiritual. This earth has been furnished as a school for man's education. The monastic life is just a kind of "playing truant." The true "use" of a school cannot be to run away from it. On the other hand, there are those who turn the school-room into a playground—who seek to convert the means of education and training into the instruments of mere selfish gratification. Some men are like little children burning their lesson-books for the momentary pleasure of the blaze! Others are like children trying to carve out their names on forms and desks of the school, when they ought to be learning lessons. Others are like children, with heads bent over their books, making a show of diligence, in order to conceal an indolent frivolity. And others, alas! are like children who, through self-willed folly, break their limbs in the very gymnasium which was intended and adapted to strengthen them! Oh what an "abuse" is here! A whole world made for men—and, all the while, men living as if they had been made for the world! III. IN SERVING GOD. He appoints us duties to discharge, and burdens to bear. His holy and loving commandment meets us everywhere—at home and in the market, &c.; and not a day passes in which He does not give us opportunities of expressing our loyalty to His law. Only see, again, how men "abuse" the world! They convert it into a sphere of disobedience. Suppose that, in order to secure a higher kind of service from an employee you were to promote him to a confidential position—giving him full access to your books, and an insight into the secrets of your business; and suppose that he were forthwith to employ the knowledge thus obtained in order to injure your business or embezzle your property! And yet this is but a faint emblem of your own conduct towards the Heavenly Master! You take the bread which He places on your table; you come out into His

sunshine; you breathe His air; and then, with the health and strength you thus obtain, you pollute His air with words that ought never to be spoken, or commit actions too foul to bear the light of His sun. God reveals to you some of those wondrous secrets which He has lodged in the bosom of Nature, and then you go, perhaps, and employ this very knowledge for the retarding of His spiritual kingdom. You take the subtle electricity, and with it you flash your lying, fraudulent message along the wire—breaking God's own law of truth and justice with God's own mysterious forces! He gives you wife and children and friends; and lo! you make them do the devil's work. Here is one man whom God's Providence places in a position of power. How that man might use his power in the cause of truth and justice and liberty! But, instead of this, he becomes tyrannical. Here is another man who has been placed in a position of wealth. How that man might multiply manifestations of loyalty to God! But, instead of this, he practically worships his gold, and employs it to corrupt and degrade others, and to supply fuel for his own lusts. Conclusion: "The fashion of this world passeth away." Let us, then, not live as if the visible were the eternal. And let us remember that we do not necessarily escape worldliness, by belonging to what is called "the religious world." Men may seem to be engaged in the service of God, and yet all the while be only serving themselves. A selfish ambition does not cease to be worldly merely because it is ecclesiastical. Slander and spite do not cease to be worldly merely because they appear in a "religious newspaper." "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," do not cease to be worldly, even in a household that is daily summoned to family prayers. (*T. C. Finlayson.*) *The use and abuse of the world.*—I. PAUL'S PRESENT OBSERVATION ABOUT THIS WORLD. That its "fashion" "passeth away." It passes away—1. Before our eyes. 2. To our hearts. II. THE USE WHICH PAUL MAKES OF THIS FACT. That they that use this world should use it as not abusing it. 1. The world is abused when we suffer it—(1) To supplant in our hearts its Creator; (2) To banish other worlds from the sphere of our attraction; (3) To overcome us; (4) To make us carry the lawful use of it to excess. 2. The world should be used with—(1) A pilgrim's; (2) A godly; (3) A free and independent; (4) A generous and holy spirit. (*S. Martin.*) *On the use and abuse of the world*:—The world is always represented in Scripture as the great scene of trial to a Christian. The part which is proper for him to act may be comprised in these two expressive words of the text; "using the world, and not abusing it"; the significancy and extent of which I propose now to explain. The subject is of the higher importance, as in the world we must live; and according as we use or abuse it, it will prove either our friend or our greatest foe. It is natural to begin with observing that the Christian is here supposed to "use the world"; by which we must certainly understand the apostle to mean maintaining intercourse and connection with the world; living in it as one of the members of human society, assuming that rank which belongs to his station. No one can be said to use the world who lives not thus. Hence it follows that sequestration from the world is no part of Christian duty. Instead of employing their influence to regulate and temper the pleasures of the world by a moderate participation of those that are innocent, they deliver up all the entertainments of society into the hands of the loose and giddy. It may be assumed, therefore, as a principle justified by the text, and by the whole strain of Scripture, that to use, and in a certain degree to enjoy, the world, is altogether consistent with religion. We shall have a clearer view of the proper use of the world when we contrast it with that abuse of the world which we too often observe. Those abuses manifest themselves in various forms; but in general may be classed under three great heads. I. They are abusers of the world who intemperately give themselves up to its pleasures, and lead a life of licentiousness, riot, and dissipation. Amidst the wealth and luxury of the present age, it will be admitted that persons of this description are not unfrequent, who, being opulent in fortune, and perhaps high in rank, think themselves entitled to pass their days in a careless manner, without any other object in view than the gratification of their senses and passions. By the train of life which they lead they defeat every purpose for which Providence bestowed on them the blessings of prosperity. They sink every talent which they possess into useless insignificancy. They corrupt the public manners by their example, and diffuse among others the spirit of extravagance and folly. They behave in a manner altogether unsuitable to the condition of the world in which we live. With indignant eyes the sober and thinking part of mankind view the luxury and riot of those abusers of the world. To them are owing the discontents of the poor, their disaffection to their superiors,

their proneness to disturb the peace of the world. The conduct of such abusers of the world is not only pernicious to the welfare of society and to the interests of virtue, it is equally ruinous to themselves. At the bottom of the hearts of all men there lies a secret sense of propriety, virtue, and honour. This sense may be so far blunted as to lose its influence in guiding men to what is right, while yet it retains its power of making them feel that they are acting wrong. Hence remorse often gnaws the heart which affects to appear light and gay before the world. Retreat, then, from your dishonourable courses, ye who by licentiousness, extravagance, and vice, are abusers of the world! You are degrading, you are ruining yourselves. You are grossly misemploying the gifts of God, and the Giver will not fail to punish. II. The world is abused, not only by an intemperate pursuit of its pleasures, but by a sordid attachment to its gains. This respects a set of men of a very different description from the former, more decent in their carriage, and less flagrant in their vices, but corrupted by the world in no less a degree. For the world is often abused by the men of business as much as by the men of pleasure. The world, with its advantages, is a lawful object of pursuit to a Christian. He may seek, by fair industry, to render his circumstance affluent. His care is, not merely to amass and possess, but to use his possessions well, as one who is accountable to God. He is not a slave, either to the hopes or the fears of the world. He would rather forfeit any present advantage than obtain it at the expense of violating the Divine law or neglecting his duty. This is using the world like a good man. This is living in it as a subject of God and a member of the great commuuity of mankind. Very opposite to this is the character of the worldly-minded. To them the mere attainment of earthly possessions is an ultimate aim. They cannot be said to use the world; for to possess, not to use or enjoy, is their object. He is an abuser of the world who cannot occasionally retreat from it to consider what character he bears in the sight of God, and to what issue his conduct will bring him at last. In a word, the world is then properly used when it is generously and beneficially enjoyed; neither hoarded up by avarice, nor squandered by ostentatiou. III. The world is abused by those who employ its advantages to the injury or oppression of their brethren. Under this class are included the worst and most criminal abusers of the world, who turn against their fellow-creatures those advantages with which it has pleased Heaveu to distinguish them. The licentious, the avaricious, and the insolent, form the three great classes of abusers of the world. Let not those who are in wealthy and flourishing circumstances complain of the restraints which religious doctrine attempts to impose on their enjoyments. For to what do these restraints amount? To no more than this, that, by their pleasures, they would neither injure themselves nor injure others. (*H. Blair. D.D.*)

The use and abuse of the world:—I. A GOOD MAN MAY MAKE USE OF THE WORLD. 1. The persons of the world. 2. The thiugs of the world, for they are his own: "All things are yours." It is an incivility and unthankfulness not to make use of a gift, and the things of this world are God's gift. We are all travellers to another country, so far therefore as things are necessary for our journey, we may make use thereof. II. BUT WE MUST USE THE WORLD AS THOUGH WE USED IT NOT. As wicked men do nse the things of God, and of the other world, so a good man should use the things of this world. A wicked man prays as if he prayed not, and hears as if he heard not, because his mind is upon other things. "Set your affections on things that are above." As good men are where they yet are not, namely in heaven, so they are not where they now are, namely on earth, for your conversation is in heaven. The things of this world are but to serve a purpose, and are not to be enjoyed for themselves. Clothes are but to cover nakedness; meat and drink but to serve hunger and thirst; only God is to be enjoyed; therefore why should we not use the world as if we used it not? And then the world uses us as if it used us not, and cares for us as if it cared not for us. III. WHAT ARE THOSE PARTICULAR CONCERNMENTS WHEREIN WE ARE TO USE THE WORLD AS IF WE USED IT NOT? 1. Our relations (ver. 29). Be as zealous for the truth and as ready to suffer for the cause of Christ as if you had none. 2. Grief (ver. 20). It is lawful to grieve, but we must not weep too much, or otherwise it will argue that we have too much love to the world. If we are to "rejoice in the Lord evermore," then surely we are to weep as if we wept not. 3. Joy. Why should I joy much in that which I cannot enjoy? God only is to be enjoyed. There is a crack in the finest crystal. 4. Our possessions (ver. 30). How can a man be patient in the loss of things if he be not weaned from them while he hath them. And if good men have greater possessions to mind, and they cannot intensively mind both, then surely they

must so possess, as if they possessed not. IV. WHAT IS THERE IN THESE REASONS OF THE APOSTLE THAT MAY ENFORCE THE EXHORTATION? 1. The time is short. We have a great business to do, and but little time to do it in. If a citizen go into the country about some business that concerns his life, will he run up and down to catch butterflies, when all his time is but little enough for to do his business in? 2. The fashion of this world, it is but a piece of pageantry, a stage—one goes off and another comes on. As that is a fashion to-day which was not yesterday, that is a fashion to-day which is none to-morrow; so the fashion of the world passeth away. Will you instance a natural, civil, sinful, religious, or comfortable fashion of the world that does not pass away? V. WHEN MAY A MAN BE SAID SO TO USE THE WORLD AS IF HE USED IT NOT? When a man so uses the world as to walk with God in the use thereof: when one man walks with another he turns as he turns; so when a man walks with God in the world, he turns as God turns. When God calls to joy, he joys; when God calls to grief, he grieves, &c. VI. SUPPOSE I DO NOT USE THE WORLD AS IF I USED IT NOT, WHAT THEN? 1. You do want this character of a good man. 2. You are not dead to the world, and if not dead to the world, then not dead with Christ. 3. You are defiled by the world. 4. Your hearts will reproach you when you come to die. 5. You cannot more prejudice the thing you love, nor wrong yourselves more, than by loving it too much. A man leans upon a slender stick, and both breaks the stick and runs it into his hand. VII. WHAT SHALL WE DO THAT WE MAY GET OUR HEARTS INTO THIS GRACIOUS AND HOLY FRAME? Note—1. What that man does that uses the world as if he used it not. (1) He will be sure to use grace in the use of the world. (2) He will be ready to give up that part of the world unto God wherein his affections are most engaged. (3) He will stand at a distance from the world, in the getting as well as in the keeping. (4) He will not place his religion in a morning and in an evening duty, but in his walking with God in his place. 2. The means. (1) Labour to possess your hearts much with God's all-sufficiency (Psa. lxii. 10, 11). (2) Look upon the world with the prospective of the Scripture, not with the world's multiplying glass. (3) Never fall in love with any condition for itself, but for the good of the condition. (4) Take all God's alarums of death, and mingle those with the consideration of the death of Christ, and then you will die to the world. (5) Afford the world and the things thereof, so much of your love, as better things do leave. (6) Let the name of the Lord be very precious in your hearts and in your eyes. (7) Go to the Lord and beg of the Lord to fulfil His promises. (8) Consider what a good thing it is to use this world as if we used it not. Thereby—(*a*) You shall be able to want and to part with the world with ease: "I know how to want," saith Paul, and "I know how to abound." (*b*) You shall have more of the world, and have it in a better edition, in a better impression, for it will be sanctified unto you. (*c*) You shall have that which is better than all, the mind of Christ. (*W. Bridge, M.A.*) **For the fashion of this world passeth away.**—*The fashion of the world:*—The words contain—I. A METAPHORICAL ALLUSION to a public exhibition or a dramatic representation. 1. The state and constitution of things as they now exist pass away; not so much the world itself, as to its material substance, as its fashion with respect to us. Do we now behold a beautiful appearance of nature or art? To us they will soon be as the reminiscence of a giddy dream. 2. Our employments and pursuits here. In these we are as the actors of a drama. Some assume fictitious characters; our possessions and enjoyments change; our feelings change, not only as to their nature, but their keenness. 3. Our present ties and connections. These pass away to assume another fashion. In the world to come "we shall know no man after the flesh." II. DOCTRINAL TRUTH. 1. The present world bears evident marks of imperfection; but "God is a rock, His work is perfect." 2. The present world does not exhibit that discrimination which exists between the righteous and the wicked. 3. The grand end of all revelation is to prepare men for another life. Why have human beings an intelligent existence? Why did Jehovah style Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Why select a people and inspire prophets to instruct them? Why send His Son to live, &c.? Why alarm the fears or excite the hopes? Verily there is an after state, &c. III. A PRACTICAL APPLICATION. 1. All are equally concerned in it. Young persons of robust constitution must die as well as the greyheaded and infirm. The knowing or witty must all pass away. 2. This alone is our state of probation. Fleeting as this state is, when once gone it returns no more; "time is short," not so eternity. "Behold, now is the accepted time," &c. 3. The change of worlds, with respect to the righteous, will be highly advantageous.

4. The change of worlds to the unconverted distressing and terrible. What will become of the proud? (Mal. iv. 1.) Of the worldly person? (James v. 1–3.) Of the carnally minded? (Rom. viii. 6.) Of the vain and giddy? (Luke vi. 25.) In a word—"If the righteous scarcely are saved," &c. Conclusion: Does the fashion of the world pass away? Then let us improve every occurrence which may tend to loosen our attachment to this world, and every means to prepare us for a better. (*Homilist.*) *The passing nature of this world*:—I. BY THIS WORLD WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND THE VISIBLE, IN OPPOSITION TO THE INVISIBLE STATE OF EXISTENCE. For into these two the whole world, or entire system of the creation, is resolved: the world that is unseen, and is in its nature eternal; and the world that is seen, and is in its constitution temporal. And by the attention that every man pays to the one or the other, his character is determined and his lot is fixed. He is either carnally or spiritually minded, and his recompense accordingly, death or life (Rom. viii. 6). Here things look quite otherwise than they are. Mourning and poverty bear the face of misery; mirth and riches appear to be happiness; fame and preferment are styled honour; slander and oppression are accounted disgrace; hypocrisy has the face of devotion; pride the mask of humility; vanity the air of greatness. In short, truth is currently counterfeited and concealed under false colours; and, as the Psalmist sings, man spends his life in a vain show. Yet, in truth, they may be blessed that mourn—they may be happy that are poor—they may be truly honourable that are in disgrace in this world—they may be great and good who look mean. And, on the contrary, they may be worthless, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked, who are accounted rich, and great, and famous among men. Here things have no solid bottom. All moves in a perpetual tendency to another state, where false appearances shall for ever vanish away, and everything appear as it really is. The whole frame of things here is continually hastening to a dissolution—continually shifting place and time. II. THIS WORLD IS IN ITS NATURE A FLUCTUATING AND TRANSITORY STATE OF THINGS. 1. Time is the element in which all creatures below are calculated to exist; in which they begin, go on, and end: and an element continually changing; always in motion, never resting, never returning. 2. The numberless creatures that exist in time, and compose this world, are continually changing with time, and passing away. III. THE USE WE SHOULD MAKE OF THIS IMPORTANT AND EXTENSIVE TRUTH. 1. To avoid all anxious care and immoderate concern about the things of this life. 2. To be moderate in the use of worldly enjoyments. 3. To be contented with our lot in the world. 4. Here we have read a lesson that redeems poverty from contempt, and reduces riches to little. 5. Hence we may observe the sin and folly of those who trust to their riches for supporting their life, credit, and comfort in this world. 6. From this subject we should learn patience under afflictions. They cannot last in a world continually changing and passing away. A little time longer will either end or amend them. 7. We should study to wean our affections from the things of time; to leave the world as fast as it leaves us; to be more and more indifferent about the pains or pleasures of it, the longer we live in it. 8. What we have heard serves to abate the love of life and the terrors of death, which naturally keep the mind of man under bondage. 9. Here Christians may read consolation under the loss of Christian friends, relations, or acquaintances. 10. Let us bless God with thankful hearts that we have another and a better world to look for, a state that can never know either time or change (*Wm. Beat.*) *On the fashion of the world passing away*:—I. The fashion of the world passeth away, as the opinions, ideas, and manners of men are always changing. We look in vain for a standard to ascertain and fix any of these; in vain expect that what has been approved and established for a while, is always to endure. Principles which were of high authority among our ancestors are now exploded. When we read an account of the manners and occupations, of the studies and opinions, even of our own countrymen, in some remote age, we seem to be reading the history of a different world from what we now inhabit. Coming downwards, through some generations, a new face of things appears. As one wave effaces the ridge which the former had made on the sand by the sea-shore, so every succeeding age obliterates the opinions and modes of the age which had gone before it. Let us only think of the changes which our own ideas and opinions undergo in the progress of life. One man differs not more from another, than the same man varies from himself in different periods of his age, and in different

situations of fortune. In youth and in opulence everything appears smiling and gay. But let some more years have passed over our heads, or let disappointments in the world have depressed our spirits; and what a change takes place! The world itself remains the same. But its form, its appearance, is changed to our view; its fashion, as to us, hath passed away. II. While our opinions and ideas are thus changing within, the condition of all external things is, at the same time, ever changing without us and around us. Wherever we cast our eyes over the face of nature, or the monuments of art, we discern the marks of alteration and vicissitude. We cannot travel far upon the earth without being presented with many a striking memorial of the changes made by time. What was once a flourishing city is now a neglected village. When from the public scene we turn our eye to our own private connections, the changes which have taken place in the fashion of the world must touch every reflecting mind with a more tender sensibility. For where are now many of the companions of our early years? III. Not only our connections with all things around us change, but our own life, through all its stages and conditions, is ever passing away. As the life of man, considered in its duration, thus fleets and passes away, so, during the time it lasts, its condition is perpetually changing. It affords us nothing on which we can set up our rest; no enjoyment or possession which we can properly call our own. IV. That the world itself in which we dwell, the basis of all our present enjoyments, is itself contrived for change, and designed to pass away. There are three fixed and permanent objects to which I must now call your attention, as the great supports of human constancy amidst this fugitive state. 1. Virtue and goodness never change. Let opinions and manners, conditions and situations, in public and in private life, alter as they will, virtue is ever the same. It rests on the immovable basis of eternal truth. Every terrestrial glory sparkles only for a little, with transient brightness. But virtue shines with eternal and unalterable splendour. It derives its origin from heaven; and partakes both of the lustre and the stability of celestial objects. 2. God never changes. Amidst the unceasing vicissitude of earthly things, there remains at the head of the universe an Eternal Protector of virtue, whose throne is established for ever. With Him there is no variableness, neither any shadow of turning; no inconstancy of purpose, and no decay of wisdom or of power. How much soever worldly things may change in themselves, they are all united in His plan; they constitute one great system or whole of which He is the author; and which, at its final completion, shall appear to be perfect. His dominion holds together, in a continued chain, the successive variety of human events; gives stability to things that in themselves are fluctuating; gives constancy even to the fashion of the world while it is passing away. 3. Heaven and immortality pass not away. The fleeting scenes of this life are to be considered as no more than an introduction to a nobler and more permanent order of things, when man shall have attained the maturity of his being. (*H. Blair, D.D.*) *The changing nature of worldly things*:—I. ALL THINGS AROUND US ARE CHANGING. The visible heavens daily vary their appearance, the seasons walk their rounds, and in each we experience a great variety in the temperature. Nature is continually diversifying her dress. Time makes observable changes in the surface of our globe. Every age introduces great alterations in the bounds of empires, in the politics and commerce of nations. Families, as well as nations, are changing. New ones are forming as elder ones pass away. The lands which have been acquired, and the property which has been accumulated, by the industry of the proprietor, are often alienated by the misfortune or folly of the descendants. The condition of every person is in continual mutation. As we advance in life, our views and apprehensions of men and things, and our taste and inclination for the objects around us, greatly alter. The inhabitants of the world are changing. There is a mighty change which awaits us all. II. LET US IMPROVE THE SENTIMENT. The mutable condition of the world may lead us—1. To contemplate the immutability of the Creator (Heb. i. 10-12). 2. To see much of the wisdom and goodness of God. (1) The mutability of things is on the whole a source of enjoyment. We are formed to love variety. The traveller passing over a level plain where, all along, a train of similar objects meets his eyes, soon finds the scene tedious. Let a man choose his own condition, and place himself in the most agreeable circumstances; will he enjoy it? No, not for a single week. There must be something new, or every pleasure becomes insipid. (2) As our pleasures are heightened, so our pains are mitigated, by variety. On the roughest roads there is some smooth way where we can walk with ease. Many are the troubles of

the world, but they are intermixed with pleasures. And our troubles are not always the same; one passes away as another comes. We find some relief by shifting it from shoulder to shoulder. 3. To direct our thoughts to a future state of existence. One change leads to another. Each season is preparatory to the next. Youth is preparatory to manhood, and this to old age. We may naturally then conclude that death is introductory to a new state of existence. Pain, in this state, usually precedes high enjoyment; the humiliating circumstances of death are preludes to glory and immortality. 4. To rejoice as if we rejoiced not, and weep as if we wept not. 5. To remember our great change. When we see the fashion of the world passing away, it becomes us to realise that we are passing away also, and have here no continuing city. The seaman, in a feeble bark, tossed on the tumultuous ocean, surely will not imagine himself on firm ground, nor forget his danger of being swallowed up in the deep. 6. To direct our thoughts to heaven, where none of the painful vicissitudes of the present stage will attend us. Changes there will be in heaven, but they will be only changes for the better, from glory to glory, from perfection to perfection. (*J. Lathrop, D.D.*) *The world changes*:—Ah, this beautiful world! I know not what to think of it. Sometimes it is all sunshine and gladness, and heaven itself lies not far off; and then it suddenly changes, and is dark and sorrowful, and the clouds shut out the day. In the lives of the saddest of us there are bright days like this, when we feel as if we could take the great world in our arms. Then come gloomy hours, when the fire will not burn on our hearths, and all without and within is dismal, cold, and dark. Believe me, every heart has its secret sorrows, which the world knows not; and ofttimes we call a man cold when he is only sad. (*H. W. Longfellow.*) *The fashion of the world passeth away*:—The crust of the globe is constantly changing in some form or other in all places. It is true in a material sense that the fashion of the world passeth away. (*Scientific Illustrations and Symbols.*) *Eternal things and fleeting*:—Afar off one can hardly tell which is mountain and which is cloud. The clouds rise with peaks and summits, all apparently as solid, and certainly as glistening, as the snow-clad Alps, so that the clearest eye might readily be deceived. Yet the mountain is unsubstantial as the cloud, and the cloud is never permanent as the mountain. So do the things of time appear to be all-important, far-reaching and enduring, and eternal things are not always of equal weight to the soul with those nearer at hand. Yet, despite all our instinctive judgments may suggest to the contrary, nothing earthly can ever be lasting, nothing in time can be worth considering compared with eternity. The cloudy philosophies of men may assume the shape of eternal truth, but the wind shall scatter them, while the great mountains of the Divine Word shall stand fast for ever and ever. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 32–40. **But I would have you without carefulness.**—"*Without carefulness*":—1. BY AVOIDING THOSE STATES WHICH INVOLVE CAREFULNESS. Take, *e.g.*—1. The question of marriage. Paul bids Christians, in the first place, not to marry. (1) But that was a time of persecution. The Christian man who had no family could flee in a moment if it was right to flee, and if caught he had not to think about his wife and fatherless children. Paul wished the Church to be like an army which is not encumbered with baggage; his own consisted of half a dozen needles and a reel of thread. He was thus without carefulness. (2) But to-day the circumstances are decidedly different, and we are to follow the principle rather than the particular instance. I have known brethren who had a great deal more care before than after marriage, and who served God better in the married estate. That is the rule to judge by. But numbers of you never judge at all in this way. Many men and women rush into marriage when they know that it must involve them in all sorts of care and hinder them in the Master's service. 2. Increased worldly business. Now, if you can serve God better by having a dozen shops, have a dozen; but I have known persons whom God blessed in one shop, and they lost the blessing when they opened two or three. When invited to take their part in the Lord's work, they replied—"You see, I cannot get out," or "I am so tied." But as the disability is entirely of your own creation, how can it excuse you? Do not fill your pocket at the expense of your soul. God can prosper you and make you happy with a more manageable business, and he can make you miserable if you wilfully increase your cares. Remember how Napoleon tried to do too much, and did it, and did for himself. 3. Public engagements. Everything which concerns a man concerns a Christian, and God never wished His servants to leave the

government of this realm to all the place-hunters who look for a seat in Parliament. To abandon law-making to the worst of men would be infamous. So with everything which concerns the public weal. But let the rule be—first God, and then our fellow-men. Ye are the servants of God; do not make yourselves the slaves of men. 4. Occupations prevent attendance at the house of God. When a young man with a moderate salary, and the whole Sabbath and some week-evenings to himself, is offered twice as much in a place where he must be shut out from worship and service, I hope he will look long before he makes the bargain. For Christians, the best place is where they can do most for Jesus. II. BY KEEPING AWAY FROM THOSE PURSUITS WHICH NATURALLY FOSTER IT. 1. When a man makes the gaining of riches the first thing in life he cannot be without carefulness. Where his treasure is, there will his heart be also. 2. If you live with the view of gaining honour among men, you will be full of cares. To please everybody is as impossible as to make ice and bake bread at the same moment in one oven. 3. Those who are ambitious to be very respectable will never be without carefulness; they have a pound coming in, but they spend a guinea. Some have a favourite object in life—not God; and these cannot be without carefulness. Dear mother, love your children by all means, but if that little one has become an idol, you cannot be without carefulness. Lots of children have suffered a martyrdom from too much nursing, and excessive carefulness has created cause for care. If anything else becomes the hobby of life, a horse, a dog, a flower, a painting, it will entangle you in nets of care. III. BY EXERCISING A CHILDLIKE FAITH IN GOD. He sends you troubles and trials, but be without carefulness—1. By never trying to anticipate them. Never meet them half-way. Commit your way unto the Lord, and then be without carefulness. 2. By being quite content with the Lord's will. Do your best and leave business, health, friends, &c., in the hands of God. 3. By being quite sure about the love of God. He cannot make a mistake, and He cannot fail His people. If the worst thing, as it seems to us, should happen, it must be the right thing, because God has sent it. 4. By believing in the power of prayer, and in the fact that God does actually answer it. 5. By giving all our thought and care to this one object—How can I live as Christ would have lived? You never find Jesus worrying. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Against carefulness*:—I. THE EVIL AND DANGER OF "CAREFULNESS." Every kind of care is not evil; but only that care which is attended with anxiety. And this is evil—1. As distracting our mind. 2. As impeding our progress. 3. As tending to turn us from the path of strict integrity. II. HOW WE MAY MOST EFFECTUALLY DIVEST OURSELVES OF IT. We must get—1. A deep sense of the obligations which God has laid upon us. 2. A lively sense of the obligations which He has laid upon Himself also respecting us. (*C. Simeon, M.A.*) *Free from cares*:—I. WHY SHOULD WE BE "FREE FROM CARES"?—1. The approach of the end. (1) "The time is shortened," between now and the Lord's coming; or—(2) Between now and our last hour. 2. The transiency of all earthly things. "The fashion of this world passeth away." Do not many of the circumstances of past life, that were then subjects of absorbing anxiety, look now like so many shifting scenes of a stage play? II. HOW SHOULD WE BE "FREE FROM CARES"? 1. By contentment with our present lot. This is the lesson of vers. 10, 11, 27, 18, 21, &c. "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called" (ver. 20). 2. By using all temporal relations without worldly absorption in them. (1) All relative duties—husband and wife an example. (2) All sorrowful and joyous events. (3) All acquisitions. 3. By using all temporal relations with a view of pleasing God (vers. 32, 34, 35). (*Clerical World.*) *Torment of little cares*:—One of the most cruel torments of the Inquisition was to place a poor victim beneath a tap, and let the cold water fall upon the head drop by drop. This was not felt at first, but at last the monotony of the water dropping always on one spot became almost unendurable; the agony was too great to be expressed. It is just so with little cares. When they keep constantly falling drop by drop upon one individual they tend to produce irritation, calculated to make life well-nigh insupportable. (*Clerical Library.*) **He that is unmarried . . . but he that is married.**—*The cares of married life*:—I. ARE UNAVOIDABLE. Marriage involves not merely new anxieties and troubles, but new claims which may interfere with our duty to God. II. MAY BE MODERATED. 1. By considering the sinfulness of excessive care. 2. By a supreme aim to please God. 3. By pleasing the partner of our life for good to edification. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **This I speak for your own profit.**—*Advice should be given*:—I. WITH A PURE MOTIVE—for another's profit. II. IN A CHRISTIAN SPIRIT—so as not to overrule conscience and bring a snare. III. FOR A WISE END—to secure what is honourable and

subservient to piety. (*Ibid.*) *Characteristics of Christianity*: The apostle here specifies in dealing with one particular subject some of the grand features which commend the Christian life. The expansion of the text is not unwarrantable, for religion is—I. TRUE PROFIT. "This I speak for your profit" might preface nearly every Biblical injunction; for godliness in its widest scope and minutest details is "profitable unto all things." This fact appeals to the practical side of our nature, and should have some force in this utilitarian age. II. PERFECT FREEDOM. The last thing Paul had in view was to cast a noose over the Corinthians, or to lay a restraint on them. The very key note of his teaching, as of the whole gospel, is "liberty." This appeals to the volitional side of our nature, and should arrest the attention of an age one of whose loudest watchwords is "freedom"—of thought, trade, &c. Religion fetters us in nothing, but in that which would restrict our true liberty. Hence it is "a perfect *law* of *liberty*." III. REAL BEAUTY. "That which is comely." Much which goes by the name is unreal because unsubstantial and fading. One of the synonyms of Christianity is "grace"—what is becoming the uncreated beauty of God, and what becomes the creature made in His image. By the common consent of all who are entitled to judge, the most beautiful characters are those who are formed on the model of Him who is "the altogether lovely." Religion thus appeals to the æsthetic side of nature, and should gain an hearing in an age which has witnessed a wonderful revival of art. IV. HAPPY SERVICE. "That ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction." To attend upon anything without distraction is a desideratum in this busy age. The lowest and simplest services bring their cares, and men and women are overwhelmed with them. Religion sanctifies these and would have us at home, and in the world, "without carefulness." But in the highest and most difficult service—work for God, and for the eternal interests of man—here anxiety is often the acutest. Paul's contention is that this should not, must not be. And when we consider the nature of the work, its issues, and its helps, we shall say with our Master "I delight to do Thy will, O My God." Conclusion: What more can be added to commend religion? Seemingly two things. The great questions yet remain—Is it reasonable? Is it right? But these are answered already practically. A thing that is profitable, liberating, beautiful, useful and blessed cannot be irrational and wrong. (*J. W. Burn.*)

Power over his own will.—*Will-power*:—What is your conception of the best manhood? Clearly, there may be various conceptions of it, each with much to say for itself. One may think to discover it in the domain of mind, where the mellow and perfect culture of a vigorous understanding claims and wins homage. Another detects it in physical beauty and vigour, and in that delightful condition of body which makes it the obedient and ready organ of the spirit. Another, again, finds it in the moral nature of man. The best is the manliest. The purest, gentlest, kindest, truest, tenderest; he is the most worthy, and therefore the most admirable. But surely our text has the real key to the question. It is in the quality, and use, and dominance of the will that the test of manhood is to be discovered. It has been well said that every act is made up of a purpose, a method, and a power. But the purpose comes first. Also, what is true of an act is doubly true of a life. If the will is the mechanical force of the soul, before all things let it be strong. Only a strong will can make a strong man. If the will initiates action in purposing it, it must persevere in it for the accomplishing of the purpose; and, perhaps, even more needful than the volition that starts an act is the firmness that stays. What we all want in life is staying power. The beginning of the race is brisk, facile, and pleasant; but it needs more than high spirits and a vivid fancy to go on to the far end. See, oh, clearly see, that it is not from force of will, so much as from weakness of it, that the world breeds its miseries and its failures. Of course a strong will misdirected is bad. The apostle, you observe, is careful to add "his own will." Perhaps in nothing is a real man's individuality so marked as in his own will. Each man, as says Shelley, must "be himself alone," and he is most specifically himself by his will. If it deserves the name, your will differs from mine, and every other man's, in its surroundings, its flexibility, and original force; and we have to do the best with it that we can. For if you say, as well you may, is not will an inheritance by birth, God's original gift, as much as brain, or animal strength, or those surroundings which make such a difference in our start—I say, in a degree, yes: but not so as to justify us in a base despair because our pound is but one, when our neighbour has five. Like memory, like reason, like the brain itself, which they say grows all through a man's life, with the steady work that does it honour, it is made stronger by regular,

definite, and repeated use. Then there is the control of the will, which St. Paul describes as power over it, or as the Revised Version gives it, power touching it. To rule the will, we must first consecrate it, in surrendering it with the entire being which it both commands and energises at the footstool of the most high God. You remember of Him, who lived as no other man lived, and died as no other man died, what He said about His will—His human will—a will like yours and mine, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." To give our will back, up to Him who has bestowed it upon us, with its terrible honourable freedom, is at once our dignity and our blessedness. Our dignity, because thereby we recognise the Divine Fatherhood, and plead our own sonship, as the children of God. Our blessedness, for sometimes the noblest use of liberty is to surrender it: and what St. James calls the perfect law of liberty, is only learnt in the school of love. "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price. Wherefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." To rule it, again, implies that we use it. By using it I mean giving it a first place in the continuous activities of life; not only about plans, but about details; not only for what gets credit, but for what no one sees but God; not only for the problems of the thinker, but for the homely plodding tasks of the honest student, who wanting but his degree, sees Alps that he must climb before he can reach it, yet means to reach it. Not for any one department, or corner, or phase, or period of life, but for the whole. A strong man resolves, sometimes it must be admitted with precipitateness, and an incomplete knowledge of resources. Then he suffers, and perhaps others as well. But is it not far better in the end to suffer for over-much doing—a rare fault, and one which has a knack of taking its own cure with it—than to suffer for too little doing, which usually results, if not in a paralysis of our finer powers, certainly in a deterioration of them? and it is deterioration, so subtle, so easy, so rapid, so hidden, that we all of us, but especially those who are in the autumn of our years, have so much to dread. Power over the will also means the regulating it, in its impulses, prejudices and resolves. By impulse I mean its first ideas and stirrings, which if not watched and restrained will sometimes land us in inextricable disaster. Prejudice it must examine and allow for; neither ignore, nor too much dread. Every intelligent human being is constantly and inevitably storing up in his mind those final and essential and condensed results of his past, which tend, and ought to tend, to bias him in this direction rather than that; and which swaying conduct with an invisible but potent influence, a wise man will recognise and make allowance for, just as the navigator of an iron vessel is careful to have his compasses verified before he goes to sea; then goes, and feels safe. Intention, too, needs regulating, sometimes in the way not only of modifying it, but even of surrendering it, should altered circumstances make it expedient. Self-will has nothing strong about it, though it affects, and even caricatures, firmness. But what is the area of this will over which we are to claim and exercise power? First, it moves about faith; for if St. Paul be correct, both the will in God and the will in man have a concurrent share in what touches our salvation—salvation being a condition of the entire being, and not only one part of it; as much of the intellect which ponders and accepts truth, as of the conscience that feels after righteousness. Let us instantly admit that the will must not be suffered an undue preponderance in the dealings of the mind, with what we call revelation. Our first question is not what do I wish truth to be, but what truth is actually found to be; not what I hope can be proved, but what by the evidence suitable to the question is capable of proof. Keep your will set on truth; still seek it, desire it, wait for it, pray for it, more than for your necessary food. Do not despise it as if it was not worth waiting for: do not despair about it, as if it would never come. Then for culture is not the will required to keep men from dreaming, instead of thinking; to stir this one to study, that one to ambition? Surely will has its place here, with its function of selection, and its duty of application, with its aim in concentration, and with its reward in power. Once more, see what the will has to do with character. An apostle of culture, who describes Salvation as "a harmonious perfection only to be won by unreservedly cultivating many sides in us," admits that "conduct, not culture, is three parts of human life." If there is one rule more than another that I wish to leave in your minds it is the will for goodness. The one sentence that I impress on you about it is "to keep yourselves unspotted from the world." Remember how all grossness and self-indulgence go to weaken the physical powers, and degrade your personal dignity, and wait for their implacable revenge, when the autumn of life arrives, and, almost worst of all, spoil that fine instinctive sense of goodness

which is the reward of a soul that has never stained its whiteness, which goes, never quite to come back even after years of devotedness and sanctity: and so with all the power of your will, and with all the passion of your heart, and with all the conviction of your reason, and with all the weight of your conscience, say, when the tempter comes—I may not, I must not, I will not, I cannot, for am not I the child of God, the brother of Jesus Christ? Lastly, the will of the Father, the will of the Son, the will of the Holy Ghost are all for you. The will of the Father about you and your life in front will open out in the way of His providence as the years go on. Trust it. The will of His Son, Jesus Christ, is for you. From His place of glory He looks down and thinks of you all, some with fear, some with delight—all with unspeakable love. His will is to bless you. Is it your will to be blessed? And the will of the Holy Ghost is to give you strength, to sanctify you in body, soul, and spirit, and dignify and irradiate your studies with His divine presence, to stir your thirst for knowledge—all knowledge—but supremely that which manifests the face of God. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." And then this power over your own will shall mean in a perfect and joyous freedom the service of men and the fruition of God. (*Bishop Thorold.*)

Vers. 39, 40. . . . **She is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.**—*On marriage*:—Let me—I. EXPLAIN AND JUSTIFY THE RULE LAID DOWN IN THE TEXT. 1. To be in the Lord is to be a believer in Christ, to be united to Him by a living faith, and to be interested by reason of that, in all the blessings of His great salvation. In short, believers in Christ should marry believers, and none other. Now, this law does not require—(1) Perfect unanimity in religious sentiment. Creeds may differ, but hearts may be the same. (2) That both should be members of the same religious society. This is, however, exceedingly desirable, for it is unseemly, indeed, when they who are together in all the most endearing intercourse of life, go as solitary individuals to the sanctuary. (3) That both or either of the parties should be in full communion with any Christian Church. Now, I believe that a man who lives in the neglect of such communion lives in the violation of a positive command, and in the abandonment of a precious privilege, and, by so doing, subjects his Christianity to suspicion by the Church, and to animadversion from the world. Yet still, there are some who, notwithstanding this serious drawback, we are compelled to believe love the Saviour. 2. Having thus ascertained the rule, we proceed to justify it by an appeal—(1) To the reasonings of Scripture (Josh. xxiii. 11, &c.; Ezra ix. 1, 2; Deut. vii. 1–4). Now, if such a principle as this was thus established under a dispensation comparatively lax and dim, how much more reasonable and binding must it appear as a law of Christianity (2 Cor. vi. 14–18). (2) To history, observation, and experience. With all the excuses persons have made, and all the disinterested motives they have assigned for their conduct, did you ever know any good come of it? Scripture and the Church are big with examples of domestic misery and spiritual ruin, the result of these monstrous and unnatural connections. What became of the daughters of Lot, who preferred the sons of Sodom to the sons of God? Was there ever a greater monster, a more fearful prodigy of vice than Ahab? (see also Nehem. xiii. 23–27). 3. To analogy. If you wished for a commercial partner, would you choose a man utterly averse to, or totally ignorant of, trade? Would you choose for the companion of a long journey a man whose disposition and principles were opposite to your own? Would you, as a man of taste and of education, prefer being shut up for weeks in a carriage with a fool or a clown? 4. To acknowledged obligation (chap. vi. 20). And how is such a marriage to promote the glory of God? 5. To conscience—whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Now, is this of faith, the union of a believer with an infidel?—of a friend of Jesus with an enemy? II. CONSIDER AND EXPOSE SOME OF THE MOST OBVIOUS TEMPTATIONS TO ITS VIOLATION AND THE MOST COMMON EXCUSES FOR IT. 1. Fortune. It is this which constitutes a good match. 2. Rank and station. 3. Parental advice. 4. An ill-directed but sincere attachment. 5. But some are ready to say, the object of my attachment has everything but real religion. Well, and wanting that, everything is wanting. III. SOME HINTS OF CAUTION AND ADVICE. 1. There may be marriages within the letter of the apostolic rule, which yet are neither lovely nor of good report. There may be piety in both parties, yet—(1) Such discrepancies of age as to render the union odious. (2) Such an evident impropriety in the connection as to render it a subject of grief to the Church, and

animadversion to the world. (3) Such indecorous haste in the formation of a new alliance, immediately after the dissolution of an old one, as to excite the grievest censure. 2. There may be marriages in which the law of Scripture is observed with regard to piety, but the dictates of prudence utterly disregarded. There may be marriages where there is neither strength of affection, suitableness of character, adaptation of temper, or similarity of views, sufficient to ensure permanent happiness and domestic harmony. 3. There may be cases in which it is difficult to apply the rule of Scripture, and to determine in what way to act. There may be a most distressing ambiguity about a character. It is impossible to tell how far the influence of circumstances, so peculiarly interesting, may give a more favourable appearance than actual principle would warrant: the mind perpetually alternates between hope and fear, and dares not to decide. In such a case it were well to wait and watch, and, after all, if there should be error, to err on the side of conscience and of safety. Finally, let the husband and wife, who neither of them fear God, think how terrible a thing it is to walk hand in hand to hell. Let the pious husband who has an unbelieving wife, or the pious wife who has an unbelieving husband, strive by all means, by meekness, gentleness, and affection, to win the unbelieving party to the truth (ver. 16). (*T. Raffles, LL.D.*) *Christian marriage:*—I. THIS COMMAND MUST BE EXPLAINED. 1. In what respects it allows freedom. A believer may marry—(1) A second time. This is the particular case here referred to. (2) Under various circumstances of inequality. If he marry "in the Lord," he "is at liberty to marry whom he will." There may be inequality of mind, age, station in life. Marrying "in the Lord" is of such infinite importance that in comparison with it every other consideration is almost trivial. Yet it should be seriously considered that any great inequality, though not expressly forbidden, is yet very undesirable. The God of grace is also the God of nature—the God of order, too, and not of confusion. "All these things are lawful for me, but all these things are not expedient." 2. In what respect it binds. "Only in the Lord." (1) Only to a Christian. For a believer to marry an unconverted person may be to marry in carnality, or in covetousness, or in pride, or in the world; but certainly not in the Lord. It is against the Lord; in opposition to one of His plainest commandments, and also to all reason and propriety. Such a junction (for union it cannot be) partakes of the monstrous. For the difference between a regenerate and an unregenerate person is next to infinite (2 Cor. vi. 14–16). (2) Only as a Christian—religiously and with the fear of God. They, therefore, who anxiously desire to marry only in the Lord, will remember that "a prudent wife (or husband) cometh from Him"; they will, therefore, by prayer seek this good gift from the only Giver. II. THIS COMMAND MUST BE ENFORCED. Obedience here—1. Tends to the glory of God. God is glorified in this world by the visible holiness of His people. When professors marry persons "of the world," for money, or connection, or personal attraction, how is the mouth of the ungodly opened, the Church scandalised, and the cause of Christ dishonoured! 2. Prevents many most deplorable evils. He who obeys this precept will be saved from the shame of inconsistency before the world, from the loss of the esteem of holy persons, and from the remorse of his own conscience. Even in those cases of mixed marriages where the professing partner is not drawn aside by the other into apostacy; usually, he suffers great spiritual loss, and loses all zeal in doing good. And should there be children, the mischief spreads. 3. Promotes the true interest and happiness of those who obey it. The advantages that attend the spiritual and holy union of two believing persons are inestimable. They walk together, for they are agreed. They are helpers of each other's faith and joy, being made, through grace, the instruments of each other's spiritual growth in fruitfulness and happiness. They have their sorrows; but these they lessen by dividing them, bearing each other's burden. They have their faults; but these "they confess, the one to the other, and pray one for another, that they may be healed." But among all the changing scenes of life, they have a look that penetrates "within the veil," where their union will be perfected, and crowned with immortality. Hence they habitually walk, "as being heirs together of the grace of life." If children are given to them, they cordially unite in the work of bringing them up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Exhortations: 1. To Christians who are yet free to obey this command. You see what the will of the Lord is. Regard with horror the thought of being united to an unconverted person. 2. To those who have already transgressed this command. If, by having married inconsistently, you have awakened in your partner's mind the suspicion

that your religion is all a delusion, now seek to dislodge that suspicion, and to implant in its stead the conviction that religion is a great reality. 3. To those who have married in accordance with this precept. "Happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." (*Essex Congregational Remembrancer.*)

But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment.—*The widow's happiness*—I. IS CONDITIONAL. 1. Upon her union with Christ. 2. Upon times and circumstances. II. CONSISTS IN—1. Freedom and care. 2. Holy service. 3. The assurance of the Divine protection and blessing. III. IS CONFIRMED BY—1. Apostolic judgment. 2. Enlightened by the Spirit of God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

And I think also that I have the Spirit of God.—*Degrees of apostolical authority*:—The apostle on this point does not arrogate more to himself than a view, an advice, the value of which every one can appraise at pleasure. It is evident how far he was removed from that exaltation which makes fanatics take all their ideas for revelations. Nevertheless, he certainly claims an inspiration, and traces it to the Divine Spirit. But we must beware of concluding that he did not claim, besides this, revelations of a wholly special kind. In other cases he is careful to affirm that his directions proceed "from the Lord" (chap. xiv. 37, vii. 17). And if he thus expresses himself in connection with simple directions about public worship or Christian practice, how much more conscious was he of being the organ of a Divine revelation of a wholly personal kind when the matter in question was the very essence of "his gospel"! We are led, therefore, to distinguish three degrees of authority. I. THE DIRECT COMMANDS OF THE LORD, which He gave during His sojourn on earth, and which Paul merely quotes without discussing their grounds (ver. 10). II. THE APOSTOLIC COMMANDS OF THE APOSTLE, which are imposed on Churches subject to his jurisdiction, and which he gives them as the organ of a higher illumination attached to his special mission. As to these he is careful to expound their reasons, being unwilling to ask his brethren to give a blind obedience (vers. 12–17, *cf.* x. 15). III. THE DIRECTIONS WHICH HE GIVES AS A SIMPLE CHRISTIAN, which he himself declares to be optional, and which he leaves to the judgment of every believer (ver. 25). In the text there is a vein of irony. "Now, I hope, however, even if my apostolic authority is disputed among you, that you will not deny to me the possession of the Divine Spirit, such as you recognise in all Christians, and specially in the numerous spiritual guides to whom you give your confidence." (*Prof. Godet.*)

CHAPTER VIII.

