

THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR.
COLOSSIANS.

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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

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COLOSSIANS.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

I. THE CHURCH TO WHICH IT WAS WRITTEN.—1. The locality and people. A rich canton of Southern Phrygia, in particular the small basin of the Lycus, a tributary of the Meander, saw some active Christian centres formed within it. Three towns very close to each other—Colossæ, Laodicea, and Hierapolis—filled it with life. Colossæ, which in old days was the most important, appeared to decline; it was a town which remained faithful to ancient ways, and did not renew itself. Laodicea and Hierapolis, on the contrary, became, in consequence of the Roman Empire, very considerable cities. The very soul of all this beautiful country is Mount Cadmus, the patriarch of all the mountains of Western Asia—a gigantic mass, full of dark precipices, and keeping its snows all the year round. The waters which flow down from it freshen one of the slopes of the valley, upon which are orchards filled with fruit trees, traversed by rivers full of fish, and enlivened with storks which are quite tame. The other side is quite given up to the strangest freaks of nature. The encrusting properties of the calcareous waters of one of the affluents of the Lycus, and the enormous mass of hot water which falls in a cascade from the mountains of Hierapolis, have struck the plain with sterility, and formed crevasses, quaint caverns, beds of subterranean streams, fantastic piles, and layers like petrified snow, serving as a reservoir for waters which reflect all the colours of the rainbow; deep hollows whence far resounding waters rush on in a succession of cataracts. On this side the heat is extreme, the soil being nothing but one vast plain paved with calcareous blocks. But upon the heights of Hierapolis, the purity of the air, the splendid light, the view of Mount Cadmus, swimming like another Olympus in a lustrous atmosphere, the burnt-up summits of Phrygia fading into the blue heaven in a rosy tint, the opening of the valley of the Meander, the oblique outlines of Messogis, the far white summits of Tmolus, produce a truly dazzling effect. There lived St. Philip and Papias; there Epictetus was born. All the valley of the Lycus presents the same character of dreamy mysticism. The population was not Greek by origin; it was partly Phrygian. There was also round Mount Cadmus an old Semitic settlement. Jewish colonies had been transplanted from Babylon two centuries and a half before, and had first brought with them some of those industries (carpet weaving, &c.) which, under Roman Emperors, produced in the country such opulence and such powerful guilds or companies. Christianity followed, and remained for three centuries the religion of the country. A great number of the Christians of Ephesus and Rome came from Phrygia. The names most frequently found upon Phrygian monuments are the old Christian names, Trophimus, Tychicus, Tryphena, Onesimus. (*E. Renan.*) 2. The origin, growth, and circumstances of the Church. There is no ground for supposing that when Paul wrote this Epistle he had ever visited the Church, but if he was not directly its evangelist, it was indirectly indebted to him for its knowledge of the truth. Epaphras had been his delegate, and by Epaphras the Colossians had been converted to the gospel (chap. i. 6). How or when their conversion took place we

have no direct information. Yet it can hardly be wrong to connect the event with St. Paul's long sojourn at Ephesus (A.D. 54-57). It is possible that during this period he paid short visits to neighbouring cities, but if so these interruptions to his residence in Ephesus must have been slight and infrequent (Acts xx. 18). Yet though the apostle himself was stationary, his teaching and influence spread far and wide (Acts xix. 10, 26), and the first Epistle to the Corinthians contains salutations, not from Ephesus alone, but from the "Churches of Asia" generally (1 Cor. xvi. 19; cf. 2 Cor. i. 8; Rom. xvi. 5). To Ephesus, as the metropolis of Western Asia, would flock crowds from all the towns and villages far and near. Thence they would carry away, each to his own neighbourhood, the spiritual treasure they had unexpectedly found. Among the places thus represented at the Asian metropolis would doubtless be the cities lying in the valley of the Lycus. The bonds of amity between these places and Ephesus were unusually strong. The "Concord of the Laodiceans and Ephesians," the "Concord of the Hierapolitans and Ephesians," are repeatedly commemorated on medals struck for the purpose. Thus the Colossians, Epaphras and Philemon, the latter with his household (Philem. 1, 2, 19), and perhaps also the Laodicean Nymphas (Col. iv. 15) would fall in with the Apostle to the Gentiles, and hear from his lips the first tidings of a heavenly life. But whatever service may have been rendered by Philemon at Colossæ or by Nymphas at Laodicea, it was to Epaphras especially that all three cities were indebted for their knowledge of the Gospel (chap. iv. 12, 13), and he looked upon himself as responsible for the spiritual well-being of all alike. We pass over a period of five or six years. St. Paul's first captivity in Rome is now drawing to a close. During this interval he has not once visited the valley of the Lycus. Two circumstances, one affecting his public duties, another private and personal, at this time conspired to bring Colossæ prominently before his notice. (1) He had received a visit from Epaphras, whose mind was alarmed at the dangerous condition of the Colossian and neighbouring Churches. A strange heresy had broken out and was spreading rapidly. The faithful evangelist, therefore, came to Rome to seek Paul's counsel and assistance. (2) But at the same time St. Paul was also in communication with another Colossian, who had visited Rome under very different circumstances. Onesimus, the runaway slave, perhaps accidentally, perhaps through Epaphras, fell in with his master's old friend. The apostle interested himself in his case and transformed him from a good-for-nothing slave (Philem. 11) into a faithful and beloved brother (Col. iv. 9; cf. Philem. 16). This combination of circumstances called Paul's attention to the Churches of the Lycus and more especially to Colossæ. (*Bishop Lightfoot.*)

II. WHERE, WHEN, AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES IT WAS WRITTEN.—There are in the Epistle indications of the time and place of writing similar to those found in Ephesians and Philippians. It was written in prison (chap. iv. 10, 18). Like the former it is sent by Tychicus, with precisely the same official commendation of him (chap. iv. 7-8, cf. Eph. vi. 21-22); but with him is joined Onesimus, the Colossian slave, the bearer of the Epistle to Philemon. The persons named in the concluding salutations (chap. iv. 7-14) correspond, with the exception of Justus, with those mentioned to Philemon (vers. 23, 24); two of them, Aristarchus and Luke, are known to have accompanied the apostle on his voyage as a captive to Rome (Acts xxvii. 2), and another, Tychicus, to have been his companion on the journey to Jerusalem, which preceded the beginning of that captivity at Cæsarea (Acts xx. 4). A direction is given to forward this Epistle to Laodicea, and to obtain and read a letter from Laodicea (chap. iv. 16), which is, in all probability, our Epistle to the Ephesians, an encyclical letter addressed to sister Churches. All these indications point to one conclusion—not only that Colossians is one of the Epistles of the first captivity (A.D. 61-63), but that it is a twin Epistle with the Ephesians, sent at the

same time and by the same hand, and designed to be interchanged with it in the Churches of Colossæ and Laodicea. (*Bishop Barry.*)

III. ITS OCCASION AND SUBJECT.—To the apostle's lodgings there comes a brother from Colossæ, Epaphras by name, who brings with him bad news which burdens Paul's heart with solicitude. Many a night would he and Epaphras spend in deep converse on the matter, with the stolid Roman legionary to whom Paul was chained sitting wearily by. The tidings were that a strange disease, hatched in that hot-bed of religious fancies, the dreamy East, was threatening the faith of the Colossian Christians. A peculiar form of heresy, compounded of Jewish ritualism and Oriental mysticism, was being vigorously preached. The characteristic Eastern dogma, that matter is evil and the source of evil, had begun to infect them. The conclusion was quickly drawn that God and matter must be antagonistic, and so the creation and government of this world could not have come directly from Him. The endeavour to keep the pure Divinity and the gross world as far apart as possible, while yet an intellectual necessity forbade the entire breaking of the bond between them, led to the busy working of the imagination, which spanned the void gulf with a chain of intermediate beings, emanations, abstractions, each approaching more nearly to the material. Such notions made wild work with the plainest moral teachings of conscience and Christianity. For if matter be the source of all evil, then the fountain of each man's sin is to be found not in his own perverted will, but in his body; and the cure of it is to be reached, not by faith, which plants a new life in the sinful spirit, but simply by ascetic mortification of the flesh. Strangely united with these teachings were the narrowest doctrines of Jewish ritualism, insisting on circumcision, laws regulating food, the observance of feast days. It is a monstrous combination, a cross between a Talmudical rabbi and a Buddhist priest, and yet it is not unnatural that, after soaring in these lofty regions of speculation, where the air is too thin to support life, men should be glad to get hold of the externals of an elaborate ritual. Extremes meet. If you go far enough east you are west. But what does all this matter to us? The truth which Paul opposed to these heresies is all-important for every age. It was simply the Person of Christ as the only manifestation of the Divine, the link between God and the Universe, its Creator and Preserver, the Life and Light of men, the Lord and Inspirer of the Church. Christ has come, laying His hand upon both God and man; therefore there is no need or place for a misty crowd of angelic beings or shadowy abstractions to bridge the gulf across which His incarnation flings its single solid arch. Christ has been bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, therefore that cannot be the source of evil in which the fulness of the Godhead has dwelt as in a shrine. Christ has come, the fountain of life and holiness, therefore there is no more place for ascetic mortifications nor for Jewish scrupulosities. To urge these and the like truths this letter was written. Its central principle is the sovereign and exclusive mediation of Jesus Christ, the God-man, the victorious antagonist of these dead speculations, and the destined conqueror of all the doubts and confusions of this day. If we grasp with mind and heart that truth, we can possess our souls in patience, and in its light see light, where else is darkness and uncertainty. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

IV. ITS GENUINENESS.—1. The external testimony is considerable. The following verses are quoted or referred to in the Apostolic Fathers: chap. i. 16 by Barnabas; ver. 18 by Clement; ver. 25 by Ignatius; chap. iii. 4 by Ignatius, and ver. 14 by Clement. Marcion, the earliest herald of sceptical criticism, who rejected Timothy and Titus, admitted Colossians and Philemon. It is cited by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and still earlier by Theophilus of Antioch and Justin Martyr. All candid criticism agrees with M. Renan's conclusion that the Epistle

is "to be received unhesitatingly as the work of St. Paul." (*Bishop Alexander.*) 2. Internal evidence. None but Paul could have written it. To say that it is un-Pauline in doctrine is to make an arbitrary assertion, since it states no single truth which is not involved in his previous teachings. The fact that it is a splendid development of those teachings, or rather an expanded statement of them to meet new exigencies, is simply in its favour. Nor do I see how any one familiar with the style and mind of St. Paul can fail to recognize his touch. That the style should lack the fire and passion of the Epistle to the Galatians, and the easy, fervent overflowing of thought and feeling in those to the Thessalonians, Corinthians, and Philippians, is perfectly natural. Of all the converts to whom Paul had written, the Colossians alone were entire strangers to him. He had not, indeed, visited Rome, but many members of that Church were personally known to him, and he was writing on a familiar theme which had for years been occupying his thoughts. The mere fact that he had already written on the same topic to the Galatians would make his thoughts flow more easily. But in writing to the Colossians he was handling a new theme, combatting a recent error, with which among Christians he had not come into personal contact, and of which he merely knew the special characteristics at second hand. When in the Epistle to the Ephesians he reverts to the same kind of conceptions, his sentences run with far greater ease. The style of no man is stereotyped, and least of all is this the case with a man so many sided, so emotional, so original as St. Paul. His manner reflects to an unusual degree the impressions of the time, place, mood in which he was writing. A thousand circumstances unknown to us may have given to this Epistle that rigid character, that want of spontaneity in the movement of the sentences which led even Ewald into the improbable conjecture that the words were Timothy's, though the subject and the thoughts belong to Paul. But the difference of style between it and other Epistles is no greater than we find in the works of other authors at different periods of their lives, or than we daily observe in the writings and speeches of living men who deal with different topics in varying moods. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*)