VERS. 1–13. **Now as touching things offered to idols.**—*Liberty and love*:—1. The question about meats necessarily arose in a society partly heathen and partly Christian. Every meal was dedicated to the household gods by laying some portion of it on the family altar. On a birthday, a marriage, or a safe return from sea, &c., it was customary to sacrifice in some public temple. And after the legs of the victim, enclosed in fat, and the entrails had been burnt on the altar, the worshipper received the remainder, and invited his friends to partake of it either in the temple itself, or in the surrounding grove, or at home. A convert might therefore naturally ask himself whether he was justified in conforming to this custom. Thus personal friendships and the harmony of family life were threatened; and on public occasions the Christian was in danger of branding himself as no good citizen, or by compliance of seeming unfaithful to Christ. 2. Apparently a good deal of ill-feeling had been engendered by the different views taken, as is always the case with morally indifferent matters. They do little harm if each holds his own opinion genially and endeavours to influence others in a friendly way. But in most instances it happens as in Corinth: those who saw that they could eat without contamination scorned those who had scruples; while the scrupulous judged the eaters to be worldly time-servers. 3. As a first step towards the settlement of this matter, Paul makes the largest concession to the party of liberty. Their clear perception that an idol was nothing in the world was sound and commendable. "But do not," says the apostle, "think that you have settled the question by reiterating that you are better instructed than your brethren. You must add love, consideration of your neighbour, to your knowledge." Men of ready insight into

truth are prone to despise less enlightened spirits; but however such vaunt themselves as the men of progress and the hope of the Church, it is not by knowledge alone the Church can ever solidly grow. Knowledge does produce a puffing-up, an unhealthy, morbid, mushroom growth; but that which builds up the Church stone by stone, a strong, enduring edifice, is love. It is a good thing to have clear views of Christian liberty; but exercise it without love, and you become a poor inflated creature, puffed up with a noxious gas destructive of all higher life in yourself and in others. 4. It is easy to imagine how all this would be exemplified at a Corinthian table. Three Christians are invited to a party in the house of a heathen friend. One is weakly scrupulous, the others are men of ampler view and more enlightened conscience. As the meal goes on the weak brother discerns some mark which identifies the meat as sacrificial, or, fearing it may be so, he inquires of the servant, and finds it has been offered in the temple, and at once says to his friends, "This has been offered to idols." One of them, knowing that heathen eyes are watching, and wishing to show how superior to all such scruples the enlightened Christian is, and how genial and free the religion of Christ is, smiles at his friend's scruples, and accepts the meat. The other, more generous and truly courageous, declines the dish, lest by leaving the scrupulous man without support he should tempt him to follow their example, contrary to his own conviction, and so lead him into sin. It need not be said which of these men comes nearest to the Christian principle of Paul. 5. In our own society similar cases necessarily arise. I, as a Christian man, and knowing that the earth and its fulness are the Lord's, may feel at perfect liberty to drink wine. But I must consider the effect my conduct will have on others. There may be some among my friends whose temptation lies that way, and whose conscience bids them refrain. If by my example such persons are encouraged to silence their conscience, then I incur the guilt of helping to destroy a brother for whom Christ died. Or again, a lad brought up in a Puritanic household has been taught, *e.g.*, that the influence of the theatre is demoralising; but on entering the life of a great city he is soon brought in contact with some genuine Christians who visit the theatre without the slightest twinge of conscience. Now either of two things will probably happen. The young man's ideas of Christian liberty may become clearer; or being daunted by overpowering example and chafing under the raillery of his companions, may do as others do, though still uneasy in his own conscience. What is to be observed is that the emboldening of conscience is one thing, its enlightenment quite another. Constantly it happens that men who once shrank from certain practices now freely engage in them, and they will tell you that at first they felt as if they were stealing the indulgence, and that they had to drown the voice of conscience by the louder voice of example. The results of this are disastrous. Conscience is dethroned. The ship no longer obeys her helm, and lies in the trough of the sea swept by every wave and driven by every wind. It may indeed be said, What harm can come of persons less enlightened being emboldened to do as we do if what we do is right? The harm is this, that if the weak brother does a right thing while his conscience tells him it is wrong, to him it is wrong. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Note two permanent lessons—I. THE SACREDNESS OR SUPREMACY OF CONSCIENCE. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." A man may possibly do a wrong thing when he obeys conscience; he is certainly wrong when he acts contrary to conscience. He may be helped to a decision by the advice of others, but it is his own decision by which he must abide. His conscience may not be as enlightened as it ought to be. Still his duty is to enlighten, not to violate, it. It is the guide God has given us, and we must not choose another. II. THAT WE MUST EVER USE OUR CHRISTIAN LIBERTY WITH CHRISTIAN CONSIDERATION OF OTHERS. Love must mingle with all we do. There are many things which are lawful for a Christian, but which are not compulsory or obligatory, and which he may refrain from doing on cause shown. Duties he must, of course, discharge, regardless of the effect his conduct may have on others. But where conscience says, not "You must," but only "You may," then we must consider the effect our using our liberty will have on others. We must forego our liberty to do this or that if by doing it we should shock a weak brother or encourage him to overstep his conscience. As the Arctic voyager who has been frozen up all winter does not seize the first opportunity to escape, but waits till his weaker companions gain strength enough to accompany him, so must the Christian accommodate himself to the weaknesses of others, lest by using his liberty he should injure him for whom Christ died. (*M. Dods, D.D.*)

Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.—*A twofold knowledge*:—I. A PRIDE-

GENERATING KNOWLEDGE. "Knowledge puffeth up." One that is—1. Merely intellectual. A stock of mental conceptions, concerning objects material or spiritual, referring to the creature or to the Creator. Now such knowledge tends to self-conceit. 2. Essentially superficial. The more superficial mere intellectual knowledge the stronger its tendency. The men who go farthest into the essence of things, take the widest view of the domain of knowledge, will be the least disposed to self-elation. II. A MAN-EDIFYING KNOWLEDGE. 1. "Charity," or love to God, is the true knowledge. Love is the life and soul of all true science. Love is the root of the universe, and you must have love rightly to interpret love. 2. This true knowledge builds up the soul; not as a house is built up, by putting dead stones and timber together, but as the oak is built up, by the appropriating force of its own life, compelling nature to deepen its roots, extend its bulk, multiply its branches, and push it higher towards the heavens. 3. This true knowledge insures the approval of God (ver. 3). In the last day, Christ will say to those who have not this love, "I never knew"—*i.e.*, approved of—"you." This love for God in the heart converts the tree of intellectual knowledge into the tree of life. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The difference between Christian and secular knowledge*:—A great controversy is going on in the matter of education. One partly extols the value of instruction, the other insists that secular education without religion is worse than useless: Paul spoke of both as secular and worthless without love. That knowledge which he treated so slightingly was—I. KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT HUMILITY. It is not so much what is known as the spirit in which it is acquired which makes the difference between secular and Christian knowledge (ver. 2). The greatest of modern philosophers and historians, Humboldt and Niebuhr, were both eminently humble men. So, too, you will find that real talent among mechanics is generally united to great humility. Whereas those puffed up by knowledge are those who have a few religious maxims and shallow doctrines. There are two ways therefore of knowing. One is that of the man who loves to calculate how far he is advanced beyond others; the other, that of the man who feels how infinite knowledge is, and how little he knows. II. LIBERTY WITHOUT REVERENCE. The men whom the apostle rebukes were free from many superstitions. An idol, they said, was nothing in the world. But it is not merely freedom from superstition which is worship of God, but loving dependence on Him; the surrender of self. "If any man love God, the same is known of Him," *i.e.*, God acknowledges the likeness of spirit. There is much of the spirit of these Corinthians now. Men throw off what they call the trammels of superstitions, and then call themselves free: they think it a grand thing to reverence nothing. This is not high knowledge. It is a great thing to be free from mental slavery, but suppose you are still a slave to your passions? From bonds of the spirit Christianity has freed us, but it has bound us to God (vers. 5, 6). The true freedom from superstition is free service to religion: the real emancipation from false gods is reverence for the true God. And not merely is this the only real knowledge, but no other knowledge "buildeth up" the soul. "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Separate from love, the more we know, the profounder the mystery of life, and the more dreary existence becomes. I can conceive no dying hour more awful than that of one who has aspired to know instead of to love, and finds himself at last amidst a world of barren facts and lifeless theories. III. COMPREHENSION WITHOUT LOVE TO MAN. These Corinthians had got a most clear conception of what Christianity was (vers. 4–6). "Well," said the apostle, "and what signifies your profession of that, if you look down with supreme contempt on your ignorant brothers, who cannot reach to these sublime contemplations?" Knowledge such as this is not advance, but retrogression. How immeasurably superior in the sight of God is some benighted Romanist who has gone about doing good, or some ignorant, narrow religionist who has sacrificed time and property to Christ, to the most correct theologian in whose heart there is no love for his fellow-men. Breadth of view is not breadth of heart; the substance of Christianity is love to God and man. Hence it is a precious fact that St. Paul, the apostle of liberty, whose burning intellect expounded the whole philosophy of Christianity, should have been the one to say that knowledge is nothing compared to charity, nay, worse than nothing without it: should have been the one to declare that "knowledge shall vanish away, but love never faileth." (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Knowledge and charity*:—No person ever entertained a higher idea of true wisdom than St. Paul, but he saw that learning makes not the man of God perfect, and that the complete scholar may fall short at last of the kingdom of heaven. He saw that spiritual, like bodily

wealth, unless used for the benefit of others, would prove no blessing to its owner. And therefore, that the wise man might not glory in his wisdom, the apostle determines that, not only human learning, but the knowledge of all prophecies and mysteries, will profit nothing if charity be not superadded. I. KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT CHARITY ENDETH IN PRIDE. 1. It produces an inflation in the mind, which, like a tumour in the body, carries the appearance of solidity, but has in reality nothing within, and only indicates a distempered habit. And, indeed, knowledge, as well as faith, if it be alone, is vain—it is dead. For all knowledge is given as a means to some end. The means, abstracted from their end, cease to be means, and answer no purpose whatsoever. The end of knowledge is action (John xiii. 17). Every article of the creed involves in it a correspondent duty, and it is practice alone that gives life to faith and realises knowledge. "The manifestation of the Spirit (as that Spirit Himself testifies) is given to every man to profit withal." Otherwise it is of no effect, and the man becomes "a cloud without water"; raised aloft it sails before the wind, proudly swelling in the sufficiency of its own emptiness, instead of dropping plenty on the lands over which it passes. 2. Consider the instances of this truth. (1) Ascend into heaven and there view the glories that once encircled Lucifer (*cf.* Ezek. xxviii. 12). He saw, he knew; but he loved not, and through pride he fell. A proof, to the learned of all ages, that knowledge without charity will turn a good angel into an evil one. (2) Yet this has all along been the fatal mistake, and the tree of knowledge still proved the occasion of a fall. Knowledge wrought destruction by pride. "The serpent," says Eve, "beguiled me"; *lit.*, elated, puffed me up. All the fruits of error and vice have sprung from the same root of bitterness. (3) Take the case of the Gentiles (Rom. i. 21). Lack of knowledge was not their original fault; "they knew God." But knowledge in the understanding for want of charity in the heart did not operate to a holy obedience. "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful." (4) Turn to the Jew. "Having the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law." Yet knowledge puffed him up; his privileges became an occasion of boasting himself against his brethren, and envy ate out his charity. "Going about to establish his own righteousness" upon the strength of his own wisdom, he rejected the Lord his righteousness, and nailed Him, who is the source of wisdom, to the Cross. (5) When the distinction of Jew and Gentile ceased, and one Church comprehended all believers, knowledge puffed men up into heretics and schismatics. Pride made them rather choose to see themselves exalted at the head of a faction, than the Church edified by their labours in an inferior station. This was the case in the Church of Corinth, and has been the cause of every heresy and schism since. II. CHARITY DIRECTETH KNOWLEDGE TO ITS RIGHT END—the edification of the Church. This will be seen in some instances the reverse of the foregoing. 1. If we ascend a second time into heaven, we shall find that the principle which triumphed over the proud knowledge of Lucifer was the wisdom of God actuated by love. In our redemption, wisdom contrived, power executed, but love set all to work, and perfected and crowned the whole. 2. To reverse the sad effects of a vain thirst after knowledge in our first parent, Divine love became incarnate. All that He did and suffered was because He loved us. Because man, by the temptation of knowledge, was seduced to infidelity and disobedience, He encountered and overcame the tempter by the Word of God, and by love keeping the commandments. The treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Him were not suffered to rust and canker, locked up from the public by a supercilious reservedness, but out of them He continually dispersed abroad, and gave to the poor in spirit. On the Cross love regained what pride had lost, and the wound made in our nature by the fruit of the tree of knowledge was healed by the leaves of the tree of life. 3. To combat the vain wisdom of the Greek, and the self-justifying arrogance of the Jew, the apostles were sent forth. The strongholds of false knowledge could not stand before the gospel. Blasted by the lightning of inspired eloquence, the arm of false philosophy withered and lost all its holds on the minds of men. The Roman empire wondered to see itself Christian; to see the Cross exalted in triumph over the globe, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ. But what was it that gained this victory over the pride of earth and hell? What, but the same all-suffering, and, therefore, all-subduing charity which taught the disciples of a crucified Jesus, after His example, to endure all things for the salvation of their brethren? 4. If we view the unity of a primitive church, as opposed to the sad divisions and distractions since produced by heresy and schism, it will appear that charity built

up that solid and durable edifice. As at its formation, the Spirit descended upon the disciples, when "they were all with one accord in one place," so, in like manner, after more were added to them, it is remarked that "the multitude of the believers were of one heart and one mind." The spirit of unity knit all the members together, insomuch that if one member suffered the rest sympathised with it. And thus they "grew up into Him in all things, even Christ . . . made increase of the body to the edifying itself in love." (*Bp. Horne.*) *Knowledge and love:*—I. KNOWLEDGE PUFFETH UP. 1. This applies to all knowledge, whether human or Divine, when unaccompanied with love to God. 2. Its effect is—(1) To inflate men's notions of the powers of human reason and the importance of human knowledge. (2) To encourage self-confidence and conceit. 3. The reason—(1) Knowledge without faith acts upon the intellect, but leaves the heart untouched. II. LOVE EDIFIETH. 1. Love—(1) Depends on faith. (2) Implies confidence, submission, obedience, sacrifice. 2. Its effect. It edifies—(1) By strengthening the understanding and the will. (2) By building up the moral character. (3) By elevating the spirit. (4) By bringing man into direct communion with God. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Knowledge and love:*—This knowledge is not secular as distinguished from Divine and theological, but knowledge of Divine things *without* love—knowledge by itself as distiuguished from the knowledge of Divine things *with* love. The same contrast is drawn out more at length in chap. xiii.; but as there he is led to speak of it chiefly by insisting on the superiority of active usefulness to spiritual ecstasies, so here he is led to speak of it by insisting on the superiority of that love which shows a regard for the consciences of others, over that knowledge which rests satisfied in its own enlightened insight into the folly of human superstition. Knowledge such as this may indeed expand the mind, but it is a mere inflation, as of a bubble, which bursts and vanishes away. Love alone succeeds in building up an edifice tier above tier, solid alike in superstructure and in basis, so as to last for ever. (*Dean Stanley.*) *The two guides—knowledge and love:*—I. THEY ARE BOTH EXCELLENT. 1. The pupil of Gamaliel would have been the last to speak slightingly of real knowledge. How much has knowledge accomplished in the world! Ignorance is a fool's paradise; knowledge is power. 2. And how excellent is love. How dull and sad and more prolific in crime the world would be without it! One's only regret is that there is so little of it. Herein heaven and earth contrast. The triumphs of knowledge are great, but greater are the victories of love. II. THEY ARE COMPLEMENTARY. 1. Knowledge without love leads to—(1) Pride. (2) Intolerance. (3) Selfishness. (4) Injury to others. (5) Many blunders in thought, feeling, and action. 2. Love without knowledge leads to moral catastrophe. Knowledge is necessary to determine within what limits we may rightly act; love determines what within the limits of the "lawful" we should choose. 3. Knowledge and love united lead to that more perfect, penetrating, true practical knowledge, the opposite of that described in ver. 2. *E.g.*, a man may know God as God—have some conception of the Divine attributes, &c., but when he loves God his knowledge makes incalculable strides. (*W. E. Hurndall, M.A.*) *Knowledge and love:*—These beautiful words are introduced into a discussion which has long ceased to have any practical interest. In pagan Corinth the banquet and the sacrifice were part of the same proceeding. The animal was slain and offered to the gods. Then the priest claimed his part, and the rest was taken home and used in providing a feast. To these feasts the pagans invited their friends, and some of these friends might be Christians. The question was, Could they conscientiously go? Some, the most simple, honest, earnest souls, said, No. It was recognising idolatry, it was disloyalty to Christ; or, to say the best of it that could be said, it was going into evil associations and temptation. Others who prided themselves on their superior knowledge laughed at these scruples. We know, they said, that there are no gods except One. The offering of the sacrifice to them is an empty farce. The meat has not been polluted at all. We have discernment enough to share in the feast without recognising the occasion of it. We can rejoice with these pagans, and at the same time smile at their superstitions. It is only weak, ignorant natures that will hold aloof from these harmless enjoyments through the fear of being drawn into sin. The pride of knowledge and its accompanying disdain and want of consideration towards their less-instructed brethren were their distinguishing features. Knowledge puffeth up, charity edifieth. Knowledge passeth away, charity abides for ever. Knowledge sees through coloured glass darkly, love sees face to face. Knowledge may be greatest in devils, love makes angels and saints. Knowledge is temporal and earthly, ever changing with

the fashions of earth; love is God-like, heavenly, immortal, enduring like the mercy of the Lord for ever. Now, if any other of the apostles had written in this way about knowledge, men would have been found ready to quote against him the old fable of Æsop about the grapes. Untutored peasants and fishermen lifting up their voices in disparagement of knowledge would have furnished the intellectual scorner with a convenient sarcasm. Ah, yes, these men were ignorant! Knowledge was beyond their reach, and therefore they depreciated it. Singularly enough, however, it is St. Paul, the one learned man in the apostolic band, who talks in this way. Never once did those unlearned fishermen, Peter, James, and John, write slightingly of knowledge. That was left to Paul, the scholarly man. Had not his own learning made him a hard, haughty, cruel Pharisee, shutting out the vision of God, hiding from him the beauty of Jesus Christ, filling him with violent prejudice and hatred against all men save those of his own class? With all his knowledge, he had been blind to whatsoever things were lovely, and just, and reverent, and Divine. He had reason, indeed, to write, Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. Knowledge puffeth up. Yes, from the raw schoolgirl to the man of greatest literary attainments, this is the effect of knowledge when it is found without the warm and generous and tender emotions of the heart. There is the young man with his smattering of literary attainments, with little more than an outward daub of culture. He has little reason to be proud; not a bit of that knowledge of which he makes his boast has been his own discovering. It has been drilled into him by patient, painstaking teachers. There is no more reason to be proud of knowledge received from another person than there is for a beggar to be proud of receiving alms. How wise he thinks himself in dealing with religious things, in measuring the preacher, in criticising the Bible, in disposing of questions of faith, in setting down the old-fashioned people who in their simple ignorance have been content to believe all that has been taught them! You see it in literary circles, and in the utterances of the scientist. How conspicuous by its absence is the grace of humility! Because they know something more about letters, and words, and cells, and germs, and rocks, and chemical elements than other people, they write and talk as if their judgments on all subjects were to be received *ex cathedra* as authoritative and unquestionable. Their word on all the great subjects of morality, faith, inspiration, the Bible, God, is to be deemed final and conclusive. They write as if all men were fools who dare to dispute their conclusions. Yet there is more genius, insight, and real vision in one of David's psalms than there is in all the books they have written. An artist or a poet who has none of their knowledge will see more of beauty and glory and reality in a moment than they would see in a thousand years. We are always boasting that knowledge is power, that knowledge has enriched the world, that knowledge has done wonderful things for humanity. It is the idlest of delusions. Knowledge by itself has done very little. Even the greatest material inventions have come through men who had rather the swift insight of genius than the lore of the schools. They were not knowing men who gave us the railway, the steam-engine, the telegraph. Still less were they knowing men who enriched the world with the sweetest poems, with the noblest pictures, with the most charming stories. Titian, and Raphael, and Shakespeare, and Bunyan, and Burns, and Thomas à Kempis, not to speak of Homer, and David, and Isaiah, and the evangelists, and the fishermen, Peter and John—from these men, who had less knowledge on most things than any undergraduate of the present day, we have inherited the wisdom and the immortal thoughts and words which are beyond all wealth. They were men with great hearts, seeing things with the keen, clear eyes of love, rather than men whose heads had gathered a large stock of culture. Heart rather than head has given to humanity its noble inheritance; love rather than knowledge. Think of the martyrs, the reformers, the defenders of liberty, the philanthropists, the missionaries. And who are doing the best work in the world now?—its purifying, saving, uplifting work? Not the men who call themselves the cultured class. No; knowledge for the most part sits in judgment on the work of others, criticises, and sneers; while love goes on its way, its loins girded for service with quenchless faith in God, and hope which nothing can discourage. It is love, not knowledge, that carries light and sweetness and health into the dark, foul places of city life; it is love, not knowledge, that generates all the power of sweet activities. In the highest kind of knowledge what the world calls knowledge breaks down utterly. What can mere intellect know about God? His greatness infinitely transcends the grasp of the most cultured mind. Before His wisdom the profoundest reaches of the human intellect are folly. Yes, it is to the pure, gentle,

tender heart that God tells His secrets. You can hardly prove the simple fact of God's existence, still less the supremely good, loving, and tender character of God, except to those whose hearts by their very likeness to Him beget their own witness of Him. His own love helps him to grasp the love Divine. So with immortality. All the knowledge of Butler and Plato could not prove it. Men who are only wise in the things of nature never find it there. But when the heart of man has found by experience the measureless power of its own love, found out what a human soul is capable of in long-suffering, patience, self-forgetfulness—how great, how even infinite the soul is in the power of loving—then the proof comes. God could not have made the soul thus and not made it immortal. And the loving heart, too, understands the mystery of sorrow and pain as the head does not and never can. The heart which loves God, and feels His love, knows that beyond all the sorrows and the darkness there is brightness and joy. So give me love and not knowledge, for knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. (*J. G. Greenhough, M.A.*) "*Love edifieth*":—Think of love—I. As THE ESSENTIAL SPIRIT OF ALL OTHER GRACES. It is the life, beauty, strength, very soul of them all. Consider its position in the circle of the Divine attributes. Truth, justice, purity, &c., are perfections of the Divine character; but "God is love." A similar position does love occupy in the ideal character of His true children. II. As THE BOND OF CHRISTIAN UNITY. Keenness of spiritual insight, zeal for truth, fidelity to conscience, may of themselves have a separating effect; but love draws and cements men together in a real fellowship. Differences in opinion, &c., become of comparatively small account. III. As AN INCENTIVE TO CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY. "Love is the fulfilling of the law," the end of the commandment. Get your soul filled with love, and you will never want for an effectual motive to all noble living. As the materials of the building arrange themselves and rise into their finished form in obedience to the thought and will of the architect; as the notes fall, as if by an instinct of their own, into their due place according to the inspiration of the musician; as the words flow in rhythmic cadence in answer to the mood of the poet's genius; as the grass, flowers, and corn grow by the spontaneous energy of the creative and formative mind that animates them all—so will you rear for yourself the structure of a beautiful and useful Christian life, if your heart is filled with love. IV. As THE MIGHTIEST OF ALL INSTRUMENTS OF BLESSING TO OTHERS. By the sweet constraint of His love Christ wins the heart of those for whom He died. By the almightiness of His love He will ultimately conquer the world and build up that glorious temple to His praise—a redeemed humanity. Let His love be the inspiration of our life, and we wield a moral force akin to His and share His triumph. (*J. Waite, B.A.*)

Ver. 2. **If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.**—*Pride vitiates religious knowledge*:—St. Paul would teach those who placed a high estimate upon a philosophical comprehension of religious truth, and who therefore were liable to a spurious kind of knowledge, that if any one of them conceitedly imagined himself to comprehend the gospel mysteries, he was in reality utterly ignorant concerning them. Pride injures our religious knowledge as to—I. ITS QUANTITY OR EXTENT. The apostle refers to that disposition which leads a man, when he has made some addition to his stock of knowledge, to stop and review it, and boast of it. These Corinthians were anxious to get the credit of superior insight into Christian doctrine, hence St. Paul says to them, "If any man among you," &c. (chap. iii. 18–20). Such a self-complacent spirit prevents a man from surveying and travelling over the whole field. It is like a traveller among the Alps, who, having ascended the first range of hills, and seeing the lower valleys, should "think" that he had exhausted Switzerland. The instant a Christian begins to dwell upon his knowledge of God, or of himself, with any degree of self-complacency, he creates an eddy in the flowing stream of his self-reflection, and whirls round instead of moving onward. And unless the volume of water starts once more, and gets out of this whirlpool; unless the Christian ceases to think of how much he knows, and to boast of it, he will never know any more than he now knows. And even the little knowledge, over which he has boasted, will be absorbed in the pride of the heart and disappear. But he who contemplates the character of God, *e.g.*, with no side glances at himself, and bows down before it in reverence and awe, is carried forward from one vision to another. So with the knowledge of our own heart, of the atonement, &c. II. ITS QUALITY, OR DEPTH. The moment the mind begins to compute the distance it has gone, it stops going. If, therefore, under the influence of pride it pauses to see how profound it has become, and to

tell the world its success, it adopts a suicidal course. Suppose that a man fixes his attention upon some one sinful habit, and begins to see plainly its odiousness. The longer this process continues, the deeper and clearer is his view. Now suppose that his attention is diverted from his sin itself, to the consideration of the fact that he has been exploring it, his sense of the iniquity of his sin will begin to grow more shallow, and he will come up to the surface of his heart again, instead of penetrating to its recesses. The sin will not appear so odious to him; he will know nothing as he ought to know. III. ITS PRACTICALITY. The great purpose of religious truth is, that we may be made better by it. We ought not to desire to know God except that we may become like Him. We ought not to make any scrutiny into our own sin except to get rid of it. When religious knowledge loses this practicality, it degenerates into mere speculation, and hardens the heart instead of melting it into sorrow and love. Man's first duty on obtaining some new view of Divine truth is to apply it. But nothing so interferes with this as pride or self-gratulation. "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit, there is more hope of a fool than of him." When a man feels himself destitute of knowledge, instruction can be imparted. But when he thinks that he comprehends the whole subject, the prospect of his becoming enlightened is hopeless. Conclusion: Spiritual pride—1. Is the most subtle of sins. It is the sin of Satan. He fell from a purely intellectual temptation, and his wickedness was "spiritual wickedness." In wrestling against it, we "wrestle not against flesh and blood," &c. (Eph. vi. 12). When the believer proves to be on his guard against the more common and outward temptations of earth, then the arch-deceiver fills him with the conceit of holiness and of knowledge. 2. Especially requires the aid and influence of the Holy Ghost to overcome it. No spirit is a match for the subtlety of Satan but the Eternal Spirit. (*Prof. Shedd.*) *The pride of intellect:*—I. ITS INDICATIONS. 1. Assumption. 2. Dogmatism. 3. Contempt of the opinion of others. II. ITS REBUKE. Human knowledge is—1. Very limited. 2. Mixed with much error. 3. Morally defective. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The modesty of true knowledge:*—The wisest men feel that they know nothing compared with what they are capable of knowing. I was struck with a remark that a man once made to me on this subject. To my mind he was a marvel of learning. He seemed thoroughly educated in every direction. As now there is not a tree in the forest which, if you tap it, will not run sap, so there was not a side on which you could touch him where his knowledge did not seem complete. I said to him one day, "If I knew a tithe of what you know, I should think myself very fortunate." Said he, "Henry, I seem to myself like a basket in which are being carried away the fragments of a hotel—a bit of this, the fag-end of that, and all sorts of things jumbled up together. I do not know anything except little fragmentary parts of this, that, and the other." (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver. 3. **But if any man love God, the same is known of Him.**—*Love the medium of Divine knowledge:*—I. ITS NATURE. 1. Whence it proceeds. 2. What it implies. 3. What its fruits. II. ITS PRIVILEGE. It secures—1. The favour of God. 2. Fellowship with Him. 3. The enlightening influence of His Holy Spirit. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Superiority of love to knowledge:*—"Papa," said the son of Bishop Berkeley, "what is the meaning of the words 'cherubim' and 'seraphim,' which we meet with in the Holy Scriptures?" "Cherubim," replied his father, "is a Hebrew word, signifying knowledge; seraphim is another word of the same language, and signifies flame. Whence it is supposed that the cherubim are angels who excel in knowledge, and that the seraphim are angels likewise who excel in loving God." "I hope, then," said the little boy, "when I die I shall be a seraph; for I would rather love God than know all things." *The love and knowledge of God:*—From the love of man, which must be the sense of the word in ver. 1 (see chap. xiii. 1), the apostle passes insensibly to the love of God, partly because God is the implied, though not expressed, subject of the previous clause, partly because He is the only worthy and adequate object of Christian love. I. For THE CONNECTION OF KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE (1 John iv. 7, 8). St. Paul substitutes "is known of Him," for "knows Him," to express that man can, in this life, hardly be said, in any sense, to know God. It is sufficient to be the object of His knowledge, which in itself implies that we are brought into so close a relation with Him, as to be the object of His care and love, and ultimately, therefore, to know Him. II. For THE IDENTIFICATION OF GOD'S KNOWLEDGE WITH HIS LOVE compare Exod. xxxiii. 17; John x. 3. III. For THE IDENTIFICATION OF GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF MAN WITH MAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF GOD compare the similar blending of

the spirit of man with the Spirit of God in Rom. viii. 15, 16; 1 Cor. ii. 11; also John x. 15. "As the Father knoweth me, even so I the Father." IV. For THE GENERAL TURN OF THE WHOLE EXPRESSION, as implying that every part of our redemption, but especially our knowledge of God, is more properly His act than ours see chap. xiii. 12; Gal. iv. 9; Phil. iii. 12. For the unexpected substitution of one thought and word for another see chap. ix. 17, x. 18. (*Dean Stanley.*) *Known of God*:—I. THE CHARACTER THAT IS HERE PRESENTED TO US, the man that loves God. This love will be manifested by—1. The state of the heart. 2. The tenor of the thoughts. 3. The influence of God's Word. 4. Delight in holy pursuits. II. THE PRIVILEGE ASSERTED. "The same is known of Him"—1. This knowledge is individual and personal. 2. It embraces all the circumstances of his present state. 3. It is a loving, parental delight in him. 4. It is a pledge of final acknowledgment. Application: 1. What a source of pure and solid delight! 2. What a powerful incentive to holiness! (*C. Simeon, M.A.*) *Known of God*:—This verse is the antithesis of ver. 2. Without love, no knowledge; with love, true knowledge. But why instead of "The same knoweth God," does the apostle say, "The same is known of God"? Does he mean to deny the first of these two ideas? Assuredly not. But he clears, as it were, this first stage, which is self-understood, to rise at a bound to the higher stage which implies it. To be known of God is more than to know Him (Gal. iv. 9). In a residence every one knows the monarch; but every one is not known by him. This second stage of knowledge supposes personal intimacy, familiarity of a kind; a character which is foreign from the first. We need not therefore take "known of God" as equivalent to "acknowledged by," or "approved of," or "put into the possession of the knowledge of," God. The word "know" is taken in the same sense as in Psa. i. 6. The eye of God can penetrate into the heart that loves Him and His light, to illuminate it. In this light an intimate communion is formed between him and God; and this communion is the condition of all true knowledge—of man's being known by God as of God's being known by man. (*Prof. Godet.*) *God's knowledge of us*:—Sinner, let this be thy comfort, that God sees thee when thou beginnest to repent, He does not see thee with His usual gaze, with which He looks on all men, but He sees thee with an eye of intense interest. He has been looking on thee in all thy sin, and in all thy sorrow, hoping that thou wouldst repent, and when He sees the first gleam of grace, He beholds it with joy. Never warder on the lonely castle-top saw the first gray light of morning with more joy than that with which God beholds the first desire in thy heart. Never physician rejoiced more when he saw the first heaving of the lungs in one that was supposed to be dead, than God doth rejoice over thee, now that He sees the first token for good. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Intimacy between God and man*:—I. ITS CONDITION. It is a condition—1. Which could scarcely occur to man apart from revelation. Men fear, reverence, worship, seek to avert the wrath of God; but to love Him is not an exercise of mind which seems congruous to the relation between the Creator and His creatures. 2. Which Christianity makes possible and natural. By revealing God as love, by bringing that love home to the heart in Christ's atonement and sacrifice it makes a claim upon human love. 3. Capable of universal fulfilment, "If any man." There are many whose natural powers of body and mind are very limited; but there is none who has not the capacity of love. II. ITS CHARACTER. Love is represented as leading to, as involving knowledge. 1. On the side of God Himself knowledge is often used as equivalent to favour. Of course the Omniscient knows all His creatures; but He has a Fatherly, affectionate knowledge of those who love Him. He knows them to watch over, keep, guide, govern, strengthen, and save them. 2. On the side of man. This is the implicit statement of the text; for he who in the sense affirmed is known by God also knows God. How true it is that he who loves God knows Him too! We cannot know our earthly friends thoroughly unless we love them. Love opens the doors of knowledge. It creates that sympathy which gives intensity to the intuitive gaze of the soul. Thus it is that while many learned minds are ignorant of God, many lowly saints whose hearts are quickened with love, live in hallowed intimacy with Him. (*Prof. J. R. Thomson.*) *The man who loves God known of Him*:—You and I would dearly like to be known of God. Day by day we would like to be consciously at peace with God. We may know that there is no condemnation for us, that the gulf of spiritual death is behind and not in front of us, that life and immortality brought to light by the gospel are ours through grace, if love for God and our brethren reigns supreme within us. And now let us look, each one, into his heart and conscience, and

examine himself as to how far he can truthfully say and feel, "I love God: I am known of Him." "We love God, because He first loved us." He, in the first instance, did so infinitely much that a rightly affected person could not possibly dwell upon without loving Him. And again, the statement of the inspired apostle bears yet another sense. We cannot love God without the Holy Spirit having been first given to, and dwelling within us, as His consecrated temples. But, again, let me press home the question, "Do we love God?" I think we seem to fall back into the days of our childhood again when we answer this question truly and profitably. In our memories of those earliest years we shall certainly find experiences of our past feelings treasured up that will help us in our endeavour to find an answer to it. Those of us who had good, loving parents dearly loved them in return. We grew up beneath the sunshine of their smiles, and thrilled at the sound of their loving words. We strove to do all things that we knew would give them pleasure. We tried to obey all their commandments. We knew, too, what would please them, even though they did not ask us to study closely everything that they wanted of us. Our love for them was not fickle or changeable. Now and then, indeed, we had our naughty, rebellious passions hindering the outward flow of our love for them, but, underneath the strong torrent of those passions, our love for our good parents lingered on calm and unmoved, just as, fathoms down below the storm-tossed waves of the sea, the water is calm and still. And when our childhood's offences had been atoned for by our soul-felt tears of penitence, then we were ready enough to inveigh against ourselves as having been solely to blame for the interruption of the happy interchange of parental and filial love, with a great joy we threw ourselves into our fathers' or mothers' arms again, when we saw that they had forgiven our offence completely, and again our hearts welled forth their love for them, and all was once more peace and joy within us. Now have you these sacred memories of your childhood to help you to reply to my question? If so, it is very well, for are not God's people as just so many little children in His sight? And will they not then be happiest when they act towards Him, in all His dealings with them in providence and grace, as well-disposed little children act towards their earthly parents? Will they not then feel consciously that they love God, and that God loves them? (*J. C. Boyce.*) *Known to God although unknown to the world*:—In the midst of His glory the Almighty is not inattentive to the meanest of His subjects. Neither obscurity of station, nor imperfection of knowledge sinks those below His regard who worship and obey Him. Every prayer which they send up from their secret retirements is listened to by Him; and every work of charity which they perform, how unknown soever to the world, attracts His notice. (*J. Blair.*) *Known of God*:—Thick on the moors, pushing up through the mosses, side by side where the blueberries grow, sprang up and blossomed the wild rose. There was no one to see its beauty, to breathe its fragrance. Mile after mile spread the moor, purple in the dawn, glowing in the noontide, rosy in the sunset after-glow, yet there was none to see. Overhead there was the blue vault, soft and deep and silent. The wild, sweet breath of the sea swept over the moors, and tenderly touched the cheek of the wild rose. "In thy heart, O Rose," it said, "what beauty, in thy form what loveliness! Yet there is none to see. Wherefore, O Rose, give thy fulness of bloom where no eye may see, where nought looketh down but the sun and the stars, and no voice save mine may whisper to thee?" "God looketh down," answered the Rose. "He seeth me, and remembereth His gracious promise, 'The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.' In the day when He turneth the captivity of His people Israel and His ransomed shall come to Zion with everlasting joy, shall my mission be fulfilled. But now, I look up to God and whisper, 'Though He tarry, wait.' Even so I praise Him and magnify Him for ever." (*Christian Age.*)

Vers. 4–7. . . . **We know that an idol is nothing in the world.**—*An idol nothing in the world*:—A singular phenomenon, known as the Spectre of the Brocken, is seen on a certain mountain in Germany. The traveller who at dawn stands on the topmost ridge beholds a colossal shadowy spectre, moving on the summits of the distant hills. But, in fact, it is only his own shadow projected upon the morning mists by the rising sun; and it imitates, of course, every movement of its creator. So heathen nations have mistaken their own image for Deity. Their gods display human frailties and passions and scanty virtues, projected and magnified upon the heavens, just as the small figures on the slide of a magic-lantern are projected, magnified, and illuminated upon a white sheet. *Idolatry*:—I. ITS FOLLY. 1. An

idol is a thing of the imagination. 2. For there is but one God. 3. He is incapable of any representation. II. Its FORMS. Manifold. 1. Among the heathen. 2. Among professed Christians, as—(1) Love of the world. (2) Undue attachment or subservience to the creature. (3) Forgetfulness of God. III. Its ANTIDOTE. Consider—1. His true character. 2. His relation to His people. 3. His revelation in Christ. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Idolatry*:—I. IN ITS GENERAL HISTORY. Notice—1. The awful principle in which it originated (Rom. i. 28)—aversion to God. But the knowledge of its origin may direct as to the means of its overthrow. Nothing in earth or heaven can effectually overcome it but the power and grace of Christ; not force of arms nor power of reasoning. 2. The degraded objects to which it was outwardly paid (Psa. cxv.; Rom. i.). Surely, then, those who worship them demand our pity, our prayers, and our exertions for their reclamation. 3. The infernal spirit to whom it was really directed (chap. x. 20). 4. The amazing wealth and power by which it has hitherto been upheld. Talk we of the magnificence of some of the churches of Christendom. Think of the temple of Diana at Ephesus. Let rich Christians, who have it in their power to do so much for the propagation of their religion, but who do so little, let them turn to Isa. xlvi. 6, and learn a lesson of liberality worthy of a better cause. II. IN THAT PARTICULAR VIEW PRESENTED IN THE TEXT. The objector to missionary exertions may possibly be ready to say that if an idol be nothing, there is no need of the efforts, sacrifices, and prayers on which you have been insisting. How slightly he must have considered the matter who does not perceive that this very fact furnishes one of the strongest grounds of appeal on behalf of the unenlightened heathen! If an idol is nothing it follows—1. That the religious offerings of idolaters have not only been useless, but an abomination. 2. That the very religion of idolaters has promoted the honour and glory of Satan. 3. That the dying prayers of idolaters have been a delusion and a lie. (*T. Mortimer, B.D.*) **And that there is none other God but one.**—*The unity of God*:—1. What it implies. 2. What are its evidences. 3. What is its bearing upon faith and practice. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The unity of God* is demonstrated—1. By reason. 2. By creation and providence. 3. By revelation. (*Ibid.*) *Unity of God*:—A little boy being asked, "How many gods are there?" replied "One." "How do you know that?" "Because," said the boy, "there is only room for one; for He fills heaven and earth." *Aspects of responsibility* (1 Cor. viii. 4–13):—Note—I. THAT THE MORAL OBLIGATIONS OF ALL MEN ARE DETERMINED BY THEIR RELATION TO THE ONE GOD AND HIS SON. There are many objects that men call gods, but they are really nothing; they therefore impose no moral obligation. 1. There is One, however, and only One, from your relation to whom there grows up all moral obligations. "One God." Monotheism is demonstrated by nature, conscience, and the Bible. (1) He is a Father. The Creator of the universe, but the Father of spirits. (2) He is the Source of all things. (3) He is our end. "We in" or "unto Him." The supreme end of our existence, and object of our love. 2. In connection with Him there is "One Lord Jesus Christ, who was not only His creative Agent, "by whom are all things," but His redemptive Agent, the Mediator, "and we by" or "through Him." As Christians, we are what we are through Him. 3. Now the will of this One God, as coming through Christ to us, we are morally bound to fulfil—an obligation which can never be abrogated or modified. II. THAT WHAT MIGHT BE WRONG FOR ONE MAN TO DO MIGHT NOT BE SO FOR ANOTHER. The apostle teaches that those who felt that an idol was nothing in the world, and that consequently there was no harm to them personally in eating meat offered to it, would commit no wrong in doing so. The meat had not been corrupted by that, and their consciences not being against it, there would be no wrong in eating it (ver. 8). On the other hand, those who had a superstitious idea that they ought not to eat it would commit wrong in doing so (ver. 7). That which is against a man's conscience may not be against the eternal law of right, but is against his own sense of right, and therefore should be avoided. Here is the principle, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Therefore, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." III. THAT TO OFFEND THE CONSCIENCE OF A GOOD MAN, HOWEVER WEAK, IS A WRONG IN ALL (ver. 9). Respect for the weak consciences of good men. 1. May require self-denial on our part. 2. Is urged on the strongest considerations. (1) The lack of it may inflict serious injuries on the weak. (*a*) It may "become a stumbling-block to them that are weak"—*i.e.*, an occasion of sin. Their faith may be shaken, and they may become apostates. (*b*) They may be "emboldened," encouraged to do

the wrong. Without your moral strength they will imitate you and will be ruined (ver. 10). (2) The lack of it is a sin both against the weak brethren and against Christ (ver. 12). 3. Is exemplified in the sublime resolve of the apostle (ver. 13). Here is benevolent expediency, the strongest ground on which the temperance reformation can be wisely and effectively advocated. Give up all rather than ruin souls. Such an utterance as this is characteristic of Paul (Rom. ix. 3). (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **But though there be that are called gods, . . . to us there is one God, the Father, . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ.**—*Polytheism*:—1. Its numerous forms. 2. Awful prevalence. 3. Manifest absurdity. 4. Abominable wickedness. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The unity of God*:—The apostle had been trained in the monotheism which had from the first been the belief of his race, and from which they had now not swerved for centuries. The unity of God—I. IS CONTRASTED WITH POLYTHEISTIC BELIEF AND WORSHIP. 1. The heathen deities are "called," but are not, gods (ver. 4). 2. These deities are deemed "gods" and "lords." They were, and still are, in heathen lands thought supernatural, and are invested by the imagination with claims to the homage and service of men. 3. They are many in number, every natural object, &c., having its deity. 4. They have their several ranks and realms. The superior Olympian deities are "in heaven"; the inferior *numina* nymphs, fauns, dryads, &c., haunt this "earth." II. FURNISHES A CENTRE AND AIM FOR THE NEW RELIGIOUS LIFE OF MEN. 1. In Himself He is "the one God, the Father." This was a glorious revelation, and in Christ provision is made for its wide promulgation and acceptance. 2. He is the Creator and Upholder of all; "Of whom are all things." 3. He is the object of our faith, love, and devotion. We are "for," "unto Him." It is at this point that the great revelation of the new theology becomes the great motive of the new religion. Polytheism distracted the mind, and made it impossible that faith in God should become the inspiration of a new and better life. For it was a question, What measure of reverence and of service should be offered to this deity, and what to that? But Christianity revealed one God, in whom are all perfections, and who is the Creator, Governor, and Saviour of mankind. They who live to serve this God have an elevating, purifying, powerful aim in the conduct of their life. III. FURNISHES THE NOBLEST MOTIVE TO THE NEW RELIGIOUS LIFE. 1. The one God is made known by the one Lord Jesus Christ, as the Word reveals the utterer, the Son the Father, which conflicts in no sense with monotheism. 2. Christ is the universal Mediator, "by whom are all things"—the moral as well as the physical creation. All blessings which the Father destines for humanity He has resolved to confer by Christ. 3. We, as Christians, are what we are "through Him." As in the former clause we recognised the great aim, so here we see the great means and motive of the new, the distinctively Christian life. The Divine nature and mediation of Immanuel, so far from obscuring our belief in the Divine unity, is the most effectual support of it. Even as Jesus said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"; and "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." (*Prof. J. R. Thomson.*) *The unity of God*:—The term "unity" is difficult to define. It may mean merely the numerical basis of calculation; the contrast between one thing and two or more things of the same kind. But if used in the sense of a unit, it is clear that every one thing is made up of many parts, possesses many qualities, stands in various relations, and though in itself only one thing, is also a part of many other things. By unity is often meant more than the antithesis of many. Though the unity of God means that there is one God, in opposition to the claims of lords many and gods many, yet the phrase implies that whatever internal distinctions there may be in the essence of the Most High, that essence is one essence—a whole, a unity in itself. Unity is individuality, in spite of the recognition of the multiplicity of elements of which it is compounded. Thus a crystal of quartz is a unity distinct from all other crystals, and from the hand that holds it. It possesses a multitude of curious properties as long as it remains one thing; but let me break it into a thousand pieces, and it might soon be proved that every fragment possessed in a measure all those properties. Yet those fragments, though many, previously formed one whole. Consider, again, a tree or plant; its root, stem, branches, leaves, flowers, and seed form one whole of mysterious beauty; and though each twig and leaflet is a perfect creation, having an independent life in itself, yet the many parts do not fail to form a unity. Farther, playing in the branches of the tree there is a world of more mysterious life. Every leaf has its colony of insects, every bough its parasitical growth; the bees are humming in its fragrant flowers, and the birds are building their nests in its branches. But each lichen, moss, insect, and bird is as wonderful in its

mysterious combination of many opposites, and dependent structures, and wondrous balancing of powers, as was the tree itself. But while I am considering crystal and tree, and insect and bird, I find that I myself am just such a combination of many parts, faculties, passions, and relations, each of which is sufficiently individual, and yet the whole of which seem all but indispensable to constitute my self-conscious unity. I am a strange combination of body, soul, and spirit; and yet I am reckoned as one man. My senses, reflections, and passions; my body, understanding, and will seem at times capable of individualisation, and to be unities in themselves; but it is the mutual relation and dependence of the parts that constitute the unity of the whole. With this self-consciousness of multiplicity in unity to help me, the revelation that God has made of His threefold nature is less perplexing than it otherwise would be. The unity of the Divine nature, like the unity of all other things, is a unity consistent with the self-inclusions of various constituent elements. (*J. W. Reynolds, M.A.*) *One God, one Lord*:—I. THE ONE GOD. The oneness of Deity is here emphasised. It is insisted on throughout the Scriptures. The conflict, confusion, and absurdity conspicuous in polytheism find no place in Judaism or Christianity. This oneness is confirmed by nature, providence, and the moral sense. The one God is—1. The Source of all things. We know not how; the manner is not revealed to us; the fact is. God may have left much to man's scientific instinct to discover. He may have intended not a little to remain in mystery. We may travel reverently along the lines of true knowledge till they cease for us; then the great truth remains still for our enlightenment and comfort. The march backward of science is towards unity; revelation began with it. 2. The end of all things. "We unto," not "in," "Him." What is here asserted of some of God's works applies to all (Col. i. 16). The whole universe looks God-wards. So far as intelligent creatures do not find the end of their existence in God and seek His glory, so far they fall out of harmony with the rest of creation and bring failure into their lives. II. THE ONE LORD. The Head of the Church was the active power in creation. This verse teaches the Divinity of Christ in a very impressive manner. The administrative, mediating position occupied by Christ is recognised; but the assertion that "through Him" all things were, is only explicable on the supposition of His Deity. Moreover, this very expression is applied elsewhere to God (Rom. ix. 36; Heb. ii. 10), and the expression "unto Him" is in Col. i. 15 applied to Christ. Paul is speaking about idols as "gods and lords." These were all regarded as deities. In carrying over the same terms to the realm of Christianity, there is nothing which should lead us to suppose that "Lord" is less Divine than "God." III. THE SPECIAL RELATIONS SUBSISTING BETWEEN BELIEVERS AND THE ONE LORD AND ONE GOD. 1. They are "through" Christ—as creatures, amongst "all things"; but the additional "we through Him" indicates special relationship. Believers are such through Christ; they believe in Him. Through Him they are separated from "all things," and made a peculiar people. Apart from Christ believers are nothing; through Him they become "heirs of God." 2. They are "unto God" in a special sense, and through Christ. They show forth the Divine glories as others cannot. They reflect the Divine love manifested in redemption. They are presented to God as the fruits of Divine grace. Once rebellious, they are now obedient; once defiled, they are now purified, &c. 3. God is their Father. In a certain sense He is the Father of all, but in a spiritual sense He is not so. Of some Christ said, "Ye are of your father the devil." But the believer has received the adoption through Christ. (*W. E. Hurndall, M.A.*) *The many gods and the one God*:—I. THE WORLD'S MANY GODS. To make gods for himself has been man's great object all along. Every nation has had its gods, and every age. Is there no god-making still, even in our day? Money, business, pleasure, lusts, luxuries! Will they prove more helpful in the day of trouble than Baal, or Jupiter, or Buddha? Will they forgive, and save, and comfort? II. THE SAINT'S ONE GOD. Yes; one only, the living and the true God. Jehovah is His name. With undistracted eye the Christian looks but to one, not many; with undivided heart he fixes on one, not many; and that one sufficient to fill his whole heart, and soul, and being. How the thought of that one God—infinite, eternal, and unchangeable—makes all that are called gods to vanish utterly away! "Jehovah is my portion, saith my soul." We need no other; we need no more. III. THE SAINT'S ONE CHRIST. "To us there is but one Lord Jesus Christ." As there are many beings who go under the name of God, so are there many who go under the name of Christ, yet there is but one Christ, not two, nor many. The tendency of

the present day is to multiply Christs. A Christ as the impersonation or representative of humanity is quite in accordance with the spirit of the age. But every one wants to have his own Christ, just as each heathen wanted to have his own god; the Christ that suits his own fancy, or his own philosophy, or his own intellect, or his own circumstances. Some want a Christ who is not God; others a Christ who is not a sacrifice; a Christ without a cross, and without blood; a Christ who will teach but not expiate sin; a Christ whose life and death are an example of self-surrender to the utmost, but not an atonement; a Christ who is not a judge, nor a law-giver, nor a priest, and only a prophet in the sense of teacher. If thus, then, there is but one Christ, then there is but—1. One Cross. 2. One Priest. 3. One altar. 4. One sacrifice. 5. One way to the kingdom. (*H. Bonar.*)

Vers. 7–13. **Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge.**—*Ignorance:*—1. Great ignorance may consist with genuine piety. 2. Is a source of much unnecessary anxiety and peril. 3. Is to be deplored and pitied. 4. May find relief in the study of Divine truth. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Christian liberty:*—I. ITS NATURE. 1. Implies freedom of action in things indifferent. 2. Depends on knowledge. 3. Requires conscientious conviction. II. ITS LIMITS—1. Defined by a brother's weakness. 2. By love to Christ. 3. By self-sacrificing love. (*Ibid.*) **For some with conscience of the idol . . . eat . . . and their conscience being weak is defiled.**—*The law of Christian conscience:*—I. THE EXPOSITION OF THE LAW ITSELF (vers. 7, 8). The apostle tells the strong-minded Corinthians that the superstitions of their weaker brethren are unquestionably wrong (ver. 8); but he also tells them that "there is not in every man that knowledge," &c. (ver. 7), *i.e.*, some have an ignorant, mistaken conscience; and yet he insists that this conscience, so ill-informed, yet binds the possessor of it: "and their conscience being weak, is defiled." Here, then, we have the distinction between absolute and relative right and wrong. Absolute right and wrong are unalterable. But the right or wrong of any action done by any particular man is a matter relative to his particular circumstances. That charity and self-denial, *e.g.*, are right—this we see recognised in almost every nation. But when and how far self-denial is right, and what are the bounds of charity, this is for different circumstances to determine. And so it will be found that there is a different standard among different nations and in different ages, *e.g.*, the standard among the Israelites in the early ages was very different from that recognised by the later prophets. And the standard in the third and fourth centuries was an entirely different one from that recognised among ourselves. The principle laid down by the apostle is this. That which seems to a man to be right is, in a certain sense, right to him; and that which seems to a man to be wrong, in a certain sense is wrong to him (Rom. v. 14, xiv. 14). II. THE APPLICATIONS WHICH ARISE OUT OF IT. 1. Personally. Do what seems to you to be right: it is only so that you will at last learn by the grace of God to see clearly what is right. A man is responsible for the opinions he holds, and still more for the way in which he arrived at them—whether in a slothful and selfish, or in an honest and truth-seeking manner; but being now his soul's convictions, you can give no other law than this—"You must obey your conscience." For no man's conscience gets so seared by doing what is wrong unknowingly as by doing that which appears to be wrong to his conscience. 2. To others. To the large, free, enlightened mind of Paul, all these scruples and superstitions must have seemed mean and trivial. But conscience was far more sacred to him than even liberty. The scruple may be small and foolish, but it may be impossible to uproot it without tearing up the feeling of the sanctity of conscience, and of reverence to the law of God, associated with this scruple. And therefore the Apostle Paul counsels these men to abridge their Christian liberty, and not to eat of those things which had been sacrificed to idols, but to have compassion upon the scruples of their weaker brethren. And this for two reasons. (1) Christian feeling. It might cause exquisite pain to sensitive minds to see those things which appeared to them to be wrong done by Christian brethren. Take a parallel case. There is no doubt that it causes much pain to many Christians to see a carriage used on the Lord's day. But you, with higher views of the spirit of Christianity, can exercise your liberty. But is it not your duty to abridge your Christian liberty, and to go through rain, and mud, and snow, rather than give pain to one Christian conscience? (2) It might even lead their brethren into sin. If any man should eat of the flesh offered to an idol, feeling himself justified by his conscience, it were well: but if any man, overborne by authority or interest, were to do this against conscience, his compliance

would as much damage his moral sense as if the act had been wrong in itself. Conclusion: 1. Distinguish between this tenderness for a brother's conscience and mere time-serving. This same apostle whom we here see so gracefully giving way upon the ground of expediency, stood firm as a rock when anything was demanded which trenched upon Christian principle (Gal. ii. 5). 2. This abridgment of liberty is a duty especially incumbent upon all who are possessed of influence. If the landlord uses his authority and influence to induce his tenant to vote against his conscience, it may be he has secured one voice to the principle which is right; but he has gained that single voice at the sacrifice and expense of a brother's soul. Or again, if for the sake of ensuring personal attention, the rich man puts a gratuity into the hand of a servant of some company which has forbidden him to receive it, he gains the attention at the expense of a man and a Christian brother. 3. How possible it is to mix manliness with charity! No man ever breathed so freely the atmosphere of heaven as Paul—no man ever soared so high above all scruples as he: and yet no man ever bound himself as St. Paul bound himself to the scruples of his brethren. So that, what in other cases was infirmity, imbecility, and superstition, gathered round it in his case the pure high spirit of Christian delicacy. And now, out of the sayings of those who loudly proclaim "the rights of man" and "the rights of liberty," match us if you can with one sentence so sublime as ver. 13. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *A weak conscience, i.e.*, as we might say "diseased," incapable of forming a sound healthy judgment. As we speak of weak nerves the apostle speaks of a weak conscience. A person who has been taught when a child to believe in ghosts, will sometimes be seized with dread if he is alone at night, though his reason has long since convinced him that spectres do not appear. Similarly, though the moral reason of a Christian tells him that the heathen deities which he formerly worshipped do not exist, yet it requires spiritual knowledge of the true God to allay his dread. *Cf.* 1 Tim. i. 5, where the apostle joins "a good conscience" with "faith unfeigned." (*Principal Edwards.*) *Abstinence for the sake of others*:—Of the flesh of beasts slain by the heathen priests in the service of their gods only a portion being required for the religious rites, the remainder was consumed as food by the priests or exposed for sale in the public markets. Entertainments were sometimes given in localities more or less closely associated with the idolatrous worship, and these meats were offered to the guests. Was it right to partake of such food? There may be at least four different methods of treating a question of that sort. It may be determined merely upon considerations of personal inclination and enjoyment. "Those are the only considerations," some might say. "If the meat is good, and I want it, why refuse it?" With others the case would be at once submitted to the judgment of society: "What is the custom? How do my associates dispose of the problem?" A third and manifestly higher method asks, "What is right? What does an enlightened conscience approve?" Here are three entirely distinct methods of dealing with a question of practical morality. But neither of these schemes suit Paul. There is a larger question of charity: "How might my habit affect others, and especially my religious associates?" I. In this golden sentence is seen THE SENSITIVENESS OF CHRISTIANITY WITH REGARD TO THE WEAK AND THE OBSCURE. Such a sentiment was practically new. "Christianity for the first time made charity a rudimentary virtue," says Lecky, the historian of European morals. How strange was this method is apparent also from the early criticisms of Christianity —that of Celsus, for example. "Why," said he, "woollen-manufacturers, shoemakers, and carriers, the most uneducated and boorish of men, are zealous advocates of this religion!" By the apostle, however, the opprobrium was turned into a sort of boast: "Ye see your calling, brethren. . . . God hath chosen the weak things to confound the mighty." These "weak things" Paul never made the mistake of despising. We, too, shall deal most successfully with similar cases of conscience when we are nearest to Paul's Master and ours, having most of his life in us, his mind of love. Many a boy proudly drops his bat and ball to run and serve his mother or his sister. Such surrenders love counts among its privileges and joys. And if the earthly affection can easily do this, is it likely that a mightier passion will fail? II. WE ARE TAUGHT, FURTHER, THAT THE INDIVIDUAL IS OF LESS CONSEQUENCE THAN SOCIETY. That seems too plain to need reiteration. But practically it is not always acknowledged. Writers like Mill put the stress upon personal liberty. They are slow to justify legal measures or social laws which in any degree abridge the privileges of the individual. Such invasion of rights they

would condemn, except under the greatest necessity. They seem to estimate a man too high, and mankind too low. But Providence does not make such estimates. What we call the laws of nature constantly subordinate us to the general good. The progress of history is achieved through suffering and martyrdom. Father and mother must deny themselves for the family. Sons and brothers die that the republic may live. Science and invention go forward through unrequited sacrifices. In the fact that men have so often tried to reverse God's computations, and make the one to be worth more than the many, lies the secret of much of the misery of the human race. Along the lines of this vicious calculation rivers of blood have flowed. Think of the kings and princes who from thrones of gold have looked down upon the millions of their subjects only as the small dust of the balance. III. It is also to be remembered THAT IN THE COMPARISON OF THESE OPPOSITE METHODS, AND IN DETERMINING THE ISSUES WHICH THEY INVOLVE, IS TO BE FOUND AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF EDUCATION. The settlement of moral questions to which we are daily summoned is designed for our discipline, a means both of testing and increasing our love for the Master and for His people. With a child we are best satisfied not when he promptly obeys an express command, but when, left to choose for himself, he deliberately prefers another's pleasure to his own. That shows, and at the same time develops, the kindness of his heart. It is often objected, however, that the requirements of such a charity may become unreasonable and oppressive—that there are narrow-minded and captious persons who, upon any pretext, will seek to obstruct our freedom and spoil our innocent pleasures. Where, then, shall the line be drawn? The only answer must be that a line cannot be definitely drawn. We are left to the impulses of our natural or gracious hearts. They will put their own constructions upon every principle laid down for guidance. The problem is not, "Who is technically right?" nor, "Who has the better head and the more enlightened conscience?" nor, "Who is more prominent in the world's work?" This is not a matter of pride, but of self-forgetting charity. The stress and point lie in the question, "What will save this brother whom my liberty might offend?" The more unreasonable the prejudice, likewise, to which we yield, the weaker the opinion to which we make our offering of peace and good-will, the more tenderly will God be sure to regard it. We may be thankful if instead of being among those who ask for concessions, we have reached the high place of those who are delighted to grant them. IV. THE SUPERIORITY OF "LOVE AS A LAW" IS MANIFEST, THEREFORE. Such a force is not only disciplinary, but it is in the highest degree disciplinary; it secures the best advantage and growth. "This law is not arbitrary. It is no law of fanaticism or enthusiasm or self-torture." In preferring it we only surrender a lower, because we seek a manifestly higher, good. "To work from fear is slavery; to work under the compulsion of animal want is a hardship, and if not a positive yet a relative curse; to work for personal ends, as for pride or ambition or the accumulation of property, either for its own sake or our own sake, is compatible with freedom, but has in it nothing either purifying or ennobling; it finds and leaves the soul dry and hard. But activity from love is the perfection of freedom and of joy." We are never so high and great as when for love we can easily make sacrifices to advance the unity and power of Christ's Church or the welfare of those for whom He died. V. How VARIOUS ARE THE PROBLEMS OF OUR MODERN LIFE WHICH THIS LESSON TOUCHES WE MAY READILY DISCOVER. Shall I drink wine? What shall be my attitude toward the theatre and the opera? How shall I deal with the question as to promiscuous dancing? Shall I on Sunday patronise the street-railway? What games shall I approve? How far may I indulge a taste for personal adornment, particularly in places of public worship? What principles and limitations of expenditure are to be preferred in building, beautifying, and administering a home? These and a thousand like inquiries are to be treated in the spirit with which Paul approached the Corinthian problem about meat. They are not merely ethical, but Christian, problems. (*H. A. Edson, D.D.*) *Abstinence for the sake of others*:—Slight acts may loose vast forces, as a shout starts an Alpine avalanche. Insignificant questions may involve great principles. So was it with the Corinthian Church. The body of Christ was torn about a piece of meat; but the strife involved solemn matters—love for Christ and dying souls. I. THE LAW OF KNOWLEDGE. We commonly reckon knowledge to be a product of the intellect, including the powers by which we learn facts, reason upon them, and draw conclusions. The kind of knowledge determines the instrument by which we are to acquire it. Pure mathematics, abstract logic, may seem to use only the seeing eye and reasoning mind.

But really to know a thing, the student must have some affinity for the object. It must find him, must stir a response in his nature. True of nature and art, this is more commandingly true of our fellow man. We cannot know him or any truth concerning his life and character except as we love him. This is the only way to get God's way of looking at him, God's ideal for him. Love is the discoverer, love is the interpreter, love the guide. Knowledge without love is the turbine without waterfall, wire without electricity. Love without knowledge is cataract minus wheel, loose lightning in the heavens. Love with knowledge is the servant and benefactor of mankind. Love has chemic tests, microscope, clairvoyance. It is the expert picking up the pebble a settler's child is playing with and telling the man he is farming over a gold mine. Knowledge despises his ignorance and leaves him to its poverty. The characteristic of modern charity is the combination of scientific method with personal devotion. It studies the case with minute pains, then helps it with cool head and steady hand as well as warm heart. The worst enemy of true charity is indiscriminate giving; and true giving means personal contact. It is so much cheaper to give money than to give one's self, and the reward is correspondingly small. This is the law: True knowledge includes love; it comes through head and heart together. II. THE LAW OF CONSCIENCE. But what law can there be to a faculty divided against itself, that, seeing two men doing the same thing, smiles upon one and smites the other? Which of them is right? How can any one ever be sure he is right? Conscience is called the voice of God in the soul of man; but can God say Yea and Nay together? The faculty we name conscience is not simple, but complex. It includes the impulse which commands, Do right; when you know the right, do it, whatever the cost. But back of this lies the judgment which tells us what is right. Not attempting the philosophical definitions, call the one moral impulse, the other moral judgment. The first of these is essentially the same in all sound souls, while differing in force and accepted control. The second differs according to birth, training, personal experience. Plainly, then, persons equally anxious to do right may differ as to the right or wrong of a specific act. Equally conscientious, they conscientiously disagree. Each, trying to do right, does what the other condemns. They agree in moral impulse, but disagree in moral judgment. The difficulty is great, and to recognise its occasion does not remove it. Two precepts are to be urged—1. Cultivate the moral impulse, which insists upon obedience to known right. Guard this high conception of the majesty of righteousness. Listen to the whispers of conscience rather than to the shouts of interest or songs of pleasure. Protect the sensitiveness of moral discernment as a piano tuner guards the accuracy of his ear. Recur constantly to the invariable standard. Crowd forward conviction into action. 2. Train the moral judgment, which decides whether a specific act is right or wrong. Extend the control of conscience to the formation of opinions. Educators of the moral judgment are—(1) Revelation. A clear word from God is end of debate. (2) The teachings of reason, vitalised by love. (3) Experience; our own, that of the wise and good, and the broad testimony of history. (4) A spiritual life. Constant fellowship with Christ, effort to grow like Him and to win others to Him, furnish the finest tests and incitements to right moral decisions. We can have God's wisdom for the asking, the especial illumination of the Holy Spirit. Changes of conviction will issue in changes of practice, and with these may come a period of unrest, while the moral sense is becoming adjusted to the judgment. The immorality of false opinions and virtue of right convictions are often discredited; but they make life, character, destiny. This is the law of conscience: Cultivate a sensitive and positive moral impulse; train the moral judgment to clear and spiritual views. III. THE LAW OF CONDUCT. Conduct has two relations —between myself and God, and between myself and my neighbour. An act done in the sight of others becomes example, and what is innocent kept to myself alone may be hurtful if indiscriminately followed. Unfortunately, doing in secret what is condemned in public savours of insincerity and hurts a delicate honour. As a rule, what is good for me is good for my neighbour, and what hurts him is bad for me. Which of us has suffered much from giving the weak brother, the holy Christ, the benefit of the doubt? That weak brother, he is ever with us; what shall we do about him? Would that he were strong! How we admire the well-poised man, clear head at the top and firmly set feet beneath; physical passions and temper and tongue following obediently at the heel of sound reason; warm heart and positive will, handmaids of a sensitive and proud conscience! Such there are, and how simple to them is life! But they are as rare as admirable. The

weak brother, whose claim is mainly his weakness—he ought to train his moral judgment, be fully persuaded in his own mind, then be content to stand or fall to his own Master; but it is not so with him. He keeps looking to see what we do, putting us on a pedestal we have no wish to occupy. Have not we rights also? Yes; and what right higher than to surrender rights to gain blessings? To hesitate between tickling one's palate and saving a soul from death would be worse than brutish. Grant that this means surrender of what we might claim but for this weak brother, are we losers? Am I impoverished by putting helpfulness above self-assertion? What is self-denial but choosing the nobler and better part? Give the weak brother and the spiritual life the benefit of the doubt. The example of abstinence involves no risks. Grow rich by giving up, gain life by dying to self and the world. While this law is general, its application in a temperance lesson is peculiarly clear. Here, of all cases, abstinence involves no risks; and appeals to the weaker without example of abstinence come to nothing. (*Charles M. Southgate.*) *Abstinence for the sake of others*:—Not a few of the church members in Corinth reserved the right to purchase and partake of these meats. Where is the flaw in their argument? The apostle meets and controverts it with great clearness. I. HE ALLEGES THAT CHARITY IS BETTER THAN KNOWLEDGE. "We all," says he, "have knowledge." We are all able to make a showing of reasonableness for our foibles and prejudices. The poorest cause may be bolstered by an argument. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth, literally buildeth up. Self-vindication makes us conceited and dogmatic; but charity helps both us and others. The charity here referred to is the largest of the Christian graces. It is the Greek *ἀγάπη*, the Vulgate *charitas*; it is love in its broadest and deepest sense. It includes love towards God as well as towards men. It is like the constant commerce which is going on between the waters of the heavens and the earth; the rills trickle into the brooks, the brooks murmur towards the rivers, the rivers roll onward to the sea, and the seas are exhaled into the clouds above to distil again in grateful showers and morning dews. So love is the constant means and communion between God and His children. "We know our franchise," said the Christian banqueters of Corinth; "we have knowledge as to the true character of idols and idol-worship, and are therefore in no danger of being led astray." "Knowledge! knowledge!" replies the apostle, "but what about love? If any man love God the same is known unto Him, and that is the knowledge worth having." All the wisdom of the schools is not to be valued with the assurance that we love God; and "the same may be known unto us." II. THE APOSTLE TURNS, SECONDLY, TO A CONSIDERATION OF INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM. For these Corinthian Christians were disposed to stand upon their rights. They said in effect, "There is no specific injunction as to these idol-meats in Scripture. The question is left to the individual conscience. Our consciences are clear; the meats do not injure us. We therefore propose to do as we please about them." "Granted," says Paul, "I do not dispute your rights in these premises; but there are some important facts which you are in danger of losing sight of." He then reminds them—1. That the mere matter of eating or abstaining is in itself of slight consequence; "for meat commendeth us not to God; neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we eat not are we the worse." So small a matter therefore as a dish upon one's table should not be permitted to jeopardise the spiritual interests of any. 2. There are some weaker brethren who have less knowledge. These weaker brethren must not be left out of the reckoning. We are in a measure responsible for them. Am I, then, my brother's keeper? Aye, and if he fall over a stumbling-block of my making, I shall he held responsible for it. 3. Rights are relative. Some of them must bow down to others, as did the lesser stars to the greater in the patriarch's dream. A man's lowest right is to please himself; his highest is to deny himself for others. Rights may conflict, but duties never; and duty always has the highest and uttermost claim. 4. As to individual freedom there is no such thing. If there were only one man in the universe he might be absolutely free to serve his own pleasure, but the moment you introduce another man there is a mutual restriction. Each is now free only so far as his freedom does not infringe upon the other. It is a mistake to think of freedom as license. There is, in fact, nothing in the world more circumscribed than true freedom. It is not lawlessness nor deliverance from restraint. Its best definition is, "Perfect obedience to perfect law." True, "we are no longer children of the bond-woman, but of the free." He who comes forth from the bondage of the law into the liberty of the gospel bows down, at the very threshold of his new life, and gives himself as a slave to serve the interests of his

follow men. III. THIS LEADS US, THIRDLY, TO CONSIDER WITH THE APOSTLE THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST HIMSELF. "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died?" For whom Christ died! Is it true, then, that Jesus stooped to the infirmity of the least of His little ones? Aye, and here are we, followers of His, haggling about meats and drinks! God forgive us, that we fall so far short of the mind that was in Christ Jesus our Lord. In Phil. ii. 7 occurs a word about which there is much controversy. The word is *kenosis;* it means an "utter emptying," and is applied to Christ's humiliation. When He crossed the threshold of heaven to undertake His redemptive work He laid aside crown, royal robes, heavenly retinue, everything, that He might restore the race of fallen men. He was free to remain where He was; but He put away His freedom and took upon Himself the form of a servant for our sake. Oh, by the love and devotion of our Lord, let us cease our clamouring for rights, and begin to ask, "How may we empty ourselves as He did for the uplifting of the children of men?" The point at which humanity comes nearest to Deity is self-denial. Its best illustration is at Calvary, where God stoops down to embrace His penitent children. The summit of human character is reached when a man gives himself for others. Christ did it. We also, for Christ's sake, must do it. (*D. J. Burrell, D.D.*)

Vers. 11–13. **And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?**—*Suffering, the measure of worth*:—I. THE "WEAK BROTHER" IS NOT OF MUCH VALUE IN HIMSELF; BUT HE IS MADE VALUABLE BY THE FACT THAT CHRIST DIED FOR HIM. 1. How much of themselves men will give for one another, measures the worth in which that other is held. "I love you," may mean only "you are my plaything," or "I love myself"; but true love will give up for another's sake time and convenience. It will employ all the resources of its being for the sake of that friend. And when, in some great exigency, all this will not avail, then love, in the glory of its power, goes to death as to the consummation of itself, and leaves a witness to itself which all mankind recognises (John xv. 13). 2. Even when this is the fruit of instinct, it is impressive. The bear that dies defending its cubs, the hound that pines and dies on its master's grave, the little sparrow that fights the hawk and owl, not for itself, but its nest—one must be heartless indeed to feel no admiration for these fidelities of love. 3. But how much more when one's love and suffering spring from a perception of excellence in an object loved? The greater the nature that suffers, the higher is the estimate which his example gives of that for which he suffers. And by this analogue, the suffering and sacrifice of a Divine Being carries out the witness to its utmost conceivable extent. 4. We see at once a new element in the hands of the apostles after this testimony of the Master. No sooner was He gone up than they began to preach that man was valuable on account of what Christ suffered for him. A man for whom Christ died became a very different creature from a man before Christ had died for him. The fact that Christ died for a man made him worth protecting if he was weak. 5. This suffering was not founded upon man's character. It would be a testimony to the value of good character if Christ had come to die for it; but that was the very point of conflict between Him and the Pharisees. They held that Christ ought to suffer and identify Himself with them; but He most scornfully rejected that, and said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. I came to give My life for the lowest and worst men." He more sharply than any other discriminated between good and bad character; yet there was something behind character to which Christ was bearing witness, viz., the abstract original value which inheres in human life. The death of Christ is a testimony to the value of man in his very substance, if I may so say; so that the least and the lowest have the essence of value in them. II. THE EFFECT WHICH THIS FACT HAS OF DETERMINING MAN'S PLACE, HIS RIGHTS, AND HIS WORTH. 1. Consider what the world's way of estimation has been in judging men. Earliest, men measured physical power. Now the habit of society is to classify men into relative ranks of value by the effects which they are able to produce; by what they are worth to society. Therefore, when a great man dies men say, "The world has met with a great loss." If a poor man dies, men say, "The world has one less incumbrance." The dog that hunts well is better than a pauper that does not do anything, in the estimation of men. If a race are not able to hold their own against aggressive peoples men say, "There is no help for it; they must go." They judge men by the standard of political economy. There is no such contempt on the globe for anything as man has for man. We need therefore to go back to this testimony of our Master's example, who came by His suffering and death to bear a

testimony of that element in human nature which every man has like every other. 2. This view interprets the future. A man in the lowest condition here is not the man that he is to be; and when you have measured and weighed him, you have not estimated what he is worth in the kingdom to come. He has before him another world; and we are told most solemnly by our Saviour that the men who are the most regarded here will be worth the least there. "The first shall be last, the last first." Many of the plants of our northern summer come up quickly, and do exceedingly well; but they are coarse and rank at that. And there are many seeds that I plant by the side of them every spring, which in the first summer only grow a few leaves high. There is not sun enough to make them do what it is in them to do. But if I put them in some sheltered hot-house, and give them the continuous growth of autumn and winter, and then, the next summer, put them out once more, they gather strength by this second planting, and lift up their arms and spread out the abundance of their blossoms. The plants that grew quickest the year before, are now called weeds by their side. And I doubt not that there is many a man who rushes up to a rank growth in the soil of this world, and of whom men seeing him, say, "That is a great man," but there are many poor, feeble creatures in this world who will be carried safely on and up, and rooted in a better clime; and then, lifting up their whole nature, they will come out into that glorious summer of fervent love in heaven, where they will be more majestic, more fruitful, than those who so far surpass them here. III. THE EFFECTS WHICH THIS DOCTRINE WILL HAVE UPON OUR FEELINGS AND CONDUCT TO OUR FELLOW-MEN. 1. Let us suppose that we are in full possession of the Christian feeling—Christ died for that man. It will be a powerful restraint upon lawless liberty, and will bring us into such sympathy with all our fellow men, that, at the sacrifice of our own convenience and rights, it will be a privilege and a pleasure for us to serve them. Some men go through life, saying, "I will take care of myself, and you must take care of yourself"; and they feel that they have a right to go through life thus. Now no one who has drunk deeply of the spirit of the Master will refuse to accept the injunction, "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." It is as if a strong swimmer should turn back and lend a helping hand to buoy up and lift across the flood one that was weaker or less able to swim than himself. We have no right to disregard, much less to hinder, the welfare of any human being. Have I a right to go tramp, tramp, tramp, according to the law of my physical strength, among little children? If I have had better privileges than others, and have come to conclusions which they cannot understand, have I a right to scatter sceptical notions through society? A man is bound to hold his knowledge, his conscience, his pleasures, &c., subject to this great law: "Christ died for men, and I must live for men, and restrain my power, and forego my rights, even for their sake." We have a right to employ men, of course; but there is a habit which prevails in society of thinking that a man has a right to just so much of his fellow-men as he is able to extract from them. A man may fleece a hundred men during the week, and take the communion on Sunday, and nobody thinks that there is any violation of good-fellowship or of orthodoxy. But that great law of fellowship which knits every man to every other man on the globe says not only "Thou art his brother," but, "Thou art responsible for his weal as well as thine own. Thou shalt not in any wise harm him." 2. This is one of the most precious of doctrines to those that look and long for a better period of the world. It was almost the only thing we could urge when slavery rent our land. The single strand that held against the storms of avarice and the fire of lurid lusts was the single argument, "For these Christ died." And that held; and the most wonderful change toward regeneration that the world ever saw has taken place by the simple operation of that great law. And what have we now for the weak races? Men of a hard heart and an iron-shod foot are preparing to tread these people down and deny them their rights. And I take my stand by the side of every weak creature, whatever his nationality may be, and I say, "For him Christ died." Give men at the bottom a chance to come up. God, the highest, bowed down His head and came upon the earth and suffered for the weakest and the worst. 3. Christian brethren, we must arm ourselves betimes. The seeds of a better public sentiment must be sown. Then let no man be discouraged because he is labouring with a very much neglected class. There is no material in this world which is unpromising. No man is beyond salvation since "Christ died" for him. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.**—*Sin against Christ*:—It is a proof of the intimate character of the relation between Christ and His people that it should be the very

climax of reproach against Christians because of any course they followed, to charge them with sin against Christ. Language like this could be used of no merely human teacher and leader. To act without due charity is a sin against Christ because it is—I. To OFFEND AGAINST CHRIST'S COMMANDMENT, viz., to love one another. This was to be the test of Christian discipleship. II. To CONTRADICT CHRIST'S EXAMPLE. What Christ enjoined He exemplified in His whole life, and at last in His death. III. To INJURE CHRIST IN THE PERSON OF ONE OF HIS LITTLE ONES. Christ so identified Himself with His disciples as to regard what was done to them as done to Himself. Whosoever is indifferent to the welfare of the Lord's servants, sins against the Lord Himself, and shall not be held guiltless. (*Prof. J. R. Thomson.*) *Wounding a weak conscience*:—I. WHAT A WEAK CONSCIENCE IS. 1. Such a conscience is improperly called tender; for tenderness imports quickness and exactness of sense, which is the perfection of this faculty, whose duty it is to be a spiritual watch to give us warning of whatsoever concerns us. It is opposed to a hard or seared conscience; but a weak conscience is opposed to a strong, which very strength consists in the tenderness or quickness of its discerning power. 2. The weakness of conscience here spoken of is opposed to faith (Rom. xiv. 2), by which is not meant that act by which a man is justified, but signifies the same with knowledge (vers. 7, 10). The clear discernment of what is unlawful, and what is only indifferent, together with a firm persuasion of the lawful use of such indifferent things, all circumstances being duly observed in the using of them. And therefore, on the other side, the weak conscience is such a one as judges otherwise of the nature of things than indeed it is, supposing that to be unlawful in itself which really is not so. 3. From whence it follows that weakness of conscience implies—(1) An ignorance of the lawfulness of some certain thing or action. That ignorance must be such a one as is not willing. (*a*) Because it must be such a one as renders it in some degree excusable; but so far as any defect is resolved into the will, it is in that degree inexcusable. (*b*) Because it must be such an ignorance as renders the person having it the object of compassion. But no man pities another for any evil lying upon him, which he would not help, but which he could not. And consequently it must be resolved into the natural weakness of the understanding faculty, or else the want of opportunities or means of knowledge. Either of which makes ignorance necessary, as it is impossible for him to see who wants eyes, and equally impossible for him who wants light. (2) A suspicion of the unlawfulness of any thing or action. (3) A religious abstinence from the use of that thing of the lawfulness whereof it is thus ignorant or suspicious. It brings a man to that condition in Col. ii. 21. II. WHAT IT IS TO WOUND OR SIN AGAINST IT. 1. To afflict or discompose it; *i.e.*, to rob it of its peace. For there is that concernment for God's honour dwelling in every truly pious heart which makes it troubled at the sight of any action by which it supposes God to be dishonoured. And as piety commands us not to offend God, so charity enjoins us not to grieve our neighbour. 2. To encourage or embolden it to act against its present judgment or persuasion: which is, in other terms, to offend, or cast a stumbling-block before it: *i.e.*, to do something which may administer to it an occasion of falling or bringing itself under the guilt of sin. So that as the former was a breach upon the peace, this is properly a wound upon the purity of the conscience. 3. The conscience may be induced to act counter to its present persuasion. (1) By example; which is the case here expressly mentioned, and principally intended. (2) By command; as when a person in power enjoins the doing something, of the lawfulness of which a man is not persuaded. (*R. South, D.D.*) *Dissuasives against an undue use of Christian liberty*:—1. A weak conscience is easily wounded. 2. The infliction of such a wound is a violation of the law of love. 3. It is a sin against Christ Himself. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) **Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth.**—*The great argument for abstinence*:—I. ARGUMENTS FOR ABSTINENCE ARE OFTEN GROUNDED ON—1. Danger to ourselves. (1) We may be led to excess. (2) We may injure ourselves, physically or morally. 2. Wastefulness. 3. Intrinsical wrongness. II. SUCH ARGUMENTS FREQUENTLY LACK COGENCY. 1. The third will have no application to a large class of things indifferent in themselves, and it is generally in respect of such that the war is waged. 2. The others are open to question. Conflicting facts will be adduced, and where knowledge is imperfect the contest is likely to continue. And the argument often acts as a temptation, for when human nature is warned of peril it often delights to show how brave and steadfast it can be. III. THE APOSTOLIC ARGUMENT. St. Paul—1. Enlarges the

view so that others are included as well as ourselves. Abstinence is sometimes not for ourselves at all, but only for our fellows (Phil. ii. 4). We are units, but united units. We cannot legislate for that little area which we ourselves occupy. 2. Recognises the influence of example. Our words are a spider's web; our acts are a cable. Men do what we show them, not what we tell them. And we cannot persuade men that we are strong and they weak. 3. Asserts the obligation of self-sacrifice for the welfare of others. That which is "indifferent" becomes anything but that if our indulgence is injurious to others. Our sacrifice is small indeed compared with their possible loss. This argument has special force for Christians. (1) They have the example of self-sacrifice in their Master (ver. 12). They have a more impressive view of the issues involved in the fall of a fellow-creature. (2) Their non-abstinence may be a sin against a fellow-Christian (ver. 11). The fall may be, not of an unbeliever, but of a brother associated in Christian fellowship and service, and thus be—(3) A sin against the brethren (ver. 12), *i.e.*, the Church, bringing scandal and disgrace through a brother's fall. And also—(4) A sin against Christ (ver. 12). For Christ and Christians are one—He the Head and they the members. (5) They have in their ears such utterances of their Master's as Matt. xviii. 6, xxv. 40. (*W. E. Hurndall, M.A.*) *Personal sacrifice* is—I. NECESSARY. 1. Not only in meats and drinks, but in many other things. 2. To avoid offence. II. IS OBLIGATORY—1. On Christians. 2. By the law of love, and—3. The example of Christ. III. IS MAGNANIMOUS. It is—1. A conquest of self. 2. An act of benevolence. 3. A feature of renewed nature. IV. WILL BE ABUNDANTLY COMPENSATED. 1. By the approval of conscience. 2. The benefit of others. 3. The approbation of God. 4. Final reward. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Abstaining for the good of others*:—Do you not think, dear friends, that though it may be quite proper for you to take a glass of wine or a glass of beer, and there is no sin in the thing at all, your example may be injurious to somebody to whom it would be a sin to take it? Perhaps some persons cannot take a glass without taking two, three, four, five, or six glasses. You can stop, you know; but if your example leads them to start, and they cannot stop, is it right to set them going? Though you have a clear head, and can stand in a dangerous place, I would not recommend you to go there if somebody else would thus be placed in danger. If I were walking by the cliffs of Dover, and I happened to have a very fine cool head, yet, if I had my sons with me, and I knew that they had ordinary kinds of heads, I should not like to go and stand just on a jutting piece of crag so as to induce them to try the same position. No; I should feel, "Though I can stand here, you cannot; and if I stand here, perhaps you will attempt it, and fall, and I shall be guilty of your blood." Let us treat men as we would treat our sons; and let us be weak to their weakness, and deny ourselves for their sakes. Is not that good and proper reasoning? It seems to me that it is. If it is not good reasoning, it is safe. I never have asked God to forgive me for my sin in going without strong drink. I have never seen any commandment in Scripture showing that I am bound to take it. I feel free to do as I like about abstaining; but especially free when for the good of others I prefer to abstain altogether. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christian consideration for others*:—Now you may say to me if you please as a man, "Mr. Gough, I am a moderate drinker; I use these things in moderation, and therefore I set you a good example." I say at once, "Sir, you do not." "Well, if I drink one glass and there stop, is not that an example for others?" "No, sir; no, sir; no more than if there was a bridge built over a gulf, to fall into which was utter ruin, and that bridge will bear 150 lbs., and you weigh 150 lbs., and you say to that young man (and he weighs 200 lbs.), 'Follow my example.'—'I don't like the look of that bridge.' 'Don't be a fool, I have walked it forty years; proved it perfectly safe; never cracked with me; never sprung with me; perfectly safe.'—'But I don't like it.' 'Don't be foolish; you can do that which I can do; now I am setting you a good example; follow me step by step.' That young man attempts to follow it; he sets his foot on the centre; crash! crash! down he goes, with a shriek, into destruction. Now, did you set a good example? No, because you didn't take into consideration the difference of weight." Before you can say to a young man, "I set you a good example," you must take into consideration the difference between his temperament and yours, his susceptibility and yours. (*J. B. Gough.*)

CHAPTER IX.