V. ITS RELATION TO THE OTHER EPISTLES.—1. To the other Epistles in general. Each of Paul's greater Epistles has its one salient thought. In that to the Romans it is justification by faith; in Ephesians it is the mystical union of Christ and His Church; in Philippians it is the joy of Christian progress; in this Epistle it is the dignity and sole sufficiency of Jesus Christ as the Mediator and Head of all creation and of the Church. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) 2. To the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is in exact psychological accordance with the peculiarities of St. Paul's mind and style that, if, after writing a letter which was evoked by peculiar circumstances, and led to the development of particular truths, he utilized the opportunity of its despatch to send another letter, which had no such immediate object, the tones of the first letter would still vibrate in the second. When he had discharged his immediate duty to the Church of Colossæ, the topics dwelt upon in writing to the neighbouring Churches would be sure to bear a close resemblance to those which had most recently been occupying his thoughts. Even apart from special information St. Paul may have seen the desirability of warning Ephesus and its dependencies against a peril which was infusing its subtle presence within so short a distance from them; and it was then natural that his language to them should be marked by the very differences which separate the Epistle to the Colossians from that to the Ephesians. The former is specific, concrete, and polemical; the latter is abstract, didactic, general. The same words and phrases predominate in both; but the resemblances are far more marked and numerous in the practical exhortations than in the doctrinal statements. In the Epistle to the Colossians he is primarily occupied with the refutation of an error; in that to the Ephesians he is

absorbed in the rapturous development of an exalted truth. The main theme of the Colossians is the Person of Christ; that of the Ephesians is the life of Christ manifested in the living energy of His Church (Col. ii. 19; Eph. iv. 16). In the former Christ is the "Plentitude"—the synthesis and totality of every attribute of God. In the latter, the ideal Church, as the body of Christ, is the Plentitude, the recipient of all the fulness of Him who filled all things with all. Christ's Person is most prominent in the Colossians; Christ's body in the Ephesians. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians deal with the same lines of truth; they differ only in the method of treatment. That to the Ephesians is devotional and expository; that to the Colossians is polemical. In the Colossians the dignity of Christ's Person is put forward most explicitly as against the speculations of a Judaizing theosophy which degraded Christ to the rank of an archangel, which recommended as a substitute for Christ's redemptive work ascetic observances, grounded on a trust in the cleansing and hallowing properties and powers of discipline. In the Epistle to the Ephesians our Lord's personal dignity is asserted more indirectly. It is implied in His reconciliation of Jews and heathens to each other and to God, and still more in its relation to the predestination of the saints. In both Epistles we encounter two prominent lines of thought, each in a high degree pointing to Christ's Divine dignity. The first, the absolute character of the Christian faith as contrasted with the relative character of heathenism and Judaism; the second, the recreative power of the grace of Christ. In both Epistles the Church is considered as a vast spiritual society (Col. i. 5, 6) which, besides embracing as its heritage all the races of the world, pierces the veil of the unseen, and includes the families of heaven (Eph. iii. 15) in its majestic compass. Of this society Christ is the Head (Eph. i. 22, 23). He is the predestined point of unity to which earth and heaven, Jew and Gentile, meet and are one (Eph. i. 10). His death is the triumph of peace in the spiritual world. Peace with God is secured through the taking away of the law of condemnation by the Cross (Col. ii. 14, 15). Peace among men is secured because the Cross is the centre of the regenerated world as of the moral universe (Col. i. 20, 21). (*Canon Liddon.*)

VI. ITS CONTENTS.—The following is an analysis of the Epistle. I. INTRODUCTORY.

1. Opening salutation (i. 1, 2).
 2. Thanksgiving for the progress of the Colossians hitherto (i. 3-9).
 3. Prayer for their future advancement in knowledge and well doing through Christ (i. 9-13). (This leads the apostle to speak of Christ as the only path of progress.)
- #### II. DOCTRINAL. The Person and work of Christ.
1. Through the Son we have our redemption (i. 13, 14).
 2. The pre-eminence of the Son. (1) As the Head of the natural creation, the universe (i. 15-19). (2) As the Head of the new moral creation, the Church (i. 18). Thus He is first in all things; and this because the *pleroma* has its abode in Him (i. 19).
 3. The work of the Son—reconciliation. (1) Described generally (i. 20). (2) Applied specially to the Colossians (i. 21-23). (3) St. Paul's own part in carrying out this work. His sufferings and preaching. The "mystery" with which he is charged (i. 24-27). His anxiety on behalf of all (i. 28, 29); and more especially of the Colossian and neighbouring Churches (ii. 1-3). This expression of anxiety leads him by a direct path to the next division of the Epistle.
- #### III. POLEMICAL. Warning against errors.
1. The Colossians charged to abide in the truth of the Gospel as they received it at first, and not to be led astray by a strange philosophy which the new teachers offer (ii. 4-8). (In the passage which follows (ii. 9-23) it will be observed how St. Paul vibrates between the theological and practical bearings of the truth.)
 2. The truth stated. (1) Positively. (a) The *pleroma* dwells wholly in Christ and is communicated through Him (ii. 9-10). (b) The true circumcision is a spiritual circumcision (ii. 11, 12). (2) Negatively. Christ has—(a) annulled the law of ordinances (ii. 14). (b) Triumphed over all spiritual agencies, however powerful (ii. 15). 3.

Obligations following thereupon. (1) Consequently the Colossians must not—(a) either submit to ritual prohibitions (ii. 16, 17); or, (b) substitute the worship of inferior beings for allegiance to the Head (ii. 18, 19). (2) On the contrary, this must henceforth be their rule. (a) They have died with Christ; and with Him they have died to their old life, to worldly ordinances (ii. 20–23). (b) They have risen with Christ; and with Him they have risen to a new life, to heavenly principles (iii. 1–4). IV. HORTATORY. Practical application of this death and resurrection. 1. Comprehensive rules. (1) What vices are to be put off, being mortified in this death (iii. 5–11). (2) What graces are to be put on, being quickened by this resurrection (iii. 12–17). 2. Special precepts. (1) The obligations of wives and husbands (iii. 18–19); children and parents (iii. 20–21); of slaves and masters (iii. 22–iv. 1). (2) The duty of prayer and thanksgiving; with special intercession on the apostle's behalf (iv. 2–4). (3) The duty of propriety in behaviour towards the unconverted (iv. 5–6). V. PERSONAL. 1. Explanations relating to the letter itself (iv. 7–9). 2. Salutations from divers persons (10–14). 3. Salutations to divers persons. A message relating to Laodicea (15–17). 4. Farewell (18). (*Bishop Lightfoot.*)

VII. ITS USEFULNESS IN RELATION TO ERROR IN ALL AGES. The so-called "Gnosticism" with which this Epistle deals is nothing more than a form of error—a phase of the crafty working of systematic deception—which is common to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual aberrations of all ages and countries. It is found in the Zend Avesta, in Philo, in Neoplatonism, in the Kabbala, in Valentinus. Abject sacerdotalism, superstitious ritual, extravagant asceticism, the faithlessness which leads men to abandon the privilege of immediate access to God, and to thrust between the soul and its One Mediator all sorts of human and celestial mediators; the ambition which builds upon the unmanly timidity of its votaries its own secure and tyrannous exaltation; the substitution of an easy externalism for the religion of the heart; the fancy that God cares for such barren self-denials as neither deepen our own spirituality nor benefit our neighbour; the elaboration of unreasonable systems which give the pompous name of Theology to vain and verbal speculations drawn by elaborate and untenable inferences from isolated expressions of which the antinomies are unfathomable, and of which the true exegetic history is deliberately ignored; the oscillating reactions which lead in the same sect, and in even the same individual to the opposite extremes of rigid scrupulosity and antinomian license—these are the germs not of one but of all the heresies; these are more or less the elements of nearly every false religion. The ponderous technicalities of the systematizer; the interested self-assertions of the priest; the dreamy speculations of the mystic; the Pharisaic conceit of the externalist; the polemical shibboleths of the sectarian; the spiritual pride and narrow one-sidedness of the self-tormentor; the ruinous identification of that saving faith which is a union with Christ and a participation of His life with the theoretic acceptance of a number of formulæ—all these elements have, from the earliest dawn of Christianity, mingled in the tainted stream of heresy their elements of ignorance, self-interest, and error. In their dark features we detect a common resemblance. There was Gnosticism in the days of Paul as there is Gnosticism now, though neither then nor now is it recognized under that specific name. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*)

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CHAPTER I.

VERS. 1-5. Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.—The assertion of St. Paul that the afflictions of the faithful "work together for good" is verified by constant experience (Rom. viii. 28; Psa. cxix. 71). As roses, the sweetest and fairest flowers, grow on a thorny stock, so from the piercing afflictions of the believer spring sweet and salutary examples. The imprisonment of St. Paul has done the Church more good than the prosperity of the rest of the faithful of that age. **I. THE INSCRIPTION of the Epistle.** We now inscribe letters with the names of those to whom we write at the beginning, and our own names at the end. Formerly it was the custom to put both at the head as here. 1. The writers. Paul—(1) an apostle, signifying one sent, but in the New Testament more particularly those sent by Christ with sovereign and independent authority to preach the gospel and establish the Church. To exercise this office it was necessary—(a) to have seen Christ alive after His death; (b) to have received the commission direct from Christ; (c) to enjoy an extraordinary measure of the Holy Spirit for miracles and preaching. Whence it appears how illogical they are that attribute the glory of apostleship to the Pope, who possesses none of these qualifications. (2) "By the will of God"—distinguishing him from false apostles and necessary—(a) to maintain his honour against the calumnies of seducers, who alleged that he had not lived in Christ's day; (b) to establish his liberty to write to the Colossians and prove to them their duty. (3) To his own name Paul adds that of Timothy "our brother," as having the same faith, and labouring in the same work. 2. The readers. (1) Saints. You cannot be Christians unless you are saints. The body of Christ is too vital and precious to have dead members. (2) Faithful. Another mark of the true Christian, and taken from that faith which they give to the gospel of the Lord. (3) Brethren signifies the holy communion they had with believers of whatever rank, as begotten of the same Father—God; born of the same mother, the heavenly Jerusalem; all partaking of the same Divine nature, nursed in the same family, nurtured in the same hopes, destined to the same inheritance. (4) In Christ, because of Him, and by Him, and in Him we have this sanctity, faith, and fraternity. (5) Paul wishes them, according to his custom, "grace"—the favour of God, and His saving gifts, and Divine assistance; "peace" with God and men, a word which signifies all kinds of welfare and prosperity; "from God our Father" as the source, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the channel. **II. THE CONGRATULATION (vers. 3-5).** 1. The thanksgiving is for—(1) the faith of the Colossians; (2) their love; (3) their prospects: three particulars which comprise all human felicity. The part which Paul takes in their happiness, teaches us to interest ourselves in the affairs of our brethren, and rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep—not, as many of the world, the reverse. And the joy that we have in the good of others should be elevated to God its only source. 2. It is not enough to render thanks for our brethren, we must pray for them. Under the Old Testament the Divine appellation was "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," the patriarchs with whom He contracted the old covenant, and to whom He promised the new;