VERS. 1–22. **Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?**—*Signs of apostleship*:—Why should Paul, departing from his usual custom, speak here of himself and his claims? Undoubtedly because these were questioned. Now wishing to incite the Corinthians to self-denial, Paul exemplified this virtue; but to make this effective it was necessary that he should assert and vindicate his position and rights. If he had no special commission from Christ, there was no virtue in renouncing privileges which never were his. The signs of his apostleship were—I. THE VISION OF CHRIST. Not that every one who saw Jesus became an apostle; but that none became an apostle who had not seen and been commissioned by Him. No doubt he had been contrasted with the twelve to his disadvantage in these respects. But Paul would not submit to an imputation which must needs weaken his authority. He had seen the Lord on the way to Damascus, had heard His voice, and been entrusted with a special mission to the Gentiles. He had not been preaching the gospel at the instigation of his own inclinations, but in obedience to the authority of Christ. II. SUCCESS IN APOSTOLIC LABOUR. The craftsman proves his ability by the work he does; the sailor by his navigation of the vessel; the soldier by his courage and skill. So the apostle acknowledges the justice of the practical test. 1. Paul appealed to his work. Labour is misspent when no results ensue. But his labour had not been in vain. 2. The workmanship of the apostle was also his seal, *i.e.*, it bore the mark and witness of his character, ability and office. A competent judge, looking to the Churches Paul had founded, would admit them to be evidence of his apostleship. 3. The signs were manifest in the very community where his authority was questioned. There is irony and force in the appeal made to the Corinthians. Whoever raised a question they should not. (*Prof. J. R. Thomson.*) *The leading characteristics of a truly great gospel minister*:—The greater minister of Christ—I. THE MORE INDEPENDENT OF CEREMONIAL RESTRICTIONS. Paul was an apostle, and had "seen Christ," a qualification that distinguished him as a minister from all but eleven others. Besides this, his natural and acquired endowments placed him in the first rank of reasoners, scholars, and orators. He was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, &c. But see how he regarded the mere conventionalities of religious society. "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free?"—referring to the eating of meat offered to idols, &c. (chap. viii. 13). The greater the man, always the more independent he is of forms, fashions, customs. Hezekiah called that which his countrymen worshipped "Nehushtan," a piece of brass. Cromwell called that glittering insignia of authority on the table of the House of Commons a "bauble." Thomas Carlyle called all the pageantry of office and the glitter of wealth "shams." Burns called the swaggering lordling a "coof." A famous French preacher began his funeral address over the coffin of his sovereign with "There is nothing great but God." What cared Elijah for kings? Nothing. Felix trembled before the moral majesty of Paul, even in chains. II. THE HIGHER THE SERVICES HE RENDERS TO SOCIETY (vers. 1, 2). "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways," &c. What work approaches this in grandeur and importance? And the man who succeeds in accomplishing it demonstrates the divinity of his ministry (ver. 3). III. THE MORE INDEPENDENT HE IS OF THE INNOCENT ENJOYMENTS OF LIFE (vers. 4, 5). Paul claims the privilege to eat and drink as he pleased, and to marry or not. IV. THE MORE CLAIM HE HAS TO THE TEMPORAL SUPPORT OF THOSE WHOM HE SPIRITUALLY SERVES (vers. 6–14). The reasons are—1. The general usage of mankind (ver. 7). He illustrates the equity of the principle from the cases of the soldier, the agriculturist, and the shepherd. 2. The principle of the Jewish law (vers. 8, 9). "Doth God take care for oxen?" Yes; but is not man greater than the ox? And shall he work and be deprived of temporal supplies? 3. The principles of common equity (ver. 11). 4. Other apostles and their wives were thus supported (vers. 6–12). Have we done less? Is our authority inferior? 5. The support of the Jewish priesthood (ver. 13). 6. The ordination of Christ (ver. 14; *cf.* Matt. x. 10). Looking at all that Paul says on that question here, the conviction cannot be avoided that no man has a stronger claim to a temporal recompense than a true gospel minister. Albeit no claims are so universally ignored. Call the money you pay to your butcher, baker, lawyer, doctor, "charity"; but in the name of all that is just, do not call that charity which you tender to the man who consecrates his entire being and time to impart to you the elements of eternal life. V. THE MORE

READY TO SURRENDER HIS CLAIMS FOR THE SAKE OF USEFULNESS. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *A true minister* :—We see in these verses—I. WHAT IT IS THAT CONSTITUTES A TRUE MINISTER. 1. Communion with Christ. "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" 2. Souls won for Christ. "Are not ye my work in the Lord?" II. THE TRUE MINISTER OUGHT TO BE RECOGNISED BY HIS PEOPLE. 1. Courtesy demands it. 2. His message demands it. 3. His work requires it. 4. Their consciousness declares it. III. IT IS OFTEN BETTER TO ANSWER FOOLISH QUESTIONS THAN TO PASS THEM BY. 1. For the sake of individual character. 2. For the sake of the Christian Church. 3. For the sake of mankind. (*A. F. Barfield.*) *The claims of the Christian minister* :—I. ARE FOUNDED—1. Upon his character as—(1) A messenger of Christ. (2) A man. (3) A Christian. 2. Upon his work. II. INCLUDE—1. The common rights of man. 2. The particular right to a just compensation for his labour. III. SHOULD BE ENFORCED—1. With moderation. 2. With a due regard for the interests of the gospel. IV. OUGHT TO BE RELINQUISHED RATHER THAN OCCASION REPROACH: still the right remains, and will finally be established. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Maintenance of the ministry* :—In the preceding chapter Paul has disposed of the question as to meats offered in sacrifice to idols. He has inculcated the duty of accommodating ourselves to the consciences of others, and is prepared to abridge his own Christian liberty. But keeping pace, as he always does, with the thought of his readers, it at once occurs to him that his opponents will declare that his apostleship stands on so insecure a basis that he has no option in the matter, but must curry favour with all parties. The original apostles may reasonably claim exemption from manual labour, and demand maintenance both for themselves and their wives; but Paul has no such claim to maintenance, and is aware that his apostleship is doubtful. He therefore—I. ASSERTS HIS RIGHT TO THE SAME PRIVILEGES AND MAINTENANCE AS THE OTHER APOSTLES (1–14). He rests his claim on—1. His apostleship (vers. 1–6). No one could be an apostle who had not seen Christ after His resurrection. Paul therefore, both in his speeches and in his letters, insists that on the way to Damascus he had seen the risen Lord. But an apostle was also one who was commissioned to bear witness to this fact; and that Paul had been thus commissioned he thinks the Corinthians may conclude from the results among themselves of his preaching. In presence of the finished structure that draws the world to gaze, it is too late to ask if he who built it is an architect. 2. The principle of remuneration everywhere observed in human affairs (ver. 7). However difficult it is to lay down an absolute law of wages, it may be affirmed as a natural principle that labour must be so paid as to maintain the labourer in life and efficiency; as to enable him to bring up a family which shall be useful and not burdensome to society, and as to secure for him some reserve of leisure for his own enjoyment and advantage. Paul anticipates the objection that these secular principles have no application to sacred things (vers. 8, 9). But this law is two-edged. If a man produce what the community needs, he should himself profit by the production; but, on the other hand, if a man will not work, neither should he eat. 3. Ordinary gratitude (ver. 11). And some of the Churches founded by Paul felt that the benefit they had derived from him could not be stated in terms of money; but prompted by irrepressible gratitude, they could not but seek to relieve him from manual labour and set him free for higher work. The method of gauging the amount of spiritual benefit absorbed, by its overflow in material aid given to the propagation of the gospel would, I daresay, scarcely be relished by that monstrous development the niggardly Christian. 4. The Levitical usage (vers. 13, 14). That evils may result from the existence of a paid ministry no one will be disposed to deny. But if the work of the ministry is to be thoroughly done, men must give their whole time to it; and therefore must be paid for it; a circumstance which is not likely to lead to much evil while the great mass of ministers are paid as they are. II. GIVES THE TRUE REASON FOR FOREGOING HIS LAWFUL CLAIM. Paul felt the more free to urge them because his custom was to forego them (ver. 15). How apt are self-denying men to spoil their self-denial by dropping a sneer at the weaker souls that cannot follow their heroic example. Not so Paul. He first fights the battle of the weak for them, and then disclaims all participation in the spoils. Nor does he consider that his self-denial is at all meritorious. On the contrary, he makes it appear as if no choice were left to him. His fear was that if he took remuneration, he "should hinder the gospel of Christ." Some of the best incomes in Greece were made by clever lecturers; Paul was resolved he should never be mistaken for one of these. And no doubt his success was partly due to the fact that men recognised that his teaching was a labour of love. Every man finds an audience who speaks, not

because he is paid for doing so, but because there is that in him which must find utterance. Paul felt that on him lay the gravest responsibilities. Had he complained of bad usage, and stipulated for higher terms, and withdrawn, who could have taken up the task he laid down? But while Paul could not but be conscious of his importance, he would arrogate to himself no credit. Whether he does his work willingly or unwillingly, still he must do it. If he does it willingly, he has a reward; if he does it unwillingly, still he is entrusted with a stewardship he dare not neglect. What, then, is the reward? The satisfaction of knowing that, having freely received, he had freely given (ver. 18). III. REAFFIRMS THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH HE HAS UNIFORMLY ACTED. It was from Paul (ver. 19) that Luther derived the keynote of his blast "on Christian Liberty" with which he stirred Europe into new life: "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one." But Paul was no mere latitudinarian. While accommodating himself to the practice of those around him in all matters (vers. 20–23) in all matters of mere outward observance, he held very definite opinions on the chief articles of the Christian creed. No liberality can ever induce a thoughtful man to discourage the formation of opinion on all matters of importance. No doubt righteousness of life is better than soundness of creed. But is it not possible to have both? Again, Paul had an end in view which preserved his liberality from degenerating (ver. 22). In order to remove a man's difficulties, you must look at them from his point of view and feel the pressure he feels. In order to "gain" men, you must credit them with some desire to see the truth, and you must have sympathy enough to see with their eyes. Parents sometimes weaken their influence with their children by inability to look at things with the eyes of youth. Put yourself in the place of the inquiring, perplexed, embittered soul, find out the good that is in it, patiently accommodate yourself to its ways so far as you legitimately may, and you will be rewarded by "gaining some." (*M. Dods, D.D.*) *Abstinence from rightful privileges*:—Ver. 27 is commonly quoted in the Calvinistic Controversy, to prove the possibility of the believer's final fall. In reality, it has nothing whatever to do with it. The word "castaway," is literally "reprobate," that which, being tested, fails. "Reprobate silver shall men call them." St. Paul says, "Lest when I have preached to others, I myself, when tried by the same standard, should fail." In chap. viii. Paul had laid down the principle that it was good to respect the scruples of weaker brethren (ver. 13). But to this teaching an objection might be raised. Does the apostle practise what he preaches? Or it is merely a fine sentiment? Does he preach to others, himself being a castaway, *i.e.*, one who being tested is found wanting? The whole of the chapter is an assertion of his consistency. Note:—I. PAUL'S RIGHT TO CERTAIN PRIVILEGES, viz., domestic solaces and ministerial maintenance. This right he bases on four arguments: 1. By a principle universally recognised in human practice. A king warring on behalf of a people, wars at their charge—a planter of a vineyard expects to eat of the fruit—a shepherd is entitled to the milk of the flock. All who toil for the good of others derive an equivalent from them. Gratuitous devotion of life is nowhere considered obligatory. 2. By a principle implied in a Scriptural enactment (ver. 9). The ox was provided for, not because it was an ox, but because it was a labourer. 3. By a principle of fairness and reciprocity. Great services establish a claim. If they owed to the apostle their souls, his time had a claim on their gold. 4. By the law of the Temple Service. The whole institution of Levites and priests implied the principle that there are two kinds of labour—of hand and of brain: and that the toilers with the brain, though not producers, have a claim on the community. They are essential to its well-being, and are not mere drones. II. HIS VALIANT ABSTINENCE FROM THESE PRIVILEGES (vers. 12, 15). Note—1. His reasons. (1) He was forced to preach the gospel, and for the preaching of it, therefore, no thanks were due. But he turned his necessity to glorious gain. By forfeiting pay he got reward: and in doing freely what he must do, he became free. When "I must" is changed into "I will," you are free. (2) His object was to gain others (ver. 19) His whole life was one great illustration of this principle: free from all, he became the servant of all. 2. The general principles of our human life. You cannot run as you will; there are conditions (ver. 24). You cannot go on saying, I have a right to do this, therefore I will do it. You must think how it will appear, not for the sake of mere respectability, or to obtain a character for consistency, but for the sake of others. And its conditions are as those of a wrestling match—you must be temperate in all things—*i.e.*, abstain from even lawful indulgences. Remember no

man liveth to himself. The cry, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is met by St. Paul's clear, steadfast answer, "You are." (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) **If I be not an apostle unto others . . . I am to you; for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.**—*The successful minister*:—I. HIS HAPPINESS. 1. Success. 2. Divine attestation. II. HIS CLAIMS upon—1. The respect. 2. Affection. 3. Help. 4. Support of his charge. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The seal of apostleship*:—I. CONSISTS IN ACTUAL SUCCESS—in the conviction and conversion of sinners. II. ESTABLISHES THE CLAIM TO APOSTLESHIP—because it—1. Indicates the Divine call and blessing. 2. Is of more value than human authorisation. III. ENTITLES A MINISTER TO THE SPECIAL REGARD OF THOSE TO WHOSE SPIRITUAL BENEFIT HE HAS CONTRIBUTED. If no claim on others—yet on you for sympathy, love, support. (*Ibid.*) **Mine answer to those that do examine me is this.**—*Ministerial independence*:—I. ATTEMPTS ARE OFTEN MADE TO LIMIT THE FREE ACTION OF CHRISTIAN MINISTERS; as in apostolic times, so now. II. THESE ATTEMPTS SHOULD BE RESISTED with Christian dignity and in a Christian spirit—Paul's answer—he excludes all interference with—1. His manner of life. 2. His personal and domestic associations. His mode of working. (*Ibid.*) *The right of the ministry to support*:—Observe—I. THE OCCASION OF THE APOSTLE'S APPEAL. 1. Not selfish (ver. 12). 2. Some disputed his apostleship and its rights (ver. 3). II. HIS ASSERTION OF HIS RIGHT—1. To support for himself—for his wife if he thought proper to marry. 2. Sufficient to free him from the necessity of manual labour. III. HIS DEFENCE OF HIS RIGHT—is sustained by an appeal to—1. Human justice. 2. The law. 3. The sense of gratitude. 4. Divine ordination under the law, under the gospel. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 7–14. **Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?**—*The battle of life*:—We have here—I. AN INSPIRITING METAPHOR. When life is represented as a warfare, some peaceful minds may feel a little alarmed, yet there are others who feel their blood pulsing the stronger at the thought that life is to be one continued contest. It were ill for us if our love of peace, as a nation, should degenerate into a fear of danger or an indifference to exploits. For me the battle-field has no charms; but I buckle on my armour at the very thought that life is to be a conflict in which it behoves me to get the mastery. 1. It is wise to begin the battle of life early. We have all so little time to live, and our first years are so evidently the best, that it is a pity to waste them. 2. We have to fight with that trinity of enemies—the world, the flesh, and the devil. 3. This is not an engagement to be quickly terminated. Unlike the laconic despatch of the ancient Roman—"Veni, vidi, vici," this is a continuous fight. Like the old knights who slept in their armour, you must be prepared for reprisals—always watchful, and ready to resist. 4. You may hope to conquer, for others have done so before you (Rev. iii. 21, vii. 14). 5. You may be defeated. Make bankruptcy in your secular business, why, you can start again; but once make bankruptcy in soul affairs, and there is no second life in which to start afresh. If you are defeated in the battle of life you can never begin again, or turn the defeat into a victory. If you go down to your grave a captive of sin, the iron bands will be about you for ever. II. A KINDLY HINT. There are charges in this life-battle. Let us just glance at some of them. If any man shall get up to heaven he will have to meet a demand for—1. Courage. How many enemies he must face! 2. Patience. How he must bear and forbear! 3. Perseverance. 4. Watchfulness. 5. Zeal. 6. Strength. 7. Wisdom. The difficulties of an expedition may be intensely aggravated by a lack of knowledge as to the country to be invaded; and in the battle of life who knows what lies next before him? Hence I beseech you to consider the greatness of the charge of this warfare. Our British soldiers must press forward, though they are landed on a blazing beach, before steep mountains, dismal swamps, or savage tribes. But in our eventful battle of life the checks and bars to progress are more than I can describe. No marvel that Pliable should say, as he turned back, "You may have the brave country yourself for me." Apart from Divine strength Pliable was a wise man. There is no "royal road" to heaven, except that the King's highway leads there. There is no road skilfully levelled or scientifically macadamised. The labour is too exhaustive, the difficulties are too serious, unless God Himself come to our help. Who, then, can go this warfare at his own charges? III. A GRACIOUS REMINDER. You cannot go this warfare in your own strength. Then do not try it. If you do you will rue it. But you may rely on God to help you. You may reckon on—1. His watchful Providence. You little know how easy the Almighty can make a path which otherwise would have been difficult and

dangerous. All things shall work together for good to them that love God. 2. The help of Christ. He will be always present to revive you with His precious blood, to sprinkle your hearts from an evil conscience, to wash your bodies with pure water. 3. The assistance of the Spirit. There is nothing too obdurate for the Spirit of the Lord to overcome. Conclusion: Let me urge upon those who are beginning this battle—1. The wisdom of diffidence. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 2. The dignity of reliance upon God. 3. The importance of prayer. If all our charges in the life-war are to be paid us by the Paymaster, let us go to the treasury. 4. The necessity of holiness. 5. The power of faith. The beginning of true spiritual life is here—trusting what Christ has wrought for us. The continuation of spiritual life is here—trusting still in what Christ has done and is doing. The consummation of spiritual life on earth is still the same—trusting still, trusting ever. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ present with His servants*:—About two centuries ago, during the persecutions in Scotland, Margaret Wilson, a girl of eighteen, along with an aged widow of sixty-three, was doomed to die for insisting that Christ alone was the Head of the Church. They were to be fastened to stakes driven into the oozy sand that covered the beach, and left to perish in the rising tide. The stake to which the aged woman was fastened was farther down the beach than that of the young woman, in order that, being sooner destroyed, her expiring sufferings might shake the firmness of Margaret Wilson. The tide began to flow, the waters swelled and mounted to the chin of the old woman, and when almost stifled by the rising tide, they put to the girl the question, "What think you of your friend now?" "What do I see," she answered, "but Christ in one of His members, wrestling there? Think you that we are the sufferers? No; it is Christ in us, He who sendeth us not a warfare on our own charges." **Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?**—*Principles of equity*:—1. Commend themselves to human reason. 2. Are enforced by the law of God. 3. Are of universal application. 4. Contribute by their operation to the best interests of all. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Human consciousness of the right*:—1. Is but an echo of the Divine law. 2. Is only explicable on the principle of moral government. 3. Establishes the authority of the law. (*Ibid.*) **For it is written in the law of Moses.**—*The inspiration of the law of Moses* is established by—1. Its ascription to God. 2. Its moral bearing. 3. Its comprehensive application. 4. Its beneficial tendency. (*Ibid.*) **Doth God take care for oxen?**—*Oxen unmuzzled*:—This is a favourite text with Paul (1 Tim. v. 17, 18). If Paul wrote this twice we may be sure the words were often on his lips; and if the Holy Spirit has twice put this fragment of the old law into the New Testament, we may be sure the lesson is an important one. The text is racy and suggestive. I. MINISTERS AND THEIR WORK. 1. They are a distinct class. Have a function all their own like oxen. 2. Their work is humble. 3. And hard. 4. And requiring patient routine. 5. And withal of vital importance. II. THE SAVIOUR HAS TAKEN CARE FOR THEIR SUPPORT. They have the same wants as other men, but are not at liberty to supply them in the same way: they are oxen whose strength is spent in the service of others. Therefore the Master laid down His will as to their temporal support. "The labourer is worthy of his reward" (ver. 14). Both charity and ordinary bargain are excluded by this rule: the matter is raised to a higher level altogether. III. THE RULE IS REASONABLE (ver. 11). Whatever a man pays for his Bible there is no kind of proportion between the money given and the thing got: the wealth of the world could not buy one text of the Word of God: the money is the equivalent only of paper, printing, binding. So conversion, sanctification, organised fellowship, godly training of the young, the Lord's Day, the sacraments, comfort in sickness and death—are things which man cannot buy, because man cannot give them. All the more reasonable, therefore, that the simple and inexpensive channel by which God dispenses them to us and sends them on to coming generations should be maintained. IV. THE SUPPORT SHOULD BE GENEROUS. While the ox is working he will not be the worse for all he can eat: let him not be muzzled. Muzzling is poor economy, and not even just. All the more should this part of Bible teaching be plainly uttered, because the true minister will be ready to forego even righteous claims rather than allow God's message of love with which he is charged to be discredited by urging these (vers. 15–19). The minister should receive freely—not what his education, time, gifts, may be worth in the market, for gain and bargain have no place here—but what is needed to maintain his position. There should be nothing so grand about him as to estrange him from the poorest, and nothing so mean about his dress or personal habits as to render him unfit for

the most refined society; for, like the gospel, he belongs to no one class of society, but stands equally related to all (Phil. iv. 10-19). (*A. M. Symington, D.D.*)

That he that plougheth should plough in hope.—*Ploughing in hope*:—When you go into the country and see the farmers driving their ploughs, you have no occasion to ask them why they are turning up the soil. You understand as well as they that it is the crop they have in view. If it were not for the hope of the harvest they would forego this toil. And what is true of the farmer is true of the mechanic, of the manufacturer, of the tradesman, of people of all occupations and conditions. Men are swayed by an endless variety of motives, good and bad; but the one element which blends with all other springs of action is hope—the desire and expectation of future good. St. Paul takes the plougher as a representative character. It may be useful to us to consider the same principle in its application to the religious life and the service of God generally. The spiritual, no less than the natural husbandman, has ample reason to go on with his work in hope. That is to say, in doing the Divine will we have ground to hope for a beneficial result. It may be just the result at which we have been aiming. Herein the case differs from that of the ploughman, who can always forecast the nature of his crop from the seed. And yet the difference is rather apparent than real. For the spiritual husbandman does after all reap what he sows. If we inquire into the grounds of that hope which should animate all true workers in this field, it may be observed that they are doing what their Heavenly Father has directed them to do. Our Saviour said, on a certain occasion, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." We are every one of us sent into the world on a similar errand—*i.e.*, to do the will of Him who placed us here. The few who do try to conform to it are fulfilling the end of their being. They are living not for themselves, but for God. We affirm the right of the believer, and of all who have their faces Zionward, to labour or suffer for God in hope, because He "cannot deny Himself." In His infinite condescension He has been pleased to link His own glory with the toils and trials, the prayers and praises, of His people. To an eye capable of taking in its vast proportions, our globe must present a busy scene. We may not assert that the overthrow of an empire or the founding of a dynasty is a matter of no moment to God; but we are warranted in saying that events of this kind are of small moment with Him as compared with changes in the condition of the Church; and, indeed, that He orders or permits those very events, with a continual reference to His Church. We are sure, then, that He looks with approbation upon the efforts of His people to follow and to serve Him; and that in doing this they have more reason to be hopeful than in attempting any other service whatever. Let us rather consider the lesson of the text in its bearing upon various parts of the Christian life. To begin at the beginning—our first plougher shall be one who is just awaking from the sleep of sin, and pondering the question, Shall I now attend to the matter of my personal salvation? Can I hope to secure this greatest of blessings? Many an one, brought to this point, has been discouraged by the apparent obstacles in the way, and declined the effort. Had it been an earthly scheme they would not have abandoned it. Men do not so lightly forego the prospect of wealth and honour. But where the soul is concerned the quest is too often relinquished on the vague report that "there is a lion in the way." Without striving there is no entering in at the strait gate. But is this peculiar to religion? Do you win any earthly prize without striving? Why, then, complain that Christianity denies its treasures to the torpid and the indifferent? The blessings it proposes to us are as much superior to the noblest distinctions of the world as the heavens are higher than the earth. There is nothing a man may go about more hopefully than an honest and faithful endeavour to obtain forgiveness and reconciliation to God. How can you help seeing this? For what means this day of rest, this house of worship, these Christian ordinances, this precious Bible revealing a crucified Saviour, a throne of grace, and an ever-present compassionate Spirit? If, with these testimonies around you, you cannot "plough in hope," you will be likely to wait until all that now invites you to hope gives place to remediless despair. But coming to Christ is only the first step: it is simply securing the charter and the gracious equipment which prepare us to begin the work of life. The ploughing must go on. The field is large, and much of the soil intractable. But the allotted task can be accomplished, provided only we keep up a good heart as we tread the weary furrows, and "abound in hope." You will know what is meant by this "intractable soil." Look at the human heart, even the renewed heart, and see what a work is to be done there before it can "bear the image of the heavenly!" This whole work of self-discipline must needs be arduous

and painful, because it is in the face of nature. Its aim is the subjugation of nature. We need this conviction as a stimulus to effort. You have to deal, *e.g.*, with some wayward passion, some obliquity of temper, some inexorable habit. You are well aware that it is more than a match for your own strength. But you must also understand that you henceforth bring into the contest auxiliaries which insure your ultimate victory. It is part of His plan that "you should be holy and without blame before Him in love." And what He proposes, He can and will accomplish. There is nothing in the case which need discourage them. Let them "plough in hope." We have all seen the proudest men clothed with humility; the profane become patterns of godliness; the passionate put on the gentleness of the lamb; even the parsimonious turned into generous givers. They "ploughed in hope," and were made "partakers of their hope." And thus it will be with all who tread in their steps. We may extend the application of this principle. It deeply concerns parents and teachers to understand it, and all who have to do with the training of the young. How disheartening this work is may be seen in the ill success which so often attends it. What is done frequently is to leave them to themselves. The fruit answers to the culture. Their early infirmities have ripened into vices; and the habits which were barely endurable in their youth are intolerable in their manhood. The Scriptures teach "a more excellent way": "That he that plougheth, should plough in hope." It will be conceded that the field here indicated is not very attractive. One would not choose for his ploughing a common that was overrun with brambles, or a hill imbedded with stones and matted roots. But if that happens to be your only inheritance, you have no alternative. And many a farmer has transformed just such a plantation into a scene of surpassing fertility. These uninteresting children, so dull and torpid; these malicious children; these deceitful children; these coarse, unkempt children; it matters not what they are, they belong to your patrimony: at least they are, for the time, committed to your guardianship. It is idle to look abroad and say, with a sigh, "Oh, that this or that child had been confided to me instead!" God has given you this field to plough; and however ungenial the task, He has bid you "plough in hope." For consider that He who made nothing in vain could not have designed that these children should remain in perpetual bondage to their wayward tempers and repulsive habits. And is there anything in the sort of problems here presented which should prevent your "ploughing in hope"? The question may be answered by another: "Is there anything too hard for the Almighty?" For no one expects these children to be roused into action, to be toned down into submission, to be cured of their vicious propensities, to be moulded into shapes of symmetry and beauty, except by the help of a superhuman arm. But God can do it. And He can do it through your agency. And if it be thus with teachers and parents, so also with ministers of the gospel. No one can understand, except from experience, the greatness of their work, or the trials and discouragements which are incident to it. But what can they do? What ought they to do? They bear a Divine commission. They preach a Divine gospel. The truth they proclaim is precisely suited to its end. It is the only cure for the world's maladies, the only means for bringing men back to God. They must publish it. And they may well publish it in hope. Appearances may be adverse. But there is no alternative. And precisely such conditions as these have often been followed by a generous harvest. It has proved thus even amidst the appalling wastes of paganism. Let them "plough in hope." The cause they have at heart is God's cause. His eye is upon them. His ear hearkens to their intercessions. Especially will this be the case with those who make it a part of the real business of life to seek the conversion of their fellow-sinners. There are such Christians. They are always on the alert for opportunities of this kind. And they who do this, who make the conversion of sinners one of the cherished ends of life, not only have full warrant to "plough in hope," but uniformly avail themselves of it. Hopefulness is of their very nature. There is another field for the application of this maxim, covering too many broad acres to be traversed now; but we may just glance at it. I refer to the multitudes of sufferers—those who are struggling with inward conflicts, with poverty, with misfortune. There is a lesson in our text even for these sufferers. It is not in mockery of their troubles, but with a full appreciation of them, we say, in the face of these trials, you must "plough in hope." Despair will ruin you. Despondency will paralyze you. Hope will bring peace and strength. These troubles have not come by chance. They are from the hand of an infinitely wise and merciful God. "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord" (Lam. iii. 26). Satan will if possible prevent this. Still

another wide sphere invites our notice in connection with the text, merely glanced at in the opening of this sermon—viz., the importance of this principle to the young in prosecuting even their secular plans. It is, under God, one of the great secrets of success, this "ploughing in hope." No one quality has been more uniformly characteristic of the world's heroes, both its benefactors and its scourges, than hopefulness. The main thing is to assure yourselves that you are in the right path; that your ends and aims have been sought in the fear of God, and your powers dedicated to Him. With this condition precedent, you may and should be hopeful. You will encounter difficulties. But never despond. Look to God for succour, and "plough in hope." I feel that I have done injustice to this text by restricting it so much to the present life, to immediate, or at least palpable, success, whether in temporal or spiritual things. But you will all contemplate it in its higher and nobler aspect. It is the blood-bought privilege of the Christian always and everywhere to "plough in hope," because he may be certain of his harvest hereafter, even if it fail here. Nothing he does for Christ can miss its fruitage there. There is one hope, and only one, that never misleads and never disappoints. Its foundation is laid in the blood and righteousness of Christ. Its object is the friendship of God and the glories of the heavenly state. (*H. A. Boardman, D.D.*) *Ploughing in hope*:—Ploughing the land may properly be considered as one of the most laborious of those services to which husbandmen are called: much strength, skill, and perseverance are required. The same field must be frequently retraced by weary steps, till the whole is regularly and deeply furrowed. But arduous, difficult, and wearisome as this employment is, we find persons cheerfully and habitually engaged in it, although it yields no immediate return of profit, and is only preparatory to their other toils. Hope animates their exertions, not the expectation of a direct benefit, but the hope of suitable weather for sowing; the blessing of heaven on the springing of the seed; and, remotely, the returns of harvest. It will be our purpose to illustrate this one position—that those more difficult duties of religion which do not promise immediate advantage, yet should be promptly and perseveringly engaged in. "He that plougheth should plough in hope." 1. We shall see the propriety of applying the sentiment of our text, primarily, to repentance towards God. This is indeed the gift of God, but clearly the duty of man. Painful, tedious, and distressing as this toil is, it is preparatory to that state of rich cultivation which is the honour of the Christian character. Then those of you who are convinced of sin, and are sorrowing in the bitterness of your spirits, persevere. 2. May not the sentiment of these words be considered as applicable to that reformation and regulation of heart and life which invariably accompany, yea, may be considered as essential parts of true repentance—as the necessary products of genuine contrition? Self-inquiry, like the searching and separating ploughshare, will be driven over every part of the heart: irksome as the service may appear, no nook or corner of that barren field shall be left unbroken. 3. There are numerous acts of self-denial required by Him who for our sakes bare His Cross and hung thereon. These, like the toils of tillage to which our text alludes, require much skill and perseverance in their discharge; and but for a better hope would be in every case neglected. 4. Various are the duties of benevolence He performed towards His fellow immortals. Not only are we called to cultivate our own hearts, but to labour for the good of others, that they may not be barren and unfruitful in knowledge of our Lord and Saviour: but frequently this toil is so irksome, and the advantage, if any, so remote, that but for the principle presented in our text, we should refuse to commence our work, or cease in the midst of our labours. 1. Are there any here who must be charged and convicted of having put their hand to the plough and looked back? 2. Let me offer consolation to such as have long toiled, and have hitherto wrought unrewarded in the field of exertion. 3. I congratulate such as patiently persevere, even where success appears withheld. (*W. Clayton.*) **He that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.**—*Threshing*:—The toils of the field are succeeded by those of the flail: and perhaps the peasant has no employment more laborious than threshing; indeed, none to equal it in severity of exertion, but ploughing; for which reason St. Paul, in the verse before us, selects these two branches of agriculture to illustrate the work of a minister. I. On entering a barn and seeing the thresher beat the corn with his flail, a casual observer would almost conclude the grain would be MATERIALLY INJURED. Censures, in ignorance of the process, might be heard; and ministerial efforts are open to this misconstruction (Isa. xli. 15, 16; 2 Cor. vii. 8-16). II. He who thresheth intends, and hopes, to succeed IN SEPARATING THE GRAIN FROM THE HUSK: and he does succeed.

So shall the Word of God be, by it character is detected and displayed. After our Lord had urged the necessity of self-denial, from that time many walked no more with Him, they were offended at His doctrine: while His genuine followers became by the same means more confirmed in their attachment, and renewed their allegiance to their chosen sovereign. Labours for the spiritual good of others must be discriminating to be successful: each must receive his portion of meat, or medicine, as the case may require, in due season. III. Does not the toil of the thresher receive a remarkable and instructive commendation in the REMOVAL OF THE CHAFF when the corn is winnowed? He hopes that he shall so thresh as that the subsequent process of the fan shall thoroughly purge the floor. Terrible will be the sanction that God, the Judge of all, will give to every rejected message: the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous: they are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. IV. THE TERMINATION OF MINISTERIAL TOIL is suggested by this metaphor: when the husks and chaff are separated from the grain, the husbandman threshes it no longer. Further, this specific toil of all who labour for the immortal welfare of others shall cease for ever when the number of the elect is accomplished: the dusty and tedious process of threshing is not needed in our garners; and it is in hope of this remoter happiness that he that plougheth and he that thresheth engage in their respective labours; they shall rejoice together. To conclude, let it ever be remembered that though the Word of God is the ordinary threshing instrument, yet it is not the only one; for there is a variety of implements used for this purpose (Isa. xxviii. 27). So where the Word fails of producing the desired effect, He will try the flail of adversity; by this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away sin. (*G. Clayton.*) **If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?**—*Christian ministers:*—I. ARE SOWERS. 1. They toil and cast in the seed. 2. In obedience to their Master's command. 3. The result depends on the soil and the Divine blessing. II. BEAR PRECIOUS SEED. Spiritual things as—1. Truth. 2. Hope. 3. Promise. III. HAVE A RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FRUIT. The reasonableness of some return is shown by—1. Gratitude. 2. Justice. (*H. H. Beamish, M.A.*) *The obligation of the Churches to support the ministry:*—I. THE DIVINE APPOINTMENT, THAT CHURCHES SHOULD SUPPORT THEIR MINISTERS. 1. Under the Mosaic dispensation. 2. As enjoined by Christ under the gospel. 3. As the dictate of natural religion. II. THE VARIOUS MODES ADOPTED TO ATTAIN THIS INSTITUTED END. 1. Tithes. 2. Taxes. 3. Voluntary support. III. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THIS DUTY SHOULD BE CARRIED. 1. To satisfy the claims of justice. 2. To accord with the language of Scripture. 3. To promote the highest interests of the Church. 4. To promote in the best way the conversion of the world. IV. THE AGENTS BY WHICH THIS WORK MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED. 1. The deacons. 2. The people. (*J. Bennett, D.D.*) *The Christian ministry:*—Had the preaching of the gospel been committed to the ministry of angels, their superior natures would have rendered them incapable of receiving those services of gratitude which are evidences and effects of faith and obedience. But when men, subject to wants and griefs, come to us in the name of the Lord, we feel ourselves called upon to consult their temporal comfort. I. FROM THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE, FORCIBLE ARGUMENTS RESULT FOR THE GRATITUDE AND LIBERALITY OF THOSE FOR WHOSE BENEFIT IT IS EMPLOYED. "We sow unto you spiritual things." We are the ministers of a spiritual dispensation which has for its object the present happiness and everlasting salvation of mankind; we endeavour to implant in your mind those sacred principles which, when nourished by Divine influence, ripen into all the fruits of righteousness and peace; we willingly spend our strength for your improvement. Just is the plea, good men will reply. From your ministrations we have enjoyed advantages which we can never repay; through your instrumentality we have, by Divine grace, been rescued from the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity; have learned the vanity of created joys, and been taught to set our affections on the nobler things which are above. We know, indeed, that to the God of all grace belongs the supreme unrivalled praise of those supports and joys we have experienced. But ye are the servants of the Most High, who have shown unto us the way of salvation, and as such we honour you; ye have administered to us benefits far more valuable than all the honours and treasures and joys of time. And what can we render you in return? What can we do for you, or for your sons or daughters? II. THE STATED LABOURS OF A REGULAR MINISTRY ARE OF MUCH IMPORTANCE TO THE COMMU-

NITY. The preservation of a state depends far more upon the prevention of crimes than upon the punishment of them. Civil legislation needs to be aided by an authority which reaches the heart, by a dominion over man which extends to his sentiments and pursuits, and by considerations calculated to subdue his worst dispositions, to restrain him from every evil work, and to regulate by internal and governing principles the whole tenor of his conduct. This is the empire which religion establishes. If this representation of the importance of religion to human society is just, it becomes a prudent measure in all well-regulated governments to secure a succession of persons who are qualified by education, by talents, by principle, and by conduct, for explaining the rules of piety and morality; and for recommending that glorious scheme of salvation which Christianity reveals to us—that blessed doctrine of salvation which came down from heaven, which alone can conquer the depravity of human nature, which alone can secure the reign of tranquillity on earth. III. THE LABOURS OF A REGULAR MINISTRY ARE OF MUCH IMPORTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS. A faithful pastor, dwelling amongst his people, observing their tempers and their habits, and enjoying their confidence and affection, feels himself sincerely interested in the welfare and happiness of every individual committed to his charge. He regards them as his family, and the evidences of his pastoral care will bear a proportion to the variety of their situations. Animated by his careful inspection, and awed by his reproofs, the young are trained up to habits of application, temperance, and subordination; and thus are fitted for appearing with advantage in the station which Providence allots them. In estimating the advantages of religious institutions to individuals, keep it in remembrance that ministers of religion are messengers of consolation to the afflicted. The trials of life are far too numerous to be mentioned in detail; suffice it to remark that the consolations of the gospel extend to all the variety of human woes. Another evidence of the importance of pastoral ministrations to individuals is taken from their tendency to prepare them for everlasting happiness. IV. THE HARDSHIPS AND DIFFICULTIES WHICH MINISTERS HAVE TO ENCOUNTER VINDICATE THE REASONABLENESS OF THE EXPECTATION EXPRESSED IN MY TEXT. Long before they enter on their sacred employment, they look forward to it with the mingled emotions of hope and fear. They enter on the arduous work with the solicitude of men who know that earth and hell unite to impede their progress and to ensnare their steps. They perceive the importance of preparing new and diversified instruction for their people. (*A. Bonar.*) *The duty of ministerial support*:—I. THE WORK OF THE MINISTER IS COSTLY TO HIMSELF. 1. All the energies of the minister must be devoted to his work, or it cannot be well done. 2. The minister's work is relatively expensive. He occupies a position which exposes him to expenses that cannot be met with small means. 3. Then there are the public meetings of the churches and councils, all necessary for the good of Zion, yet they cost something to the minister. He must also read much; he must therefore have at hand all necessary facilities for the study and illustration of truth. 4. The work of the ministry requires a large amount of skill and a sound judgment, and imposes great responsibility upon the minister. II. THE MINISTER'S SERVICES ARE VALUABLE TO THE PEOPLE. The pulpit is in no wise indebted to its supporters. It gives them many times more in temporal good than it costs. It has ever been the first, the most important, means of civilisation and social refinement; of gathering around the family home the tokens of thrift and comfort; of the increase of wealth, and of the productive value of real estate. Life and property are more secure under the influence of an evangelical ministry than where the gospel is not preached. III. THE STANDING AND REPUTATION OF A MINISTER IS AFFECTED BY HIS COMPENSATION. IV. JUSTICE REQUIRES THAT MINISTERS SHOULD BE PAID LIKE OTHER MEN. V. THE SYSTEM SO PREVALENT OF SUPPORTING THE MINISTER AS A GRATUITY DEGRADES THE MINISTRY IN THE ESTIMATION OF THE PEOPLE AND TENDS TO MAKE THE MINISTER SERVILE. 1. To avoid misapprehension, it is proper to say that this discourse refers to the duty of churches in forming their estimate of a minister's claims; not of the minister's duty to preach, whether paid or not. Necessity is laid upon him, he must preach the gospel; but it does not follow that he must give his services to those who able to pay him. 2. Ministers should preach to their own people on this subject. 3. Churches may not expect the rich effusion of Divine grace while they do not acknowledge their just obligations to their minister. 4. If the church that is able to pay a just compensation to their minister does not and will not do it, their minister should leave them. (*M. H. Wilder.*) **If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless**

we have not used this power.—*Rights asserted and foregone:*—I. THE JUST RIGHTS WHICH THE APOSTLE ASSERTED—that like other teachers he had a claim upon his scholars for recompense and support. 1. He supports this by striking illustrations (ver. 7) and by Scriptural proof (vers. 8, 9). 2. He urges the superiority of the advantages bestowed by the teacher over those which he is justified in expecting by way of acknowledgment if not of return (ver. 11). 3. This right he claims for all ministers, himself included. II. THE NOBILITY OF SPIRIT WITH WHICH THE APOSTLE WAS WONT DELIBERATELY TO FOREGO THESE RIGHTS. Observe—1. The fact. Paul had acted on this principle from the beginning, and remembered that it involved hard manual labour. Like every Jew he had been taught a trade; he wove the Cilician goat's hair into the fabric used for tents and sails. It was a tax upon his energies whilst he was thinking, writing, and preaching, to spend part of the day in hard rough toil. 2. The exception. From the Macedonian Churches, for a special reason, he consented to receive a gift (Phil. iv.). 3. The motive. (1) Not pride: whilst preaching was a necessity in his case, so that he could take no credit and make no boast for his ministry, he gave up the right of maintenance that he might have the pleasure of a voluntary sacrifice, a ground of lowly glorying. (2) That there might be no hindrance to the progress of the gospel. It might have been thought that he preached for gain, and such a supposition would render his hearers suspicious and unreceptive. (*Prof. J. R. Thompson.*) **But suffer all things lest we should hinder the gospel.**—*How Christians may hinder the gospel:*—1. In one sense the gospel cannot be hindered. As well speak of hindering the advance of the sun, or of an avalanche. God has promised, "My word shall not return unto Me void," &c., and Christian history is but the fulfilment of this prediction. 2. But whilst this is true it is not less true that the work of sinner's salvation may be impeded. I will not refer to so-called hindrances by the enemies of truth, for these have often been the most effective aids to its advancement; nor to the major hindrances such as Romanism, superstition, hypocrisy, rationalism, &c., for these are so prominent that we cannot overlook them. But I call attention to some serious obstacles which are too much overlooked. I. CHURCHES MAY HINDER THE GOSPEL. 1. By the want of a clear and definite line between the Church and the world. During the first three centuries this was distinct enough, and then the Church prospered. And if this distinction is less manifest to-day it is not because the world has become less carnal. A false respectability is threatening the spiritual life of the Church. A cause is often accounted prosperous according as its finances are large and the hearers influential. This cold respectability does not believe much in conversions or aggressive effort. 2. By the want of self-denial. Instead of "suffering all things" for the advancement of the gospel, is there one single thing that we really suffer? The manifold artifices we have to adopt, the violent efforts we have to make to raise the means of spreading the gospel are an evidence of the unreality of much religious profession and a powerful hindrance to the truth. How different in those early days amid the glow of the Church's first love, when they that had money *brought* it and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3. By the refusal of personal and active service. We speak, indeed, with anxious concern of the heathen abroad and at home, pray for their evangelisation, and bid God-speed to the official labourers among them; but something more than this is required before these masses will be brought under the power of the gospel. As in the early days the responsibility must be felt by the entire Church; every believer must be a herald and an evangelist. The Epistle to the Hebrews rebukes those who are still babes in Christ, but ought to be teachers; and if the day is to come when it will be no longer necessary to say "Know the Lord," because all shall know Him, it will only come by every one teaching his neighbour that knowledge. The living Church has not yet stretched herself Elijah-like upon the dead body whose quickening she prays for. Like the atmosphere she must press with equal force on all the surfaces of society; like the sea flow into every nook of humanity; and like the sun shine on all things foul and low as well as fair and high, if she is to accomplish that for which she has been commissioned and equipped. 4. By self-complacency and spiritual pride. 5. By a spirit of captiousness, ever ready to pick faults with existing arrangements, but doing nothing to make them better. 6. By our failure to recognise the absolute sovereignty of God in the salvation of souls. 7. By our want of humble dependence on the Holy Spirit and our neglect of earnest persevering prayer. II. MINISTERS MAY HINDER THE GOSPEL. If Paul felt the possibility of this, why may not we? 1. By a cold perfunctoriness in the discharge of our duties. It is no easy matter to escape this,

To address to the same people every week the same verities and still retain freshness and power, can only be done by sustained communion with God and living contact with the realities of which we speak. Incessant preaching apart from careful cultivation of the inner life will make us little better than sermon machines. 2. By forgetfulness of our absolute dependence on the Holy Spirit, and by reliance on human strength. 3. By the assumption of a certain distinctness of order from our people. Our office, authority, and work are all spiritual. We have no priesthood in any other sense than that all believers are priests. The more we make our people feel that we are not above them, but of them, the more influence will our preaching exert upon them. 4. By our want of confidence in the success of the gospel. How many sermons have we preached of which we have never seen any fruit because we never really looked for it? 5. By our want of the spirit of self-sacrifice and consecration indicated in the text. (*Thain Davidson, D.D.*) **They which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar.**—*Partakers with the altar* :—Archdeacon Farrar says that Mr. Gladstone once told the late Bishop Magee that he had never heard a sermon preached on the text, "They who wait at the altar are partakers with the altar." The bishop thereupon promised to preach on the text, and on the occasion Mr. Gladstone was present. Most preachers would have seen nothing in the text but a sermon on the right of ministers to maintenance. But Dr. Magee drew from it a sermon on the congruity between the nature of a man's life and the results he reaps from it. "I shall never forget," says Dr. Farrar, "one passage, in which he described the bitter disappointment and disillusionment of the man who had lived for sense, for pleasure, and for self. He described such a man—his own worthless idol—in his hoary and dishonoured age seeking in vain for comfort and sustenance from the source of his idolatry; the hungry worshipper holding out his withered hand to his dead idol, and holding it out in vain." **Do ye not know that they . . . which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.**—*The pastor's duty and claims* :—I. THE BUSINESS OF THE PASTOR IS IMPLIED: he is to "preach the gospel." Note—1. The subject of his ministry—"the gospel," *i.e.*, all the gospel fairly implies, its promises, commands, &c. The term taken thus comprehensively, clearly instructs us in—(1) The fallen condition of mankind. (2) God's great pity on our fallen race (John iii. 16). (3) The obligation of those who believe to act worthy of their relation to the Saviour. 2. His duty with regard to it. He is to preach "the gospel." Every pastor is bound to do this out of regard to—(1) The honour of Christ. (2) The edification of the Church. (3) The conversion of sinners. II. THE DUTY OF THE FLOCK POINTED OUT, viz., to support their pastor. There are two ways of doing this, either by compulsory laws or by voluntary contribution. The former has, indeed, some advantages. It renders the minister independent, and if his flock is destitute of principle it is well for him that the law compels them to the performance of duty. But the law of Christ binds the people voluntarily to the support of their minister, *i.e.*, it binds them to the duty, but leaves the amount to them according to the rule in chap. xvi. 1, 2, and Matt. x. 8. Now this is to be done—1. From a principle of justice. It is not benevolence, but equity, and he is not just who withholds from the minister the due remuneration of his labours (ver. 7). The person who refuses to meet the just claims of the physician is reckoned dishonest, and is he less so who withholds from the pastor his equitable support? 2. From a regard to our own advantage. We all know that our prosperity depends on the Divine blessing; and should we not be chiefly concerned respecting soul prosperity? God's blessing may be hoped for in the use of the means when those means are suitably valued and employed. But are they so when the support we could give is sinfully withheld? (2 Cor. iv. 6-10; Mal. 8, 9). 3. From a regard to our final account. (*J. Dorrington.*) *Ministers, pay of* :—Ministers are not as well paid as cricket-players, and for a good reason—religion is not the national game. The utmost a minister can say is what the farmer said of his cow when grazing on the bare top of a lofty hill, "If she has a poor pasture, she has a fine prospect." (*J. A. Macfadyen, D.D.*) *Paying the ministry* :—In 1662 the town of Eastham agreed that a part of every whale cast on shore be appropriated for the support of the ministry. The ministers must have sat on the cliffs in every storm, and watched the shore with anxiety. And, for my part, if I were a minister, I would rather trust to the bowels of the billows to cast up a whale for me than to the generosity of many a country parish that I know. (*Thoreau.*) *Payment of ministers* :—It must be remembered as among the anomalies of Welsh religious life, that it combines an insatiable appetite for sermons with a marvellous disregard for the temporal comfort of the preacher. On

one occasion a woman said to Mr. Evans, as he came out of the pulpit, "Well, Christmas Evans, we are back with your stipend; but I hope you will be paid at the resurrection. You have given us a wonderful sermon." "Yes, yes," was his quick reply; "no doubt of that; but what am I to do till I get there? And there is the old white mare that carries me—what will she do? For her there will be no resurrection. But what will you do? What reward will you get for your unfaithfulness at the resurrection? It's hard, but I shall get on at the resurrection; but you, who got on so well in the world, may change places with me at the resurrection." (*Paxton Hood.*) *Support of the ministry*:—A clergyman in Wales was appointed by an ordaining council to address the people who had impoverished their former pastor and were now to receive a new one. He recommended in his address that Jacob's ladder be let down from the skies to that Welsh parish, in order that the new minister might "go into heaven on the sabbath evening after preaching, and remain there all the week: then he would come down so spiritually minded and so full of heaven, that he would preach almost like an angel." Now, the people insisted on having their pastor with them on other days than the sabbath. "That may be," replied the speaker; "but then, if he remain among you, he must have something to eat." The dignity of the angels was not inconsistent with their ascending and descending on a wooden ladder; and one ladder on which our ministering angels may go up to their heavenly studies is such a material sustenance as will make it unnecessary for them to grovel in the earth. (*Prof. Park.*)

Vers. 15, 16. **But I have used none of these things.**—*Paul's conduct*:—I. DOES NOT ESTABLISH A GENERAL RULE. Because—1. He maintains his right. 2. Voluntarily concedes it. 3. Under particular circumstances. II. COMMENDS DISINTERESTED EFFORT. The desire of personal advantage—1. Should never be the motive of Christian effort. 2. Is unworthy of the Christian character. 3. Robs us of our true glory. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Professional Minister*:—The man who has adopted the Church as a profession, as other men adopt the law, the army, or the navy, and goes through the routine of its duties with the coldness of a mere official—filled by him, the pulpit seems filled by the ghastly form of a skeleton that, in its cold and bony fingers, holds a burning lamp. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) **For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me.**—*Preaching the gospel* is to preach Christ in His fulness, in His attributes, in His relations to men; is to preach His life as the pattern of Christian morals; His atonement as the substance of Christian doctrine; His resurrection as the source of Christian assurance; and His coming again as the fountain of hope and joy. (*Bp. Thorold.*) *Preach the gospel*:—I. WHAT IS IT TO PREACH THE GOSPEL? 1. To state every doctrine contained in God's Word, and to give every truth its proper prominence. Men may preach a part of the gospel. I would not say that a man did not preach the gospel if he did but maintain the doctrine of justification by faith, but he would not preach the whole gospel. No man can be said to do that who leaves out one single truth. Some men purposely confine themselves to four or five topics and make an iron ring of their doctrines, and he who dares to step beyond that narrow circle is not reckoned orthodox. God bless heretics, then, and send us more of them! 2. To exalt Jesus Christ. A great many preachers tell poor convinced sinners, "You must go home and pray and read the Scriptures; you must attend the ministry," and so on. I would not direct to prayer, &c., but simply to faith. Not that I despise prayer, &c.—that must come after faith. None of those things are the way of salvation. 3. To give every class of character his due. He who preaches solely to saints, or solely to the sinner, does not preach the whole of the gospel. We have amalgamation here. We have the saint who is full of assurance and strong; we have the saint who is weak and low in faith; we have the young convert; we have the man halting between two opinions; we have the moral man; we have the sinner; we have the reprobate; we have the outcast. Let each have a word. 4. Not to preach certain truths about the gospel, not to preach about the people, but to preach to the people. To preach the gospel is to preach it into the heart, not by your own might, but by the influence of the Holy Ghost. II. HOW IS IT THAT MINISTERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO GLORY? Because—1. They are conscious of their own imperfections. 2. All their gifts are borrowed. The life, the voice, the talent are the gift of God; and he who has the greatest gifts must feel that unto God belongs the glory. 3. They are absolutely dependent on the Holy Ghost. III. WHAT IS THAT NECESSITY WHICH IS LAID UPON US TO PREACH THE GOSPEL? 1. The call itself. If a man be truly called of God to the

ministry, I will defy him to withhold himself from it. He must preach. 2. The sad destitution of this poor fallen world. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Every Christian a preacher:* —Mark—I. THE OBLIGATION OF SPEECH. No doubt the apostle had, in a special sense, a "necessity laid upon" him. But though he differs from us in his direct supernatural commission, in the width of his sphere and in the splendour of his gifts, he does not differ from us in the reality of the obligation. The commission does not depend upon apostolic dignity. Christ said, "Go ye into all the world," &c., to all generations of His Church. 1. That commandment is permanent. It is exactly contemporaneous with the duration of the promise which is appended to it. Nay, the promise is made conditional upon the discharge of the duty. 2. Just because this commission is given to the whole Church it is binding on every individual member of the Church. The whole Church is nothing more than the sum total of all its members, and nothing is incumbent upon it which is not incumbent upon each of them. You cannot buy yourselves out of the ranks, as they used to be able to do out of the militia, by paying for a substitute. We all, if we know anything of Christ and His love and His power, are bound to tell it to those whom we can reach. You cannot all stand up and preach in the sense in which I do it. But the word does not imply a pulpit, a set discourse, a gathered multitude; it simply implies a herald's task of proclaiming. Everybody who has found Christ can say, "I have found the Messias," and everybody who knows Him can say, "Come and hear, and I will tell what the Lord hath done for my soul." No man can force you. But if Christ says to me, "Go!" and I say, "I had rather not," Christ and I have to settle accounts between us. 3. This command makes very short work of a number of excuses. (1) There is a great deal in the tone of this generation which tends to chill the missionary spirit. We know more about the heathen, and familiarity diminishes horror. We have taken up, many of us, milder ideas about the condition of those who die without knowing the name of Christ. We have taken to the study of comparative religion, forgetting sometimes that the thing that we are studying as a science is spreading a dark cloud of ignorance and apathy over millions of men. And all these reasons somewhat sap the strength and cool the fervour of a good many Christian people nowadays. Jesus Christ's commandment remains just as it was. (2) Then some of us say, "I prefer working at home!" Well, if you are doing all that you can there, the great principle of division of labour comes in to warrant your not entering upon other fields; but unless you are, there is no reason why you should do nothing in the other direction. Jesus Christ still says, "Go ye into all the world." (3) Then some of you say, "Well, I do not much believe in your missionary societies. There is a great deal of waste of money about them. I have heard stories about missionaries taking too much pay, and doing too little work." Be that as it may, does that indictment draw a wet sponge across the commandment of Jesus Christ? 4. I sometimes venture to think that the day will come when the condition of being received into and retained in the Church will be obedience to that commandment. Why, even bees have the sense at a given time of the year to turn the drones out of the hives. Whether it is a condition of Church membership or not, sure I am that it is a condition of fellowship with Christ, and a condition, therefore, of health in the Christian life. II. THE PENALTY OF SILENCE. "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." 1. If you are a dumb and idle professor of Christ's truth, depend upon it that your dumb idleness will rob you of much communion with Christ. There are many Christians who would be ever so much happier and more assured if they would go and talk about Christ to other people. Like the mist, which will be blown away with the least puff of fresh air, there lie doleful dampnesses, in their sooty folds, over many a Christian heart, shutting out the sun, and a little whiff of wholesome activity in Christ's cause would clear them all away, and the sun would shine again. 2. The woe of the loss of sympathies, and the gain of all the discomforts and miseries of a self absorbed life. 3. The woe of the loss of one of the best ways of confirming one's own faith in the truth—viz., that of seeking to impart it to others. If you want to learn a thing, teach it. 4. The woe of having none that can look to you and say, "I owe myself to thee." 5. Aye! but that is not all. There is a future to be taken into account. Though we know, and therefore dare say, little about that future, take this to heart, that he who there can stand before God, and say, "Behold! I and the children whom God hath given me" will wear a crown brighter than the starless ones of those who saved themselves and have brought none with them. III. THE GLAD OBEDIENCE WHICH TRANSCENDS THE LIMITS OF OBLIGATION. "If I do this thing willingly I have a reward."