under the New, "The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," by whom He has abolished the old covenant and accomplished the new. 3. The true matter of our rejoicings for others is not that God has given them health, riches, fame, &c., but faith and love, which comprise the whole kingdom of God, the one its beginning, the other its accomplishment, and are inseparable the one from the other, the one being the root, the other the fruit of Christian virtue. 4. But considering the worldly condition of these believers, there seemed no great cause to congratulate them on their faith and love, for they drew affliction on them. The apostle therefore turns his eye of faith towards the future, and the blessed inheritance is as certified as though it were already in their hands. A good man's promise is as good as its fulfilment, much more God's. Being in heaven, the Christian's treasure can neither be stolen nor soiled. 5. This sublime hope is derived from the truth of the gospel. So sublime is it that neither sense nor reason, nor the light of the law could have discovered it (2 Tim. i. 10). (*J. Daillé.*) *The writer and the readers:*—Notice—I. THE BLENDING OF LOWLINESS AND AUTHORITY IN PAUL'S DESIGNATION OF HIMSELF. He does not always bring his apostolic authority to mind in his letters. In his earliest, to the Thessalonians, he has not yet adopted the practice. In Philippians he has no need, for it was not gainsaid. In Philemon friendship is uppermost, and he will not command as an "apostle," but pleads as "the prisoner of Christ Jesus." In the rest he puts it in the foreground, as here. 1. He claims the apostolate in the highest sense of the word—equality with the original apostles, the chosen witnesses of Christ's resurrection; for he, too, had seen the Lord, and his whole ministry was built upon the fact. 2. "Through the will of God" is at once an assertion of Divine authority and of independence, and also a lowly disclaimer of individual merit and power. 3. His gracious humility is seen in his association of his young brother Timothy, who has no apostolic authority, but whose concurrence in his teaching might give it some additional weight; but in the fiery sweep of his thoughts, Timothy is soon left out of sight and Paul alone pours out the wealth of his wisdom and the warmth of his heart. II. THE NOBLE IDEAL OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER SET FORTH IN THE DESIGNATIONS OF THE COLOSSIAN CHURCH. In his earlier letters the address is to "the Church," but in his latter, beginning with Romans, and including Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, he drops the word, and uses expressions which regard individuals rather than the community. This did not arise from any lower estimate of "the Church," but advancing years and familiarity with his work, his position, and his auditors, all tended to draw him closer to them, and led to the disuse of the formal and official term in favour of the simpler and more affectionate "brethren." 1. Saints—a word woefully misapplied. The Church has given it as a special honour to a few, and decorated with it the possessors of a false ideal of sanctity—that of the ascetic sort. The world has used it with a sarcastic intonation as if it implied loud professions and small performance, not without a touch of hypocrisy. Saints are not people living in cloisters, but men and women immersed in the vulgar work of every day life. (1) The root idea of the word is not moral purity, but separation to God. Consecration to Him is the root from which the white flower of purity springs. We cannot make ourselves pure, but we can yield ourselves to God, and the purity will come. (2) We have also the idea of the solemn obligation on all so-called Christians to devote themselves to Him. We are not bound to this as Christians; we are not Christians unless we consecrate ourselves. So the term does not belong to an eminent sort of Christians. (3) The one motive which will lead us to bow our necks to the easy yoke, and come out of the misery of self pleasing into the peace of serving God, is drawn from the great love of Christ who devoted Himself, and bought us for His own, by giving Himself to be ours. And if drawn by this we give ourselves to God, He gives Himself to us. "I am thine" has ever for its chord which completes the fullness of its music "Thou art Mine." And so "saint" is a name of dignity. (4) There is implied in it, too, safety. If I belong to God then I am safe from the touch of evil and the taint of decay. 2. Faithful—trustworthy—true to the stewardship or trusting; probably the latter, because faith underlies consecration, and weaves the bond which unites men in the brotherhood, for it brings all who share it into a common relation to the Father. And then he who is believing will be faithful in the sense of being worthy of confidence, and true to his duty, his profession, and his Lord. 3. Brethren. (1) That strong new bond of union among men the most unlike, was a strange phenomenon when the Roman world was falling to pieces, and men might well wonder as they saw the hearts of master and slave, Greek and barbarian, Jew

and Gentile, fused into one glow of unselfish love. (2) But the word points not merely to Christian love, but to the common possession of a new life. It leads straight to the doctrine of regeneration, and proclaims that through faith in Christ men are made children of the highest, and therefore brethren. "To as many as received Him," &c. 4. In Christ: saints, believers, brethren, are in Him as living things are in the atmosphere, the branch in the vine, members in the body, inhabitants in a house, hearts that love in hearts that love, parts in a whole. III. THE APOSTOLIC WISH WHICH SETS FORTH THE HIGH IDEAL TO BE DESIRED FOR CHURCHES AND INDIVIDUALS. "And the Lord Jesus Christ" should be omitted. Perhaps the word "brethren" was lingering in Paul's mind, and so instinctively he stopped with the kindred word "Father." 1. Grace and peace blend the Western and Eastern forms of salutation, and surpass both. All that the Greek meant by his "grace" and the Hebrew by his "peace," the ideally happy condition which differing nations have placed in different blessings, and all loving words have wished for dear ones, is secured and conveyed to every one who trusts in Christ. 2. Grace means—(1) Love in exercise to those who are below the lover; (2) the gifts which such love bestows; (3) the effects of these gifts in the beauties of character and conduct developed in the receivers. So here first the gentleness of the Father, next the outcome of that love which never visits the soul empty-handed, and as the result every beauty of mind, heart, and temper. "Of His fulness we have received grace for grace." 3. Peace comes after grace. For tranquillity of soul we must go to God, and He gives it by giving us His love and its gifts. There must be first peace with God that there may be peace from God. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The apostolic salutation*:—Pondering this we ask three questions. I. WHAT IT REVEALS ABOUT THE APOSTLE. 1. His dignity: "An apostle by the will of God," a title—(1) Directly derived from God. (2) Abundantly justified—(a) by supernatural visions and experiences; (b) by seals of success. (3) Employed here—(a) Because he was dealing with erroneous teaching, and so needed a claim of authority. (b) He was personally an entire stranger to the Colossians. (c) He writes from prison, and it was well that he should remind himself and them of his dignity. He was a prisoner, but he was none the less an apostle. 2. His condescension: "Timotheus our brother." He was no fellow-apostle, yet his brother; his boyish convert, yet his brother. Great souls never patronize; they elevate men of whatever station or age into brotherhood with them. The Greatest is not ashamed to call us brethren. II. WHAT IT IMPLIES ABOUT THE CHURCH. It recalls to us—1. Its locality and associations. One of the historic Churches in the valley of the Lycus. The town had been famous, but its glory was waning. Xerxes and Cyrus had made it famous, but Paul's letter has made its name known where Xerxes and Cyrus have never been heard of. 2. Its character, which ought to be that of every Church. (1) "Saints." The Old Testament description of Israel applied to Christians to indicate union to God and consecration. (2) "Faithful brethren," indicating union to each other. All freemasonries, guilds, &c., are but hints of what the Church was meant to be. III. WHAT IT SUGGESTS ABOUT TRUE BLESSEDNESS. 1. "Grace" is a Greek thought Christianized. It takes the conception of grace of form, gesture, tone into the spiritual realm. To Paul it has two meanings. (1) It is to be enjoyed as the attitude of God in Christ towards men. It is thus the Divine pity, gentleness, favour; the bearing of a forgiving, condescending, loving God. (2) It is to be possessed as the spirit of a Christian. It is thus "the grace of life," moral beauty, spiritual loveliness. It is the indwelling in human character of more than all that the Greeks conceived in their "three graces." 2. "Peace," which may include—(1) Freedom from persecution—a great desideratum. (2) Absence of internal dissension—one main purpose of the letter. (3) Inward calm of heart, and quiet confidence in God—ideal peace, Christ's peace. The wish of Paul is the gift of Jesus. (*U. R. Thomas.*) I. THE SUPERScription. 1. The writer. (1) His Gentile name, kindred in form and pronunciation to his Hebrew name, was that of an honoured family in Rome. His use of it is evidence of his desire to keep before himself and others the relationship of Jesus to Gentiles, and to show that He was no respecter of persons who gave Himself a ransom for all. (2) His office—messenger of Jesus Christ; not (2 Cor. viii. 23) of the Churches. The expression implies that Christ has a message for universal man, "Go ye into all the world," a message of good news. (3) His Divine authority, "By the will of God," stated to shield himself from the charge that he was running unsent. The best are sometimes misunderstood, mistrusted, and suspected. Although many have no special call, yet all can do something after the

manner of a humble herald to diffuse the glad tidings, and as we have opportunity so responsibility is laid upon us to be up and doing. 2. Paul associates with himself Timotheus the brother, or brother Timothy, not his own in particular, nor theirs, but the Church's universally. The disciples of Jesus are a brotherhood, and every individual should be animated in relation to all the rest with the feelings of a brother or a sister. 3. The parties addressed were—(1) In his judgment of charity, true saints—a fine word meaning “holy ones,” and yet it has been pelted for ages with moral mire. No wonder, for it has been assumed by pretenders, and claimed by people because they lived in cells or wore a certain garb. Unholy men, occupying a certain official position, have been and are obsequiously addressed as “Your Holiness.” Saintliness is not a thing of profession but practice, and springs out of that pure heart which sees God. (2) Faithful brethren in Christ. That was the secret of all their excellencies. We do not say of any one that he is in Luther or Calvin, Paul, David, or Isaiah—but “in Christ.” We may be in love, peace, joy; and in some kindred way we may be in Christ, even as we live, move, and have our being in Him. Conversely, Christ is in us, when He is the object of the faith that is in us. We never fully comprehend Him; but He comprehends us as members are comprehended in the body and branches in the tree. II. THE SALUTATION. 1. A cordial greeting of this kind was common with the apostle. It was no formality or empty inflation. He really felt most kindly towards the Colossians, and hence, with beautiful Christian gentlemanliness, he no sooner names them than he hastens to set them entirely at ease, by letting them feel his cordial friendliness. 2. The salutation is not a supplication, but rather a benediction. In the former we address God, in the latter man. 3. It is twofold—Greek and Hebrew, being a message to both peoples. (1) The word “grace,” though not that which the Greeks employed in their salutation, is intimately related to it. When Greek met Greek politely, they mutually said, “Joy to thee.” The apostle slightly modifies the ordinary Greek phraseology, and lays hold of a word which directs attention to the Divine source of joy. The English “grace,” as is obvious from its two adjectives “graceful” and “gracious,” denotes that which occasions joy. It is connected with *gratitude* and *gratification* as conditions of heart that are inspirations of joy. But the term is employed to denote that greatest joy-giving kindness which when found in the heart of God towards us is the fountain of joy unspeakable. From the constitution of the mind, lovingkindness is pre-eminently fitted to produce joy. (2) The Jewish salutation, “Peace,” is strictly oriental and primitive. It had naturally sprung up when there were no extensive governments or codes of law, when men were apt to be like Ishmaelites wherever they travelled. When they came in view of strangers therefore, if no hostile intent was entertained, it was natural to call out “Peace!” As time rolled on and peoples got consolidated into organized communities, so that life in general became secure, the import of the salutation became gradually and increasingly enriched—equivalent to “May you have peace, and the fruits of it in your home, amongst your friends and neighbours, in your heart.” But as the apostle turned to Jesus, “peace” became that which He gave, that which passed all understanding. (J. Morison, D.D.) I. AN EXALTED AND IMPORTANT OFFICE. “Apostle.” Paul was commissioned to declare the grandest truths. His sphere was the world, and to fill it involved incredible care, work, and suffering. The office was created by the circumstances of the time. An ordinary officer can govern a garrison, but it requires a gifted general to marshal an army in line of battle. In the Divine government the occasion calls forth the man. II. THE AUTHORITY THAT DESIGNATES AND QUALIFIES. The will of God is the great originating and governing force. That force called and qualified Paul (Acts ix.). In undertaking the highest work for God it is not enough that we possess learning, gifts, piety, without the consciousness of a Divine commission. There are crises when it is necessary to have this to fall back upon. III. A FAMILIAR CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIP. “Timotheus our brother.” He was Paul’s “own son in the faith,” but here he recognizes him on the more equal footing of brother. Christianity is a brotherhood; not a communism which drags down all to its own level, but a holy confederacy in which men of all ranks, ages, and talents unite. His equality is based on a moral foundation. The minister whose position is assured loses nothing by honouring his younger brethren. IV. UNITY OF SYMPATHY AND DESIRE. “Paul and Timothy.” The closest intimacy, notwithstanding disparity in rank and ability. V. SUGGESTIVE PHASES OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. 1. Saints. 2. Faithful brethren. Several races are here united in a

holy and faithful brotherhood. 3. The sublime origin of the Christian character. "In Christ." VI. THE SALUTATION SUPPLICATES THE BESTOWMENT OF HIGHEST DIVINE BLESSINGS. 1. Grace. A term inclusive of all the blessings that can flow from God. 2. Peace. Grace expresses the spirit in which Divine manifestations come; peace the result they accomplish. (1) Peace with God. (2) Peace with each other—peace in the Church. 3. The source of the blessings desired. The Father's love and the Son's work are the sole source of every blessing, while the Holy Spirit is the agent of their communication. Learn: the broad, deep charity of the apostolic spirit, and the scope and temper of the prayers we should offer for the race. (*G. Barlow.*)

Ver. 2. To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ.—*Saints*.—I. THEIR CHARACTER. Holy persons. The idea is derived from the sacred vessels of the temple, which might not be appropriated to common uses. In a more general sense, saints are those who are eminent for piety, not all who are flattered or derided as such. One who is truly a saint—1. Acknowledges that he was once a lost and undone sinner, and who daily brings his sins for pardon and his graces for increase to the throne of grace. 2. Has a new heart and a right spirit. He is a new creature—loving what God loves, and hating what He hates. 3. Is zealous for the cause of his Divine Master. Where there are no spiritual actions there is no spiritual life. The chief motives are fortitude and the constraining love of Christ. 4. Grows in grace. II. THEIR RELATION TO EACH OTHER. 1. There are three kinds of brotherhood—natural, such as that between Esau and Jacob; national, such as existed among the Jews; spiritual, by adoption and grace. The last is the strongest, purest, and most enduring. 2. Of this Christ is the Elder Brother, and as He is not ashamed to own this relationship should we be either in regard to Himself or the poorest member of the family? 3. Love should spring out of this relationship. This is most natural; Christ has made love the badge of Christian discipleship; it is "good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity." 4. Its distinguishing attribute is fidelity. Be thou faithful in defending your brother when defamed, in admonishing him when in the wrong, in helping him in difficulty, in comforting him in trouble. A false brother is worse than an open foe. III. THEIR SITUATION IN THE WORLD. 1. Christians in the midst of heathens, and exposed to temptation and persecution. 2. Believers surrounded by heretics—their faith exposed to subtle undermining and bold attack. 3. Few as against many. Churches are often thus situated, but if they retain their holiness and faithfulness become more than conquerors. (*T. Watson, B.A.*) *Motives to saintliness*.—I. AS OUR GOD IS HOLY SO MUST WE BE (1 Pet. i. 15). II. IT IS THE END OF OUR DIVINE CHOICE (Eph. i. 4). III. OUR CALLING BINDETH US (1 Thess. iv. 7). IV. OUR REDEMPTION (Titus ii. 14). V. THE GRACE OF GOD TEACHES US THIS (Titus ii. 11-12). VI. THE FINAL JUDGMENT PERSUADES US THEREUNTO (2 Pet. v. 11; 1 John iii. 3). VII. THE RIGHT CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH PROHIBITS THE UNHOLY (Matt. vii. 6). Conclusion: 1. This discovers to us the vanity of the Pope in restraining a title common to all believers while they live to some few whom it pleaseth him to canonize after death. 2. We see the lewdness of many profane Esaus who scoff at the name. 3. We must remember what kind of men we must be: even such as must profess and practice holiness. (*P. Bayne, B.D.*) *In Christ*.—This mystical but most real union of Christians with their Lord is never far away from the apostle's thoughts, and in the Epistle to the Ephesians it is the very burden of the whole. A shallower Christianity tries to weaken that great phrase to something more intelligible to the unspiritual temper and poverty-stricken experience proper to it; but no justice can be done to Paul's teaching unless it be taken in all its depth as expressive of the same mutual indwelling and interlacing of spirit with spirit, which is so prominent in the writings of John. There is one point of contact between the Pauline and Johannine conceptions, on the difference between which so much exaggeration has been expended; to both the inmost essence of the Christian life is union to Christ, and abiding in Him. If we are Christians we are in Him in a profounder sense than creation lives and moves and has its being in God. This is the deepest mystery of the Christian life. To be "in Him" is to be complete. "In Him" we are "blessed with all spiritual blessings." "In Him" we are "chosen." "In Him" God "freely bestows His grace upon us." "In Him we have redemption through His blood." "In Him" "all things in heaven and earth are gathered." In Him is the better life of an that live. In Him we have peace though the world be seething with changed all

storm. In Him we conquer though earth and our own evil be all in arms against us. If we live in Him, we live in purity and joy. If we die in Him, we die in tranquil trust. If our gravestones may truly carry the sweet old inscription, carved on many a nameless slab in the Catacombs, "In Christo," they will also bear the other, "In pace." If we sleep in Him, our glory is assured, "For them also that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with Him." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) **Grace and peace.**—Grace is introductory good; peace is final good: he therefore who wishes these two blessings includes every intermediate benefit. I. **GRACE** denotes—1. The gratuitous act of the Divine will accepting man in Christ and pardoning his sins (Eph. ii. 5; Rom. iii. 24). This free love of God is the first gift in which all other gifts are bestowed. 2. All those habitual gifts which God infuses for the sanctification of the soul. So faith, love, and all virtues and salutary endowments are called graces (Eph. iv. 7). 3. The actual assistance of God, whereby the regenerate, after having received habitual grace, are strengthened to perform good works, and to persevere in faith and godliness. For to man renewed and sanctified by grace, the daily aid of God is still necessary for every single act. The union of all these is necessary: inherent grace is not given unless the grace of acceptance has preceded it; neither being given is it available to the production of fruits, unless also the efficacious help of God follow and accompany it through every individual action. II. **PEACE.** The Hebrews used this expression as we use the expression health or joy: it signifies prosperity marked by no calamities either public or private (Gen. xliii. 27; Psa. cxxii. 6). But with the apostles it is used more extensively, and comprehends more especially spiritual joy and prosperity. Therefore under this term Paul desires for them—1. Internal peace, or peace of conscience, which arises from the grace of God accepting us for Christ's sake (John xiv. 27; Rom. v. 1; Phil. iv. 7). 2. Brotherly peace; "breaking peace they exclude grace." This is a great and desirable good, and is frequently celebrated as the special gift of God (1 Cor. xiv. 33; 2 Cor. xiii. 11). The seeds of schism had been scattered abroad; there was therefore need of peace. 3. That external peace which is the well-being of the Church; but only yet so far as it does not militate against their spiritual good; for sometimes it conduces more to the welfare of the faithful that they be afflicted than that they enjoy external tranquility. III. **WE MAY GATHER**—1. From the order itself, as he places grace before peace, he teaches us—(1) That this is first of all to be desired, that we may have God propitious. If He be hostile, even blessings will be turned into a curse. (2) That true peace cannot belong except to those only who are in favour with God. "There is no peace to the wicked." (3) That all good things which fall to the lot of the godly are streams from this fountain of Divine grace. 2. From the thing itself desired—(1) Paul shows us by his own example the duty of every minister of the gospel; which is, not only to preach grace and peace to his people, but from their inmost souls to intreat and implore the same from God by incessant prayer: neither is sufficient of itself. (2) He reproves the folly of this world, in which almost all wish for themselves and their friends, health, riches, and honours; but grace, peace, and other spiritual good things, they neither regard nor think of. But Christ commands us to seek "first the kingdom of God" (Matt. vi. 33). (3) He comforts the godly and faithful by showing them that the grace of God, and the peace of God they always possess; in comparison of which good things whatsoever fall to the wicked are refuse. "A God appeased," says Bernard, "tranquillizes all things, and to behold Him at peace is to be ourselves at peace. (*Ep. Davenant.*)

Vers. 3-8. **We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**—*The prelude:*—I. A THANKFUL RECOGNITION OF CHRISTIAN EXCELLENCE AS INTRODUCTORY TO WARNINGS AND REMONSTRANCES. Almost all Paul's Epistles begin thus. Gentle rain softens the ground, and prepares it to receive the heavier downfall which would else mostly run off the hard surface. These expressions are not compliments, or flattery used for personal ends, but uncalculated expressions of affection which delights to see white patches in the blackest character, and of wisdom which knows that the nauseous medicine of blame is most easily taken if wrapped in a capsule of honest praise. All persons in authority may be the better for taking this lesson. 2. The praise is cast in the form of thanksgiving to God, as the true fountain of all that is good in men. All that might be harmful in direct praise is thus strained out of it. Christian excellences are God's gifts. The fountain, not the pitcher, should have the credit of the water. 3. There were two points which occasioned his thankfulness. (1) Faith. This is sometimes spoken

of as "towards" Jesus, which describes the act by its direction, as if it were the going out of man's nature to the true goal of all active being. "On" Christ, describes it as reposing on Him as the end of all seeking. But more sweet is faith considered as "in" Him as its home, where the seeking spirit may fold its wings, be strengthened, and tranquillized. (a) In all, faith is the same—simple confidence. But how unlike are the objects!—broken reeds in the one case, and the firm pillar of Divine power and tenderness in the other. And how unlike, alas! the fervency and constancy of our trust in each other and in Him. (b) Faith covers the whole ground of man's relation to God. Everything that binds us to the unseen world is included in it. (c) From that fruitful source all good will come, and that faith lacks its best warrant which does not lead to whatsoever is of good report. (2) As faith is the parent of all virtue, so it is the parent of love—the whole law of human conduct packed into one word. But the warmest place in a Christian's heart will belong to those in sympathy with his deepest self. The sign on the surface of earthly relations of the central fire of faith to Christ is the fruitful vintage of brotherly love, as the vineyards bear the heaviest clusters on the slopes of Vesuvius. (3) So here we have two members of the familiar triad, and their sister, Hope, is not far off. And the hope laid up in heaven is a motive for brotherly love. This hope is not the emotion, but the object, and the ideas of futurity and security are suggested by that object being laid up. This is not the main motive, but it is legitimate to draw subordinate motives for holiness from the anticipation of future blessedness, and to use that prospect to reinforce the higher motives. II. A SOLEMN REMINDER OF THE TRUTH AND WORTH OF THAT GOSPEL WHICH WAS THREATENED BY THE BUDDING HERESIES OF THE COLOSSIAN CHURCH. 1. He begins by reminding them that to that gospel they owed all their knowledge and hope of heaven. Its sole certainty is built on the resurrection of Christ, and its sole hope on His death. All around us we see those who reject these surrender their faith in the life beyond. 2. The gospel is a word of which the whole subject and contents is truth. It is of value, not because it feeds sentiment or regulates conduct only, but because it reveals knowledge about the deepest things of God, of which, but for it, man would know nothing. It is not speculation, but truth; and truth because it is the record of Him who is "the Truth." "To whom shall we go?" If elsewhere, to will-o'-the-wisps and Babel. 3. This gospel had been received by them. "You have accepted the Word; see that your future be consistent with your past." Blessed are they whose creed at last can be spoken in the lessons learned in childhood, to which experience has but given new meaning. 4. This gospel was filling the world. "All the world" must be taken with an allowance for rhetorical statement, but the rapid spread of Christianity then, and its power to influence all sorts of men, were facts that needed to be accounted for if the gospel were not true. All schisms and heresies are partial and local, suit coteries, and are the product of circumstances; but the gospel goes through the world, and draws all men. Dainties are for the few, and the delicacies of one country are the abominations of another; but everybody breaks bread and lives on it. Do not fling away the gospel, which belongs to all, for that which can never live in the popular heart, nor influence more than a handful of "superior persons." 5. Another plea for adherence to the gospel is based on its continuous and universal fruitfulness. It brings about results which attest its claim to be from God. Our imperfections are our own; our good is its. A medicine is not shown to be powerless if a sick man has taken it irregularly. This rod has budded at all events; have any of its antagonists' rods done the same? Don't cast it away, says Paul, till you have found a better. 6. They have heard a gospel which reveals the "true grace of God"—another argument for steadfastness. In opposition to it then, as now, were put various thoughts and requirements, a human wisdom and a burdensome code. They are but bony things to try and live on. The soul wants something more than bread made out of sawdust. We want a loving God to live on, whom we can love because He loves us. Will anything but the gospel give us that? III. THE APOSTOLIC ENDORSEMENT OF EPHRAS, the early teacher of the Colossians, whose authority, no doubt, was imperilled by the new direction of thought, and Paul was desirous of adding the weight of his attestation to the complete correspondence between his own teaching and that of Ephras. We know nothing of him except from this letter and that to Philemon. He is a member of the Colossian Church (iv. 12). He had brought the tidings which filled the apostle's heart with joy and love for their Christian walk (vers. 4-8), and of anxiety lest they should be swept away from their steadfastness. Ephras