Paul desired to bring a little more than was required, in token of his love to his Master and of his thankful acceptance of the obligation. The artist who loves his work will put more work into his picture than is absolutely needed, and will linger over it, lavishing diligence and care upon it, because he is in love with his task. The servant that seeks to do as little as he can scrape through with without rebuke is actuated by no high motives. The trader that barely puts as much into the scale as will balance the weight in the other is grudging in his dealings; but he who, with liberal hand, gives "shaken down, pressed together, and running over" measure, gives because he delights in the giving. And so it is in the Christian life. There are many of us whose question seems to be, "How little can I get off with?" And what does that mean? It means that we are slaves. It means that if we durst we would give nothing and do nothing. And what does that mean? It means that we do not care for the Lord, and have no joy in our work. And what does that mean? It means that our work deserves no praise, and will get no reward. If we love Christ we shall be anxious, if it were possible, to do more than He commands us. Of course He has the right to all our work; but yet there are heights of Christian consecration and self-sacrifice which a man will not be blamed if he has not climbed, and will be praised if he has. What we want is extravagances of service. Judas may say, "To what purpose is this waste?" but Jesus will say, "He hath wrought a good work on Me." And the fragrance of the ointment will smell sweet through the centuries. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The true pulpit*:—From this verse we infer that the true preacher—I. PREACHES THE GOSPEL AS HIS GRAND MISSION. The essence of this good news is that God loves man, though a sinner, and that Christ is the demonstration and medium of this love. This is the heart of the gospel, and to preach this is the grand mission of the true preacher. 1. In contradistinction to natural religion. Natural religion does not reveal Divine love for sinners. The volume was written before sin existed. . In contradistinction to human theologies. Neither Calvinism, Arminianism, nor any other "ism," constitute the gospel. 3. In contradistinction to legal maledictions. A terrible condemnation, it is true, hangs over the sinner, but the terrors of the judgment, &c., are not gospel. II. DISCLAIMS ALL PRAISE IN THE DISCHARGE OF HIS MISSION. "Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of." 1. There is everything in the nature of the subjects to prevent self-glory. It is—(1) Undiscoverable by human reason. (2) Declaratory of human degradation. (3) Demonstrative of infinite condescension. 2. There is everything in the nature of the work to prevent self-glory. Every true preacher must feel a consciousness—(1) Of unworthiness for such a high honour. "Unto me, who am least of all saints," &c. (2) Of incompetency for such a work. "Who is sufficient for these things?" &c. (3) Of utter inability to realise success. Whatever he does, however well he preaches, he cannot guarantee efficiency. "Paul plants, and Apollos waters," &c. 3. There is everything in the nature of his inspiration to prevent self-glory. What was the feeling that prompted him to undertake it? "The love of Christ that constrained" him. It was scarcely optional with him. He was drawn to it by this new and heavenly afflatus. Man cannot praise himself for loving. Does a mother take credit for loving her child? &c. III. IS IMPELLED BY AN INWARD NECESSITY IN THE PROSECUTION OF HIS MISSION. "Necessity is laid upon me," &c. This necessity was a force working from within, not a pressure from without. It was the force—1. Of ingratitude. Christ had appeared to him, rescued his soul from hell, and given him a commission. Gratitude bound him to the service of such a deliverer. 2. Of justice. The gospel had been given to him in trust. He was a steward. It was given to him not to monopolise, but to communicate. "He was a debtor," &c. 3. Of compassion. He knew that souls were dying, and he had the panacea in the gospel. Such were the necessities that bound him to his work. He felt he could not but do it; felt a horrid woe over him if he dared neglect it. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The ministry and its responsibilities*:—We have here—I. A DECLARATION OF AN EXISTING OFFICE —to preach the gospel. 1. The gospel is a simple statement of glad tidings to a perishing world. To speak merely of the nature of moral duties, to discuss the various attributes of God, to describe Christian virtues, to speak of a future state and its retributions, is very well in its place, but it is not the gospel. If there be not warm statements of the atonement then there is a blank in the "counsel of God"! 2. With regard to the manner in which we are to discharge our duty. These principles are to be made known to all within our reach. The minister of Christ is to allow no limitations or restrictions to his message. He must "warn

every man, and teach every man," &c. 3. This gospel must be "a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death," to those who hear it. II. THE RENOUNCEMENT OF ALL RIGHT TO SELF-EXALTATION ON ACCOUNT OF THAT OFFICE. "Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me." There is in man a powerful tendency to self-exaltation. The same principle would fain accompany us in our work of preaching the gospel; but ministers have nothing to boast of. 1. Because we are under the bond of absolute necessity. For the apostle says, "Necessity is laid upon me." There is—(1) The positive command of God: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (2) The constraining influence of love to the Redeemer. (3) A sense of the necessities of men around us. 2. Because, whatever talents we possess, they are given us entirely by God. 3. Because all our success is entirely from the agency of Heaven. The preacher remembers to have been told, "My son, beware of the bribe of talent"; this was understood—"Beware of the bribe of applause," and this was understood. But then there was another caution, which was a secret—"Beware of the bribe of usefulness"; this could not be understood. We are apt to say, "My success! My usefulness!" and so Satan overcomes us. Now, the gospel goes to destroy this tendency. It says, "Not by might," &c. III. A SENSE OF CERTAIN CONSEQUENCES RESULTING FROM INFIDELITY IN THIS CAUSE. "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." 1. Why should he have this woe? (1) Because it is an intrusion upon an office which God would have occupied only by His own servants. (2) Because it is an act of absolute wickedness to undertake so important an office and not perform it. (3) Because it is an attempt to sustain the weight of immortal souls without being able to bear it. 2. What is this woe? (1) We should encounter the censure of all good men. (2) Our death-beds can else be nothing but desertion and misery. (3) The contemplation of condemnation on the judgment-day. (*J. Parsons.*) *The burden of the ministry*:—I. WHAT IS IT TO PREACH THE GOSPEL? The gospel is the revelation of God's mercy to mankind, disclosing the Divinely-appointed method whereby a lost and degenerate race may be restored to the favour of their Creator. Consequently it cannot be rightly understood, or fully preached, until there be a distict exhibition of man—1. As fallen in Adam. 2. As renewed in Christ. II. WHY WOE IS UNTO THE MINISTER, IF HE PREACH NOT THE GOSPEL. 1. Professing that he thinks himself moved by the Holy Ghost to undertake the solemn office of clergyman; and having bound his soul by the most awful vows; if he deliver a false message, and inculcate a strange worship, then he violates, with flagrant audacity, the most sacred of all obligations, and is a thousand times a fouler traitor than if sent on an embassage by his earthly monarch, he had sold that monarch or bartered his honour. 2. Woe is unto him who preaches not the gospel, because he deludes into error the souls of his hearers; and at his hands shall their blood be required. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The watchword of the true minister*:—I. THE FUNCTION OF THE TRUE MINISTER IS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL. Paul was not a politician, to turn the church into a party club, and the pulpit into a hustings—not a mere orator, to give his hearers an hour's entertainment; not a devotee of science; not a philologist, to spread out before immortal souls scholastic criticisms; not a mere moralist, to discourse of flowers that never grew around the Cross. No! his was a nobler and more difficult work, viz., to preach the gospel! To do this is—1. To proclaim all the precious doctrines, promises, precepts, and duties recorded in the Scriptures. Some confine themselves to a few favourite topics. They are afraid to preach the whole gospel, lest its truths contradict each other. Away with such idle fears! One truth can no more clash with another truth than one sunbeam can quench another sunbeam. 2. To preach Christ crucified. Some excuse their non-preaching of Christ on the ground that He is not in the text. I should not like to live in a village from which there was not a road to London; and I should not take a text from which there was not a way to Christ. 3. To preach to all. A deacon once said to a minister, "If you go into that pulpit, you are only to preach to God's dear people." The minister replied, "Have you marked them all on the back, so that I may know them?" The gospel is a boon to a lost world, and I dare not monopolise it. II. THE TRUE MINISTER IS IMPELLED TO HIS HOLY VOCATION. Paul did not preach the gospel on the ground of expediency, or to gain human applause, but because of an irresistible inspiration, a celestial impulse. No minister is now called in the miraculous way Paul was, but every true minister feels the same necessity. John Newton was summoned from the deck of the slave ship to the pulpit. Thomas Scott threw aside his shepherd's frock to put on the mantle of the prophet. The true minister cannot help preach-

ing. "If I were out of prison to-day," said Bunyan, "I would preach the gospel again to-morrow, by the help of God." You might as well try to uproot the mountains, roll back the rivers, tame the wild ocean, or arrest the stars, as attempt to silence the man whose mouth God has opened. It is said that ministers are all hypocrites; and when a specious professor stands unmasked the cry is raised, "They are all the same." Are they? Nay, there are thousands who would march bravely to the stake to-morrow, if it were necessary. III. THE TRUE MINISTER IS MISERABLE IF UNENGAGED IN HIS SACRED CALLING. To an unselfish mind personal security is not always perfect felicity. The apostle stood on the serene elevation of personal assurance. "I am persuaded that nothing can separate me from the love of Christ; but oh! this great heaviness for Israel—my kinsmen!" The man who would go to heaven alone shall never get there. Paul longed and laboured to save others. He thought on the multitudes that were dying in their sins. Christ bled for sinners—shall I not labour for them? He lived and died for me—shall I do nothing for Him? Perish the thought! (*W. Anderson.*) *Necessity is laid upon me*:—We need not ministers that may or will, but that *must* preach, and members not that may or will, but that must live, the gospel. Consider—I. THE WORK: WHAT THEY DO. They preach the gospel. The terms point to the public ministry of the word; but it is as certainly applicable to every Christian. Responsibility is diversified not in kind, but only in degree. By two short links every believer is bound to minister for the Lord. "Let him that heareth say, Come." We have heard the word of life, and therefore we should speak it. "Freely ye have received, freely give." Without opening his lips to teach, every one who bears Christ's name may help the gospel—1. By his spirit and his life. As we thread life's promiscuous throng we are touching right and left immortal beings, giving them a bias by the contact to the right or the left. 2. By word and work. The methods and opportunities are manifold. "She hath done what she could" is the standard of measurement. (1) The more obvious methods are—a Sabbath-school, a mission or tract district. (2) Private doors are also open. You might make yourself useful in a time of distress; and your word would then go deeper than in the public assembly. As to work for the Lord, the rule is the same as in getting from the Lord: "Seek, and ye shall find." (3) But a sphere lies open to those who shrink from even the most private walks. If you cannot make up to other people, you may have your hands filled with remunerative labour at home. If you are bashful in presence of others, you may surely be bold in dealing with yourself. Here is an opportunity of doing mission-work. The kingdom of God is within you: go work in that vineyard. If that field become ripe, seed from it will be carried away on the wings of the wind to make the desert fruitful. II. THE MOTIVE: WHAT COMPELS THEM TO DO IT. "Necessity is laid upon me," &c. The apostle confesses frankly he was kept at his work as a slave is by the sound of the whip. Is any one startled at this representation? See if it be not God's way of keeping His servants to their work, and if His way be not very good? The pain of a wound is our Maker's messenger to send us forth quickly in search of a cure; the pain of thirst, His messenger to send us forth quickly in search of water. So it is consonant with God's ways to keep His creature busy with useful work by pressing him with pain if he indolently or ignorantly cease. By the secret line fixed in the conscience, which God in heaven holds in His own hand, many a man is compelled to run errands of benevolence who otherwise would sit at home in indolent ease. I knew a boy once who was asked for an alms by a passing beggar. The boy refused; the beggar passed, piercing the youth by a look from a pale face and a drooping eye. The youth continued his work mechanically, scarcely knowing what he did. Woe, woe was upon his soul, because he had not given the beggar a penny. This woe increased and accumulated until it became unbearable. The boy threw his instrument on the ground, and ran after the wearied beggar, and silently placed the penny in the beggar's hand, and ran home again to his work. The woe lashed him to duty, and then left him light of heart as the birds that sang beside him on the tree. Look to some of the particular forces which press a human soul to diligence in the work of the Lord. 1. The constraining love of Christ. Paul could not help going forward through every difficulty and danger, any more than a ship can help going forward through the billows when its sails are full and its helm held aright. His affections rose from earth to heaven, because a pressure was upon his heart, as great as the pressure that compels the waters of the sea to rise and constitute the clouds. 2. The new appetite of the new creature. The Lord Himself was borne forward in this manner, and owned it. "My meat is to do the will

of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." 3. The need of a sinning, suffering world. A brother ready to perish lies heavier than lead upon a loyal, loving heart, and produces that haste to the rescue at which the giddy world, ignorant of the moving power, gazes as an inexplicable phenomenon. Ah, if the secret machinery of the Christian life within us were well oiled and free of rust, we should move quickly in these days; for the appropriate kind of power is playing on us in a mighty volume all the day long. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *A passion for preaching*:—Dr. Parker, in an address to local preachers, City Temple, June 1, 1885, said: "A lady asked me the other day, 'What is your hobby?' Said I, 'Preaching.' 'But apart from that?' said she. 'There is nothing apart from that,' I replied. All poetry, all beauty, all nature, all love, all history, the whole future are included in preaching. The preacher should never be away from his work, and never can be if his spirit is what it ought to be. Unless you make this preaching the very crown of your lives you will be very poor preachers." *Constrained to preach*:—In lecturing one day to the students of his college—by no means the least important monument of his sanctified genius, enterprise, and industry—Mr. Spurgeon said: "If any student in this room could be content to be a newspaper editor, or a grocer, or a farmer, or a doctor, or a lawyer, or a senator, or a king, in the name of heaven and earth let him go his way." No doubt it has always been more or less true, though never more so than in these days of earnest faith and equally pertinacious scepticism, that the preacher, or Christian worker of any kind, whose heart does not feel the fire of spiritual earnestness, who has no enthusiastic love for his work, will soon succumb, and either leave the unavailing drudgery or move on in sullen discontent, burdened with a monotony as tiresome as that of a blind horse on a farm-yard saw-mill. Beneath and behind all high and fruitful exertion of the human soul there must be moral earnestness. Horace, in his "Ars Poetica," tells the poet that if he wants the people to weep over his poetry, he must weep with them. And the coldest, hardest, most self-contained pleader at the bar knows he must have his heart in his case if he is to convince the jury. One of the greatest of actors laid bare the whole secret of his power in a tragic part he was accustomed to play with incomparable success by saying that through force of imagination he did actually tremble under the terror which he excited in the audience. To young versifiers who had scored some success in poetry and asked his opinion as to the advisability of devoting their time and energies to poetry, Ruskin was accustomed to say, "Don't if you can help it." **Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.**—*The responsibility of gospel preaching*:—1. There are some with whom an exclamation of this kind is almost conventional, with whom it implies nothing more than annoyance. But this is not the case with the deeply serious apostle. The exclamation which occurs nowhere else in his writings has a history. Under its cover the prophets called down penal suffering upon opponents of God's will. And our Lord invoked it upon the scribes and Pharisees, &c. The word does not change its character when it is invoked by a psalmist, prophet, or apostle, upon himself. St. Paul, then, is employing an expression of acknowledged solemnity, which for him had not lost its freshness. 2. But is not the apostle exaggerating somewhat? It was a grand thing to preach the gospel as he did. But supposing that he had settled down quietly as a private Christian, why should he think that any great harm would happen to him? There are multitudes with natural capacity for this or that kind of work, who, somehow or other, never come to undertake it. It is a misfortune, no doubt, but if we were to hear a man say, "Woe is me if I do not practise medicine; if I do not plead at the bar, &c., we should say to him, "It is a pity you are not making the best of yourself; but there are other things besides that on which you have set your heart, and it is better to take a quieter view of your case." Now why may not something of this kind be said of St. Paul? Ah! why? Because St. Paul felt that if he were not to preach the gospel he would—I. DO A VIOLENCE TO HIS SENSE OF JUSTICE. The gospel was not his in such a sense that he had any right to keep it to himself. 1. The word implied that man was in a bad case, and needed something to reassure and to help him; that mankind was ill at ease, and was looking out for a deliverer. We often know that we are ill without knowing precisely what is the matter with us, and this was the case with the pre-Christian world. And, therefore, God opened the eyes of men to see what their case really was. Nature and conscience did something in this way for the heathen nations; the law of Moses did a great deal more for the Jews. But man's misery was only made more intense by becoming intelligent. And then came the real cure. "God so loved the world" that He gave His Son to save it. 2. Now

this is the essence of the gospel, and clearly such a gospel was not meant for a company of men, or for a favoured nation, but for the race. Like the natural sun in the heavens the incarnate Sun of Righteousness is the property of all men. And not to preach the gospel, to treat it as if it were the luxury of a small clique, was to offend against the sense of natural justice; it was to incur the woe which, as Nature herself whispers, is sooner or later inseparable from doing this. II. SIN AGAINST THE LAW OF GRATITUDE. That which strikes St. Paul in the redemption, and makes his heart captive, is the extraordinary generosity of the Divine Redeemer. What was there in the race, in the single sinner, in himself, to invite such an effusion of Divine love? Even the heathen counted the obligations of gratitude as imperative; and the lower animals make practical acknowledgment of kindnesses received at the hand of man. And such a sentence as "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us" measures St. Paul's sense of his obligation to his Saviour; and if this sense is to take a practical form, it could only be by his extending among men the knowledge and the love of the redemption. III. BE FALSE TO THE IMPERIOUS COMMANDS OF TRUTH. The gospel came to St. Paul as it comes to all of us, as a body of truth which could only be really held on condition of its being propagated. Not to do something towards this is already not to believe it; it is to treat the gospel as at best only partially true; and the gospel is nothing if it is not the universal religion. It is different with false religions, with human views. To hold them is one thing, to make efforts to disseminate them is quite another; to believe the gospel and to do nothing for its acceptance among men is a contradiction in terms. Unless you can separate, in fact as well as in idea, the convex and concave sides of a circular vase, you must, when you believe a religion which, being absolutely true, is also, and therefore, the universal religion, do what you may to induce others to believe it also. Conclusion: This surely is a motto for every member of the Church of Christ. Not seldom in her history has she been tempted to proclaim something other or less than the gospel. 1. There were clever and accomplished Greeks at Corinth, feeling much sympathy with many sides of Christianity, but withheld from conversion by what seemed to them to be the strange and repulsive doctrine of Christ crucified. And what was St. Paul's reply? "We preach Christ crucified, to the Greeks," &c. (chap. i. 23). He could say nothing else. Woe to him had he preached not the gospel! And so it was again in the fourth century. Arianism tempted the Church to say something less on the subject of our Lord's adorable person than she had said and had believed since Pentecost. And what was her reply? It was the famous sentence which we repeat in the Nicene Creed—"I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ," &c. She could have said nothing else, nothing less. Woe to her had she not preached the gospel! 2. And so it was in the fifteenth century. The old literature of Greece and Rome had been just rediscovered, and Christians actually professed themselves ashamed of the jargon of St. Paul, and unable to express even their religious ideas excepting in the phrases of Cicero and of Plato. The Church was bidden by the Renaissance to refashion herself upon the model of Paganism which, a thousand years before, she had conquered by suffering. The reply of Christendom took different forms, but its spirit was substantially "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." 3. And in our own day the old temptation presents itself, but in an altered form. There is much good still in Christianity—so we are told; but if it is to keep on good terms with the modern world, Christians must give up the supernatural—they must be content with a Christ who is perfect, if you will, but simply human, with a Calvary that is the scene of a self-sacrifice, but not a world-redeeming atonement, &c. And what are we to say to all this? Ah! what but that which the apostle said eighteen hundred years ago? (*Canon Liddon.*) *The preacher and his mission*:—Simple as the words appear, the exact meaning of the passage in which our text occurs is not easy to determine. One thing is clear, viz., that the idea of "glory" or "glorying" which is brought out in the 15th verse is the key with which the passage must be opened, but even then the manner of using this key remains to be discovered. What is there that we can conceive of Paul as glorying in to such an extent that he says with impassioned vehemence: "It is good for me rather to die than that any man should make my glorying void"? Surely he would not use such language about some little question of independence that lay on the fringe of his life; most certainly he would not use it in opposition to the grand compelling power which he was conscious of in his Christ-begotten life. Nay, rather, it was in this very compelling power, and in this alone that Paul felt the true glory of his life to consist. This was his one glory

which he would rather die than lose, that God had imposed upon him a sacred stewardship. All else must be subservient to the fulfilment of that. I. THE GOSPEL OF THE TRUE PREACHER. In the impassioned assertion: "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel," the gospel is intimately and intensely related to Paul's inner self. Truth is not an external label to be affixed to a glass case to mark a fossil inside, but a living movement in a living man, God ever revealing Himself in clearer and clearer forms to the soul that seeks Him. It will go hard at any rate if he be not superior to an embalmed and preserved mummy. There is no doubt that the reassertion of the subjectivity of truth has given new freshness, beauty, and unity to the history of the world, and to the place of revelation in that history. It has united the old and new dispensations in a living embrace, it has connected us by closer links with prophet and apostle, and revealed that all the world in all ages has been held in the grasp of one great Divine movement. But we must remember that this assertion of subjectivity is also one-sided, and, as in all cases of reaction there is a danger of swinging back to the other extreme, so there is certainly a tendency in much that is written and spoken now, to advocate a doctrine of extreme subjectivity which contains far greater peril for the truth than the most dogmatic applications of credal orthodoxy. The gospel must be a system of objective truth, and my gospel, if it is to be a gospel at all, must not be in opposition to that, but must rather be that very gospel, or a portion of it, having passed through the crucible of my life. The Jesus that was revealed *to* Paul was revealed also *in* him. II. THE EGOTISM OF THE TRUE PREACHER. What does the apostle mean by saying, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel"? There is one answer that will be ready on all your lips, and as far as it goes it is perfectly true. He meant that there was a Divine impulse within him that he could not resist. The fire that blazed within would have burnt deep scars upon his heart if his mouth had kept silence. The "burden" of the Lord would have grown too heavy to be borne if it had not been imparted to the people. And I believe that this is substantially true of all that have really a prophetic mission for their generation. But Paul's impassioned words quiver with a yet deeper meaning, and it is to this that we apply *par excellence* the phrase, "The egotism of the true preacher." To Paul's eye the fiery hieroglyphics of God's moral government, of the great overarching heaven of eternal righteousness, contained primarily a message for himself. It was not merely that he would feel inward pain if he refused to preach the gospel, but he felt the universe to be in battle-array against him if he gave no voice to his great mission. Herein lies the prophet's power and authority that he utters the mandate of creation—the mandate of God—that he feels the full tides of the universal roll through his soul, and must move with them or perish. But, further, this intense spiritual consciousness of the true preacher not only causes him most emphatically to relate himself to the universal government of God, but also to fling all his energies into the heart of human life. In this respect also the self of the preacher must be large: it must be profoundly related to universal humanity. He must be a microcosm—a miniature of the great macrocosm of human joy and sorrow. He must know himself a debtor to all sorts and conditions of men, by feeling the surging tides of the world's needs and aspirations rush through his own life, and by thus knowing that he must find his life by giving it up to the larger life of the world. The prophet of the age is the man that can speak the thought, the passion, the aspiration of the people, and give them their Divinest setting. He must have the subtle sympathy and the Pentecostal tongue of flame that can speak to the people in their native language—the language of their hearts. Him will the people hear; for they are part of his life, and he is part of theirs. III. THE DEEP-SEATED FAITH OF THE TRUE PREACHER. To say that "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel" is to recognise the gospel as eternally victorious. For nothing can be really a woe to me except my being out of harmony with those forces that are to be eternally triumphant. Only the truth itself can revenge the insult which I offer it by rejecting it. The qualifications of the true preacher consist, therefore, in a profound faith in the Divineness of the gospel, in the heart-recognition of it as the eternal truth of God. These two things, then, are necessary to enable us to enter into the fellowship of the apostle's words. We must be under the absolute sway of the gospel of Christ, and we must identify this rule with the eternal government of God. (*John Thomas, M.A.*)

Vers. 17–19. **For if I do this thing willingly I have a reward.**—*Purity of motive required in every Christian minister*:—I. WHEREIN IT CONSISTS. 1. A willing

service. 2. Without respect to fee or reward. 3. He may receive but must not bargain for it. II. ITS IMPORTANCE. 1. If pure, Christ will reward him. 2. If impure, his service is merely professional and has its reward. III. ITS PRESENT RECOMPENSE. 1. Freedom from all imputation of mercenary motives. 2. The free dispensation of the gospel. 3. The consciousness of his own integrity. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *Aspects of St. Paul's ministry*:—His preaching was no ground of boasting (ver. 16). If he preached willingly, *i.e.*, if it were optional with him to preach or not to preach, then it would be a ground of boasting; but if he did it unwillingly, *i.e.*, if it were not optional with him (as was in fact the case), he was only discharging an official duty, and had nothing to boast of. That Paul preached the gospel willingly, that he esteemed it his highest joy and glory, is abundantly evident (Rom. i. 5, xi. 13, xv. 15-16; 1 Cor. xv. 9-10; Gal. i. 15, 16; Eph. iii. 8). The difference, therefore, here expressed between "willing" and "unwilling," is not the difference between cheerfully and reluctantly, but between optional and obligatory. He says he had a "dispensation" or stewardship committed to him. Stewards were commonly slaves. There is a great difference between what a slave does in obedience to a command, and what a man volunteers to do of his own accord. And this is the difference to which the apostle refers. So Paul was commanded to preach the gospel, and he did it with his whole heart; but he was not commanded to refuse to receive a support from the churches. The former, therefore, was not a ground of boasting, not a thing for which he could claim the reward of special confidence; the latter was. He could appeal to it as a proof, not only of his obedience, but of the purity of the motive which prompted that obedience. A physician may attend the sick from the highest motives, though he receives a remuneration for his services. But when he attends the poor gratuitously, though the motives may be no higher, the evidence of their purity is placed beyond question. Paul's ground of glorying, therefore, was not preaching, for that was a matter of obligation; but his preaching gratuitously, which was altogether optional. He gained something by it. He gained the confidence even of his enemies. But as preaching was not optional but obligatory, he did not gain confidence by it. The principle on which the apostle's argument is founded is recognised by our Lord in Luke xvii. 10. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Ministers and wealth*:—Rev. T. Hancocks, of Chatham, formerly a Pastors' College student, relates the following reminiscence of Mr. Spurgeon, introduced by the late president into one of his lectures to his students, and which is particularly interesting in the light of his last will and testament: Men sometimes say, "Spurgeon's making a good thing of it." To which I reply, "You are perfectly right, for I serve a Master who is no niggard, but who rewards me daily with both hands." But if they mean that I am saving money—well, they will know when I'm gone. I give away all I can get, and could wisely use more. **For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.**—*True ministerial independence*:—ITS NATURE. Freedom—1. As far as possible from personal obligation. 2. In the declaration of Divine truth. 3. In the conscientious discharge of duty. II. ITS USE. In the service of all—1. By patient toil. 2. By forbearance. 3. By Christian compliances. III. ITS MOTIVE. 1. Christ's honour. 2. In the gain of souls. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The highest service of man on earth*:—The services of men on earth embrace a large variety. There is the service of the agriculturist, the mechanic, the mariner, the merchant, the scientist, the legislator, the king, &c. Men esteem these services as differing widely in respectability and honour; but the service referred to in the text stands infinitely above all. Four thoughts are suggested concerning this service. I. It is a service for the GAINING OF MEN. "That I might gain the more." The "more" what? Not the gaining the more wealth, fame, or pleasure; but the gaining of men. Christ says, "Thou hast gained thy brother." There is a way of winning a man. Morally man is lost. No work in the universe is higher than this—to gain a man, to recover him to the true spirit and mission of life. II. It is a service INDEPENDENT OF MEN. "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all." Oh, how this high service has been degraded by the crowds of craven and mercenary souls that have pushed themselves into it! I am "free from all men," says Paul. "I made myself servant." I was not made by human authority, I was not pushed into it by others, "I made myself." A man by God's grace must make himself for the work. III. It is a service for UNIVERSAL MAN. "Unto all." All men, not to any particular tribe, sect, or nation, but to all, rich and poor, high and low, cultured and rude. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 20-22. **Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews.**—*The flexibility of Christianity*:—In Paul's hands the Christian ministry was like the Gift of Tongues. The gift was one; but it fell upon the ear of the Roman in Latin, upon the ear of the Egyptian in Coptic. Not a bad emblem of the manner in which the dispensation should adapt itself to the various forms of human character and phases of human society. While never sacrificing truth or principle, yet, so far as truth and principle admitted it, the apostle wore the guise and spoke in the accents of the persons whom he addressed. Recognising circumcision as a national mark of distinction, while utterly denying its necessity to salvation, he circumcised Timothy. Owing allegiance as a Jew to the Mosaic ritual, so long as God suffered it to exist, he took legal vows, and was scrupulous in paying them. Among Gentiles, he drew illustrations from the Grecian games, although they were heathen festivals; he quoted truths which had been proclaimed by heathen poets, and founded his appeals on natural religion. How totally different in its topics, as well as in its form, is his address on Mars' Hill from that in the synagogue at Antioch! The genius of the gospel was free. It was felt, from the first, that its fixed truths were capable of being presented in aspects almost innumerable. Note then:—I. THE PLASTIC CHARACTER OF CHRISTIANITY. This is seen in—1. Its documents. (1) The history of our Lord has been transmitted to us by four distinct authors, who evidently write from four points of view, and address distinct classes of readers. (2) Peter, Paul, James and John—men of widely different characters and circumstances—were all employed in the doctrinal writings of the New Testament, and thus Christian doctrine comes to us distilled through the alembics of four human minds. If God had desired to teach a Christian minister that he should study the age, characters, society, with which he has to deal, how could He have done it otherwise? 2. Its precepts, how broadly they are stated, and with an obvious avoidance of those particulars which might limit their application. Take, *e.g.* "Pray without ceasing"—evidently a principle and not a rule, and, because a principle capable of application to an infinite variety of circumstances. 3. Its doctrines. The Fatherhood of God; the Incarnation, the sacrifice of the Cross, the gift of the Spirit, the brotherhood of men in Christ's Church, and the resurrection; these are evidently doctrines whose import is as wide as the race, and which correspond to the instincts of the human heart, under whatever garb it beats. II. HOW THIS CHARACTER SHOULD DETERMINE THE CONDUCT OF OUR CLERGY IN SETTING IT FORTH. 1. It is in vain to hope to revive any type of Christianity which has obviously had its day. (1) Let us not attempt to revive mediævalism; all that was true, deep, and touching in that really survives still, only the fashion of it has passed away to return no more. Let us cherish its devout spirit, and endeavour to imbue with it our circle of society, while we throw off its superficial costume, which, like all mere costume, must in the nature of things become antiquated. (2) Let us not seek to revive the precise form of the Evangelicalism of seventy years ago. Here again there was much which, because it was the very truth of God, can never pass away. But while we endeavour to inhale its spirit, let us not entangle ourselves in its trammels, which are not adapted to the present day. 2. But to pass to more positive counsels. Ours is an age—(1) Of much superficial knowledge on the subject of religion. For a thousand persons who discuss religion freely in society there is not one who ever digested a spiritual truth. Now in dealing with this state of mind you must not content yourself with a few Sunday platitudes; the people will tell you that they know all that as well as you. You must oppose erudition to their flimsy knowledge, and be a man of thought as opposed to their superficiality. (2) Of latitudinarianism which is making the most insidious inroads on the faith. Now an indignant repudiation of scepticism, with but a partial insight into its real views is little likely to reclaim the sceptic. Let us seek to appreciate his difficulty, and to draw forth from the repository of Divine truth a solution of it: and in doing so it may be that we shall occasionally have to retract—not indeed one iota of Scriptural truth—but our notions of what the Scripture has said. Might it not be well too if our clergy would acquaint themselves, not merely with the general platform on which infidelity is conducting its attacks, but specially with those sciences whose progress is always attended with much danger in minds which are not well settled in the faith? But remember that our Lord bids us, as scribes, instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, to bring forth out of our treasury things new and old—old in the substance, which must always abide; new in the form, which ever changes with time and with the manners of men. Mark the emphatic word "his treasury." It is not from any repository of

truth external to ourselves. No amount of learning in a Christian minister can for a moment compensate for the absence of an experimental religion. God's Word must be brought forth from our own treasury, not stolen from that of our neighbours. Prayer must go hand in hand with study. (*Dean Goulburn.*)

Being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.—*The Christian law:*—I. ITS NATURE. 1. Moral. 2. Given by God. 3. Confirmed by Christ. 4. Written by the Holy Spirit on the heart. II. ITS AUTHORITY. 1. Comprehends the whole law. 2. Extends to the heart. 3. Is enforced by love. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*)

I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.—*All things to all men*:—1. St. Paul was a cosmopolitan in the best sense, the world was his country, mankind his brethren, truth his business, the church his family, and Christ his Lord. His catholic impartiality credited alike Jew and Greek with whatever amount of truth they severally held. 2. Love is the true expositor of the text. It is the sterling politeness which gracefully bends itself into "all things" within the perpendicular of truth and equity, "to all men" in order to their profit and salvation. Like a tender mother, lisping to her babe, reading with her boys, sympathising with the early trials of her girls, following with her wistful prayers the absent ones, nor ceasing a maternal interest in the elder branches settled in life, and so in her motherly heart is all things to all members of her family—so the earnest Christian has a large-hearted family power of interestedness in whatever concerns the soul of every fellow-being. Being "all things to all men," only to gain them to Christ, implies a sacred uniformity of purpose, which—I. SANCTIONS NOTHING INCONSISTENT WITH DIVINE CONFORMITY. "All things to all men"—1. Sanctions no versatility which is evangelical with low church, sacramental with high church, indefinite with broad church, and indifferent with no church; though it does imply a courteous, loving, conciliatory tone of address to every church, always with a view to gaining them for the Church of Christ. 2. Implies no sinking the Christian to meet the worldling. The Christian is no chameleon, taking his hue from every incident he feeds on; but rather like the sunlight of his heavenly Father—the evil and the good are the better for his shining. Apply the rule to places of amusement. Can we imagine ourselves meeting Christ there, as He sat at the festival in Cana, &c.? We can realise His presence on occasions of innocent festivity; but there are others at which, if we could suppose His eye falling upon us, as it did on Peter in the hall of his denial, we should be ashamed to meet Him. I noticed in France pictures of the Crucifixion in streets and public galleries, in Hotel de Ville and Palais de Justice, but never one in a Café Chantant or the opera. As believers, you are Christ's living images, and would be as much out of place in a Casino or a playhouse. There is a rubicon between the carnal and the spiritual man which needs no Cæsar to cross it from one side (that is, from the church to the world); but it requires a Christ to ford it, from the world to the church. Attempt it alone, and like Peter on the lake, you would sink in the act, unless His mighty hand bear you through. 3. Is no text for the pusillanimous concessions implied in the maxim, "When you are at Rome, do as Rome does." Paul did not; he was as much "Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ" in Cæsar's household as in his own. Still he who gave Roman officers their respect, and magistrates their titles, who gathered sticks with the barbarians, and received the grateful courtesies of Publius, taught us to eschew rudeness or eccentricity in circumstantials, and to be peculiar only in essentials. In whatever shape you are gratuitously singular, you will be unpopular, and therefore the less useful. Hence, cultivate a conciliating not a litigious tone—suggest, rather than challenge. A well-oiled and tempered blade cuts deeper than a hacked or rusty one. Be as much at home with people as you can, that they may be at their ease with you. Let things indifferent be indifferent, that none of your earnestness and usefulness may be spent on trifles, but all concentrated on the main thing—saving souls and glorifying their Saviour. II. JUSTIFIES ANYTHING BECOMING A MANLY CHRISTIANITY. By this is not meant a Christianity indigenous to man; but a robust, open-hearted, large-minded view of sinners, and of the means to be employed for their salvation. "All things to all men." 1. Means religious toleration having "proved all things, hold fast that which is good." Stand out for your own convictions. "Be strong and quit you like men." At the same time, fidelity to your own opinions is perfectly compatible with the most respectful toleration of those of others. You believe in election; another man sees only open universal salvation. Be it so. You both believe in Christ and in His Holy Spirit: then work and pray together on those grounds in which you agree, and you will get nearer to God and to each other

than by incessant debate upon your points of difference. 2. Implies the use of all lawful means of "preaching the word in season and out of season," *e.g.*, if a Romanist won't listen to our translation of the Bible, converse with him out of his own. The Douay version obscures some doctrines, but it can't extinguish Christ. On the same ground controversy is justified. Let the obvious love of souls, and loyalty to Christ so distinguish the spirit in which you wield controversial weapons that men may see "they are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds." 3. Suggests a gentle forbearance with men's tempers, infirmities, and even sins. Much self-denial is needed for the duty of reproof, both as to the mode of doing it, and the doing it at all. "Bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ" is not the least self-denying form of taking up the cross. To bear with the magnanimity of Christian love the irritating annoyances and petty insults of an ungodly circle is no easy trial; but its effect upon those around us, though imperceptible, is real. 4. Imports the diligent use of many means, notwithstanding few results. There is a noble contentedness in expending all our means on the prospect of only "some" return. Conclusion—1. Neither "all things to all men," nor anything to any man, is either safe or possible without God. You dare not be "all things to" some men, lest, burning incense with Korah, you be swallowed up with his company. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Your life must be your testimony, where direct association would only compromise or quench it. 2. Make Christ your model. "Set the Lord alway before you." Let your first question be, "What would He have done?" He was in the best sense, and ever will be, "all things to all men," "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." And He would be nothing to any man except to save him. (*J. B. Owen, M.A.*) *Compromises*:—As a general rule compromises of every description are to be regarded with distrust. Taken at the best they are of the nature of sacrifices, as each party is supposed to give up something which he considers of more or less importance. And this is not all. A plan or policy which is the resnlt of a compromise is not a single plan or policy, but a mixture of plans, a mixture of policies. Now the several parts, instead of aiding and sustaining each other, will be very likely to interfere with and obstruct each other. Accordingly, if a compromise is called for, the first question we should ask ourselves is, whether the occasion for making it may not be avoided altogether. Many of our associations are entirely voluntary. But all our associations are not voluntary in the sense here intended. The family, for example, is not a voluntary, but a necessary association; and so likewise, in a certain sense and to a certain extent, is the neighbourhood, the Church, the State. Every man must live in society. I do not say in this or that society, but in some society. Concessions, then, we must make; but what concessions? How far can we carry the spirit of compromise without trenching at the same time on the laws of Christian truth and righteousness? To this question I reply, first, by observing that we are in no danger of trenching on the laws of Christian truth and righteousness so long as our compromises do not involve anything more than the giving up of our own tastes, our own convenience, our own innocent pleasures, our own interests, even our own rights, out of regard to others, and in the spirit of Christian concession and self sacrifice. To say that we have a right to give up our rights may sound to some like contradiction; but it is a contradiction in sound, in appearance, only. Indeed, not to give up our rights is to give up nothing; for why talk about giving up what we have no right to retain if we would? At the same time it is proper to add that our right to give up our rights depends on their being ours exclusively. We have no right to give up our neighbours' rights without their consent, express or implied. A parent, for example, might be willing to give up one or more of his own rights if he were sure the loss would fall on him alone; but if, on the contrary, he knows that, directly or indirectly, it will fall on the whole family, he will feel that they also have a voice in the matter. Again, a right may be held in common, and require to be maintained in common, and all therefore may be in some sense pledged to its defence in common, as in the case of civil or religious liberty. Here, as before, no individual can honestly act as if he alone were interested in the event. And this brings me to what may be called the pinch of the question. Have we a right, under any circumstances whatever, to go contrary to our duty for the sake of peace, or to meet those we must act with half-way, or on the plea that in a choice of evils we should take the least, or in the hope that in the end virtue and humanity will be gainers by such a course? Thus stated, it seems to me that the question answers