shared this (iv. 12). He was in some sense Paul's "fellow-prisoner," and alone of Paul's companions receives the name of "fellow-servant," which may be an instance of Paul's courteous humility. "Don't make differences—we are both slaves of one Master." As He had truly represented Paul, so he had lovingly represented them. Probably those who questioned Epaphras' version of Paul's teaching would suspect his report of the Church; hence the double witness borne from the apostle's generous heart to both parts of his brother's work. Never was leader truer to his subordinates than Paul. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Thanks-giving*.—I. THE DUTY. 1. Arises out of an express command. We are bound to be thankful for all things (Job i. 21; Isa. xxiv. 15). 2. Is a test of Christian character. All the saints have been distinguished by it, and have treasured up their mercies that they might render it. To be lacking in it is to lack the chief distinguishing grace of Christian character, and to incur the greatest sin—ingratitude. 3. Must always form a prominent feature of spiritual worship—witness the Psalms. 4. Is most reasonable in itself—when we consider that it is the best return we can make for any blessing. II. ITS SPECIAL SUBJECTS. The graces of the spirit in ourselves or others. 1. Faith takes the precedence, because it is the first and root-grace. Think of what faith does—saves, is the evidence of things unseen, casts all care on God, &c. 2. Love which is fruitful in blessed effects. The loveless man is miserable. 3. A good hope through grace—which anticipates heaven. (*T. Watson, B.A.*) *Apostolic thanksgiving*.—I. ITS SPIRIT. 1. It is unselfish. We hear the prisoner praise and exult for the joys of others. Arthur Helps says: "It is a noble sight. That man is very powerful who has no more hopes for himself, who looks not to be loved or admired any more, to have more honour and dignity; but whose sole thought is for others, and who only lives for them." 2. Ungrudging. He is about to deal with their errors, but is eager first to recognize what is laudable. There are two sets of men, those who first see the blemish, then the beauty; and those who first admire and then criticise. To the first of these Paul belonged. 3. Constant. II. ITS SUBJECTS. 1. The spiritual possessions of the Church. Sometimes Paul views faith and love as leading up to hope: here he depicts hope as kindling faith and love. (1) The faith is Christ-centred. (2) The love is practical. (3) The hope is secure. 2. The means by which these possessions had been obtained. (1) The gospel. (a) In its universality. (b) In its fertility. The gospel is not only vital, but reproductive. (2) The preacher. 3. The source and sphere of their possession. "Love in the Spirit" is the life of all the saints. (*U. R. Thomas.*) The custom of the apostle to begin his Epistles with thanksgiving showed the devout habit of his mind, his constant recognition of the source of good, and his interest in the spiritual condition of those to whom he wrote. I. THANKSGIVING AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN PRAYER. "We give thanks, praying always for you." II. THE BEING TO WHOM ALL THANKSGIVING IS DUE. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." III. THE GROUNDS OF THIS THANKSGIVING. 1. The reputation of their faith in Christ. (1) Christ is the object and foundation of all true faith. He is so as the Divinely-consecrated Deliverer of our race. The grandeur of His work and the glory of His character are suggested by the titles here given. (2) Faith is the root-principle of Christian life. 2. Their possession of an expansive Christian love. Love to Christ is necessarily involved, for love to the saints is our affection for Christ's image in them. Love is all-embracing. Peculiarities, defects, differences of opinion, are no barriers. It is the unanswerable evidence of moral transformation (1 John iii. 14). It is the grandest triumph over the natural enmity of the human heart. It is the indissoluble bond of choicest fellowship. 3. Their enjoyment of a well-sustained hope. (1) Its character. The prospect of heaven—of possessing a spiritual inheritance whose wealth never diminishes and whose splendours never fade—of seeing Christ, and being like Him and dwelling with Him for ever. This prospect lifts the soul above the wearinesses, disappointments, and sufferings of the present limited life. (2) Its security "laid up"—safely deposited as a precious jewel in God's coffer. There no pilfering hands can touch, no breath tarnish, no moth corrupt it. Earthly treasures vanish, and to God's people sometimes nothing but hope remains. Where this treasure is there the heart should be. (3) Its source—the gospel. It alone unfolds the mysteries of the future. How dismal the outlook where hope is unknown. Lessons: 1. We should thank God for others more on account of their spiritual than temporal welfare. 2. Learn what are the essential elements of the Christian character—faith, love, hope. 3. The proclamation of the gospel

should be welcomed, and its message pondered. (*G. Barlow.*) *The connection between thanksgiving and prayer.*—The participle marks the thanksgiving as part of the prayer, and the adverb makes it prominent, indicating that when they prayed for them they always gave thanks. There is no true prayer without thanksgiving. Gratitude intensifies the soul's sense of dependence on God, and prompts the cry for the needed help; and, on the other hand, earnest prayer naturally glides into fervent thankfulness. As one sin is interlinked with and produced by another, so the use of one grace begets another. The more temporal things are used, the more they wear and waste; but spiritual things are strengthened and increased with exercise. Every spiritual grace has in it the seed of an endless reproductiveness. Underlying every thanksgiving for others is a spirit of tender, disinterested love. Moved by this passion, the apostle, from the midst of imprisonment and sorrow, could soar on the wings of gratitude and prayer to heaven. "Thanksgiving will be the bliss of eternity." (*Passavant.*) *Five Christian elements.*—I. CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. It consists in—1. Faith. (1) That which leads us to accept as true the testimony of the gospel concerning Christ. (2) To depend upon Him for all the blessings promised by Him. (3) To constantly apply to Him for all that He has revealed and accomplished. (4) To lay hold of His friendship, and find Him in every respect a faithful, suitable, ever-present, all-sufficient friend. 2. Love, the constant attendant of faith, and by which faith works. (1) It produces universal benevolence to all the world, and compassion for perishing sinners. (2) It especially delights itself in the saints as related to and bearing the image of Him who is the supreme object of love. (3) It will evidence itself in love to Christ's commands, ways, people. 3. Hope. (1) Its object is heaven. (2) As a grace it dwells in the heart, always in some measure accompanying faith and love. (3) It is with the Christian even in his darkest moments. II. CHRISTIAN COMMUNION consists in—1. Joy and gratitude to God on behalf of those who give evidence of being partakers of His grace in truth. This is quite distinct from ordinary friendship. (1) It is founded on personal attractions or intimate intercourse. (2) It is oneness of soul which subsists in the absence of every other consideration, and notwithstanding unfavourable circumstances. 2. Fervent prayer for the establishment and perfection of those graces in the beginning of which we rejoice (vers. 9, 10). 3. Cheering and animating each other to perseverance, notwithstanding all the trials and difficulties we may meet (ver. 11). 4. Encouraging each other constantly to keep in mind our infinite obligations and glorious prospects (vers. 12, 13). III. CHRISTIAN RESOURCES. 1. The word of the truth of the gospel (ver. 5). Till this came the Colossians were strangers to faith, love, and hope. 2. The instrumentality of ministers. Epaphras and Paul were dear fellow-servants and faithful ministers, one preaching to the Colossians, by which they believed, and both labouring for their establishment and edification. 3. Prayer for the supply of all those spiritual blessings which the saints have learned to appreciate and desire (vers. 3-9). 4. The operations of the Holy Spirit, which gives efficiency to all love (ver. 8) is especially said to be in the Spirit, who is indeed the agent of every grace. IV. CHRISTIAN PRACTICE (ver. 6). Wherever the gospel is preached, and attended with Divine power and efficacy, it brings forth fruit. 1. In the conversion of sinners. 2. Where vital religion is possessed it is evidenced by exemplary deportment and diffusive benevolence. There is fruit that both the Church and the world can see. They cannot see our love to Christ or our hope of heaven, but they can see our conscientious dealings in the world, our charity, our unworldliness. These are fruits which give evidence of vitality and vigour in the root. V. CHRISTIAN EXPECTATIONS. Christians have a hope that is laid up for them in heaven. 1. As to themselves, it is secret and out of sight. It is only faith that can realize it. They are yet in their minority in a world of discipline and education; heirs, indeed, but not of age. Supplies are sent them here, but their hope, their portion, is laid up in heaven. 2. It is treasured up in a place of perfect security, so that no enemy or thief can reach it. 3. It is laid up where none of the changes of time can affect it. If we carried it about with us, we might lose it. When we die we should drop it; but it is safe in heaven, out of the reach of disappointment. Conclusion: 1. If we desire spiritual prosperity, let us be much in prayer for ourselves and others. Nothing more enlarges our capacity for holy enjoyment. 2. If we possess a hope in heaven, let it be evidenced by superiority to the world and love to our fellow-heirs. 3. If these blessings are imparted to sinners through the instrumentality of the gospel, be concerned to spread the gospel. (*J. Hirst.*)

Christian love the chief grace.—Love, amid the other graces in this world, is like a cathedral tower, which begins on the earth, and, at first, is surrounded by the other parts of the structure. But, at length, rising above buttressed walls, and arch, and parapet, and pinnacle, it shoots spirelike many a foot right into the air, so high that the huge cross on its summit glows like a spark in the morning light, and shines like a star in the evening sky, when the rest of the pile is enveloped in darkness. So love, here, is surrounded by the other graces, and divides the honours with them; but they will have felt the wrap of night, and of darkness, when it will shine, luminous, against the sky of eternity. (H. W. Beecher.)

Ver. 5. For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.—This is—I. A VERY MARVELLOUS HOPE. 1. If we consider that it is a great act of grace that sinners should have a hope at all, there was a time when we were "without Christ, having no hope." We had many false hopes, little will-o'-the-wisps, which danced before us, deceived us, and led us into the bogs of presumption and error. Each time we tried to rely on good works, outward ceremonies, and good resolutions, we were disappointed anew. Now, sinners though we be, we have a hope. 2. More marvellous still that our hope should be associated with heaven. It seems almost presumptuous for a sinner who so richly deserves hell even to lift up his eyes towards heaven. He might have some hope of purgatory, if there were such a place, but is not the hope of heaven too much? Yet we have no fear of hell or purgatory. Heaven awaits all believers. Not that we shall have a glance at it; we shall have it and be in it. 3. Still more marvellous, it is so substantial. Paul seems hardly to be speaking of the grace of hope, since that dwells in our bosoms, but rather the object, but not exclusively, because that which is laid up in heaven is not a hope, except to those who hope for it. The hope, then, is so substantial that Paul speaks of it as though it were the thing itself. A man may have hope of wealth, but that is a very different thing from being wealthy; and of old age, and yet not reach middle life; but this Divine hope can never be disappointed. 4. Because it is the subject of Divine revelation. No man could have invented it. The prince of dreamers could not have imagined it, nor the master of logic inferred it. The word of the truth of the gospel has opened a window in heaven, and bidden us look on our own. 5. Inasmuch as it came to us by hearing, "Whereof ye heard," not by working, deserving, penance, and sacrifice. We heard that the pierced hand of Jesus had opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and we believed. Will we not prize to the uttermost the sacred word which has brought us such a hope? 6. Because the substance of it is most extraordinary. (1) It is the hope of victory, for we shall overcome every foe; (2) of perfection, for we shall be like Christ; (3) of security from every danger, for no temporal evil shall come near us, no mental evil intrude upon us, no spiritual enemy assail us; (4) of perfect rest, which shall be consistent with continual service, for, like the angels, we shall rest on the wing—no weary limb or fevered brain shall follow us; (5) of happiness beyond compare; (6) of everlasting fellowship with Christ. II. A MOST SECURE HOPE. 1. Because it is laid up. Bank calamities make business men very careful where they lay up their treasures, but there is no room for anxiety for what God takes under His charge. "Laid up," hidden in a safe place. We find it hard to lay up our valuables safely. 2. Laid up "for you." There is a crown in heaven which will never be worn by any other head but yours. 3. Laid up "in heaven," where, as our Saviour says—(1) "Neither moth nor rust doth corrupt"—no process of decay will cause your treasure to become stale and worn out. (2) "Nor do thieves break through and steal." We cannot imagine Satan undermining the bastions of heaven. If your hope lies in the bank, it may break; if in an empire, it may melt away; if in an estate, the deeds may be questioned; if in any human creature, death may bereave you; if in yourself, it is deceitful altogether. 4. We have one indisputable certificate and guarantee for it. Notice three emphatic words. (1) "In the word." We take a good man's words freely; and will we not take God's word much more readily? (2) "Of the truth." It is not a word of guess or probable inference, but of infallible truth. There may be other true things in the world, but God's word is the essence of truth. (3) "Of the gospel." The sum and substance of the good news is this glorious hope. III. A POWERFULLY INFLUENTIAL HOPE. 1. It is the parent and nurse of love. "The love which ye have to all saints for the hope," &c. That is no trifling fountain of action which leads believing hearts to love.

2. Love is part of its operation on ourselves, but it affects others also. (1) It leads ministers and gracious people to give thanks to God; (2) to pray (ver. 9). (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The heavenly hope*:—I. THERE IS GIVEN TO MAN A PROSPECT OF FUTURE GOOD. The apostle here speaks about a hope. Hope is the expectation of future good. There is no being who is not the subject of hope. We are not content to exercise this passion merely in reference to objects which are on this side the grave. We all think of the state into which we expect to remove. Man would fain live for ever; futurity rises on the soul; and hope implants the high desire of enjoying it. This hope is inspired by the goodness of the God who formed us; He has been pleased to grant us a knowledge by which our hopes may be confirmed and conducted to their final goal in heaven. A beautiful vista of enjoyment is opened before us, exactly corresponding with our views and wishes. Hope is the balm of life; and but for it life would be but a dreadful dungeon, and we should sink into all the horrors of despair. Now, look on the future; survey the landscape which revelation has sketched out. There are the many mansions in which God the Father, His Son, His people reside. These are the beautiful similitudes which are employed to inspire our hopes. They are abodes of purity; they are the abodes of knowledge. There we shall know even as we are known. They are abodes of triumph; they are the abodes of blessed companionship. There we come to God, to Jesus, to the spirits of the just made perfect. They are the abodes of life and immortality. II. CERTAIN REQUISITES ARE NECESSARY FOR PARTICIPATING IN THAT PROSPECT. Hope is founded on faith; and we must believe before we can hope for the enjoyment of heaven. 1. There must be faith in the declarations of God by which the nature of these prospects is disclosed. No man can hope for that in which he does not believe. There must be faith, else all this beautiful scenery will only be like the work of fancy or falsehood. 2. Faith in the method of mercy revealed by God as the only way through which a participation in these prospects can be enjoyed. God has not only revealed these prospects, but also the way to the enjoyment of them. III. THE PROSPECT OF FUTURE GOOD RESTS ON THE MOST FIRM AND INVOLUBLE SECURITY. It is said to be "laid up." The apostle uses the same expression, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." In Hebrews ix. 27 the same word is rendered "appointed." It is a thing granted on a firm and imperishable security. How different, then, is it from the hopes of earth. Here the object is as certain as if you grasped it in your hand. 1. It rests on the authority of the Word of God. Let it be assumed that the author of your hope is God. Did He ever inspire hope, and plunge into despair? Did He ever erect a building which He will not protect? Has He not power? Is He not wise? Is He destitute of goodness? "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." 2. The word of God is ratified by the work of the Redeemer. All the work of Christ is to give firmness to what God has sworn. "All the promises of God in Christ Jesus are yea, and in Him amen." The death of Christ does its part, as it is the sacrifice by which the curse is taken away. The resurrection of Christ is the testimony that the atonement is accepted. The present residence of the Saviour is another foundation on which this hope rests. "I go to prepare a place for you." "Jesus the forerunner hath entered in." IV. THESE PROSPECTS, WHEN ENJOYED AND POSSESSED, MUST PRODUCE THE MOST POWERFUL INFLUENCE ON THE HEART. 1. It excites to moral purity and holiness of life. You hope to enter heaven. Heaven is a holy place. God is holy. The inhabitants are holy. All their praises centre in this perfection. You must be holy in heaven; and will you not be so here? "Every one that hath this hope purifieth himself as He is pure." 2. It produces calmness and peace amidst the troubles and trials of the world. The man who has so good a hope of heaven need not grudge to encounter a few troubles on earth. 3. It gives confidence amid the approaches of decay and dissolution. This is "the hope which is laid up for Christians in heaven!" "It is a good hope, a lively hope, a sweet hope—a hope which makes the coward bold, a hope which bears above the world," &c. But is it mine? (*J. Parsons.*) *Hope laid up in heaven*:—What is this hope but the glorious life we look for? Now, where should the life of the branches of a tree be kept but where the root is? So where should our glorious life be hid but where Christ, the root of us all, is with him? Yea, this is most meet and becomely for us. If an Englishman should sojourn in France a while, and had great treasure to receive, would he not choose rather to have it paid him at the Exchange in his own country than to have it there, far from his home, and stand to the hazard of transporting of

it? So it fareth with us. It is safer that our wealth should be paid us in heaven, our own country, than here where we are but strangers wayfaring for a season. (P. Bayne, B.D.) *Christian hope* :—"Our hope is not hung upon such an untwisted thread as 'I imagine so,' or 'It is likely'; but the cable, the strong rope of our fastened anchor, is the oath and promise of Him who is eternal verity; our salvation is fastened with God's own hand, and Christ's own strength, to the strong stake of God's unchangeable nature." (S. Rutherford.)

Vers. 5, 6. **The word of the truth of the gospel which is come unto you.—The argument for the gospel based on the triumphs of missions** :—I. **THINK OF THE GOSPEL AS IT AFFORDS INSPIRATION TO DISSEMINATE ITSELF.** Christianity is the religion of universal man. It recognizes no exception. 1. The principles of the kingdom of Jesus Christ are themselves universal. They deal with conditions which belong to all men. They impose rules which all can obey. They grant their privileges without distinction. The sin they would destroy is the sin of all men. The salvation they illustrate is offered to every child of Adam. Christ indicated this universality by explicit declaration in the conversation with Nicodemus, the parables of the kingdom, and the great commission. This idea was fully gained by the apostles. Not at first, although Peter touched it in his address to Cornelius; but Paul fully developed it. Is not this in itself unique? Has it not such a supreme character that it at least suggests the idea of a Divine origin? Why should it belong to Christianity alone? 2. But this universalism is much more than an intellectual idea. It is a vital and energizing force. It propagates itself. The moment a man becomes a Christian he is filled with a desire that others should be Christians. 3. Hence we find two facts in the history of the Church—its aggressive character, and its exclusive relation to all other faiths. The Roman pantheon included all the gods of the nations conquered by Rome, and would have welcomed Christ, but He would not enter it. He demanded the extrusion of every other divinity; His altar alone could receive the sacrifices of a worshipping world. And it is still so. Christianity brooks no other faith. Is not this a noteworthy fact? Whence has it come? 4. It is in modern missions that we may find the practical illustration of this universalism and its most effective illustration. II. **THINK OF THE UNSELFISH SPIRIT IN WHICH THIS ATTEMPT TO WIN A WORLD HAS BEEN PROJECTED AND CARRIED OUT.** 1. The mere desire for imperial sway over an entire race may of itself be no very Divine emotion. Many have experienced it, and it has proved to be a spawn of hell rather than a birth of heaven—Nimrod, Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon. But this is not the spirit that animates the modern herald of the Cross. He seeks no personal glory, his gains are small, his comforts few; with no weapons but a book, the name of Jesus, and a holy life, he moves to the victory of a world. 2. I know all that can be said about the restless spirit, love of adventure, desire to escape the dullness of average home life, and the glamour of missionary fame. But these emotions are fleeting, and perish if there be no recognition in places of note, and wither before old age. But this is not the experience of missionaries. It is nearly a century since evangelical missions were started, but the spirit is as fresh as ever. If the romance has disappeared, it has been replaced by a greater devotion, and a wiser, because more experienced, energy. What is the earthly fame the missionary gains? Mention half a dozen names out of hundreds of thousands which the world signalizes. What his wealth? Scarce a pittance for old age. What does a thoughtful inquirer make of this system which begets such a quality of moral nature, which summons to its work such a noble spirit? Does it not suggest that God must be the author of the truth these men carry forth, and the inspirer of the sentiment with which they do their work? III. **THINK OF THE MARVELLOUS FORCE WHICH THE GOSPEL HAS MANIFESTED IN ITS SPREAD THROUGH THE WORLD.** 1. We are not considering the advance of a nation which is extending its government, arms, commerce, language, or tracing the progress of a trade, science, or any other force which spends itself on our physical existence, and may minister to the baser side of our nature. We are estimating the power of a force which comes to each man personally, and demands thought, obedience, self-conquest, and the dissolution, it may be, of bonds which hold him to his past, his family, and his interest. There is nothing like it. It is the only moral propagander of the world. 2. And yet what victories it has gained. Napoleon confessed that his paled before them. But putting aside the past gains of the gospel, its victories over Jewish faith, Greek philosophy, Roman law, its contest with Islam, and its conquest of Europe, con-

sider its modern achievements. Modern missions found the South Sea Islands the home of naked savages; to-day they are for the most part civilized, and reckoned among the nations. Think of what it has done in Madagascar, and what it is doing in India, China, Japan. Wherever we turn we find the missionary. He has created written languages, clothed the naked, changed the savage into a saint, made lands safe for the trader, freed the slave, &c. IV. THINK OF THE ADAPTATION TO THE WANTS OF MAN WHICH THE GOSPEL HAS EXHIBITED IN ITS SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. It has proved itself to be exactly what all men want, and what they could readily accept. 1. How varied are the climes into which it has been carried, but it breathes every air, and finds each as if its native breath. 2. All colours are alike to the gospel. 3. Age makes no difference, and culture renders it neither needless nor ineffectual. 4. No nation outgrows it. 5. It presents a point at which all can unite. It has realized the unity and brotherhood of the race. There is an old Arabic proverb which declares that Islam can flourish only where the palm tree grows, but the Tree of Life is planted in every soil, and blossoms all over the world. What can be the answer of a thoughtful mind to such facts as these? (*Ll. D. Bevan, D.D.*) *The perennial fruitfulness of the gospel:*—The gospel is not like those plants which exhaust themselves in bearing fruit, and wither away. The external growth keeps pace with the reproductive energy. While "beareth fruit" describes the inner working, "increasing" gives the outward extension of the gospel. The words "and increasing" are not found in the received text, but the authority in their favour is overwhelming. (*Bishop Lightfoot.*)