itself. We have no such right. But we must not think that the annunciation of a moral truism like this will go far to clear up the great practical difficulty we are considering. The question disappears in one form, it is true, but only to come up in another. In a sharp collision of opinions and interests, of rights and duties, of reciprocal benefits and mutual obligations, may not my duty itself become changed? Let me suppose a case. A community, bound together by a multitude of reciprocal affections, interests, and obligations, fall into irreconcilable difference respecting a single question, and that a moral one. What are they to do? Some may think to cut the matter short by insisting that the party which is right ought not to give up, ought not to make the smallest concessions. And this is true, supposing it to be known and conceded which party is right; but unhappily this is the very point in dispute. The question is not what the party shall do is right, but what the party shall do which thinks itself right. And if you still answer, "Not concede one jot nor tittle," then you have no ground of complaint against your opponents for not conceding one jot nor tittle to you, for they also think themselves right. If, therefore, we persist in shutting our eyes on these obvious facts, that is to say, pay no regard to the judgment and the consciences of others, but proceed to act on our own as if we were infallible, when we know we are not, the mistake, if we fall into one, does not make wrong to be right even for us; nay, is no excuse for the wrong. It is not mistake, properly so called, but obstinacy; and obstinacy is no excuse for delinquency of any kind. Another ground sometimes taken is, that where two parties are at variance, only one can be right; and consequently that a compromise supposes a departure from the right course on one side or the other. This, however, does not follow. I admit that where two parties are at variance, both cannot be right; but it does not follow that either is so, that is, wholly right. Both parties cannot be right, but both parties may be wrong; at least more or less so. And if so, it would seem that each party has something of wrong to give up, and the compromise that should consist of mutual concessions of this sort would evidently result, not in a departure from right on either side, but in an approximation to right on both sides. I have spoken of compromises in general, not of any particular compromise. I am aware that there is often less difficulty in laying down general principles than in applying them with the limitations and qualifications which the circumstances of the case require. Still something is gained by clearly apprehending the principles—the applications must be left to the occasion as it arises; and let me add, that a right application of the principles in the most perplexing circumstances will mainly depend, not on a morbid sensitiveness to the question at issue, nor yet on casuistical subtlety, but on downright honesty of purpose, a sound understanding, and a truly generous and magnanimous spirit. (*J. Walker, D.D.*) *Apostolical sympathy*:—This is an expression which might easily be mistaken, and has been so before now; as though St. Paul recommended, by his advice and example, a sort of craft in religious matters—pretending to agree with men when you really do not, humouring them in bad ways, concurring with them to a certain length in what you know or fear to be wrong; but all the while for their benefit, and with a view of doing, on the whole, more good in the end. Are not many marriages made by this rule, or, at least, defended by this excuse? and how do they commonly turn out? A much lighter error, but yet an error of the same kind, was that which St. Paul himself had once to correct in St. Peter, when, rather than give present dissatisfaction to certain Jewish converts which were there, he separated himself from the Gentile Christians (Gal. ii. 11), and so encouraged a division in the Church, and encouraged also the low notion that believers were still under the law of Moses. But this of St. Paul in the text is very different; it is an example, not a warning. And the difference may be put in one word: it is not accommodation which St. Paul encourages, but sympathy. He does not say that he practised what would please others, to win them, but he says that he always had an eye to them; he put himself into their place. He thought with himself, Were I a heathen, or a Jew, a young man or an old, an advanced or an imperfect Christian, a rich man or a poor, a master or a servant, what would my thoughts and feelings and fancies be when such and such holy truths or Divine commandments were made known to me? And according to what his wise and charitable heart, guided by the Holy Spirit, told him, of the needs and feelings of other persons, so he ordered his ways towards them, and his manner of speaking to them, and dealing with them. To take the instances which the apostle himself had been enumerating just before the text: "Unto the Jews," first, "I became," says he, "as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews." How was this? for we know how

earnestly St. Paul opposed himself to the Jewish prejudice, that circumcision and keeping the ceremonies of the law were at all necessary to salvation. How, then, did he become as a Jew to the Jews? Look at that letter of his, in which he most opposes their ceremonies; look at the Epistle to the Romans, and see how he speaks of them there. "I also am an Israelite." "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart." "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren." Look in the Acts of the Apostles (chap. xvi. 2; xxviii. 17; xxii. 17) and see what trouble he took, how he went out of the way to show them that he reverenced the Mosaical ceremonies, and did not hold them wicked, though he would not have them reckoned part of the Christian law. As to the Gentiles, them also he mentions just before the text, saying, "To them which are without law I became as without law, that I might gain them that are without law." That is, he put himself in the place of the Gentiles, and said and did what their condition required; as when, writing to the Corinthians, he so greatly slighted human wisdom, which he knew they were inclined to think too much of; also as when, speaking to the Athenians, he made use of their own poets, their own altars, their own customs, and the like, whereby to bring them to attend to the truth of Christ. But towards the people of Derbe and Lystra, who were in the very act of idolising himself, he spake with all vehemence, as the case required, seeing it was the only thing which could hinder them from offering sacrifice to him. In neither case did he flatter or beguile, or at all encourage them in anything wrong, no not with a view of greater good hereafter, as we, in our short-sighted self-sufficient plans, are so often tempted to do; but he used that gift which God gave him, of entering into their minds and feelings to edify them, whether by soothing or contradiction, as might be needed. And as it was with him in respect to Jew or Gentile, so also in respect of rich and poor, and the other distinctions of life; to masters and servants, husbands and wives, in short, all sorts of people, he speaks as one who had the power, by the Divine Spirit which was in him, to feel not only with them but for them—not only what they would like, but what their condition would most require. Now St. Paul was a representative, what we may in some sense call a type, of the Church or kingdom of Christ in action and warfare. His teaching seems especially recorded as the completest standard and model of her teaching. May it then be truly said that the Church is made all things to all men? Surely it may; the mystical body of our Lord Jesus Christ, animated by His Spirit, has a word of seasonable instruction, and an aid of seasonable grace, for every one, even the meanest of His members. Surely there is no person, rich or poor, young or old, good or bad, wise or foolish, for whom the Church, as she speaks in our Prayer Book, has not a word of comfort or censure, of warning or encouragement, in their season. And as this is the temper of St. Paul himself, and of the Church which he served, so also should it be the temper of each particular Christian, among his own friends and acquaintance, and all whom the Providence of God puts in his way. He will account it a part of charity to become all things to all men; to enter into their notions and feelings, not for any vain fancy of pleasing them and obtaining their good word, but for their profit, if haply by God's mercy he may be permitted to do something towards the salvation of a brother. And truly it is a strange power which God's Holy Spirit gives to faithful, self-denying persons, to enter into the thoughts and tempers and passions of those for whom they are concerned, even of those who are most unlike themselves; guarding them by a kind of instinct against those sins and temptations which would seem to be furthest from their own feeling and knowledge; as God and good angels guard them, knowing, and in a manner feeling for the sinner, without any sort of communion in the sin. Once more; if it be asked what is the way by which frail, imperfect men may be enabled to understand the thoughts of the wicked so as to perceive their tendency, and to pray and strive against them, the answer is, we must be very single in our aims—not looking, much less turning, back after we have once given in our names to Jesus Christ to be His soldiers and servants. (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*) "*By all means save some*":—I. WHY IS THIS PASSION FOR SAVING OTHERS IMPLANTED IN THE BREASTS OF THE SAVED? For God's glory. (1) It is greatly to the glory of God that He should use humble instruments for the accomplishment of His grand purposes. When Quintin Matsys had executed a wonderful well-cover in iron, it was the more notable because he had little more than his hammer. (2) It brings glory to God also that He should take us sinful men and make us partakers of His compassionate and loving nature. That an angel should cleave the air to perform his message is simple enough, but that a Saul, an enemy of Christ, should live and

die for the winning of souls to Jesus, is a memorable illustration of the grace of God. (3) In this way the Lord gets great glory over the Arch-enemy, for He can say to Satan, "I have defeated thee, not by the sword of Michael, but by the words and prayers of My humble servants." Then is the enemy smitten in the house of his former friends. Satan desired to sift Peter as wheat, but Peter sifted him in return on the day of Pentecost. 2. For the church's good. The passion for winning souls—(1) Expends the Church's energy in a healthy manner. There is a certain quantity of steam generated in the community, and if we do not let it off in the right way, it will blow up and do infinite mischief. Talents unused are sure to rust, and this kind of rust is a deadly poison to peace, an acrid irritant which eats into the heart of the Church. (2) Draws forth the strength of the Church, awakens her latent energies, and arouses her noblest faculties. Many a commonplace man has been rendered great by being thoroughly absorbed by a noble pursuit, and what can be nobler than turning men to Christ? (3) Knits us together. I have been blest of God to the salvation of my hearer, but that hearer was first brought here by a friend, and so we become sharers in the joy. And, moreover, when new converts are brought into the Church, the fact that they are brought in by instrumentality tends to make their fusion with the Church an easy matter. 3. For the good of the individual possessing it. (1) It makes us Godlike. (2) It provides a vent for love to God as well as to men. Loving God makes us sorrow that all men do not love Him too. (3) It revives our first love. When I see an inquirer penitent for sin, I recollect the birthday of my own soul. (4) It strengthens faith. If you begin to doubt the gospel's power, go to work among the poor and ignorant. (5) It draws forth all the faculties of a man. One strong passion will frequently bring the whole man into play, like a skilful minstrel whose hand brings music from every chord. If we love others, we shall become wise to attract them, and discover in ourselves talents which else had been hidden in the ground. (6) It gives the highest joys beneath the stars. II. How DOES THIS PASSION EXERCISE ITSELF? Differently in different persons, and at different periods. 1. By tender anxiety. The moment a man is saved he begins to be anxious about his relatives, and that anxiety leads him at once to pray for them. 2. In the intense joy exhibited when news reaches us of their conversion. 3. In private efforts, sacrifices, prayers, and agonies for the spread of the gospel. A word may often bless those whom a sermon fails to reach, and a personal letter may do far more than a printed book. 4. In the more public agencies of the Church. 5. In adapting ourselves to the condition and capacity of others for their good. Paul became a Jew to the Jews. He did not preach against Judaism, but showed them Jesus as the fulfiller of its types. When he met with a heathen he did not revile the gods, but taught him the true God. He did not carry about with him one sermon for all places, but adapted his speech to his audience. If you have to talk to children, be children, and do not expect them to be men. If you have to comfort the aged, enter into their infirmities, and do not speak to them as if they were still in the full vigour of life. Are you called to labour among the educated? Then choose out excellent words. Do you work among the illiterate? Speak their mother tongue. Are you cast among people with strange prejudices? Do not unnecessarily jar with them, but take them as you find them. All men are not to be reached in the same way, or by the same means. III. WHY IS NOT THIS PASSION MORE LARGELY DEVELOPED AMONG CHRISTIANS? Is it not that we have but very little grace? That is the fountain of all the mischief. But to come to particulars. 1. One-sided views of gospel doctrines. "God will save His own." Yes, but His own do not talk in that fashion; they do not say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Since idleness wants an excuse, men dare to abuse this sacred truth to stultify their consciences. 2. Worldliness. Men are too fond of gain to care for saving souls. 3. Want of faith. Men do not believe that God will bless their efforts, and therefore they make none. 4. Want of sympathy with God. IV. How CAN THIS PASSION BE MORE FULLY AROUSED? 1. By our obtaining a higher life. I do not believe in a man's trying to pump himself up beyond his level. The man must be up, and then all that comes out of the man will have risen. If love to God glows in your soul, it must show itself in your concern for others. 2. By full cognisance of men's misery and degradation. How differently one feels after seeing with one's own eyes the poverty, filth, and vice of this city. Your fellow-countrymen are living in neglect of your Saviour, and in jeopardy of their immortal souls; if you did but realise this it would quicken you by all means to save some. 3. By a sense of our own solemn obligations. If we are what we profess to be, we are redeemed by the heart's blood

of the Son of God; do we not owe something to Christ for this? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *All things dared for souls*:—In Switzerland, where land is very precious because rock abounds and the rugged soil is chary in its yieldings, you see the husbandman looking after a little tuft of grass growing on one of the edges of a lofty cliff. From the valley he had caught a sight of it, and thought of clambering up to where it grew, but the rock was all too steep. From a ledge nearer the top of the precipitous wall he looked down, but could see no pathway to the coveted morsel of green. That armful of grass would feed his goat, or help to fill the cottage loft with winter fodder for the cow. Every armful is an item, and he cannot forego that tempting clump. He looks, and looks, and looks again, but looks in vain. By and by he fetches his bold boy, who can follow wherever a chamois can climb, but the boy after a hard scramble comes back with the tidings, "Father, it cannot be done." Father's answer is, "Boy, it must be done." It is only an armful, and would not be worth a farthing to us, but to the poor mountaineer even a farthing or a farthing's worth is precious. The grass waves its flowers in the breeze and scorns the daring climbers from below; but where there is a will, there is a way; and what cannot be reached from below may be gained from above. With a rope slung round him, or firmly grasped in his accustomed hand, with a stout stake or tree to hold it up above, the Switzer is let down till he gets to the jutting crag; there he stands with his sickle, reaps the grass, ties it into a bundle, puts it under his arm, and climbing back again, joyfully returns with his little harvest. Poor pay, you think, for such dangerous toil; but, fellow worker for Jesus, I wish we were as venturesome for souls, and as careful of them, as these poor peasants are concerning miserable bundles of grass. I wish that we sometimes looked up or down upon apparently inaccessible spots, and resolved to reach immortal souls who are to be found there, and pined to bring them to Christ. (*Ibid.*) *Soul saving our one business*:—It is a grand thing to see a man thoroughly possessed with one master-passion. Lives with many aims are like water trickling through innumerable streams, none of which is wide enough or deep enough to float the merest cockleshell; but a life with one object is like a mighty river flowing between its banks, bearing to the ocean a multitude of ships, and spreading fertility on either side. Note—I. PAUL'S GREAT OBJECT IN LIFE—"To save some." 1. Some preach with the view of amusing men. But Paul did not lay himself out to please the public and collect the crowd. 2. Others think that the object of Christian effort should be to educate men. Education is an exceedingly valuable thing, but if the Church thinks that it is sent into the world merely to train the mental faculties, it has made a very serious mistake. Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, and on the same errand has He sent His Church. 3. Paul did not try to moralise men. Dr. Chalmers, in his first parish, preached morality, and saw no good; but as soon as he preached Christ crucified, grace prevailed. He who wishes for perfumes must grow the flowers; he who desires to promote morality must have men saved. 4. What did Paul mean by saying that he desired to save some? (1) That some should be born again; for no man is saved until he is made a new creature in Christ Jesus. (2) That some might be cleansed from their past iniquity through the merit of Christ's sacrifice. No man can be saved from his sin except by the atonement. (3) That they might also be purified and made holy; for a man is not saved while he lives in sin. II. THE APOSTLE'S REASONS FOR ELECTING SUCH AN OBJECT. 1. The honour of God. Did you ever think over the amount of dishonour that is done to the Lord in London in any one hour of the day? 2. The extreme misery of this our human race. It would be a very dreadful thing if you could get any idea of the aggregate of the misery of London at the present moment in the hospital and the workhouse. 3. The terrible future of impenitent souls. But if they be saved, observe the contrast. III. THE GREAT METHODS WHICH THE APOSTLE USED. 1. The simple preaching of the gospel. He did not attempt to create a sensation by startling statements, neither did he preach erroneous doctrine in order to obtain the assent of the multitude. To keep back any part of the gospel is not the true method for saving men. Give the people every truth baptised in holy fire, and each truth will have its own useful effect upon the mind. But the great truth is the Cross, the truth that "God so loved the world," &c. 2. Much prayer. A great painter said he mixed his colours with brains. A preacher ought to mix truth with prayer. When a man was breaking granite by the roadside, a minister passing by said, "Ah, my friend, your work is just like mine; you have to break stones, and so do I." "Yes," said the man, "and if you manage to break stony hearts, you will have to do it as I do, go down on your knees." 3. An intense

sympathy which made him adapt himself to each case. He was all things to all men, that he might by all means save some. Mr. Hudson Taylor finds it helpful to dress as a Chinaman, and wear a pigtail. This seems to me to be a truly wise policy. To sink myself to save others is the idea of the apostle. Never may any whim or conventionality of ours keep a soul from considering the gospel. (*Ibid.*) *Sacrifice for souls*:—All things are easy which are done for the love of God and of the souls which He loves. A lady who had a most sensitive ear for music—so much so, that a note out of tune caused her intense discomfort—joined one of our English Sisterhoods. Being visited one day by a friend, she was found placidly seated in an outhouse, in the midst of a most horrible din, raised by a number of lads whom she was forming into a drum and fife band. "How can you possibly endure this noise?" asked her friend. "Oh," was the sweet reply, "it's very good for souls!" *Adaptation essential to persuasion*:—It is said that Kossuth had an inimitable power of adaptation: a keen sense of the fitness of things. So adroit was his oratory that coming to a new country he would soon master its language, had forensic arguments for the bar, prose and poetry for women, statistics for merchants, and an assortment of local allusions for the respective towns and villages in which he pleaded his cause. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Adaptation essential to soul winning*:—While Edward Irving was assistant to Dr. Chalmers he called upon a shoemaker, a thorough-going infidel of a most disagreeable temper. All who had previously called upon him were met by cold shoulder and a "Hump!" Irving, knowing his man, took up a piece of patent leather, and expatiated on it. This he could do admirably, as his father was a tanner, and he knew the process well. The shoemaker did not look up, but said roughly, "What do you ken about leather?" Irving, unabashed, went on, and described how shoes were being made by machinery. Then the shoemaker slackened up his work, and looked up, and said, "Od, you're a decent kind o' a fellow; do you preach?" Next Sabbath the shoemaker was at church. On the Monday Irving met him in the Gallow Gate, and walked arm-in-arm with him along the street. He was overcome, and became a friend instead of a foe to Christianity; and ever after, when taunted with his change, justified himself by saying, "He's a sensible man, yon; he kens about leather." (*Mrs. Oliphant.*) *Adaptation in a minister*:—"We use the language of the market," said Whitefield, and this was much to his honour; yet when he stood in the drawing-room of the Countess of Huntingdon, and his speech entranced the infidel nobleman whom she brought to hear him, he adopted another style. His language was equally plain in each case, because it was equally familiar to the audience: he did not use the *ipsissima verba*, or his language would have lost its plainness in the one case or the other, and would either have been slang to the nobility or Greek to the crowd. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Wisdom of adaptation*:—He alone is wise who can accommodate himself to all the contingencies of life; but the fool contends, and is struggling like a swimmer against the stream. *Wisdom needed for usefulness*:—In order to reach men's hearts on Divine things Lord Haddo strove to cultivate the art of conciliating even the careless and indifferent, by talking to them, in the first instance, on subjects in which they would be interested; and in this taught a precious lesson, which all who are engaged in evangelistic labour would do well to learn and exemplify. When acting as a regular district visitor in Whitechapel, London, he happened to visit a currier, to whom he was unknown, and his knowledge of the various processes of tanning and the preparation of leather, elicited the remark, "Ah, I see you are in the trade yourself, sir." (*A. Duff, D.D.*) *The law of spiritual accommodation*:—(Text and chap. x. 33). Here is the supreme secret of service to human souls; and the two passages must be taken together to get the beauty of the whole thought. It is an accommodation —I. To ALL MEN; to Jew, to Gentile; to weak, to strong—1. By way of identification; as though himself just what they were. This means an Englishman becoming an Irishman to save an Irishman; a man of culture becoming an ignorant fool to save a fool—going down to the slums to save the inmates of the slums—becoming a slave to save slaves. 2. By way of self-denial and self-oblivion; not seeking one's own pleasure or even "profit," that other smay be saved. A renunciation of self-gratification and even self-advancement and advantage for their sakes. II. IN ALL THINGS—wherever it implies no wrong. The question is, What will remove a stumbling-block out of others' way? What will serve others? (chap. ix. 19). III. IN ORDER TO SAVE OTHERS. Everybody may not be benefited. "Duty is ours; results are God's." But what is offered to Him is not lost, although it may seem to be wasted. We never get to the true platform of service until what we do we do

unto the Lord, and are not disturbed by its apparent unfruitfulness. He values it just as highly, without regard to obvious results. (*Hom. Monthly.*) *Paul's versatility* :—There are those to whom it is painful to have to accost a stranger even on pressing business; and most men are only quite at home in their own set—among men of the same class or profession as themselves. But the life he had chosen brought Paul into contact with men of every kind, and he had constantly to be introducing to strangers the business with which he was charged. He might be addressing a king or a consul the one hour and a roomful of slaves or common soldiers the next. One day he had to speak in the synagogue of the Jews, another among a crowd of Athenian philosophers, another to the inhabitants of some provincial town far from the seats of culture. But he could adapt himself to every man and every audience. To the Jews he spoke as a rabbi out of the Old Testament Scriptures; to the Greeks he quoted the words of their own poets; and to the barbarians he talked of the God who giveth rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. When a weak or insincere man attempts to be all things to all men, he ends by being nothing to anybody. But, living on this principle, Paul found entrance for the gospel everywhere, and at the same time won for himself the esteem and love of those to whom he stooped. (*J. Stalker, D.D.*) *Fish must be angled for with the right bait* :—Speaking of fishing in Persian rivers, a recent traveller says, "The river Lar is famed for its speckled trout, and we encamped on its banks, well provided with the best rods and flies the English market could afford. We found the trout fickle enough as elsewhere, and could never tell when or where to find them. Some days 'coy and hard to please,' and other days abundant. We soon discovered that a trait peculiar to these Persian trout was an indifference, amounting to contempt, for the daintiest flies we coaxingly threw in their way. But when we baited our hooks with young grasshoppers or frogs we discovered the favourite weakness of these epicures of the Lar." (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Moral identification with others—a qualification of the evangel* :—This verse is sometimes taken as expressive of the accommodating spirit of the apostle. Hence he is regarded as acting in a somewhat Jesuitical way, taking men as it were by guile. Such a view is utterly untrue. From his very constitution, he could not bend to any temporising expediency. All that the apostle means is, that he endeavoured to put himself into the place, or rather into the views and feelings, of those whom he endeavoured to win to Christ. Now this is both right and wise. As a debater, whether in politics, philosophy, or religion, he only acts fairly and with power who acts in this way. This power implies—I. A HIGHLY IMAGINATIVE TEMPERAMENT. The phlegmatic man, whose nature is incapable of taking fire, who moves with the creeping legs of logic rather than on the wings of moral intuition, would find it all but impossible to realise another man's experiences. II. A KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN LIFE. It is necessary that we should make ourselves acquainted not merely with the outward circumstances of men, but with their inner life—their modes of thought, their strongest proclivities. This requires study of men, not as they appear in books, but as they appear in their circle, and men, not in the mass, but in their individual character and idiosyncrasies. III. A PASSIONATE LOVE FOR SOULS. Nothing but the constraining love of Christ can invest man either with the disposition or the power for such a work—a work requiring self-sacrifice, patience, tenderness, invincible determination, and hallowed devotion. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Power of tact* :—A little management will often avoid resistance, which a vast force will strive in vain to overcome. (*Colton.*)

Ver. 24. **They which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize.**—*The Greek athletic festivals and their lessons* :—1. Of these the most famous was that held every fifth year at Olympia in the west of Peloponnese. Very famous and ancient also was the Isthmian festival held every two years at the Isthmus, about eight miles from, and in full view of, the city of Corinth. Similar festivals were held at Nemea and Delphi. But in these the athletic element was less conspicuous. All these were instituted before the dawn of history. Other festivals, in imitation of them, were held in Paul's day in many cities of Asia, *e.g.*, at Tarsus, and notably at Antioch in Syria. 2. All athletes, *i.e.*, competitors for prizes, had ten months' training, under the direction of appointed teachers and under various restrictions of diet. At the beginning of the festival they were required to prove to the judges that they were of pure Greek blood, had not forfeited by misconduct the right of citizenship, and had undergone the necessary training. Then began the various contests, in an appointed order. Of these, the

oldest and most famous was the footrace. Others were wrestling, boxing, chariot and horse racing. The prize was a wreath (or crown) of olive at Olympia, and of pine leaves (at one time of olive) at the Isthmus. The giving of the prizes was followed by processions and sacrifices, and by a public banquet to the conquerors. The whole festival at Olympia lasted five days. 3. The importance of these athletic festivals in the eyes of the ancient Greeks it is difficult to appreciate now. They were the great family gatherings of the nation, held under the auspices, and under the shadow of the temples, of their gods. The laws regulating them were held as binding by the various independent states of Greece. The month in which they were held was called the sacred month, and was solemnly announced. And all war between Greek states ceased, under pain of the displeasure of their gods, while the festival lasted. The festivals were attended by immense crowds from all the Greek states, and from even the most distant colonies. The various states sent embassies, and vied with each other in the splendour of them and of the gifts they brought. The greatest cities thought themselves honoured by the victory of a citizen. The victor was received home with a triumphal procession, entered the city by a new opening broken for him through the walls, was taken in a chariot to the temple of its guardian deity, and welcomed with songs. In some cases a reward in money was given, and release from taxation. In honour of the successful athlete poems were written; of which we have specimens in the poems of Pindar. A statue of the victor was permitted to be placed, and in many cases was placed, by townsmen or friends, in the sacred grove of the presiding deity. An avenue of these statues, shadowed by an avenue of pine-trees, leading up to the temple of Poseidon, which stood within two hundred yards of the racecourse at the Isthmus of Corinth, is mentioned by Pausanias (bk. ii. 1, 7). Close by this temple with its avenue of statues Paul probably passed on his way from Athens to Corinth. The Olympic festival, which survived the longest, was abolished in A.D. 394, four years after the public suppression of paganism in the Roman Empire. The Greek athletic festivals must be carefully distinguished from the bloody Roman gladiatorial combats. That these athletic festivals permeated and moulded the thought both of classic writers and of the apostle to the Gentiles, we have abundant proof. Eternal life is to be obtained only by contest and victory (Phil. iii. 14; 1 Tim. vi. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 5, iv. 7f; *cf.* Luke xiii. 24; Heb. xii. 1; James i. 12; 1 Pet. v. 4; Rev. ii. 10, iii. 11). The Christian life is both a preparation for conflict (ver. 25; 2 Tim. ii. 5), a race (ver. 24; Phil. iii. 12; Acts xx. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 7); a boxing (ver. 27); and a wrestling (Eph. vi. 12). Paul's converts will be his crown in the great day (1 Thess. ii. 19; Phil. iv. 1). And, just as the athlete, victorious but not yet crowned, lay down to rest on the evening after conflict, waiting for the glories of the morrow, so Paul (2 Tim. iv. 7f). This metaphor—I. PRESENTS A NEEDFUL COMPLEMENT OF PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE AND THROUGH FAITH. Though eternal life is altogether a free gift of God, it is given only to those who strive for it with all their powers. Therefore we must ever ask, not only whether an action open to us is lawful, but whether it will increase or lessen our spiritual strength. Just so, an athlete would forego many things otherwise harmless, and some not even forbidden by the laws for athletes, simply because he was striving for a prize. II. RECEIVES IN TURN ITS NEEDFUL COMPLEMENT IN THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. Had we to contend for life in our own strength, we might be doubtful of the result, as was many a resolute athlete on the morning of the contest. But in us is the might of God, crushing (Rom. xvi. 20; 1 John iv. 4) our adversary under our feet, and carrying us (1 Kings xviii. 46) forward to the goal. Therefore, day by day we go down into the arena, to fight with foes infinitely stronger than we, knowing that "we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Conclusion: That the crowded Isthmian festival was held each alternate year at the very gates of Corinth and almost under the shadow of its Acropolis, must have given to the metaphor of ver. 24 special force in the minds of the Corinthians. And, possibly, Paul was himself present at a festival during (Acts xviii. 11) his eighteen months' sojourn at Corinth, using perhaps the opportunity to summon the assembled strangers to a nobler contest. (*Prof. Beet.*) *The Christian race*:—In a race generally there are multitudes to compete, but out of those multitudes how few win! The same fact in the Christian race can be accounted for on two grounds:—I. THE LACK OF EARNESTNESS. Consider this in—1. Its sources. (1) Lack of knowledge, or confusion of thought. Because of such passages as Rom. vi. 23; Titus iii. 5–7; John iii. 16, &c., some do not see what there is for the believer to strive after. As though

merely being a child were enough; as though it were not possible for a father to give his children special marks of his love. "How pleased father will be when he sees how much we have done." Are not children, when speaking in this way, really labouring for just the kind of prize held out here? the expressed approbation (Matt. xxv. 21) of the "righteous judge" (2 Tim. iv. 8). (2) Lack of appreciation. All who see the nature of this gracious reward do not also see its great value. Besides, how dim and distant! Like Esau's despised birthright, how intangible the whole promise! 2. In its results. Those who have never succeeded in grasping this prize with their hearts, naturally never do so with their hands. Such half-hearted competitors have lost the race even before they begin. Never starting, how are they to arrive? In such an undertaking as this, would it not be more than a miracle if they did? II. LACK OF SUITABLE TRAINING. Consider—1. What "training" signifies. Living by rule. To be "temperate" (ver. 25) is to rule oneself. It is to "keep under" the body, &c. (ver. 27). It is to deny ourselves everything that would in any way impede us in running our race (Heb. xii. 1). Hence we see—2. What the lack of it does. It secures failure. (1) On account of the greatness of the enterprise. What we are striving for is nothing less than the "mastery." In such an enterprise, if we do not rule our desires, our desires will rule us—and ruin us too. In such a work we not only need no self-inflicted hindrance, we need all the help we can get. (2) On account of the insufficiency of our strength. Even those who are strong, if "out of condition," are unequal to their task. Much more we, who are weak. Conclusion: To stir us up, consider in the case of failure—1. How much is lost. How can we hope that we are true Christians if we do not even "study to show ourselves approved unto God"? There are those who have just enough religion to make them miserable. 2. How little is gained, viz., too little to be described. The man who misses the approbation of Christ obtains no other in its stead, not even his own. How many centuries have passed since the question of Matt. xvi. 26 was first asked? How much nearer are we, even now, to finding a reply? (*W. S. Lewis, M.A.*) *The Christian athlete*:—I. HIS EXERCISES. The Christian life may be compared to—1. A race. 2. A combat. II. THE CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS IN THESE EXERCISES. 1. Personal mastery. 2. Moderation. 3. Distinctness of aim. 4. Concentration of purpose. 5. Activity. 6. Courage. 7. Perseverance. III. THE REWARD OF SUCCESS. 1. Its intrinsic value. 2. Its permanence. Application: This reward should make us—1. Burn with ambition. 2. Watchful. 3. Enduring and contented. (*W. Stevens.*) *The spiritual racer*:—I. THE RACE. Christian life is a race. It is no haphazard thing; it is marked off and measured; it has a starting-point and a goal. 1. The race begins at the Cross. The Christian, at his conversion, enters the racecourse, and his name is recorded and published. 2. The race ends at death. The most hopeful beginning may have a hopeless ending. A good start is of immense value; but it is not he that maketh a fine start, but "he that endureth unto the end, that shall be saved." It does not take very long for the racer to lose all the advantage of a good start: and a life, though nobly run, if it fail in the home stretches, will be sure to miss the crown. II. THE RACERS are all who have forsaken sin, accepted Christ, and publicly entered the path of obedience. The Bible does not speak of invisible racers, but of those who are "compassed about by a great cloud of witnesses." Those Grecian athletes were in training long before the day of conflict came. But the Christian's training begins with the race. He trains in the race, and thus gains agility and skill through the turmoil of the contest. The racers—1. Strip for the race. "Lay aside every weight." Nothing that hinders must be left on. 2. Make progress. "Run." Think how ridiculous a lounger would have appeared, hanging around the ancient stadium, professing to be a racer, but never getting out of sight of the starting-point. Dash into the race, or leave the ground. 3. Persevere. "A race." Not a little jet of speed, because one feels like it, or down street for fun. Christianity demands not only prompt action, but continuity of effort. If religion were only a thing of frames and feelings, some would soon fly to the goal, especially if the feeling held out. 4. Concentrate effort. "Run a race." Christianity harmonises all man's powers, and, with a noble obliviousness to surrounding attractions, hurls the whole man into the race. 5. Are watchful. "So run that ye may obtain." Christian activity is not a blind, haphazard thing. We are to keep our eyes about us, lest we stumble. III. THE REWARD. In the stadium, the prize, like all earthly honours, was perishable. But the Christian prize is an incorruptible crown. Proud moment, that, when the successful racer had the chaplet placed upon his brow, amid the applause of thousands. Grander moment for the Christian

athlete, when amid the shouts of rejoicing myriads, the pierced hands of Jesus place upon his head the crown of glory, with the blessed words of approval: "Well done," &c. (*T. Kelly.*) *The great race:*—I. THE DUTY ENJOINED—"running." The word implies—immediate attention—strong exertion. Not that easy, quiet religion which takes salvation as a matter of course, and regards condemnation as out of date. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence," &c. II. THE MANNER OF DISCHARGING THIS DUTY. 1. Previous preparation. (1) Moderation. (2) The removal of every weight. (3) Once more: we should take care in what manner. (4) Being "shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." 2. An actual exercise. Running implies—(1) Going forward. (2) In a direct line. (3) Without halting. (4) Without looking back. (5) Lawfully (2 Tim. ii. 5), i.e., (*a*) In dependence on Christ—(*b*) With a view to the glory of Christ. 3. Patient endurance. Blessed are they which "endure to the end, for they shall be saved." III. THE OBJECT AT WHICH WE ARE TO AIM. Everlasting life—to be "found in Christ"—to "know Christ," whom to know is everlasting life. (*Bishop Montagu Villiers.*) *The great race:*—I. THE PRIZE COMPETED FOR. An object in life is necessary to every one. Without it our energies are like the shafts and wheels of a machine, when there is no steam in the boiler. Put before a man the prospect of a fortune, and how cheerfully will he devote himself to his business. An objectless man can only be indolent and wretched. How these conditions remain when we rise to the higher ranges of life. There is an object in religion. Nowhere is a higher incentive needed or furnished. 1. This is not happiness. There are many whose creed is—Be good that you may be happy. But the principle is wrong. It is not for that a good man runs. He knows that happiness is like a little bird which will sit on your shoulder and sing for you all day, if you do not turn to look at it. But the moment you begin to look at it, it takes its flight. Hugo says truly—"Being in possession of the false aim in life, happiness, we forget the true aim, duty!" 2. It is not heaven. That is, undoubtedly, a home of the soul. But Christ never urged men to believe in Him in order that they might get it. The assurance of it is a very different thing from making it the reason of a good life. If the only reason one has for serving God is that he may receive his pitiful denarius at the end of the day, he will find that he has been running a race for a corruptible, not an incorruptible end. His heaven will be no heaven, since his heart will still be full of that self-seeking in whose train follows a hell of discontent and misery. Out of the heart the love of Christ must thrust the selfishness which makes not only present self-good, but eternal self-good, the aim of religion. 3. The thing for which we run is a kingdom of heaven which is within us—a Christlike character. The good man runs the race that he may be "perfect and entire" in goodness, lacking nothing. Heaven will at last fall to his lot, but to get it is not his ambition. He aims at a life made holy by the pursuit of righteousness. II. CERTAIN CONDITIONS ACCEPTED. 1. The back must resolutely be turned on wrong-doing. No one can lawfully enter on the contest for holiness with any love of sin in the heart. The merchant who conducts his business upon dishonest principles, cannot at the same time be a disciple. He is not running lawfully, and will never win the prize. 2. A strong faith in Christ who takes away the sin of which we have repented. Many hold that for a good life one has only to recognise the voice of conscience, and to follow its directions. But let us not be deceived. History can tell us something of the fruits of this so-called independent morality. The teaching of Socrates and Plato wrought no radical reformation in Athenian morals. The precepts of Seneca could not save his pupil Nero from the depths of brutality and shame. The moral philosophy of Hume culminated in the French Revolution. It is impossible to rise above the low levels of a sinful self without a high faith in Him who is the power of God unto salvation. Argument is not needed to enforce this. It is prescribed by the eternal Judge. 3. Open confession of our fidelity to Christ. We cannot, lawfully, run the race in secret. Here is the plain word of the Master. He requires us to enter into open fellowship with His cause on the earth. 4. Great and continued effort. It is not an easy thing to do right. In this contest, every energy of the soul is called into play. Amateur Christianity may do for show, but it tells for nothing in the great sum of life. This is the vice of our age. We are enthusiastic about everything but religion. (*H. R. Harris.*) *The race of life:*—1. The style of Paul is peculiar in its directness. We may hesitate to illustrate religious truth by sports as now conducted. The Greek games, however, were not of a mercenary character. No entrance fee was demanded, no betting, and no disreputable people were allowed. 2. Physical culture was more esteemed than now.

We often have well-trained minds in thin, sapless bodies. Our schoolrooms rob vitality. In Greece the instruction was given outdoors. Manly struggles ennobled the physical nature. 3. Picture to yourselves the temple of Neptune, the stadium, and the circling seats where sat the beauty and the wealth of Greece, a "great cloud of witnesses" applauding the efforts of the racers. Here is the starting-post and there the goal, with a tripod holding a garland of pine. Now the judge is seated, and the herald cries out that no unclean, no criminal or foreigner, shall draw near. The signal is given and the race begins. 4. We are all runners. Life is earnest. It may be a triumph or a disastrous failure. What is required:—I. TEMPERANCE. This word is belittled if referred to mere abstinence from drink. It means self-mastery. The whole nature must be under constraint and restraint, lest we slip and fall. II. WATCHFULNESS. Temptations creep upon us stealthily. Wealth, pleasure, ambition, and cupidity have their golden apples. Unless we keep our eye on the goal we are lost. III. THE LAYING ASIDE OF EVERY WEIGHT. The Pilgrim lost his load at the Cross. We must drop there everything which hinders. Men of this world make every sacrifice to gain money or power. Politicians run with zeal. They do it for a corruptible crown. (*D. M. Reeves, D.D.*) *Earnest counsels on the race of life:*—I. TRIFLE NOT—the business is earnest. II. DELAY NOT—the opportunity is short. III. ERR NOT—the path is narrow. IV. DIVIDE NOT YOUR ATTENTION—the work is difficult. V. RELAX NOT YOUR EFFORTS—he only that endureth shall be saved. VI. FAINT NOT—the prize is glorious. (*J. Lyth, D.D.*) *The Christian race:*—You are called, every one of you, for the kingdom of God; but it depends upon yourself whether you will work this salvation out. Life is a race, in which many will run but will not gain a prize. What is the meaning of the simile? I. RUN WITH ALL YOUR SPEED. There are some who labour from morning to night to win the treasures of this life, who are slothful in the work of saving their souls. And if they could gain the whole world and lose their own souls, what is the profit? Run with all your speed, for the way is long to the kingdom of God. The wise men from the East, when they saw the star, followed it through all the dangers and difficulties of a long journey. The attaining of eternal life, *i.e.*, so to live that eternal life may be in us here, is the greatest work that we can do. The prodigal who departed from his father's house into a far country, has to go back step by step as far as he departed. Surely this work is not the work of a day but of a life; and life is short for so great a work, and life is fleeting and uncertain. We cannot promise ourselves to-morrow; to-morrow is God's, to-day is ours. II. RUN WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH. If you see a man set about doing a task, you can see by the way he goes about it whether his heart is in it or not. Men who decide to get rich or to make a name will overcome every obstacle. But such men are often cowardly and slack in the work of their salvation. And yet we are warned that no man can serve two masters. There must be no half-heartedness in the work of our salvation, and there can be no neutrality. "He who is not for Me is against Me." III. WITH SELF-DENIAL AND TEMPERANCE. Our Lord has said, "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out," &c. The thing most necessary to you, you must cast off, if it cause you to sin. Remember that out of the seven deadly sins four are spiritual—pride, jealousy, anger, and strife. Such sins you must cast out. St. Paul says, "I keep under my body," &c. And if he had need to say that, how much need we? Venial sins are still important sins, and grow into great sins. And therefore, as St. Paul says here, "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." Men who desire to exhibit great feats of endurance have to mortify and control themselves in everything; and we cannot live with a little hardness for our eternal reward. IV. RUN WITH ALL YOUR HEARTS. There are two failures in this race—the one is to have too much hope in salvation. Some are as presumptuous as if they had received a revelation that they must be saved. The other is in not having confident hope. We must have confidence in God, and in experience. St. Paul says, "I know whom I have believed," &c. If a man is running for his life, as long as he has a hope of escape he will continue running; but the moment he despairs he slackens his efforts. A man who is swimming for his life will strike out strongly if he can hope, but the instant he despairs he sinks. So with those who lose their confidence in God, who are overcome by servile fear. Why are we to trust in God? Because—1. God is love. 2. You have His promises. He has promised you that if you believe in Him He will give you life eternal. What more do you need? Conclusion: 1. Take care you are in the right way. St. Augustine said, "You are making great strides, indeed, but you are out of the

right way." If we are out of the way, every step we take we are going from the kingdom. Our Lord says, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." 2. Having begun to run, do not let your heart do what Lot's wife did. Do not look back on the world which you have given up. (*Cardinal Manning.*) *The Christian race*:—I. ITS NATURE—"So *run*." It implies—1. Piety towards God. The love of God must be the all-constraining principle, the Spirit of God the Guide, and the Word of God the constant companion of every candidate. 2. Equity towards all their fellow-creatures. They will, by God's grace, endeavour to render to all their dues, and it will be their daily habit "to do unto others as they would others should do unto them." 3. Sobriety as to ourselves. It is not enough to abstain from drunkenness, &c., but the candidate's Christian course must be temperate in all things, even in lawful matters, keeping under his body, and bringing it into subjection. He is to use this world as not abusing it, and to let his "moderation be known unto all men," because "the Lord is at hand." II. THE MANNER. "*So* run." 1. Lawfully. 2. With the understanding. We must, ere the resolution be formed, "sit down and count the cost." 3. Looking forward to "Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith." 4. Penitently—*i.e.*, godly sorrow for and hatred to sin. 5. Prayerfully. 6. Cheerfully. 7. Believingly (Heb. xi. 1). 8. Continually. The Christian, unlike the Olympic race, which was celebrated but once in five years, is to be run every day of our lives. 9. Perseveringly. Nothing honourable and desirable is obtained, even in this world, without this. III. THE DESIGN. "That ye may obtain." (*T. Sedger, M.A.*) *The Christian race*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS COMPARED TO A RACE. There was a peculiar propriety in the selection of such an image when writing to a people who held the Isthmian games in such reverence, that no national calamity was ever known to hinder their performance. The city was sacked on one occasion, but the games went on. Public events were dated from the time of their celebration. The design of the apostle was to show that the advantage was always on the side of him who, instead of the pine leaves, was running for the crown of life. 1. There were points where the comparison held. The racer must keep to the rules of the course, and confine himself within the limits of the stadium. Speed will stand him in no stead without this: and though he may reach the goal, he will not receive the prize. And it is so with the Christian racer. He is not at liberty to choose his ground, to invent a short road, or to seek an easy road there; he must keep in the way of God's commandments. "The law of the Lord is perfect," and it is equally dishonoured, whether we multiply religious works and let these stand in lieu of the heart, or whether, under the plea of cultivating the heart, we neglect some plainly commanded duties. One man finds it easier to pray for an hour than to control his temper; another to cultivate a highly emotional religion than to part with his money. The gospel crown must be won in the gospel way. 2. There are points in which the parallel fails. (1) In an earthly race, however many may start, only one can win, whereas in the Christian race all may win. He who is faithful over a little shall be as certainly rewarded as he who is faithful over much; each shall receive a crown as large as he can wear. (2) In earthly competitions there must be jealousy and strife; the gain of one competitor is the loss of another, and each one feels it is his interest as far as he lawfully may, to keep all rivals back. But the Christian racer, instead of hindering a weak brother, would help him; he rejoices in the feeling that he has so many companions, and would carry all the world along with him if he could. II. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THE COMPARISON. 1. The necessity of vigour, singleness of heart, steadiness of purpose, and determination; the concentration on that work in which we are engaged, of all effort and all hope. Thus the text is a protest against all half-heartedness, all matter-of-course religions, all views of salvation which make it a thing to be done by and by. If you are losers in this race, you lose everything. 2. Deliberation; carefulness, frequent looking both to ourselves and to our way, to see that we are running right. Many have run well who have not run rightly. They took their eye off Christ, and all went wrong with them; they missed the prize through having missed the way. 3. Habitual self-denial (ver. 25). The restrictions are not meant to be unnatural, or such as to make life a burden, but mere restraints upon what would be a hurtful excess. We are to be temperate in all things—in our enjoyments, our griefs, our worldly ambitions, our most lawful and permitted affections. 4. The absolute necessity of holding on our way unwearied to the end. There is no prize for him who stops half way. If the disciple after taking up his cross grow weary in well doing; if he put his hand to the plough and look back, both labour and crown are lost. Vigour and alacrity in youth, noble self-sacrifice in manhood; the longest

and the best running, all will be unavailing, if, like the Galatians, we suffer any influence to drive us back afterwards. III. THE ENCOURAGEMENTS. 1. Remember all eyes are upon you. The eyes of God are upon you; the eyes of Christ are upon you, rejoicing at each onward and victorious step, and in sorrow rather than in anger turning to look upon you when the voice of the cock-crowing proclaims a shameful fall; the eyes of the holy angels are upon you, watching their opportunities to strengthen you with invisible aids; and the eyes of the malignant powers of darkness are upon you, marking your steps to make you fall; the eyes of glorified spirits are upon you (Heb. xii. 1). 2. Think of the priceless worth of the prize for which we run. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The Christian life a race*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A RACE. Rapidity, energy, &c., required (Luke xiii. 24; Col. i. 29; 1 Tim. vi. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 7; see Gr., and *cf.* Luke xxii. 44). Running often used in illustration of Christian course (Gal. ii. 2; Phil. ii. 16, iii. 3; Heb. xii. 1; and see Cant. i. 4, and Psa. cxix. 32). Some are walking, crawling, loitering, &c. (1 Cor. xvi. 13). Is not heaven worth running for? (Matt. xi. 12). Strive; for many will seek (only) and fail (Luke xiii.). II. THE GREAT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FIGURE AND REALITY. There one receives the prize; here all may, though some come much behind others. Happy those with a finished course, a crown won! Some are lame, halt, feeble, slow, &c. Nevertheless, if in Christ, who is the way, they will yet win, and many first will be last, and last first. III. How? MARK HOW THESE GREEKS WERE TRAINED. 1. What care, pains, self-denial, self-restraint in all things, hours, food, rest, &c. (Rom. viii. 13). The Corinthians self-indulgent, which St. Paul rebukes (*cf.* 1 Pet. ii. 11, v. 8; and especially 2 Tim. ii. 3–5). 2. They were to "strive lawfully." So we are "under the law to Christ" (v. 21). IV. THE PRIZE. Great disparity between the reality and the figure. Astonishing what men will undergo to obtain—what? a little fame, gold, power, or authority. All the prizes of this world like those in Greece, which were wreaths, no sooner clutched than gone. But the Christian prize how glorious. A crown of righteousness (2 Tim. iv. 8); of life (Rev. ii. 10; James i. 12); of glory (1 Pet. v. 4; *cf.* Rev. iv. 4, 10, v. 10, i. 6, vii. 9). "Hold fast that thou hast," &c. What hast thou?—hast thou Christ? Hold Him fast and run. Soon the race will be over (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8). Conclusion: Rev. iii. 21, ii. 10. (*W. E. Light, M.A.*) *The heavenly race*:—1. There are few things upon record in which the exertion was so violent, and yet so short, as a Greek race. And therefore it stands at least four times in St. Paul's epistles, as the emblem of the brevity and the struggle of the Christian life. 2. We can conceive how the believer's career will look when he casts his eye back upon it from eternity. First there came a Divine influence—then a holy ambition—then an earnest determination—then all the happy self-discipline—then the race—severe even unto death: he rushed, passed by, and all is over—and then the rest, and the joy. 3. In that course all of you are occupying now your positions. Your stadium is the little span of your present existence—the spectators are the holy angels, the heralds are the ministers who call you to the contest, and animate you by the way—the umpire is the Lord Jesus, and the crown is life eternal. 4. Already some have run their course, and are not uninterested in those who are filling, after them, the same exciting scene. Others are just offering themselves; while many are midway. But alas! some have never set out, and others who did "run well"—but, bewitched with the world's sorcery, they have ceased to run. We shall only be fulfilling our duty, as the heralds, if we set before you—I. SOME OF THE CONDITIONS OF THE COURSE upon which your admission and your subsequent victory must depend. 1. In those Isthmian games none could join who were not freemen of unspotted character. As soon as the combatants appeared, the crier, having commanded silence, laid his hand on the head of each in succession, demanding of all the assembly, "Is there any one here who can accuse this man of being a slave, or of being guilty of any moral wrongs of life?" If any stain was found upon his character, he was excluded; but if otherwise, then he was led to the altar of Jupiter, there to make solemn oath that he would conform to all the regulations, and so he proceeded to the brunt. 2. And now what if God should make proclamation that none should be candidates for the crown of life but those who, free from sin, are obedient to His laws? Could you pass the scrutiny? The very scrutiny of which St. Paul speaks in ver. 27, "castaway" meaning "not approved in the scrutiny." If there be any secret love of sin, men may reckon you in the number of candidates, but God does not! II. But suppose that the examination has shown you one who, believing in Christ, is emancipated from sin, and obedient to God's law. Follow me to THE STRIPPING ROOM (Heb. xii. 1). There are some