Vers. 6-8. Which is come unto you as it is in all the world.—*The true gospel universally the same.*—I. IN ITS ADAPTATION AND ENTERPRISE. "Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world." The gospel, though first proclaimed to the Jews, was not confined to them. It reached and changed the Colossians. In them all races were represented. The world's greatest blessings are not indigenous; are not even sought; they are sent from above. Systems of philosophy lived only in the soil that produced them. Heresies are ethnic; truth is catholic. The success of Mohammedanism was of a different character, and effected by different means. It depended more on the scimitar than the Koran. Alexander, Sesostris, and others achieved similar conquests, and as rapidly, by the force of arms. The victories of the gospel were won by moral weapons. II. IN ITS RESULTS. "Bringeth forth fruit and increaseth as it does also in you." The fruit-bearing denotes its inward and subjective influence on the soul and life; the increasing refers to its outward and diffusive influence as it makes progress in the world. The metaphor used by the apostle suggests that the gospel, as a tree, not only bears fruit, but grows, sending forth its roots more firmly and widely, and extending its branches in the air. We cannot monopolize that which is intended for the world. It is intensely practical, and aims at results corresponding with its character. The individual who is most spiritually fruitful will be most active. III. IN THE MANNER OF ITS RECEPTION. "Since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth." Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. The mode of receiving the gospel is the same to all. It is apprehended by the understanding, approved by the judgment, and embraced by the affections. It is not enough that it falls on the ear like the strain of a seraphic melody, not enough that it enters the understanding as a clearly conceived, full-orbed truth, not enough that it ripples through the sphere of the emotions as an unspeakable ecstasy; unless, aided by the Divine Spirit, it be cordially embraced by the heart and conscience as the whole truth—the only truth that saves. It is in the gospel only that we "hear of the grace of God"—the good news that He has provided redemption and restoration for the race. Nature, with all its revelations, is dumb on this subject. Providence, with its vast repertory of mingled mystery and bounty, unfolds it not. It is only by believing the gospel that, like the Colossians, we can "know the grace of God in truth." IV. IN THE METHOD OF ITS PROPAGATION. 1. It is propagated by preaching "as ye also learned," lit., "as ye were instructed," in the truth of the previous verse. Probably Epaphras first preached the gospel at Colosse and the neighbouring cities. Preaching is the Divinely-instituted means of disseminating the gospel. It cannot be superseded by any other agency. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save." 2. It is propagated by men thoroughly qualified for the work. (1) The apostle recognized Epaphras as a co-labourer with himself. The

preacher must labour as belonging to Christ, as dependent on Him, and as attached to Him. With all frankness, affection, and modesty, the great apostle acknowledges Epaphras as "a dear fellow-labourer." Envy and jealousy of the gifts and reputation of others are pernicious and unjustifiable. (2) The apostle recognized Epaphras as a faithful minister of Christ. (3) The apostle recognized Epaphras as a man of deep spiritual insight. "Who also declared unto us your love in the spirit." Love is the leading characteristic of the gospel. Lessons: 1. The universality of the gospel a strong evidence of the Divine authorship. 2. Though all the world were to reject the gospel it would still be true. 3. To whomsoever the gospel comes, the imperative duty is to believe it. (*George Barlow.*) *The gospel, its spread and fruitfulness.*—I. THE ADMIRABLE PROGRESS AND GREAT AND SUDDEN SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL. 1. The gospel had come to the Colossians, a people living in Phrygia, a province infamous for its abominations, whence had issued the mysteries and infernal devotions of Cybele, the most detestable of pagan idols, and in whose service were committed the most shameful horrors. Whence it appears that the knowledge of God's Word is a donation of mere grace, and not the payment of merit. The apostle tells them, not that they had come to the gospel, but it to them; to show us that it is God who comes to us, who prevents us by His grace, according to His good pleasure. The sick go to the physician; here the Physician of souls goes to the sick (Luke xix. 10; Isa. lxx. 1). 2. The gospel was come into all the world. This is not at all astonishing if the other apostles and evangelists laboured each according to his measure. We read of the extraordinary diffusion of the gospel in Justin, Clement, Tertullian, and even Tacitus acknowledges that there was a very great multitude of Christians in Rome. 3. The apostle mentions this—(1) To confirm them the more in the faith of the gospel. Not that truth depends on its success; though all the world were against it that would be unshaken. Yet it is a consolation to the believer to see the extensive diffusion of his faith; and the more converts, the greater the confirmation. (a) It was not full thirty years since the crucifixion; how, then, could the doctrine of the Cross have made so great a way in so little time, surmounted so many obstacles, flown into so many places, if it were not Divine. What other system has accomplished so much. (b) Then it had no force of arms to advance it, or charms of eloquence and philosophy to commend it. Its missionaries were fishermen and artisans, without credit or experience, persecuted, derided, killed. Yet it spread everywhere. (2) Besides the confirmation of their faith the apostle designed to fortify them against the errors which were being sown in the Church. II. ITS DIVINE EFFICACY. 1. It brings forth fruit—faith, love, &c. It is this energy of the gospel which Christ represents in Matt. xiii. Wherever the gospel went it transformed (Isa. xli. 19, lv. 10, 11), and those whom it transformed used it to transform others. (1) It brought forth fruit instantly—not as nature. The moment the gospel is rightly received it produces fruit. Receive it then at once (Psa. xcv. 7, 8). One of the most pernicious artifices of the enemy is to induce men to defer conversion. You cannot be the Lord's too soon. (2) But if we are required to bear fruit at once, it follows not that we may soon after cease to do so, as certain trees which, if they are the first to flourish are the first to fade (Psa. xcii. 14). 2. The faith of the gospel is "the knowledge of the grace of God," because it is not possible to enjoy this heavenly doctrine if the man has not received the mercy it offers in Jesus Christ. This grace is the heart and substance of the gospel. When Paul says that they "heard and knew the grace of God in truth," he means either—(1) That they received it in sincerity, without hypocrisy; or (2) That it was delivered to them pure, and without mixture of Pharisaical superstition or philosophical vanity; or (3) So as it is declared in the gospel, not on error and fictions, as in the false religions; nor in shadow or figure as in the law, but nakedly and simply as it is in itself. Of these three expositions the first is commendatory of the Colossians, the second of Epaphras, the third of the gospel itself. (*J. Daillé.*) *The progress of Christianity.*—The following statement, a conjectural but probable representation of the progressive increase of Christians in the world, is attributed to Sharon Turner: 1st century, 500,000; 2nd, 2,000,000; 3rd, 5,000,000; 4th, 10,000,000; 5th, 15,000,000; 6th, 20,000,000; 7th, 24,000,000; 8th, 30,000,000; 9th, 40,000,000; 10th, 50,000,000; 11th, 70,000,000; 12th, 80,000,000; 13th, 75,000,000; 14th, 80,000,000; 15th, 100,000,000; 16th, 125,000,000; 17th, 155,000,000; 18th, 200,000,000. Although this is only a mere approximation, and a very loose one, to the actual facts, yet it is interesting and instructive. With the exception of the thirteenth century (*tenebrosus*, as the late Dr. Miller called it),

the progress of the truth has been ever onward. From every defeat it has arisen afresh, and what has never been the case in any other system, religious, social, or intellectual, has revived anew from the ashes of its own inward corruptions. In this nineteenth century, the Christian population of the world cannot be far from three hundred millions; and its progress now is more rapid than in any period since the apostolic age. What imagination can forecast the conquests of the next fifty years! The heaven is working in every land. The old empires of idolatry and superstition are effete, and ready to vanish; while new Christian empires are born almost in a day. Every new discovery in nature, or invention in art, helps to speed the gospel. Trade, commerce, revolution, exploration, all prepare the way and herald the approach of the heralds of the cross. (*Dr. Haven.*)

Ver 7. As ye also learned of Epaphras.—*Epaphras*:—To commend Epaphras to the Colossians and secure to him their heart, Paul bears a strong testimony to his fidelity and goodness. 1. Paul knew how very important it is that churches should have a good opinion of their pastors; and with what artifices the enemy labours to ruin their reputation among their flocks; on this account he here exalts Epaphras as his piety deserved; and, to remove from the Colossians all suspicion against the purity of his teachings, expressly assures them that the doctrine which they had learned of him was the same gospel of which he had spoken. 2. And from this anxiety of the apostle ministers should learn the necessity of insuring the esteem of their people; abstaining not from evil only, but also from its appearances. It is not enough to obtain the approval of our own conscience, we should also be prepared to satisfy the judgment of our neighbours. Innocence is necessary for ourselves, and reputation for others. 3. And since it serves to edify them, we are evidently bound to preserve, not only our own, but also the reputation of our brethren. Who does not see that if we bite and rend one another, the disgraceful conduct of individuals will involve us all in one common infamy and ruin? 4. And see also that as the reputation of pastors is a public good, each believer owes it a peculiar respect, and that the crime of those who unjustly violate it is a kind of sacrilege. It is robbing the Church, stealing from it its means of edification. To return to Epaphras; the apostle calls him—I. His "DEAR FELLOW-SERVANT." Admire—1. His ingenuousness; for whereas there is commonly a jealousy between persons of the same profession, St. Paul acknowledges and exalts the gifts and piety of this servant of God. 2. His kindness; for he loves him, and shows that of all men there were none whom he more tenderly esteemed than the faithful ministers of the gospel. 3. His humility; in that being raised to the throne of apostolic dignity, the highest in the Church, he makes Epaphras, as it were, to sit there with him, owning him for his fellow. II. A "MINISTER OF CHRIST." It was much to be fellow-servant with St. Paul, but it is much more to be the minister of Christ, the Head of the Church. III. A "FAITHFUL MINISTER:" the appellation of minister was his in common with many others, the praise of faithfulness with few. It is all that the apostle required in a good steward of the house of God (1 Cor. iv. 1, 2). To have this praise the minister of God must—1. Seek the glory of his Master, and not his own. 2. He must keep close to his orders; not parsimoniously concealing from his sheep any of the things committed to him for their edification; and without setting before them anything of his own invention beyond, or contrary to, the will of the chief Shepherd. IV. A FAITHFUL MINISTER OF CHRIST FOR YOU. They ought therefore to love him both for the dignity of his office, and for the profit that thereby came to them. For though we are bound to love and respect all the faithful servants of God in general, yet, doubtless, we owe them particular affection and reverence who specially consecrate their ministry to our edification. (*J. Daillé.*) *The praise of service*:—It is a beautiful though a faint image which shines out on us from these fragmentary notices of this Colossian Epaphras—a true Christian bishop, who had come all the long way from his quiet valley in the depths of Asia Minor to get guidance about his flock from the great apostle, and who bore them on his heart day and night, and prayed much for them while so far away from them. How strange the fortune which has made his name and his solicitudes and prayers immortal! How little he dreamed that such embalming was to be given to his little services, and that they were to be crowned with such exuberant praise! The smallest work done for Jesus Christ lasts for ever, whether it abide in men's memories or no. Let us ever live as those who, like painters in fresco, have with swift hand to draw lines and lay on colours which will never fade; and let us by humble faith and holy life earn such a character from Paul's Master. The Master's

"well done" will out-weigh labours and toils, and the depreciating tongues of fellow-servants, or of the Master's enemies. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *A faithful minister of Christ* :—I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A FAITHFUL MINISTER OF CHRIST.

1. A sincere and manifest attachment to our Lord and Saviour. 2. He receives his doctrines and his views of truth from the pure fountain of Divine revelation. Moses was ordered to make all things according to the pattern shown him on the mount; and every faithful minister of Christ is extremely cautious that everything he delivers corresponds with the rule laid down by his Master. He makes the Scriptures his guide—the Holy Word of God his instructor. 3. While he knows the truth, he without reserve honestly delivers the Lord's message. Jeremiah was commanded by God to deliver all the message which the Lord gave him, and not to be afraid of man. He will not hesitate to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come, and will be equally faithful in comforting and strengthening believers—in showing to them their privileges, and the great mercy bestowed upon them through their covenant-head. 4. While he preaches a whole gospel, giving to saints and sinners their portion in due season, he is willing, and does suffer, if need be, for righteousness' sake. 5. Perseverance to the end: "Be thou faithful," &c. II.