who are sadly "weighted" with many things. Hoarding money—personal vanity—worldly amusements—society where God is not—self-indulgence. What are these things but clogs? You cannot "run" with those things on. Will you cumber your energies when you need to stretch them to the uttermost? In the natural course, men are accurate to the ounce—and will you trifle with those fearful odds? You may set out; but if your heart is not in it, it will only be soon to creep, then to crawl, then to stop, then to lie down, then to go to sleep, and then to die! Go into the stripping-room at once, undress yourself, else do not call yourself a runner. III. But now, entered on the race, "PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE." 1. "The mark" was a certain line drawn along the course, to show the runners exactly where they were to run—so that if you would run lawfully, take care not only that you are going to the right object, but that you are pursuing that object along the right line. The Christian's "mark," in general words, is the Scriptural method of salvation. This "mark" stretches itself out all along. "Press" to it. Every day consult your Bible to find your "mark." 2. At the time when St. Paul was writing there was a particular race in which every runner carried a torch; and he won the race who came in first, bringing with him his torch still alight. Some, running very fast, put out their torch; others, running slowly, kept their torch in, but arrived too late. Beware lest a false excitement put out the flame of love! and yet beware, equally, lest over-caution hinder too long! but let zeal and love, patience and speed, go hand in hand, with equal pace—for so heaven is won! IV. And now I see you in the midst of your career. Every race quickens as it proceeds; and the competition grows greater. YOU MUST STRETCH TO THE POINT. The secret of every race, perhaps, is fixedness of eye. Therefore the apostle has given us two directions. 1. "Forget the things which are behind"—counting our own past attainment nothing. 2. "Look unto Jesus." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The heavenly race*:—I. WHAT ARE WE TO RUN FOR? 1. Some think they must be religious in order to be respectable. Verily, if this be what you seek after, you shall get it; for the Pharisees who sought the praise of men "had their reward." But is it worth the drudgery? 2. Others go a little farther and desire to be considered saints. We have a considerable admixture of persons in our churches who only come for the mere sake of obtaining a religious status. "They have their reward," and they shall never have any but what they obtain here. 3. Another set take up with religious life for what they can get by it. I have known tradespeople attend church for the mere sake of getting custom. Loaves and fishes drew some of Christ's followers, and they are very attracting baits, even to this day. They have their reward; but at what a price they buy it! 4. Another class take up with religion for the sake of quieting their conscience; and it is astonishing how little of religion will sometimes do that. I have known a man who was drunk in the week, and who got his money dishonestly, and yet he always had an easy conscience by going to church on Sunday. 5. If you run for anything else than salvation, should you win, what you have won is not worth the running for. II. THE RULES OF THE RACE. 1. Some never will obtain the prize, because they are not even entered. These will tell you, "We make no profession." It is quite as well, perhaps, that you do not; because it is better to make no profession at all than to be hypocrites. Yet it is strange that men should be so ready to confess this. People are not so fast about telling their faults: and yet you hear people confess the greatest fault. God has made them, and yet they won't serve Him; Christ hath come into the world to save them, and yet they will not regard Him. 2. There is another class whose names are down, but they never started right. A bad start is a sad thing. There are some who on a sudden leap into religion. They get it quickly, and they keep it for a time, and at last they lose it because they did not get their religion the right way. They have heard that before a man can be saved, it is necessary to feel the weight of sin, make a confession of it, renounce all hope in his own works, and look to Jesus alone. But they look upon all these things as unpleasant preliminaries and therefore, before they have attended to repentance, &c., they make a profession of religion. This is just setting up in business without a stock-in-trade, and there must be a failure. 3. Some cannot win because they carry too much weight. "How hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven!" Carry the weight of this world's cares about you, and it will be as much as you can do to stand upright under them, but as to running a race with such burdens, it is just impossible. 4. We have known people who stopped on their way to kick their fellows. Such things sometimes occur in a race. The horse, instead of speeding onwards to the mark, is of an angry disposition, and sets about kicking

those that are running beside him—there is not much probability of his coming in first. "Now they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize." There is one, however, who never gets it, and that is the man who always attends to his fellow-creatures instead of himself. It is a mysterious thing that I never yet saw a man with a hoe on his shoulder, going to hoe his neighbour's garden; but every day I meet with persons who are attending to other people's character. They have so few virtues of their own that they do not like anybody else to have any. 5. Those will not win the race who, although they seem to start very fair, very soon loiter. At the first starting they fly away as if they had wings to their heels; but a little further on it is with difficulty that with whip and spur they are to be kept going at all. 6. Another class start well too, and they run very fast at first, but at last they leap over the rails and go quite out of the course altogether. They are like the dog that returned to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. "The last end of that man shall be worse than the first." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Running in the race:*—I. THE NECESSITY OF SELF-DENIAL. 1. Difficulty of winning the crown. If he who makes every exertion is the only winner, what becomes of the sluggish, selfish soul? All roads downward are easy; all roads upward difficult. 2. Greatness of the loss of the crown. Some will be saved—so as by fire (chap. iii.). Scarcely saved, but the reward lost. II. ITS NATURE. 1. All sin must be laid aside. Progress is impossible so long as one sin is deliberately indulged or one duty wilfully neglected. 2. All weights must be laid aside (Heb. xii. 1-3). What is lawful in itself may weigh us down. The true runner will sacrifice everything to progress. III. ITS INDUCEMENT. Throughout the moral universe there runs a law of compensation. Self-denial is but a postponement of pleasure to the future. 1. Sacrifice is reward by self-mastery. To keep the body under implies the reason and conscience enthroned and regnant, and the Spirit of God ruling over all. That is the ideal estate of man. 2. Progress and coronation. To make advance is reward enough to a true disciple; but to get to the goal and get the prize too—that is heaven. Conclusion: 1. We must run lawfully, *i.e.*, according to the Scripture rules of the race. 2. We must be temperate in all things. 3. We must run perseveringly; pursuing even when faint. 4. We must run hopefully. 5. We must run purposefully—not as a boxer who beats the air, not as one who runs uncertainly—a definite goal and the eye always on it. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *Running, the true Christian attitude:*—Cecil says that some adopt the Indian maxim, that it is better to walk than to run, and better to stand than to walk, and better to sit than to stand, and better to lie than to sit. Such is not the teaching of the gospel. It is a good thing to be walking in the ways of God, but it is better to be running—making real and visible progress, day by day advancing in experience and attainments. David likens the sun to a strong man rejoicing to run a race; not dreading it and shrinking back from it, but delighting in the opportunity of putting forth all his powers. Who so runs, runs well. (*The Christian.*) *Not all who run win:*—As victory in the games was the incentive which stimulated the youth of Greece to attain the perfection of physical strength and beauty, so there is laid before us an incentive which is sufficient to carry us forward to perfect moral attainment. The brightest jewel in the incorruptible crown is the joy of having become all God made us to be. But there are men who when opportunity is given them to win true glory turn away to salaries and profits, to meat, drink, and frivolity. The incorruptible crown is held over their head; but so intent are they on the muck-rake, they do not even see it. To those who would win it Paul gives these directions:—I. BE TEMPERATE (ver. 25). 1. Contentedly and without a murmur the racer submits to the ten months' training without which he may as well not compete. The little indulgences of others he must forego. His chances are gone if in any point he relaxes the discipline. So if the Christian indulges in the pleasures of life as freely as other men, he proves that he has no higher aim than they and can of course win no higher prize. 2. Temperance is complete and continuous self-rule. No spasmodic efforts and partial abstinences will ever bring a man victorious to the goal. One day's debauch was enough to undo the result of weeks in the case of the athlete; and one lapse into worldliness undoes what years of self-restraint have won. One indiscretion on the part of the convalescent will undo what the care of months has slowly achieved. One fraud spoils the character for honesty which years of upright living have earned. II. BE DECIDED. "I run," says Paul, "not as uncertainly," not as a man who does not know where he is going or has not made up his mind to go there. We have all some kind of idea about what God offers and calls us to. But this idea must be clear if we are to

make for it straight. No man can run straight to a mere will-o'-the-wisp, or who first means to go to one station and then changes his mind. Paul had made up his mind not to pursue comfort, learning, money, &c., but the kingdom of God. He knew where he was going and to what all his efforts tended. What then do the traces of our past life show? III. BE IN EARNEST. "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air," not as one amusing himself with idle flourishes, but as one who has a real enemy to encounter. 1. How much of mere parade and sham-fighting is there in the Christian army! We seem to be doing everything that a good soldier of Jesus Christ need do save the one thing: we slay no enemy. We are well trained: we could instruct others; we spend much time on exercises which are calculated to make an impression on sin; but where are our slain foes? 2. Even where there is some reality in the contest we may still be beating the air. Many persons who level blows at their sins do not after all strike them. Spiritual energy is put forth; but it is not brought into contact with the sin to be destroyed. Paul's language suggests that the reason may be that there remains in the heart some reluctance quite to kill and put an end to sin. We pray God, for example, to preserve us from the evils of praise or of success; and yet we continue to court them. Therefore our warfare against sin becomes unreal. 3. The result is detrimental. Sin is like something floating in the air or the water: the very effort we make to grasp and crush it displaces it, and it floats mockingly before us untouched. Or it is like an agile antagonist who springs back from our blow, so that the force we have expended merely racks and strains our own sinews and does him no injury. So when we spend much effort in conquering sin and find it as lively as ever, the spirit is strained and hurt. It is less able than before to resist sin, less believing, less hopeful, and scoffs at fresh resolves and endeavours. Finally, Paul tells us that the enemy against which he directed his well-planted blows was his own body. Every man's body is his enemy when, instead of being his servant, it becomes his master. When the body mutinies and refuses to obey the will, it becomes our most dangerous enemy. The word Paul uses is the word used of the most damaging blow one boxer could give another. It was probably by sheer strength of will and by the grace of Christ that Paul subdued his body. Many in all ages have striven to subdue it by fasting, &c., and of these practices we have no right to speak scornfully until we can say that by other means we have reduced the body to its proper position as the servant of the spirit. There is a fair and reasonable degree in which a man may and ought to cherish his own flesh, but there is also needful a disregard to many of its claims and a hard-hearted obduracy to its complaints. In an age when Spartan simplici y of life is almost unknown, it is very easy to sow to the flesh almost without knowing it until we find ourselves reaping corruption. (*M. Dods, D.D.*) *How to win the crown*:—I. MAKE UP YOUR MIND TO RUN. Decision: This must be settled once for all: "Put my name down, I will run." St. Paul says, "So have I; I therefore so run." Have you? II. PUT YOURSELF IN TRAINING. Discipline: "For even Christ pleased not Himself." III. STRAIN EVERY NERVE. Earnestness: See them, each one alert, waiting for the signal—then, away, each one with desperate eagerness seeking to cover the course. "*So* run that ye may obtain." Strenuous effort is needed. Look at rowers in a boat-race, or players in a football match. Are we to be put to shame by these? IV. AIM AT THE WINNING-POST. Singleness of mind: Straight for the mark! No step can he afford to take outside the line which leads right to it. V. HIT STRAIGHT AND HARD! Reality: It is no sham-fight. He cannot afford to hit wildly, as one beating the air. Our own besetting sin must be found out. We must learn, what the tempter knows so well, where our weak place is. There we must meet the enemy. VI. NEVER GIVE IN. Persistence: Keep at it to the end. (*T. Puddicombe.*) *The Christian race*:—I. HOW WE OUGHT TO CONDUCT OURSELVES IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, or, to preserve the metaphor, how we ought to run so as to obtain. 1. We ought to make ourselves well acquainted with the nature of the Christian life, with its duties and advantages, its difficulties and its dangers. This knowledge lies at the foundation of all spiritual improvement. The history of Christianity abounds with examples of the dangerous effects of partial and mistaken views of religion. To this source we may trace that system of corruption and superstition which, after the days of the apostles, gradually spread over a great part of the world. To the same source we may trace the overwhelming influence of the papal power, the thunders of excommunication, and the horrors of the Inquisition, the practice of retiring from the world to a life of monastic seclusion, together with many of those wars, persecutions, and massacres, which in the Middle Ages deluged with blood the

nations of Europe. A plan of mercy has been devised and executed for the salvation of man. This plan, together with the means by which we become interested in it, has been fully unfolded in the gospel. But if we are ignorant of those means, we cannot possibly avail ourselves of them. Hence the necessity of being acquainted with the Scriptures. They contain a full revelation of the Divine will. In them the path of duty is clearly pointed out, and they unfold the mystery which had been hid for ages, but which was at last made known by Jesus Christ. 2. Having become acquainted with the nature of the Christian life, we ought also carefully to avoid everything that may obstruct or retard us in our spiritual course. Christians ought to guard against the beginnings of sin, and shun every appearance of evil. They ought to subdue every evil passion, and to mortify every unhallowed lust. Without doing this, it is in vain to think of making progress in religious attainments. Every commandment of the law is enjoined by the same authority, and therefore whoever habitually violates any one of them, may be justly reputed a transgressor of the whole. 3. But Christians ought not merely to abstain from sin, they ought to discharge the duties of the Christian life with patience, with ardour, and with perseverance. (1) They ought to discharge them with patience. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Patience is opposed to a hasty, fretful, and discontented temper, and consists in a disposition to bear the severest trials without murmuring, and to fulfil the part assigned to us, notwithstanding all the difficulties with which we may have to struggle. (2) We ought to discharge the duties of the Christian life with ardour. This temper of mind is directly opposite to that lukewarmness, and difference about religion, which the Scriptures so much condemn. Why are men so ready to lay hold of every little excuse to justify their criminal attachment to the enjoyments of the present life, and their neglect of future blessings? It is because they want that ardour which penetrates the heart of the disciples of Christ, and alone can raise them above the enjoyments of the world. (3) We ought to persevere in well-doing to the end of our days. II. SOME MOTIVES TO ENCOURAGE YOU TO COMPLY WITH THE EXHORTATION IN THE TEXT. 1. Consider, first, that you have many spectators of your conduct. To be approved of by those whose approbation we esteem; to be respected by those among whom we live; to be extolled by the wise and the good, and to obtain a name among such as have distinguished themselves among men; this conveys to the mind a pleasure, to which no man can be insensible. 2. Consider, next, the example of those who have gone before us. The duties to which we are called have already been performed; the difficulties with which we have to struggle have already been surmounted; and the troubles which we feel have already been borne by many of our brethren. 3. Consider, again, that the discharge of our duty is itself attended with pleasure; that the service which God requires of us is the most conducive to our present peace, as well as to our future happiness. 4. Consider, also, that a crown of glory is reserved for the faithful disciple of Christ. It is not a garland made up of flowers and leaves, which soon wither and decay; it is a crown which will flourish, when the most precious gems on earth are dissolved, when the luminaries of heaven are extinguished, and the moon and the stars fade away in their orbs. 5. We have the promise of Divine aid in every difficulty and in every trial. God sendeth no man a warfare on his own charges. When He calls us to duty, He invariably promises to fit us for the discharge of it. (*John Ramsay, M.A.*)

I. TO GIVE YOU A GENERAL ACCOUNT OF THE RACE WE HAVE TO RUN. In general, the race we have to run comprehends the whole of that duty we owe to God; namely, obedience to His laws, and submission to His providence; doing what He commands, and patiently enduring whatever He is pleased to appoint. II. TO ILLUSTRATE THE FITNESS AND PROPRIETY OF THIS SIMILITUDE, AND TO SHOW THAT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE DOTH VERY MUCH RESEMBLE A RACE IN SEVERAL IMPORTANT RESPECTS. There is a certain limited way in which the Christian must run, emphatically called the way of God's commandments. This we must keep with the utmost precision, "neither turning aside to the right hand, nor to the left." Mere activity will not avail us: we may be very keen and busy, but if we are not busy according to rule, we only lose our labour: God can never accept it as a service done to Him. Again, as running a race is a swift and constant progression, so ought the life of a Christian to be. There are several important respects in which the Christian race doth widely differ from all others. 1. In other races, though many may start, and hold out to the end, yet none but the foremost receiveth the prize: whereas it is quite otherwise in the Christian race. There may be a great disparity among the candidates, but every one who endureth to the end shall be saved. 2. They who run in the

Christian race have no envy, no jealousy, among themselves; far less do they molest and hinder one another: on the contrary, the stronger help forward the weaker, and give them all the assistance in their power. 3. They who run in other races have nothing but labour till they obtain the prize; but in the Christian race, the exercise itself carries part of the reward in its bosom: "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." 4. A distinguishing property of the Christian race; namely, the certainty of gaining the prize at last. III. LET ME NOW EXHORT YOU SO TO RUN THAT YOU MAY AT LENGTH OBTAIN. And for this end let us consider—1. That many eyes are upon us. 2. That many have already run this race who are now in possession of the glorious prize. 3. The unspeakable worth of the prize to be obtained. (*R. Walker.*) *Human rivalries*:—I. NOTHING IS MORE UNDENIABLY TRUE THAN THAT RIVALRIES ARE AMONG THE MOST FRUITFUL SOURCES OF EVIL IN EVERY DEPARTMENT OF LIFE. 1. People are agitated by heated political contests which, for a time, absorb every other interest. 2. Commercial rivalries. The rivalries of the street, the shop, the drawing-room, when and where do we not hear their echoes? II. HOW UNIVERSAL IS THE TRAINING THAT PRODUCES THESE RIVALRIES. It begins in childhood and runs all through life. How many people are there who covet a thing because it is intrinsically good, compared with those who covet it because it is better than somebody else's. The race of competitive display we see on every side. No place is so sacred as to be free from it. III. YET COMPETITION, A STRIFE TO EXCEL, NAY, IF YOU CHOOSE, DOWNRIGHT RIVALRY, HAS A JUST AND RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE PLAN OF HUMAN LIFE. 1. It is the equitable thing that the best man should win. 2. But the rivalries of our daily life must be exercised under manly and Christian sanctions. 3. But having said this, let us see to it that no eagerness for victory persuades us for one moment to forget that greater than any other triumph is the triumph of inflexible principle. 4. It is just here that we touch what may be called the heroic side of human rivalries. 5. In the eagerness of business competition, in the race for a prize, whether it be social, or commercial, or political, what a rare field for that magnanimity which will not take an undue advantage of another. 6. And even so, nay, still more, when there comes that harder strain upon the nobility of our nature which comes with our successes. How hard to bear meekly and generously the intoxication of success. (*H. C. Potter, D.D.*) *Try a run*:—On one occasion I had taken my boys with me to the top of a mountain 2,500 feet high. The youngest of them got very tired on the way back; I thought he would fairly give in, and that I would have to carry him. As we were crossing the valley we came within sight of home, a mile and a half off. I said, "Shall we run and see who will be home first?" He put his hand in mine, and we started off with this idea: "We will be home before the boys." On we went, leaping over streams, jumping over every boulder, on and on across the fields. Disheartened worker, if you get tired and weary in God's service, try a run, holding your Father's hand. (*J. Carstairs.*) *Parabolic use of the occupations of life*:—Learn—I. THAT THE LOWER OCCUPATIONS OF OUR LIFE SERVE AS A PARABLE OF THE HIGHEST. Probably, few parables of Christian life could have been more clearly understood and keenly appreciated than these national pastimes. Pastimes become parables of Christian life. Yes, and if pastimes, why not all the engagements of life? Assuredly Scripture warrants us letting commerce become such a parable. "Buy the truth," &c. Do not agriculture, travel, art, music, &c., stand out to thoughtful eyes as indications of the true merchandise, exploration, painting, harmony, of which all that concern merely the material are but shadows. "The things that are seen are temporal," &c. II. THAT THE HIGHEST OCCUPATIONS OF LIFE CHALLENGE AND EMPLOY ALL THE BEST QUALITIES OF MANHOOD THAT ARE EMPLOYED IN THE LOWER. St. Paul clearly recognised certain moral elements of great worth in those ancient games. There was the perseverance of the runner, the self-mastery of the wrestler; and such perseverance and self-mastery were to be imitated by men in the highest region of human experiences. So it is in the whole realm of occupation. The industry, persistence, frugality, heroism, &c., we may see in any course of human affairs are to be imitated by us in our concern for, and contact with, the sublimest spiritual realities. Why? This leads us to notice —III. THAT THERE IS URGENT NEED FOR THE EXERCISE OF THESE QUALITIES, BECAUSE IN THE HIGHEST CONCERNS OF LIFE THE DIFFICULTIES ARE GREATER, THE REWARDS RICHER, AND THE FAILURE MORE TERRIBLE THAN IN THE LOWER. 1. The race to be run by the soul who would reach the true goal is longer, has more obstacles, requires more strength than that old race. 2. The rewards are higher for they are incorruptible, perfectly pure and unfading. 3. The failure is more deplorable. To miss the goal

is nothing in comparison with becoming a moral castaway. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *Jacob's ladder, or the way to heaven*:—1. The apostle saith that you must run. It is not an easy nor a short journey, which a dreamer, a snail, or any careless man may perform and take his ease. A man must always run, from the first day he setteth forth till he come to his journey's end. 2. Christ saith, "I am the way," and therefore He bids us to follow Him. He began betime, for at twelve years of age He was about His Father's business (Luke ii. 49). He made speed; for "He spake and did more good things" in three and thirty years, "than could be written" (John xxi. 25). He kept the right way; for none could accuse Him of sin, though they watched Him for that purpose. He continued well; for He died like a lamb, and prayed to His Father, and forgave His enemies. Therefore do you—I. BEGIN BETIME. God requiring the firstborn for His offering, and the first-fruits for His service, requireth the first labours of His servants, because the best season to seek God is to seek Him early. And therefore Wisdom saith, "They which seek me early shall find me"; but to them which defer, she saith, "Ye shall seek me, but ye shall not find me." Therefore the Holy Ghost crieth so often, "This is the acceptable time; this is the day of salvation; to-day hear His voice." Who is so young that has not received some talent or other? Therefore the fathers were charged to teach their children the same law which they had themselves (Deut. vi. 7), and Christ rebuked the disciples which forbade the little children to be brought to Him (Matt. xix. 14), for, should children honour their father, and not honour God? Manna was gathered in the morning, because when the sun arose it did melt away; so virtue must be gathered betime, for if we stay till business and pleasures come upon us, they will melt it faster than we can gather it. Yea, doth not God require morning as well as evening sacrifice? It is an old saying, repentance is never too late; but it is a true saying, repentance is never too soon; for so soon as ever we sin, we had need to ask forgiveness. Therefore linger not with Lot; for if the angel had not snatched him away, he had perished with Sodom for his delay. They were but foolish virgins, which sought not for oil before the bridegroom came. Samuel began to serve God in his minority (1 Sam. ii. 18). Timothy read the Scripture in his childhood (2 Tim. iii. 15); John grew in spirit as he ripened in years (Luke i. 80). II. KEEP THE WAY. As God taught Israel the way to Canaan, sending a fiery pillar before them, which they followed wheresoever it went; so when He ordained a heaven for men, He appointed a way to come unto it, which way he that misseth shall never come to the end. There be many wrong ways, as there be many errors; there is but one right way, as there is but one truth. And, therefore, Jacob did not see many, but one ladder, which reached to heaven. It is not enough to run, but we must know how we run. Therefore, if ye ask, like the scribe, how ye shall come to heaven, the right way to heaven is the Word, which came from heaven, and the way by which the Word doth set thee into heaven is, to do to others as thou wouldst have others do to thee; to exercise good works, and yet believe that Christ's works shall save thee; to pray without doubting, and yet be content that thy prayer be not granted; to keep within thy calling, and do nothing by contention; to bring thy will unto God's will, and suffer for Christ, because He hath suffered for thee; to apply all things to the glory of God, and of everything to make some use. Thus the Word goeth before us like the fiery pillar, and shows us when we are in, and when we are out. III. MAKE HASTE. For this cause Paul saith, "Run," which is the swiftest pace of man; as though he should go faster to heaven than to any place else in the world. His meaning is this, that as a man doth watch, and run, and labour, to be rich quickly, so he should hear, and pray, and study, and use all means, to be wise quickly. Therefore St. James says, "Be swift to hear" (James i. 19). We must be swift to pray, to obey, to do good; for he is not cursed only which doeth not the Lord's business, but he which "doeth it negligently" (Jer. xlviii. 10). The hound, which runs but for the hare, runs as fast as possibly he can; the hawk, which flieth but for the partridge, flieth as fast as possibly she can; and shall he which runs for heaven creep more slowly than the dial? IV. PERSEVERE TO THE END. For if you begin betimes, and go aright, and make haste, and continue not to the end, your reward is with them of whom Peter saith, "Their end is worse than their beginning" (2 Peter ii. 20). Therefore the Holy Ghost cries so often, "Be faithful even unto death," "Be not weary of well-doing," "Take heed lest ye fall." For when thou art weary of thy godliness, God doth not count thee good, but weary of goodness. Therefore Paul saith, "Pray continually," as though prayer were nothing without continuance. Some came into the vineyard in the morning, and some at noon; but none received

any reward but they which stayed till night. To have the ark but a while doeth more hurt to the Philistines than benefit them; so to serve God but a while doth more damage us than help us. Let the dog turn to the vomit, and the swine to the wallow; but thou, like Abraham, hold on thy sacrifice until evening, even the evening of thy life, and a full measure shall be measured unto thee. When one told Socrates, that he would very fain go to Olympus, but he feared that he should not be able to endure the pains; Socrates answered him, "I know that thou usest to walk every day between thy meals, which walk continue forward in thy way to Olympus, and within five or six days thou shalt come thither." How easy was this, and yet he saw it not. So is the way to heaven. If men did bend themselves as much to do good as they beat their brains to do evil, they might go to heaven with less trouble than they go to hell. (*H. Smith.*)

Ver. 25. **Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.** —*Lawful striving*:—I. THE FACT THAT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A STRIVING AFTER AN END. This text is out of joint with much of the language of the present day. Such as "the rest of faith"—as if Christian life were inaction. This is not an exceptional experience, or merely true of babes in Christ. The language appears again and again as the constant state of the apostle. II. THE MANNER OF THE STRIFE. 1. Lawfully. It must be in harmony with the Divine rule, not with our own impulses. 2. Certainly. Lawfulness secures certainty. Men guided by Christ are not in doubt as to what they ought to do, or as to the result. III. THE OBJECT OF OUR STRIVING. "I keep under my body." We think there was little need of Paul to do this. His body was indeed subject; he had gone through peril, trial, persecution. He never indulged it. IV. THE MOTIVES. 1. Not to be a castaway. 2. To gain a crown. (*W. Landell, D.D.*) *Temperance helpful to resolution*:—It is weak to be scared at difficulties, seeing that they generally diminish as they are approached, and oftentimes even entirely vanish. No man can tell what he can do till he tries. It is impossible to calculate the extent of human powers; it can only be ascertained by experiment. What has been accomplished by parties and by solitary individuals in the torrid and frozen regions, under circumstances the most difficult and appalling, should teach us that when we ought to attempt we should never despair. The reason why men oftener succeed in overcoming uncommon difficulties than ordinary ones is, that in the first case they call into action the whole of their resources, and that in the last they act upon calculation, and generally undercalculate. Confidence of success is almost success; and obstacles often fall of themselves before a determination to overcome them. There is something in resolution which has an influence beyond itself, and it marches on like a mighty lord among its slaves; all is prostration where it appears. When bent on good, it is almost the noblest attribute of man; when on evil, the most dangerous. It is by habitual resolution that men succeed to any great extent; impulses are not sufficient. What is done at one moment is undone the next; and a step forward is nothing gained unless it is followed up. Resolution depends mainly on the state of the digestion, which St. Paul remarkably illustrates when he says, "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." *Temperance*:—I. AS AN ELEMENT OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. There are many elements that constitute this; but there can be no full-rounded Christian life without temperance. 1. Observe the frequent references made to it in Scripture. It is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. v.), and one step in the ladder of Christian graces (2 Pet. i.). In his address to Felix, Paul reasoned of it. 2. The word literally means the power of regulating one's self; hence it is synonymous with self-control; and as self-control is needed only when there is temptation to sinful indulgence, there is contained in it the further idea of self-sacrifice. So it lies at the foundation of the noblest of all lives. This is the principle that made the martyrs. 3. Let it not be supposed that it was unknown prior to the Christian era. It was practised, as we see, by the athletes; so that Christianity simply took hold of an existing principle and applied it to a new case. But formerly its end was selfish and secular; now it is exercised for a worthier end. 4. Self-denial, then, occupies no secondary place. He who is not able to practise it is not worthy to be a follower of Christ. But how can this be unless we possess something of His spirit? The highest type of man is he who is likest to Christ in consecration and self-denying service. This is what we should aim at; it is the perfection of character. "Shall Jesus bear the Cross alone, and all the world go free?" &c. II. AS A CONDITION OF MORAL CONQUEST. 1. No one ever yet did anything great without making

a sacrifice. The prize-wrestler deemed it indispensable to success. He had to forego everything that did not contribute to the end in view. It is the same all through life. Whatever be one's abilities, there is no royal road to proficiency; and of all things, the most difficult to master is one's self. If the prize-fighter, the soldier, the student, the merchant, can be self-denying to gain their ends, why cannot the Christian deny himself to gain his end? Think of the self-denial of Moses, Daniel, the three Hebrew children. Let their manly example impress on us the duty of total abstinence, when the alternative is sin. 2. Herein lies the guarantee of conquest. Let self be put down and Christ lifted up, and then not only will the life be itself a success, but it will be a power for the moral conquest of the world, for we can influence others only in proportion as we live under the power of the truth ourselves. The world will not readily be impressed with that spirit which makes self-interest its end, nor be struck with the excellence of that religion which makes no sacrifice. III. AS A DUTY OF UNIVERSAL OBLIGATION. 1. We owe it to Christ. We owe our salvation to the practice of this principle on His part. Think what He gave up for us. 2. We owe it to ourselves. How many are there who, from protracted pandering to the cravings of their lower nature, have lost the power of self-control! 3. We owe it to our fellow-men. If Christ denied Himself for us, should we not also deny ourselves for the brethren, and, like the noble Apostle of the Gentiles, become all things to all men? (*D. Merson, M.A.*) *Self-control possible to all:*—1. Paul, instructed in all the narrowness of his people, escaped entirely from it, and became as unconventional as you can well imagine a man to be. If he went past a heathen temple, he used that as an illustration of Divine truth. 2. The illustration of our text is one drawn from the conflicts where wrestlers or racers contended for the wreath. He declares that men who strove for these things were "temperate." Now temperance means self-control, and self-control, self-denial. This was much to say in Corinth. I. SELF-CONTROL IS THE COMMON EXPERIENCE OF MEN, AND CHRISTIANITY APPEALS TO AN ACTIVE POSSIBILITY, FOR A PURPOSE FAR HIGHER THAN THAT FOR WHICH MEN USUALLY EMPLOY SELF-CONTROL. 1. If there is a class who are more than any other given up to the force of animal desires, it is the athletic class. And yet for the (to them) highest pleasure they persuade themselves to practise extraordinary self-control. If I were to preach to them a temperate life, for the sake of spiritual dignity, they would reply, "That will do very well for parsons, but it is impossible for men like us." And yet they practise far more than what would be necessary to make them eminent Christians. Did you ever read the history of the training of men for prize-fights? The system of exercises, if exerted in industry, would obtain for them a living during the whole year. 2. If there be anything in this world that men dislike, it is the unintermitted endurance of discomforts and disciplines; and yet how cheerfully do soldiers endure these things under the stimulus of various motives of ambition, patriotism, and *esprit de corps*. Well, if these men can do it, anybody can. The only question is, Will you? 3. There is no class that submit to so much inconvenience and self-denial as commercial men. The most disagreeable things are done by men, and men of sensitive nerve, if there be money in them. How patiently will they work in the tallow-chandler's shop, or a fish-shop, or in a mine, &c.; nay, cheerfully go to the tropics, and burn in Cuba. Ah! how sublime the life would be of an all-world-disturbing merchant, if only it were for a moral end. 4. Consider how patient men are with their fellow-men. The hardest thing to bear is men. A man that can bear cheerfully his fellow-men has little to learn. When men have no motive, how cross and uncharitable they are. But the moment they have an interest in others, see what perfect Christians they are—in a way! If a man owes you a debt, and you think you can get it by crushing him as a cluster is crushed, you will do it. But sometimes there is no cluster to crush, and then you tend this man, and take care of him. You do a world of work for the sake of helping him to bear clusters that by and by shall be pressed into your cup. Why, if you should take a man on Christian principles, and do as much as that for him, you would be canonised as a saint. And then, for the same reasons, see how men bear with disagreeable men. You have your wares for sale, and anybody that buys is welcome to your shop. And if the price is that you shall be "hail fellow well met" with him, you swallow down any reluctance, and say, "We must not do anything to offend him." During the days when colour was a virtue, in a famous church in New York a distinguished merchant had a coloured man in his pew, whose presence in the congregation had the same effect that a lump of salt would have in a cup of tea. And as they went out of the church, they gathered

about the merchant, and said, "What possessed you to bring that nigger into your pew?" He whispered, "He is a great planter, a millionaire." And then they said, "Introduce us to him." Then where was their fine taste? When mammon said, "Let it go," it was all right. But when Jesus said, "Let it go," that was detestable. 5. Nay, more. We see how willingly and cheerfully great men, great natures, for the sake of an ignoble ambition, that is not very high, after all, will sacrifice their lives, their multiform faculties and enjoyments. There are those living that are to be revered for many excellences, who, adopting the apostle's form of expression, could say, "I count all things but dung, that I may win the Presidency." II. NOW THE LORD JESUS, CALLING US TO HONOUR AND GLORY AND IMMORTALITY, SAYS ONLY WHAT THE WORLD SAYS OF ITS POOR, GROVELLING, AND MISERABLE THINGS—"Take up your cross and follow me." Lust says so: why should not love say so? Earthly glory that fades like the laurel wreath says so: why should not that crown of gold that never grows dim say so? When we urge such considerations upon the young, and young men are fired thereby; when truly noble natures hear the call, and accept it, and yield themselves to it, and enter upon a religious life with fervour, and deny themselves in all things in furtherance of its commands, how strangely the world fails to recognise its own redeeming qualities! And how are these men called enthusiasts! Now, enthusiasm in religion is the only good sense. There is not a father who does not say to his child, going out into life, "If you are to succeed as a lawyer, my son, you must give yourself to it." And I say to every man that is going out as a Christian, "If you are going to succeed as a Christian, you must give yourself to it." (*H. W. Beecher.*) **Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.**—*Contrasted aims and parallel methods*:—Here we get, in a picturesque fashion—1. THE WORLD'S SAD FOLLY IN ITS ORDINARY AIMS. The wreath was, of course, not what the racer ran for. It was only a symbol, and its entirely valueless character made it all the more valuable. It expressed simply honour and the joy of success. In front of the temple that presided over the games was a long avenue, on either side of which stood ranged the statues of the victors; and the hope that flushed many a man's face was that his image, with his name on its pedestal, should stand there. And where are they all? Their names forgotten, the marble likenesses buried beneath the greensward, over which the shepherd to-day pastures his quiet flocks. And all our pursuits, unless they be linked with eternity and God, are as evanescent and disproportioned as was the wreath for which months of discipline, and moments of almost superhuman effort, were considered but a small price to pay. Business, providing for a family, &c., necessarily demand attention. You may so use them as to secure the remoter aims of growing like your Master and fit for the inheritance, or to construct out of them a barrier between you and your eternal wealth. In the one case you are wise, in the other case your epitaph will be "Thou fool!" A poet has put in homely words the lesson for us: "What good came of it at last?" asks the little child, when the old man is telling him of the great victory. "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown"—two pennyworth of parsley. It is a symbol of what some of you are living for. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S WISDOM IN HIS AIM. "But we an incorruptible." 1. The emblem stands for a symbol of dominion, of victory, and of festivity. It is the crown of the king, or the wreath of the victor, or the garlands on the guests at the feast. It is a "crown of life." The true life of the spirit which partakes of the immortal life of Jesus is the crown. It is a "crown of glory"—the radiant lustre of a manifestly God-glorified spirit. The garland that adorns those who sit at the feast is no mere external adornment, but the lustre of a perfect character which is the outcome of a Christ-given life. It is the "crown of righteousness." Only pure brows can wear it. It would burn like a circlet of fire if it were placed on other heads. Righteousness is the condition of obtaining it. 2. This, then, is the aim which the apostle asserts to be the aim of every person that has the right to call himself a Christian. There is a sharp test for you. Do you live to win it? Does it gleam before you with a brightness that makes all other and nearer objects insignificant and pale? If you can answer them in the affirmative you are a happy man. 3. And more than that, all these nearer objects will become even more blessed, and your whole life nobler than it otherwise would be. The green of the lower slopes of the Alps never looks so vivid, their flowers never so lovely or so bright as when the eye rises from them to the glaciers. And so all the lower levels of life look fairer, because our eyes pass beyond them and fix on the great white throne that towers above them all. III. THE WORLD'S NOBLE WISDOM IN THE CHOICE OF ITS MEANS. 1. This poor racer had

ten months of hard abstinence and exercise before there was even a chance for him to succeed. And then there was a short spurt of tremendous effort before he came in at the goal. These things are conditions of success in the world, and no matter for what the man is doing it, it is better for him to be braced into self-control, and stirred into energetic activity, than to be rotting like a fat weed in the pestilential marshes of self-indulgence, and losing all pith and manhood in the languid dissolution of indolence. 2. And so one cannot but look with admiration at a great deal of the toil and effort that the world puts forth, even for its own shabby ends. Why, a man will spend twenty times as long in making himself a good conjurer, who can balance feathers and twirl plates upon a table, as some of us ever spent in trying to make ourselves good Christians. IV. THE FOLLY OF SO MANY PROFESSING CHRISTIANS IN THEIR WAY OF PURSUING THEIR AIMS. 1. A languid runner had no chance, and he knew it. The phrase was almost a contradiction in terms. What about a languid Christian? Is that a more consistent idea? If I let my desire and affections go flowing vagrantly over the whole low plain of material things, they will be like a river that is lost in the swamp. If I set out on the race without having girt up my loins by resolute self-denial, what can I expect but that before I have run half-a-dozen yards my ungirt robes will trip me up or get caught in the thorns and keep me back? No Christian progress is possible to-day, or ever was, or will be, except on the condition—"Take up your cross, and deny yourself, and then come after Me." Learn from the world this lesson, that if a man wants to succeed in any course he must shut out other, even legitimate ones. 2. And then the runner that did not put all his powers into the five minutes of his race had no chance of coming in at the goal. And there is no different law in regard to Christian people. Conclusion: God be thanked! We are crowned not because we are good, but because Christ died. But the teaching of my text, that a Christian man must labour to win the prize, is by no means contradictory to, but complementary and confirmatory of the earlier truth. The laws of the race are—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"; and the second is, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Heaven—an incentive to diligence*:—Julius Cæsar coming towards Rome with his army, and hearing that the senate and people had fled from it, said, "They that will not fight for this city, what city will they fight for?" If we will not take pains for the kingdom of heaven, what kingdom will we take pains for? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) "*Concerning the crown*":—I. THE CROWN. Recall the other places where the same metaphor is employed. It is extremely unlikely that all these instances of the occurrence of the emblem carry with them reference, such as that in my text, to the prize at the athletic festivals. For Peter and James, intense Jews as they were, had probably never seen, and possibly never heard of, the struggles at the Isthmus and at Olympus and elsewhere. The book of the Revelation draws its metaphors almost exclusively from the circle of Jewish practices and things. So that we have to look in other directions than the arena or the racecourse to explain these other uses of the image. It is also extremely unlikely that in these other passages the reference is to a crown as the emblem of sovereignty, for that idea is expressed, as a rule, by another word in Scripture, which we have Anglicised as "diadem." The "crown" in all these passages is a garland twisted out of some growth of the field. The "crown" which is the Christian's aim is a state of triumphant repose and of festal enjoyment. There are other aspects of that great and dim future which correspond to other necessities of our nature. That future is other and more than a festival; it is other and more than repose. There are larger fields there for the operation of powers that have been trained and evolved here. The faithfulness of the steward is exchanged, according to Christ's great words, for the authority of the ruler over many cities. But still, do we not all know enough of the worry and turbulence and strained effort of the conflict here below, to feel that to some of our deepest and not ignoble needs and desires that image appeals? So the satisfaction of all desires, the accompaniments of a feast in abundance, rejoicing and companionship, and conclusive conquest over all foes, are promised us in this great symbol. The crown is described in three ways. It is the crown of "life," of "glory," and of "righteousness." And I venture to think that these three epithets describe the material, so to speak, of which the wreath is composed. The everlasting flower of life, the radiant blossoms of glory, the white flower of righteousness; these are its components. Here we have the promise of life, that fuller life which men want. Here we live a living death; there we shall live indeed; and that will be the crown, not only in regard of physical, but in regard of spiritual, powers and consciousness. But

remember that all this full tide of life is Christ's gift. All being, from the lowest creature up to the loftiest created spirit, exists by one law, the continual impartation of life from the fountain of life, to it, according to its capacities. "I will give him a crown of life." It is a crown of "glory," and that means a lustrousness of character imparted by radiation and reflection from the central light of the glory of God. "Then shall the righteous blaze out like the sun, in the kingdom of My Father." We all shall be changed into the "likeness of the body of His glory." It is a crown of "righteousness." Though that phrase may mean the wreath that rewards righteousness, it seems more in accordance with the other similar expressions to which I have referred to regard it, too, as the material of which the crown is composed. It is not enough that there should be festal gladness, not enough that there should be calm repose, not enough that there should be flashing glory, not enough that there should be fulness of life. To accord with the intense moral earnestness of the Christian system there must be, emphatically, in the Christian hope cessation of all sin and investiture with all purity. "Thy people shall be all righteous." "They shall walk with Me in white." And it sets the very climax and culmination on the other hopes. These, then, are the elements, and on them all is stamped the signature of perpetuity. The crown of life is incorruptible. II. Now look, secondly, AT THE DISCIPLINE BY WHICH THE CROWN IS WON. Observe, first of all, that in more than one of the passages to which we have already referred, great emphasis is laid upon Christ as giving the crown. That is to say, that blessed future is not won by effort, but is bestowed as a free gift. It is given from the hands which have procured it, and, as I may say, twined it for us. Jesus provides the sole means, by His work, by which any man can enter into that inheritance. It remains for ever the gift of His love. Whilst, then, this must be laid as the basis of all, there must also, with equal earnestness, be set forth the other thought that Christ's gift has conditions, which conditions these passages plainly set forth. In the one which I have read as a text we have these conditions declared as being twofold, protracted discipline and continuous effort. James declares that it is given to the man who endures temptation. Peter asserts that it is the reward of self-denying discharge of duty. And the Lord from heaven lays down the condition of faithfulness unto death as the necessary pre-requisite of His gift of the crown of life. Eternal life is the gift of God, on condition of our diligence and earnestness. It is not all the same whether you are a lazy Christian or not. III. And now, lastly, note THE POWER OF THE REWARD AS MOTIVE FOR LIFE. Paul says roundly in our text, that the desire to obtain the incorruptible crown is a legitimate spring of Christian action. Now, I do not need to waste your time and my own in defending Christian morality from the fantastic objection that it is low and selfish, because it encourages itself to efforts by the prospect of the crown. If there are any men who are Christians only because of what they hope to gain thereby in another world, they will not get what they hope for; and they would not like it if they did. I do not believe that there are any such people: and sure I am, if there are, that it is not Christianity that has made them so. But a thing that we must not set as the supreme motive, we may rightly accept as a subsidiary encouragement. We are not Christians unless the dominant motive of our lives be the love of the Lord Jesus Christ; and unless we feel a necessity, because of loving Him, to aim to be like Him. But, that being so, who shall hinder me from quickening my flagging energies, and stimulating my torpid faith, and encouraging my cowardice, by the thought that yonder there remain rest, victory, the fulness of life, the flashing of glory, and the purity of perfect righteousness? Now it seems to me that this spring of action is not as strong in the Christians of this day as it used to be, and as it should be. You do not hear much about heaven in ordinary preaching. And I believe, for my part, that we suffer terribly by the comparative neglect into which this side of Christian truth has fallen. Do you not think that it would make a difference to you if you really believed, and carried always with you in your thoughts, the thrilling consciousness that every act of the present was registered, and would tell on the far side yonder? (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Ver. 26. **I therefore so run, not as uncertainly.**—*Not as uncertainly*:—In the Grecian games the uncertainties of every earthly race are symbolised. This uncertainty is one of the saddest aspects of experience. There are laurels for a few winners, but many are the losers. Some nearly win the race, and miss by a hair's-breadth; and many more never glimpse the goal, and yet bravely plod on in their weary disappointed way. I. MEN MUST RUN. Multitudes can say, not

"So run I," but, "So look I on." They are interested in the Christian story; but this is not enough. "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." "Almost!" is one of the saddest words in human experience. II. MEN ADMIT THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE EARTHLY RACE, and so they run with this dread consciousness at their hearts. Who can tell whether health may not fail, just as honours hard-won are heralding reward? What impediments may come in the earthly path from the falsity, greed, or frivolity of others? If you seek apart from God, all is uncertainty! How different is the Christian struggle. Here all who run may obtain the prize. Men of culture and no culture; vigorous or of feeble health—for Christ has promised His own Divine aid to all who, laying hold on His strength, press toward the mark. III. MEN SLIGHT DISTANT REWARDS. The goal! Let it be now, men say. The world of sense seems at first to have the best of it; but soon there comes the experience, common to all, that worldly reward is transient at the best. Earthly honours fade and wane. Even fame lives in few lives. One of the most renowned commanders of men, when the hour of triumph came, and the whole world seemed marshalled before him, was asked what the spectacle wanted? and he answered, "Permanence!" What a satire on human glory. "All flesh is grass," &c. But so firm is the apostle's faith, that with the heavens opened above him he calls the sons of men to seek the same incorruptible crown. The things we seek are all, like their Divine author, eternal in the heavens! As the voices of the redeemed fall from the celestial heights, they cry, "Not as uncertainly." IV. MEN WAIT TO BEGIN. There are some who have long been close beside the course, who are hesitating and halting still. Much depends, in life's crucial moments, upon habits of decision of character. So wait I! too many say. But what for? When will opportunity be more golden? When will heaven's gates be thrown more widely open? Test the things that are this day more pleasant than God's salvation, and see if they are worthy to be weighed with the soul's immortal weal. Death may be nearer to us than we think. V. MEN STAY IN THEIR COURSE. Some did run well, but they are hindered. Heroism cools; ardour faints. If religion were one sharp conflict, one martyr sacrifice, then how many would join the ranks? But ever in this sublunary sphere the rewards of earth and time are to the persevering. Æsop was but a slave, and Homer but a poor man, and Columbus but a weaver, and they all, keeping their eyes on the earthly goal and pressing toward it, gained the prize. So in the immortal sphere—the feeble may become strong, and the last be first, through earnest faith. (*W. M. Statham.*) *The heavenly race*:—I. YOU MUST ENTER THE LISTS. 1. You must be a Christian. An infidel, a pagan, cannot run this race, nor can a mere nominal professor. A sound faith must be united with an exemplary life. 2. Preparation is needed. The racer is careful in his diet. The Christian is to show sobriety, to be master of himself, subduing every passion. The athletes oiled themselves, both to give suppleness in motion, and to render it difficult for their antagonists to grapple them. The grace of Christ, the anointing of the Holy One, is indispensable to the believer. With the aid of Christ we can do all things. 3. The racer was presented in the circus. The Christian must free himself from everything that may hinder his progress. II. YOU MUST RUN CERTAINLY. 1. Men fail who have no aim in life. One thing is needful. "Beware of the man of one book," it has been said. You cannot stand in discussion with him. Others are readers of many books, but forget their contents. Some are distracted with business, politics, and pleasure, and so lose the reward. Of course, if God gives you varied gifts, you are not to neglect them, but to subordinate all to one aim. 2. Having chosen that aim, be conscientious. It is your conscience, not that of others, which is to guide. Do not falter and be turned aside, as were David and Peter. Don't beat the air, as a gladiator who, through fear or lack of skill, swung clear of his foe, giving the air the blow instead of his adversary. 3. Be candid. Look to yourself. We all live in glass houses, and should not throw stones. Do not listen to a sermon for another, and think how well the reproof fits another, and say, "Bravo for the preacher who has nothing for us." III. KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE GOAL TILL YOU REACH IT. We are to be "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith," for looking at Him will keep us from turning aside. We are all running a race, willingly or unwillingly. Is it a heavenly one? (*A. Gavazzi.*) *The Christian's race and battle*:—St. Paul proposes himself as an example of the life of a converted man. No conversion more unmistakable than his. If we would estimate conversion aright, let us view it as exemplified in St. Paul. I. POSITION OF CONVERSION. The starting-point, not the goal—the enlisting of the soldier, not his victory. It places us on the ground,

and bids us run. Enlists us in an army, and bids us fight (1. Tim. vi. 12; Eph. vi. 10–17). Look at St. Paul. 1. Christ had arrested him as he was rushing to ruin (Phil. iii. 12). Why? Not that he might stand still—sit down with folded hands, and wait for promised crown; but that he should run like racer in games, with no eye but for the goal—no thought but for the crown—all his powers concentrated on the one object, "to obtain" (Phil. iii. 12–14). 2. Christ had delivered him "from the power of darkness," &c. (Col. i. 13). He was sure of victory (1 Cor. xv. 57; Rom. viii. 37, xvi. 20); but only through conflict. II. A CONVERTED MAN MUST HAVE A DEFINITE AIM. St. Paul had "so run, not as uncertainly," vaguely, hither and thither, wasting time and strength. Not enough to run fast, perseveringly, energetically, we must run for the goal (Phil. iii. 13, 14). 1. Our goal is likeness to Christ. So to win Christ, to put on Christ, to be found in Christ, that we may be one with Christ. 2. Christ also our crown. He is our "exceeding great reward." The rewards of conquering in Rev. ii. 3 are Christ under different symbols. III. A CONVERTED MAN MUST REALISE A DEFINITE ENEMY. "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air"; my blows well aimed, and they tell. 1. Discover your besetting sin, or sins, by self-examination, and set yourself to fight therein. To fight against sin in the abstract is to beat the air. 2. Train for the fight. "I keep under my body," &c. Self-indulgence fatal to victory. We must be masters, not slaves of the body and its desires. 3. Fight in Christ's strength—with your eye on Him who has fought and overcome, leaving us promise of victory. As He did, take "sword of Spirit"—the threefold "it is written"—whole armour. "Who is he that overcometh," &c. (1 John v. 5). IV. A CHANGED MAN NOT NECESSARILY A SAVED MAN (ver. 27). St. Paul's words, "lest that by any means . . . a castaway," show us the precariousness of Christian life. So, too, the "stony-ground" hearers, "backsliders," &c. The Christian's safety depends on union with Christ. He must watch lest bosom sins cause him to relax his hold; lest unholiness clog the channels of the life-giving sap (John xv. 4–6). No danger so great as to shut one's eyes against danger. Application—trust not to past experiences. Self-confidence is fatal to Christian life. It is true Christ's sheep can "never perish," &c. (John x. 28, 29). But who are His sheep? They that "hear His voice and follow Him." (*Canon Venables.*) *Personal holiness:*—I. THE SUBJECT TREATED OF—eminent personal holiness. 1. Its spring. The Divine influence on the soul of man. 2. Its marks. (1) A constant keeping of the great end in view. The attaining a crown (ver. 25). (2) A habitual conflict with all difficulties. "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air." Paul felt that he had not to skirmish shadows. (3) The prevailing dominion of the Spirit over the flesh. "I keep under my body," &c. II. ITS IMPORTANCE TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER. 1. It is essential. (1) To his freedom. He is a soldier; the various indulgences which would enslave are not for him; the softnesses which would prevent his warfare are not for him. But that he may be thus free, he must be eminent in holiness (2 Cor. vi. 4–7). (2) To his happiness. The unhappiness of many ministers arises from the consciousness that they are not what they ought to be. (3) To a well-grounded assurance of the Divine favour and approbation. (*H. March.*) *The necessity of progressive religion:*—That was a fine eulogium which was made on Cæsar, that he thought there was nothing done while there remained anything to do. Whoever arrives at worldly heroism arrives at it in this way, and there is no other way of obtaining salvation. Behold in Paul a man who accounted all he had done nothing while there remained anything more to do. We ground the necessity of progressive religion—I. THE GREAT END OF CHRISTIANITY—to transform man into the Divine nature. This being the case, we ought never to cease endeavouring till we are as perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. Moreover, as we shall never in this life carry our virtue to so high a degree as that, it follows that in no period of our life will our duty be finished, consequently we must make continual progress. II. THE FATAL CONSEQUENCES OF A SUSPENSION OF OUR RELIGIOUS ENDEAVOURS. A man employed in a mechanical art sets about his work and carries it on to a certain degree. He suspends his labour for a while; his work doth not advance indeed, but when he returns he finds his work in the same forwardness in which he left it. Heavenly exercises are not of this kind. Past labour is often lost for want of perseverance, and it is a certain maxim in religion that not to proceed is to draw back. III. THE ADVANCES THEMSELVES IN THE PATH OF HOLINESS. The science of salvation in this respect resembles human sciences. In human sciences a man of great and real learning is humble; he always speaks with caution, and his answers to difficult questions are not unfrequently confessions of his ignorance. On the

contrary, a pedant knows everything, and undertakes to elucidate and determine everything. So in the science of salvation, a man of little religion soon flatters himself that he hath done all his duty. A man of lively and vigorous religion finds his own virtues so few, so limited, so obstructed, that he easily comes into a well, grounded judgment that all he hath attained is nothing to what lies before him. Accordingly we find the greatest saints the most eminent for humility (Gen. xviii. 27; Job ix. 15; Psa. cxxx. 3; Phil. iii. 12). IV. THE END WHICH GOD PROPOSED IN PLACING US IN THIS WORLD. This world is a place of exercise, this life is a time of trial, which is given us that we may choose either eternal happiness or endless misery. (*J. Saurin.*) **So fight I, not as one that beateth the air.**—*Beating the air:*—The expression implies—I. WANT OF SKILL. The boxer who strikes about wildly has never learned his art. This has to be studied—1. Patiently. Day after day must the labour be repeated. 2. Practically. No theory will teach the various cuts and defences without actual trial. And yet there are persons who think that they can enter upon the spiritual contest without either. II. WANT OF CONCENTRATION. The fighter who fights wildly loses his head and is lost, for his cool opponent seizes every opportunity, and calmly avails himself of every occasion of advantage. Does not our Christianity need a cool head, a concentration of purpose? Surely; and yet men suppose that any slipshod method, any wool-gathering frame of mind, will satisfy the requirements of that awful contest which is to win or lose eternal life. Should we not sit down sometimes amid the rush of life, and calmly inquire as to our position, difficulties, dangers, and progress? A merchant who acted aimlessly would soon come to grief; a ship's captain would soon wreck his vessel; a tradesman quickly come to the workhouse. And the Christian in the same way would soon fall a prey to the wiles of the devil. III. WANT OF PREPARATION. The athlete lays aside every weight. Even his clothes are cast off. Alas! how often Christians are handicapped with weights! One has a heavy golden chain about his neck. Another has a load of worldly affections round his heart and almost stopping its pulsations. A third has rings on his fingers which prevent his grasp. A fourth has his thoughts, his time choked with business. Or again another is absorbed with the sweet voices of pleasure. It is impossible to win with these "weights," and he who attempts to do so will be like one "beating the air." IV. WANT OF ENERGY. Activity is the soul of earthly business. How much more important is it in a contest such as a race or a fight! And in spiritual matters energy is quite as essential. (*J. J. S. Bird.*) *Fight wisely:*—1. To fight wisely is not to fight at a venture, but with a definite aim. Ahab, indeed, was shot by an arrow sent at a venture; but this is told us to magnify the Providence of God, who, in His designs, can direct the aimless shaft whithersoever it pleases Him; not to teach us that aimless shafts are likely on common occasions to be successful. Yet what is the warfare of many Christians but the sending of shafts at a venture? 2. The first work of the politic spiritual warrior will be to discover his besetting sin, and having discovered it, to concentrate all his disposable force before this fortress. Just as each individual has a certain personal configuration, distinguishing him from all other men, so there is some sin or sins which more than others is conformable to his temperament, and therefore more easily developed by his circumstances—which expresses far more of his character than others. This bosom sin is eminently deceitful. Its especial property is to lurk. (1) The besetting sin of many is vanity. Who knows not how it apes humility, so as really to impress its possessor with the notion that he is humble? Intensely self-satisfied in his heart of hearts, he depreciates himself in conversation. What follows? Men say to him, as in the parable, "Go up higher." He has been fishing for compliments, and compliments have risen to the hook. Is it not so? For would he not have bitterly resented it had any of the company taken him at his word? (2) Some men cannot bear to be second. Whatever they do must be done so as to throw into the shade all competitors. The world dignifies this with the name of honourable emulation, and accepts it as a token of fine character. But, judged by the mind of Christ, how does the sentiment sound, "Because I cannot outshine all rivals, therefore I will be nothing"? It jars strangely with those words, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them," &c. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory," &c. (3) A bosom sin, that it may the more easily escape detection, will wear the mask of another sin. Indolence, *e.g.*, is a sin which carries with it omissions of duty. Prayer or Scripture reading is omitted or thrust away into a corner, because we have not risen sufficiently early. Things go cross during the day in consequence, and we trace it all up to the

omission of prayer. But the fault lies deeper. It was indolence which really caused the mischief. One of the first properties, then, of the bosom sin with which it behoves us to be well acquainted, as the first step in the management of our spiritual warfare, is its property of concealing itself. In consequence of this, it often happens that a man, when touched upon his weak point, answers that whatever other faults he may have, this fault at least is no part of his character. It is to aid in bringing to light these secret sins that we make the following suggestions—I. Praying heartily for the light of God's Spirit to know thine own heart, OBSERVE AND REASON UPON THE RESULTS OF SELF-EXAMINATION. When this most salutary exercise has been pursued for a certain time, you will observe that the same failures are constantly recurring. The conclusion is almost inevitable that there is something serious beneath these constantly recurring failures. What is it?—selfishness, indolence, vanity, anxiety, &c. Remember always, that in the symptom, and on the surface, it may look like none of these, and yet be really and fundamentally one of them. II. LET US HAVE OUR EYE UPON THE OCCURRENCES WHICH SPECIALLY GIVE US PAIN OR PLEASURE. They will often be the veriest trifles; but yet, be it what it may, the probabilities are that, by tracing it to its source, we shall get to the quick of our character, to that sensitive quarter of it where the bosom-adder lies coiled up. III. WHEN THE DISCOVERY IS MADE, THE PATH OF THE SPIRITUAL COMBATANT BECOMES CLEAR, HOWEVER ARDUOUS. Your fighting is to be no longer a flourishing of the arms in the air; it is to assume a definite form, it is to be a combat with the bosom sin. Appropriate mortifications must be adopted, such as common sense will suggest. If indolence be the besetting sin, we must watch against slovenliness in little things; if selfishness, we must lay ourselves out to consider the wishes of others; if discontent, we must review the many bright points of our position, and seek our happiness in our work. But the great matter to be attended to in each case is, that the whole forces of the will should be concentrated for a time in that one part of the field, in which the besetting sin has entrenched itself. Thus point and definiteness will be given to Christian effort. IV. FOR EACH ONE OF US, NO BUSINESS CAN BE OF MORE URGENT IMPORTANCE THAN THIS DISCOVERY OF OUR BESETTING SIN. In conclusion, he who prays, "Show me myself, Lord," should take good care to add, lest self-knowledge plunge him into despair, "Show me also Thyself." The course recommended will probably lead us to the conclusion that our heart, which showed so fair without, is an Augean stable, which it requires a moral Hercules to cleanse; but the love of Christ and grace of Christ are stronger than our corruptions. (*Dean Goulburn.*) *Christian conflict:*—The prominent idea of spiritual life given in the New Testament is that of conflict. There is hardly one of the epistles of Paul in which the thought is not presented in some form. The same feature is found in the Epistles to the churches of Asia. I. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHRISTIAN STRIFE. 1. Its individuality. It is the personal struggle of each man against the enemies of his salvation. Of the ultimate issue of the great strife of all time there is no doubt. In other warfares each soldier receives a certain amount of glory from the success of the host—but not so here. Each man for himself must fight the good fight, and by God's grace lay hold on everlasting life. 2. Its reality. There was a time when the Christians were "everywhere spoken against"—when Paul knew that in every city bonds and imprisonment awaited him; and in the altered state of the times, and the change in feelings of men towards the gospel. Now the flesh is not less carnal, the world less alluring, the devil less Satanic. 3. Its variety. It is manifold in power but one in purpose. So is it—(1) With the outward and visible conflict. Sometimes it is a mere strife of opinion, or it is a struggle for the assertion of the rights of conscience, or it is the resistance of virtue to some form of iniquity, or the manly effort in the cause of right to break the chains of tyranny. (2) With the inner conflict of individuals. Some have to contend only against intellectual difficulties—in others it is the insidious growth of the world-spirit which they have to watch and resist. Others, again, have to contend against the self-righteous temper, or the mean, envious spirit, or the fierce passion. But, whatever phase the conflict assumes, we are contending against an enemy, who adapts his attacks to meet our individual cases, and the issue at stake is exactly the same. 4. Its bitterness. (1) There is an intensity in the opposition directed against the gospel, which at first is not easy to explain. If the Bible be not true, our faith inflicts no injury to others. It is true that Christianity pronounces a certain doom on unbelief, but if it be, as infidels would have us think, a human invention, these threatenings need awaken no anxiety, and provoke no opposition. Yet there is no weapon that can

be employed against the gospel that is not put in requisition. (2) So with regard to Christian practice. If Christians are striving after too high an ideal, they are the sufferers. Why employ against them the weapons of ridicule and calumny—why not treat them as weak enthusiasts to be pitied rather than seriously opposed? Yet it has never been so. The light will ever be hateful to those who love the darkness. (3) As in the world, so in the Christian's heart. Here is a battle of life and for life, where no quarter will be given, and no compromise can be attempted. This is, of all kinds of contests, the most fearful. It is not one of those mock encounters of the tourneys of chivalry, where knights sought to prove their prowess, without receiving or inflicting deadly injury. But it is a deadly wrestle with the foe in which we must conquer or die. II. SOME QUALITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER. 1. Perfect consecration. A whole-hearted service is what the "Captain of our salvation" expects from all who follow Him. This warfare must be the one business of his life who would "fight a good fight, and lay hold on everlasting life." 2. Simple faith. This is emphatically the "good fight of faith." It is the struggle between the love of "the things that are seen and temporal and the things which are unseen and eternal," and only through faith can the spiritual principle be victorious. Faith in the leader, not in the excellence of the cause—in a person, not in a principle—in Christ Himself and not in any creed, will give us the victory. Even in earthly conflicts nothing seems to breathe such spirit into a host as the presence of a favourite captain. Have faith in Christ, and neither earth nor hell can prevail against you. 3. Undoubting assurance as to the issue. This is the grand distinction between this and all earthly toils. There a man may be faithful and diligent and yet fail. But here we "run not as uncertainly, we fight not as one that beateth the air." "He who hath begun a good work in us will perform the same until the day of Jesus Christ." Conclusion: This is a conflict in which no man can be a mere spectator. We are all fighting under the banners of the King of kings or of the Prince of darkness; to which host do you belong? The question is surely not to be lightly dismissed, since on it hang the issues of life and death. (*J. Guinness Rogers, B.A.*)

Ver. 27. **I keep under my body . . . lest . . . I myself should be a castaway.**—*Keeping under the body*:—The body is a bad master though it may be a good servant. St. Paul does not wish to be rid of it, but he desires to put it in its proper place. I. IT IS QUITE ESSENTIAL TO A HIGH MORALITY TO HAVE A RESPECTFUL SENSE OF THE DIGNITY OF THE BODY. What our Lord Himself was pleased to wear, and wears now, must, on that very account, be honourable, and His teaching and His wonder-works were addressed as much to the body as to the soul. There are times when it is as right to attend to the body as to the soul. Are they not equally the subjects of God's creation and redemption, of the Father's care and love? Never look upon it as a pious thing to depreciate the body. We are not depreciating the body when we say, "I keep under the body, and bring it into subjection." The very connection does away with that thought. For does the racer, the wrestler, the boxer, despise his body? Is not it rather his glory? Is not it because he values it very highly that he so treats it? II. WITH THIS CAUTION, WE MAY NOW OBSERVE WHAT PLACE THE BODY OCCUPIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE SPIRIT. Originally the whole man was made in the image and after the likeness of God. Then came the fall. It was equally through the body as through the mind. In due time, Christ came, and equally redeemed both. But now here comes in the important distinction which determines everything. In the renewed man a change immediately takes place in his soul, but his body is not changed. That will take place at the resurrection. We all of us have felt the trouble of our bodies. One moment they incite us by their too much strength to pride and self-indulgence, and the next they drag us down to the dust. They are always carrying us too far, or preventing us from going far enough. To every physical temperament there is its own special danger—one to youth, another to age—one to health, another to sickness—to each according to his circumstances and constitution; but to all it is little better than "the body of this death." But, remember, there is not a member or a nerve in the body but it is capable of being a great sin or a high virtue. Every part admits of sanctification. All are given for a purpose, and that purpose is to glorify God. What we have to do is not to destroy anything, but to guide it—not to despise, but to elevate—not to cast off as an enemy, but to employ as a servant. Let me take an instance or two. 1. There is the love of dress. It is a natural instinct, and is in itself a perfectly innocent thing. And some attention as to personal appearance

is inseparable from every rightly-constituted mind. Yet every one knows that the love of dress is one of the greatest temptations of the age—to selfishness, vanity, extravagance, and sin. What shall we do, then, with it? Crush it? No. Employ it, control it, subject it. Always act upon a principle, and lay down for yourselves certain rules which your own judgment and conscience approve. Settle with yourself how much your dress ought to cost in the year, and be faithful to your estimate. Dress in the way that will please those whom you most ought to please, and not to please yourself. Make it a school of refinement and thought. So you will turn a dangerous thing into a good discipline, and a positive grace. 2. In like manner, as to food. Guide your conscience in this matter by the Bible; then live by your conscience. Take care that you live unselfishly. Remember whom you follow; and among whom, in this world of want and suffering, you are living. 3. The same consideration will apply to all worldly pleasures and amusements, and all corporeal gratifications. What is meant for pure and holy uses, keep for pure and holy uses. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Physical conditions*:—This language suggests—I. THE MANY-SIDEDNESS OF SCRIPTURE, OR, ITS POLARITY. 1. One end of a bar of magnetised iron will attract what the other repels. Now break the bar in the middle; and of either half the same will be true. And so you may keep on breaking, until you come to an atom, and even in it the two poles will be found to exist. 2. As wonderful is the polarity of truth. Take this, "Hath not the potter power over the clay," &c., and place it alongside of the text. Bring the latter near to a Calvinist, and it repels and is repelled. Bring it near to an Arminian, and it attracts and is itself attracted. And so, *vice versa*, of the former text. But as in the magnet there is but one force manifesting itself in duality, so with God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. God cannot be disappointed; yet man is free. 3. Let the theologian, then, follow the example of the philosopher who does not say, as he looks upon the needle, "There must be some mistake in the matter"; but "This is a great mystery: yet there are the two poles, and one is as deserving of my attention as the other." II. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LOWER OR PHYSICAL CONDITIONS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE. As a plant has its enemies which crawl upon the ground, and others which fly in the air, so the spiritual life has its antagonists who meet it on every level. There is the danger from intellectualism, imagination, and the affections. Then also, on the lowest and widest level, in the physical region, there is often the marshalling of forces to oppose all growth in grace. And these are what the apostle alludes to. There is—1. The excessive development of physical appetite and passion. That this has the fearful power implied in the text is very evident. Its first and most patent effect is upon the religious life. Take the professor who is given to intemperance. Before you can trace it upon the countenance, or in the domestic sphere, you will be able to note its influence upon the pulse of the man's religion. The man dies like some trees, from the heart outward. First and foremost dies that within him which is the very core of his manhood—his spiritual sense. There is much with which the indulged vice may make some sort of terms for a time, love of family, desire for a good name, many of the higher tastes, ambitions, and activities. But vice and spiritual life cannot exist together. The life of the one is the death of the other. 2. Too great absorption in the cares of this world. The Bible tells us to be "Not slothful in business." But there must be subordination of the temporal interests to the eternal. A man is like a vessel. He can hold so much, and no more. The cares of this world may be poured into his soul in such quantity as to leave room for nothing else. Many a man has no taste, capacity, strength, time, for anything but business. How can the spiritual hold its own in such? Where will you find place for religion? The good seed is choked. And the result is the same if honour instead of wealth fills the man. The condition of danger is, that a man be filled with the cares of this world. And these may be generated by poverty as by affluence. How can a man grow in Christian life who cannot forget his worldly cares long enough to say the Lord's Prayer? And but one result is possible; the religious life must die of starvation, and the man become a castaway. 3. The atmosphere of selfish indolence. Work is ordained of God as the one condition of healthful development. "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." It is the very ruin of thousands that they have nothing to do. And that which was made the condition of human development at first Christ has lifted up and sanctified to the end of Christian growth and safety. "Son, go work in My vineyard." "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross," &c. 4. The predominance of irreligious association, or, what is the same thing, living in a bad moral atmosphere. Good air, God's sunshine—these are more to the body

than all else. Let a man breathe in noxious gases day by day, and it makes no difference what other special precautions he may take, his health will be gradually undermined. So is it of moral and spiritual health. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Hence the importance which is laid upon the separation of Christians from the world, and upon the Christian communion which has been prepared for them. No man is strong enough to stand by himself. And it was never intended that the greater part of any Christian life should be spent outside of all religious association. Conclusion: In view of all that has been said it follows—1. That Christian cultivation covers a much wider sphere than many seem to think. First in order, as a means of grace, stands the Church. And then, secondly, outside of the means of grace, there are others none the less needful, and whose places cannot be supplied by the Church and her ordinances. What matters it how much a man prays, if he is living in intemperance or impurity? What good will the communion do her who has sunken down into the depths of a perfectly selfish and indolent life? And take the man whose heart is eaten up with the cares of this world. Can the Word of God dwell richly in such a one? 2. That there is no point in the Christian's progress at which he can afford to relax in vigilant watch and care of the physical surroundings of his life. 3. That there is a very wide sphere in which human activity may co-operate with the saving power of God. Many Christian hands are idle because they do not know what to do. To such I say, look at Paul. Hear his words, "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection." (*S. S. Mitchell, D.D.*) *Self-mastery*:—1. The simple etymological sense of the term is "I strike under the eye." The figure is that of a pugilistic encounter. Paul imagines to himself his body as rising up against his higher nature; and against this foe he directs his well-aimed blows; not to destroy or even mutilate it, but to render it what it always ought to be—the obedient slave of the inner nature. 2. But, it may be asked, does the apostle teach us that the body is the source of all inward evil? On the contrary, no man exalts the human body more. He represents it as the temple of the Holy Ghost. "Members of Christ." He prays that our body, as well as our spirit and soul, may be preserved faultless. How, then, are we to understand the phrase?—whence this mysterious collision? 3. St. Paul is here speaking of his life's work, in pursuing which he makes a discovery which all of us have to make sooner or later—that he who would conquer a world must be ready to conquer himself. In vers. 4–6 St. Paul indicates three special respects in which he had turned aside from the reasonable demands of nature for his work's sake. "Have we not power to eat and to drink?"—that is to say, he might have secured for himself a comfortable competence. "Have we not power to lead about a sister?" &c. He might have surrounded himself with all the pleasures of domestic life. "Have not Barnabas and I power to forbear working?" It certainly did seem reasonable that one who worked so hard for souls should be saved from the weariness of physical toil. And what had he to say to these natural and reasonable demands? Nothing but his work, and the will of God in that work. And when he found nature urging, as nature will, her demands for some degree of consideration, just as our Lord discovered Satan in the person of the disciple who dissuaded Him from the Cross; so the apostle discovered a foe in his own flesh, when that flesh shrank from the path of self-denial, and, smiting his antagonist down, he consigned it to its own proper place; from henceforth thou art to dictate thy terms no longer; thou art slave, and not master! 4. And now for our practical lesson. We, too, are striving for the mastery in a world which has been devastated by evil. Do we not also find that our bodies rise up and resist the claims made on them by the work which has to be done? (1) It may be perhaps, with us, rather in little things that the conflict has to be waged. You know that there are sick and poor to be visited. Love for souls, and for God, would prompt you to set forth; but it is a cold wintry day. How the body pleads, Sit still; another day will do as well. Or perhaps it is so small a matter as rising from your bed in the morning sufficiently early to give yourself time for prayer and the study of God's Word; or it is your time for prayer in the evening, after the busy day of toil; or it is that you have a call to visit the haunts of wretchedness and misery, where everything is repulsive. These are occasions on which we too have to arm our right hand with spiritual power, and to smite our body down, forcibly reminding it of its true position. (2) Or perhaps the body asserts itself not so much in forbidding the painful as suggesting the pleasant—now appealing to our lower appetites with suggestions of indulgences. The mind that is taken up in any degree with the thought, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? &c., is making provision for the flesh, and

in doing so is unconsciously resigning its true supremacy. The same thing is true of those higher forms of gratification which none the less have the body as their subject. There is no harm in enjoying the pleasures of the eye, or of the ear, but as soon as we give ourselves over to it, it becomes guilty. If God throws an innocent pleasure in our way, we are not called upon to suspect the gift; but when we go out of our way to pursue the pleasurable, the higher part of our nature is yielding itself as the slave of the lower. 5. How did St. Paul smite his body down, and reduce it into the condition of a slave? This much surely is obvious—a man is no match for himself! He lets us into the secret by giving us a practical direction: "If ye," he says, "through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." All turns upon this. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." (*W. Hay Aitken, M.A.*) *Self-mastery*:—Look at the chariot-drivers. Do you not see how exceedingly careful and strict they are with themselves in their training-practice, their labours, their diet, and all the rest, that they may not be thrown down from their chariots, and be dragged along by the reins? See what a thing art is! Often even a strong man cannot master a single horse; but a mere boy, who has learnt the art, shall often take the pair in hand, and with ease lead them and drive them where he will. Nay, in India, it is said that a huge monster of an elephant will yield to a stripling of fifteen, who manages him with the utmost ease. To what purpose have I said all this? To show that, if by dint of study and practice we can train into submission even elephants and wild horses, much more the passions within us. (*Chrysostom.*) *Self-government*:—A friend once asked an aged man what caused him so often to complain of pain and weariness in the evening. "Alas!" said he, "I have every day so much to do; for I have two falcons to tame, two hares to keep from running away, two hawks to manage, a serpent to confine, a lion to chain, and a sick man to tend and wait upon." "Why, you must be joking," said his friend; "surely no man can have all these things to do at once." "Indeed, I am not joking," said the old man; "but what I have told you is the sad and sober truth; for the two falcons are my two eyes, which I must diligently guard, lest something should please them which may be hurtful to my salvation; the two hares are my feet, which I must hold back lest they should run after evil objects, and walk in the ways of sin; the two hawks are my two hands, which I must train and keep to work in order that I may be able to provide for myself and for my brethren who are in need; the serpent is my tongue, which I must always keep in with a bridle, lest it should speak anything unseemly; the lion is my heart, with which I have to maintain a continual fight in order that vanity and pride may not fill it, but that the grace of God may dwell and work there; the sick man is my whole body, which is always needing my watchfulness and care. All this daily wears out my strength." (*Preacher's Promptuary.*) *Spiritual caution*:—Observe this was penned towards the close of the apostle's career. Full of years, and laden with trophies, he still thinks it necessary to keep war with the flesh. View him—I. As an aged man. There is no period in which the spiritual warrior may relax his training. Each season of life has its appropriate and dominant passion. II. As an advanced Christian. Men may make great advances in religious knowledge, but be imperfect. Consider Paul's attainments in theology—yet still he struggles; he is still imperfect. III. As an experienced minister. A minister may eloquently preach, and people be delighted to listen—to real blessings to which both he and they be strangers. Again, people may be converted, and yet their minister be a castaway. So parents, masters, teachers, may help others to Christ, yet never find Him themselves. Personal religion, including persevering conflict, essential to final salvation. (*Homilist.*) *Lest I be a castaway*:—I. What is it to be a "castaway"? One who had been pronounced by the judges to be disqualified for the Greek games, or one who, having been permitted to enter into the contest, fails. Or the expression may have reference to metals, which, when the mass has been "proved" to be dross, is rejected. Thus we read of "reprobate silver." The theological idea of reprobation does not belong to this word, it is simply intrinsic worthlessness, brought to light by the scrutiny of God's eye, the searching efficacy of His Word, or a providential dispensation. 1. From whom may we be castaway. (1) God. God "drove out the man" Adam; and Cain "went out from the presence of the Lord"; and David says, "Cast me not away from Thy presence," &c. (2) Christ, who said, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." Yet He drove the buyers and sellers out of the Temple; ejected demons; denounced the scribes and Pharisees, and foretold to them their doom. (3) The Spirit of God, who "will not always strive with men." "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost," said Stephen

to the Jewish nation; and at length the Jewish nation was cast away. A man may sin till the Spirit of God will let him alone. (4) Good men; rejected of the Church, excommunicated. The salt having lost its savour is good for nothing but to be cast away. (5) Certain societies. You are blackballed, and your rejection may involve shame and infamy. (6) The angels of God. Did they not turn their backs upon Sodom? Did they not smite Egypt? (7) Yourselves; and this in the case of an apostate is not that salutary self-loathing which is associated with hope and pardon, but that of darkness and despair. 2. When? In part now; as when a man is excluded from the fellowship of the wise and good. Yet very often this may not be carried into effect; just as in the case of the tares, Christ told His disciples to let them grow together until harvest. The time of final discrimination, then, is the end of the man's earthly probation. When he departs from this world, he is rejected of heaven. We read of those who were "without," of the virgins who were cast away; of those to whom Christ will say, "Depart from Me, I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity." The most affecting thing in the universe is to be "a castaway," finally and for ever rejected. II. THE MEANS WHICH THE APOSTLE TOOK TO PREVENT THIS. The text is only one among many. 1. He abjured confidence in himself, and his own virtue and excellence (Phil. iii.). He grounds his hope of eternal life on the atonement of Christ, and resting as he did in Christ, it was impossible for him to be "a castaway." 2. He lived, and loved, and laboured by faith (Gal. ii. 20). It is when the love of Christ is not present in a man's heart and mind, that he is in danger of being a castaway. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha." 3. He kept near to God in prayer. If you cast off prayer, you will be in peril; if you continue in prayer and supplication, you will not. 4. Taking these points antecedently to the one suggested in the text, our course becomes clear. "But I keep under my body," &c. Now the apostle does not mean anything ascetical; but that the body was subjected to the reason; and if any one of you has acquired a mastery over the animal appetites and instincts, he is on his way not to be a castaway, but to be approved and glorified of God. 5. What comes after this is sweet and sacred resignation to the Divine will. "I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." 6. The final thing is that Paul laid aside every weight. "This one thing I do," &c. III. THE TRIUMPHANT ISSUE. I know not any one name which surpasses that of Paul. He is no castaway as respects the honour done to his name in the Church. And then in the world how has his character been appreciated even by those who have rejected his doctrine! What an immense effect have his writings had on the condition of society and on human affairs! Then as respects his admission to heaven, one moment there is the axe of Nero, the next he hears, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (*J. Stratten.*) *A Castaway*:—Observe—1. How earnestly Paul sought the kingdom of heaven (ver. 26). It was long after his conversion that Paul writes in this manner. 2. One particular in which he was very earnest. "I keep under my body," &c. (ver. 25). 3. His reason for all this earnestness—"Lest when," &c. What is it to be cast away? Wicked men shall be cast away—I. FROM GOD (Matt. xxv. 41; 2 Thess. i. 9). From—1. The fruition of God. 2. The favour of God—"In Thy favour is life." 3. The blessing of God. God is the fountain of all blessing. Separate a man from God finally, and no creature can give him joy. II. FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT. The Holy Spirit is now dealing and striving with natural men. When the day of grace is done the Spirit will strive no more—1. Through ordinances. There will be no family worship in hell—no Bible, no Sabbath, no preached gospel. 2. Through providences. There will be no more poverty or riches—no more sickness or bereavements. 3. Through conscience it will condemn, but it will not restrain. III. FROM ALL CREATURES. 1. The angels will no longer take any interest in you. 2. The redeemed will no longer pray for you, nor shed another tear for you. 3. Ministers will no more desire your salvation. It will no more be their work. 4. Even devils will cast you off. As long as you remain on earth, the devil keeps you in his train; then you will be a part of his torment, and he will hate you and torment you, because you deceived him, and he deceived you. IV. FROM THEMSELVES. 1. The understanding will be clear and full to apprehend the real nature of your misery. 2. The will in you will be all contrary to God's will. 3. Your conscience, God's viceregent, will accuse you of all your sins. 4. Your memory will be very clear. 5. Your anticipations—everlasting despair. Conclusion: Let believers learn Paul's earnest diligence. A wicked life will end in being a castaway. These two are linked together, and no man can sunder them. (*R. M. McCheyne, M.A.*) *Wrecked for*

two worlds:—Ministers of religion may finally be lost. The apostle indicates that possibility. Cardinal Wolsey, after having been petted by kings, died in darkness. There have been cases of shipwreck where all on board escaped excepting the captain. You all understand the figure. There are men who, by their sins and temptations, are thrown helpless! Driven before the gale, wrecked, cast away. Among the causes of this calamity are—I. FALSE LIGHTS ON THE BEACH. This was often so in olden times. There are all kinds of lanterns swung on the beach—philosophical, educational, humanitarian. Men look at them, and are deceived, when there is nothing but the lighthouse of the gospel that can keep them from becoming castaways. Once, on Wolf Crag lighthouse, they tried to build a copper figure of a wolf with its mouth open, so that the storms beating into it the wolf would howl. Of course it was a failure. And so all new inventions for the saving of a man's soul are unavailing. You might better destroy all the great lighthouses on the dangerous coasts than to put out God's great ocean-lamp—the gospel. II. THE SUDDEN SWOOP OF A TEMPEST. A vessel is sailing along in the East Indies; suddenly the breeze freshens; but before they can square the booms the vessel is in the grip of a tornado, and falls over into the trough of the sea, and broadside rolls on to the beach and keels over, leaving the crew to struggle in the merciless surf. And so there are thousands destroyed through the sudden swoop of temptations. Some great inducement to worldliness, or temper, or dissipation comes upon them. If they had time to deliberate, they could stand it; but the temptation came so suddenly, and they perish. It is the first step that costs; the second is easier; and the third; and on to the last. Once having broken loose from the anchor, it is not so easy to tie the parted strands. III. SHEER RECKLESSNESS. The average of human life on the sea is less than twelve years. This comes from the fact that men by familiarity with danger become reckless, and in nine out of ten shipwrecks it is found out that some one was awfully to blame. So men lose their souls. There are thousands who do not care where they are in spiritual things. Drifting in their theology, in their habits, in regard to all the future; but all the time coming nearer and nearer to a dangerous coast. They do not deliberately choose to be ruined; neither did the French frigate *Medusa* aim for the Arguin Banks, but there it went to pieces. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *Hell after preaching*:—These terrible words teach—I. THAT DELIVERANCE FROM HELL DESERVES THE MOST EARNEST SELF-DISCIPLINE. "I keep under my body" I. strike under the eye so as to make it black and blue, a boxing phrase, indicative of strenuous efforts at mortification, as who should say, "I subdue the flesh by violent and reiterated blows." "And bring it into subjection"; "I lead it along as a slave," having subjugated it, I treat it as a bondsman, as boxers in the Palæstra used to drag off their conquered opponents. And the reason for this mortification of the flesh is, "lest I should be a castaway." Self-discipline consists of two things. 1. The entire subjugation of the body to the mind. The body was intended to be the organ, servant, and instrument of the mind, but it has become the master. The supremacy of the body is the curse of the world and the ruin of man. 2. The subjugation of the mind to the spirit of Christ. Though the mind govern the body, if the mind is false, selfish, unloyal to Christ, there is no discipline. The mind must be the servant of Christ in order to be the legitimate sovereign of the body. II. THAT THE NECESSITY OF THIS SELF-DISCIPLINE CANNOT BE SUPERSEDED BY THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PREACHING. Paul had preached as no one else had ever preached; yet his preaching, he felt, did not do the work of self-discipline. Indeed, there is much in the work of preaching that has a tendency to operate against personal spiritual culture. 1. Familiarity with sacred truths destroys for us their charm of freshness. 2. A professional handling of God's Word interferes with its personal application. 3. The opinions of audiences, favourable or otherwise, exert an influence unfavourable to the life of the soul. 4. Satan is especially active in opposing the growth of spiritual piety in the preacher's soul. So that there is a terrible danger that whilst the preacher is cultivating the vineyards of others he is neglecting his own. III. THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PREACHING MAY BE FOLLOWED BY ULTIMATE RUIN. A "castaway"! Who shall fathom the meaning of this word? A successful preacher "a castaway"! The Tophet of him who has offered mercy to others which he has despised, urged truths on the credence of others that he has disbelieved, enforced laws on others which he has transgressed, will burn with severer fires and peal with more awful thunders. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

CHEAP SUBSCRIPTION.

Now Ready, price 7/6 for separate volumes, or **a selection of four different volumes for 4/6 each.** *This subscription for four volumes must be* **prepaid,** *and is available at all booksellers; if sent by post or rail carriage will be charged extra. Subscribers may pay in advance for the forthcoming volumes.*

THE

BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR;

Or Anecdotes, Similes, Emblems, Illustrations, and Sermon Outlines on the Verses of the Bible, gathered from the entire range of Home and Foreign Literature of the past and present

GENESIS. 2 vols.
EXODUS.
LEVITICUS & NUMBERS.
ST. MATTHEW.
ST. MARK.
ST. LUKE. 3 vols.
ST. JOHN. 3 vols.
ACTS. 3 vols.
ROMANS. 2 vols.
1 CORINTHIANS. 2 vols.
GALATIANS.
EPHESIANS.
PHILIPPIANS and COLOSSIANS.
I. & II. THESSALONIANS and I. TIMOTHY.
II. TIMOTHY, TITUS, and PHILEMON.
HEBREWS. 2 vols.
ST. JAMES.

Press Notices of the Biblical Illustrator.

"Mr. Exell never irritates by trivial and goody reflections, but supplies just what the earnest teacher and preacher wants, and will know how to use to advantage."—*Christian World.*

"It is the most valuable book in its own line that we have read."—*Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Magazine.*

"The work will be found a storehouse of the most valuable material for teachers of Divine truth."—*Aberdeen Journal.*

"The Biblical Illustrator is *all* homiletical, a great storehouse, in very truth one of the marvels of the day."—*Expository Times.*

"They are as good as a library to preachers; indeed they constitute a library of themselves."—*The Literary Churchman.*

"The best books on the fourth Gospel have been literally ransacked, and the results are here brought together in a compact and effective way."—*Glasgow Herald.*

"The anecdotes are very well chosen, while the comments from various writers explaining the texts are particularly well selected. The work is worthy of high praise."—*The English Churchman.*

"A whole library has been boiled down to make this one volume, but the work has been exceedingly well done. Every page is bursting with the riches of criticism, research, illustration, or exposition, with the result that it forms one of the most valuable aids to pulpit preparation hitherto published. Busy preachers will be thankful for its condensation of many large and important works, while those with scant libraries will hail it as a perfect God-send."—*The Literary World.*

"The illustrations throw much and varied light on the sacred text, giving the opinions and best thoughts of many minds, and while the great theologians of all ages have been laid under contribution, humble magazines and journals have been used as gleaning grounds. Mr. Exell has, apparently, left nothing undone to render his compilation invaluable to the preacher and the teacher."—*The Liverpool Courier.*

J. NISBET & CO., 21, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W.

Now Ready. Price 2s. 6d. each.

The Men of the Bible.

ABRAHAM: His Life and Times. By Rev. W. J. Deane, M.A. Fifth Thousand.

"As the first volume of a series entitled 'Men of the Bible,' we have an interesting and carefully-written account of 'Abraham; his Life and Times' (James Nisbet and Co.), by the Rev. W. J. Deane, M.A., Rector of Ashen, Essex. The Biblical record of the career of the patriarch is faithfully followed, but is elucidated by Mr. Deane from the results of modern scientific research and archæological discovery, and the book embodies a great amount of instructive information in an acceptable form."—*The Scotsman.*

MOSES: His Life and Times. By Rev. Canon G. Rawlinson, M.A. Fifth Thousand.

"As easy to read as a story-book. Its information is wonderful. Our author makes Moses live before your eyes. Such is the writer's acquaintance with Eastern history, manners, and scenery, that he becomes the Macaulay of Moses, only without the inaccuracy of our English historian. This is grand change for half-a-crown. If the other 'Men of the Bible' find such biographers, the publishers will have to enlarge their premises. Friend, *buy this book.* We believe you will thank us for the advice when you find yourself fairly fascinated by it."—*Sword and Trowel.*

SOLOMON: His Life and Times. By Ven. Archdeacon F. W. Farrar, D.D Fifth Thousand.

An excellent history, and very readable, conveying a proper estimate of this magnificent, though criminal, prince."—*The Clergyman's Magazine.*

"Yet, with every discount, Farrar's 'Solomon' is well worth reading, and it constitutes such a magnificent word-picture of the great king that one rises from it with a more vivid idea of the royal preacher than one is likely to obtain by any other means. The cost is only half-a-crown: the literary taste, and skill, and learning are worth a thousand crowns at the least."—*Sword and Trowel*

ELIJAH: His Life and Times. By Rev. Prof. W. Milligan, D.D. Fourth Thousand.

ISAIAH: His Life and Times. By Rev. Canon Driver, M.A. Fifth Thousand.

SAMUEL and SAUL. By Rev. W. J. Deane, M.A.

JEREMIAH: His Life and Times. By Rev. Canon T. K. Cheyne, D.D. Third Thousand.

JESUS CHRIST THE DIVINE MAN. By Rev. J. F. Vallings, M.A.

THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH. By Rev. Canon Rawlinson.

DANIEL: His Life and Times. By Rev. H. Deane, B.D.

DAVID: His Life and Times. By Rev. W. J. Deane, M.A.

JOSHUA: His Life and Times. By Rev. W. J. Deane, M.A.

THE MINOR PROPHETS. By Ven. Archdeacon Farrar, D.D.

ISAAC AND JACOB: Their Lives and Times. By Rev. Canon Rawlinson.

ST. PAUL: His Life and Times. By Rev. Prof. Iverach, D.D.

GIDEON AND THE JUDGES: Their Lives and Times. By Rev. J. M. Lang, D.D.

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH. By Rev. Canon Rawlinson.

London: JAMES NISBET & CO., 21, Berners Street, W.

The Gresham Press,
UNWIN BROTHERS,
CHILWORTH AND LONDON.