SUCH A MINISTER IS A GREAT BLESSING TO THE PEOPLE TO WHOM HE IS SENT BY GOD. 1. Because he leads them from the greatest of misery to the greatest of blessedness. (1) He conducts them from sin, impenitence, self-righteousness, and unbelief; and the man who does this is our true friend. (2) He leads us to the enjoyment of the most distinguished favours, into green pastures—a state of favour with God, of union with Jesus Christ, of holy communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, upon earth, and a state of happiness when we die, enabling us to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 2. Inasmuch as he brings to their knowledge those holy and exalted truths that fortify a man for the sufferings of time and the hour of death. 3. Inasmuch as by opening to them the gospel, he presents them with—what?—ah! with what philosophy cannot do—with what the reason of man cannot unfold—with what science can never explore—with what all the pride of learning can never bring to light:—he brings life and immortality to their view. III. GOD WILL PUT HONOUR ON A FAITHFUL MINISTRY.

1. By the witness of the Spirit in the minister's own soul. 2. Where the gospel is fully preached God is generally pleased to add the seal of His approbation to it by means of the talents of His minister. 3. The Lord puts honour on His faithful ministers, both in the Church and in the world. 4. The faithful minister of God will be honoured at the day of judgment, when his Master shall say to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant," etc., not Well done, learned, zealous, eloquent, successful servant.

Conclusion—1. A faithful minister of Jesus Christ is the gift of God. 2. When a faithful minister of the Lord Jesus Christ dies he goes to give in His account. 3. If the faithful minister goes at death to give an account to his Lord and Master, then the congregation he leaves behind ought to reflect and think what account he will give of them. (*R. McAll, D.D.*) *Ministerial responsibility* :—I am angry when I hear people talk about the "awful responsibility" of being a minister. People sometimes say to me, "I should think you would shudder when you stand up before your congregation."

I shudder? what should I shudder for? Do you shudder when you stand up before a garden of flowers? Do you shudder when you go into an orchard of fruit in October? Do you shudder when you stand up in the midst of all the richness and grandeur of nature? I shudder in your midst? "But the responsibility!" I have no responsibility. I am willing to do my duty; and what more is there than that? I will not stand for the consequences. I will do the best I can. I will say the best things I can every Sunday; I will bring the truth home to you, and I will do it in the spirit of love. Even when I say the severest things, it is because I am faithful to love. "But your care!" I have not a bit of care. I forget the sermon a great deal quicker than you do. "Your burden!" I have no burden. I take up the battle, and I lay the battle aside again as soon as it is over. And I shall sleep to-night as sweetly as any man that is here. And every man that is in the ministry, and is willing to love men, and to be faithful to them, will find joy in it from day to day. (*H. W. Beecher*).

Ministers must be faithful :—A dying nobleman once sent for the clergyman on whose ministry he had attended, and said to him, "Do you not know that my life has been licentious, and that I have violated the commandments of God? Yet you never warned me of my danger!" The clergyman was silent. When the nobleman repeated the question, he replied, "Yes, my lord, your manner of living was not unknown to me; but your kindness, and my fear of

offending you, deterred me from reproving you." "How cruel! how wicked!" said the dying man. "The provision I made for you and your family ought to have induced care and fidelity. You have neglected to warn and instruct me, and now my soul will be lost." *A picture of a faithful minister.*—Come in; I will show thee that which may be profitable to thee. So he commanded his man to light the candle, and bid Christian follow him; so he had him into a private room, and bid his man open a door, the which when he had done, Christian saw the picture of a very grave person hung up against the wall, and this was the fashion of it:—It had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth was written upon its lips, the world was behind his back, it stood as if it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over his head. Then said Christian, What means this? Interpreter: The man whose picture this is, is one of a thousand; he can beget children (1 Cor. iv. 5), travail in birth with children (Gal. iv. 19), and nurse them himself when they are born (1 Thess. ii. 7). And, whereas thou seest him with his eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, and the law of truth writ on his lips, it is to show thee that his work is to know and unfold dark things to sinners, even as also thou seest him stand as if he pleaded with men; and whereas thou seest the world as cast behind him, and that a crown hangs over his head, that is to show thee that slighting and despising the things that are present, for the love that he hath to his Master's service, he is sure in the world that comes next to have glory for his reward. (*Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."*)

Ver. 8. Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.—The apostle rejoiced over the fact that the Colossians lived. This affirmation is to be proved. I. THERE ARE VARIOUS KINDS OF LIFE—of the plant, animal, man. Man has several lives, that of the animal, since he has a body; that of the intellect, since he thinks; that of the heart, since he loves. It will not be contested that thought is the life of the intellect, for the one separated from the other is nothing: and so with the life of the heart—love. Some will say that it hates also. So it does, for we cannot love a thing without hating its opposite. But the life of the heart is not to hate and to love, because hatred is not the true object of the heart. It is impossible to produce fire without making ashes, but to make ashes is not the end of our labours. Hatred forms the ashes of the fire which love kindles, but it is not on those ashes that the heart lives. The hatred which springs not from love is not the life but the death of the heart; as error is not the life of reason. But the heart has another death which is egotism; which, however, involves hatred, for a man cannot love himself exclusively without hating others. II. THE LIFE OF THE HEART IS SUPREME. 1. The life of the plant is inferior to that of the animal, that of the animal inferior to that of man, that of the body beneath that of the intellect, that of the intellect beneath moral life. Matter and form are far inferior to knowledge, and knowledge cannot be put on a level with love. 2. Then that which constitutes the value of each of these lives is its relation to a superior life. Matter is of value as it does service to the intellect, and the intellect is degraded when it does not terminate in love. If therefore a man wants the principal life for which he has received all others, and does not love, he is dead. 3. The gospel uniformly gives supremacy to this life of the heart or love. III. THE LOVE OF WHICH THE APOSTLE SPEAKS IS LOVE IN THE SPIRIT. What is this spirit? spirit in opposition to matter? and is the expression equivalent to spiritual love? Rather Paul means love in the Spirit of God, love which He teaches and inspires. But this does not exclude the former. For our spirit is the better part of us which the Spirit of God has come to set at liberty, that part of our being which holds communion with God. This love, then, is—1. According to the Holy Spirit. 2. A spiritual love towards the true, just, divine, immortal. 3. And so not (1) carnal affection, which is death (Rom. viii. 6); (2) interested affection; (3) mere natural affection; although these are consecrated and renovated by the Spirit, after which the creature is loved in and for God. IV. THE OBJECT OF THIS LOVE. God supremely and then others, forming one grand unity (John xvii. 23). V. THE GREATEST EXAMPLE OF THIS LOVE IS CHRIST: In Him we know what love is, but it was manifested in Him that it might be diffused. His disciples are to reflect His love. VI. THIS LOVE BEING LIFE, AND ANIMATED BY THE SPIRIT OF LIFE, IS IMMORTAL. VII. HELL IS THE ABSENCE OF THIS LOVE. It is that empty heart which has been violently dis severed from its affections without being united to God, a heart which has need of love, and which finds no object to supply this want. (*A. Vinet, D.D.*) *Two reasons for love in the Spirit*:—The first, a general one, which regards the very nature of love: to wit,

because the Holy Spirit is the author of it; and also because love flows from a spiritual heart, i.e., from a heart regenerated and renewed. Hence observe the dignity of Christian love. For natural love, or predilection, arises from those inclinations which they call natural affections. Worldly love arises either from views of interest or from conformity of manners; carnal, from the appetite for pleasure. To all these something corrupt, sordid, and vicious always adheres. But Christian love arises from the Holy Spirit, and is altogether full of holiness and purity. The other reason why the love of the Colossians is said to be in the spirit is special, and hath respect to Paul himself; for, they had never seen Paul, but had only heard of him through Epaphras and others. Because, therefore, they had loved him whom they never saw in the flesh, they are said to love in the spirit. Therefore the word spirit is taken in the same sense as in 1 Cor. v. 3. Hence observe, that the duty of every good man is, to embrace with spiritual love all good men, although known only by report. That any one may be esteemed worthy of our love, it is sufficient if he be known in respect to his virtue, although he be unknown in person. (*Bishop Davenant.*)

Vers. 9-14. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you.—*The knowledge of the Divine will*:—The petition asks—I. FOR A BESTOWMENT OF A KNOWLEDGE OF THE DIVINE WILL AS ATTAINED BY A SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING AND WISDOM. The faith and charity of the Colossians had been so reported to the apostle as to fill his heart with thankfulness, which took its habitual course, that of unceasing prayer. Blending the subject of his prayer with his purpose in offering it, St. Paul asks—1. Generally that they may be filled, &c.—three terms which in their union signify an impartation from above of a thorough insight into the will of God as directing the practical life. Based on the eternal purpose of redemption, this will is the counsel of human sanctification. As a matter of request it is the Holy Spirit's operation on our faculties making the knowledge experimental, rewriting the moral law on the heart, and making it there supreme. 2. Particularly the apostle connects with this the spiritual wisdom and understanding which bring Divine knowledge into the sphere of the human faculties. The Holy Spirit imparts it to the "understanding" which makes it the object of study, and aggregates the whole into wisdom, which is the practical application to life of the precepts which the understanding embraces. But both are spiritual. The unregenerate understanding may make the moral law an object of study, and arrange the whole into a system of rules for the wisdom of human ethics. But in the regenerate the precepts are studied in the light of the new nature, and the whole wisdom of holiness is the result of a teaching that is "from above" (James i. 17). II. FOR PRACTICAL CONFORMITY WITH THAT WILL IN—1. Fruitfulness (1) in every good work. All the manifestations of godliness are the fruit of a Divine life within wrought by Christ indwelling by His Spirit. But the phrase "every good work" teaches us that the thoughts, words, and deeds of holiness are our own. In their secret source they have a heavenly origin, in their manifestation they are human. The wonderful completeness arrests attention. The tree brings forth all the fruits that the infinite diversity of the relations of life permit. (2) The words "increasing in the knowledge of God" suggests that Christian fruitfulness knows no limitation. As the knowledge of God and His will grows, the fruits of obedience grow likewise, and with growing sanctity the notion of the Divine Being becomes more clear. But the general spirit of the prayer recommends the former, viz., that the enlarging knowledge of God's will, as "proved" in its varying applications in daily life, leads to an unlimited increase in good works. To the Christian the interior law of God unfolds perpetually new obligations; and as it does this, the obedient life puts on new aspects of perfection. (3) We now go back to the glowing words which precede "That ye might walk," &c. Here is a twofold standard. (a) Such a walk as should do honour to God. (b) Such an aim to secure His approval as should win His complacency always and in all things. There is a daring completeness in this sentence. There is no reservation for human infirmity, no undertone of deprecation of the Divine severity, no hint of a tolerant construction of our conduct. 2. Endurance presented as a passive patience combined with an active longsuffering. (1) While the Divine knowledge is the instrument or energy of the holy life, it is the Divine power which is connected with the patience of that holiness. The strength of God of course accomplishes all; but that strength is "made perfect in weakness." The interior discipline of religion is both endurance of what is imposed, and resistance of all temptation to rebel. Thus

the grandeur of the Christian conflict is that the omnipotence of God is brought down into the secret arena of the struggle. He infuses every kind of strength—strength to bear the inflictions of the Divine will in the sorrows of life, its disappointments, the oppositions of evil, the inexhaustible varieties of the pressure of the one great cross; strength to resist temptations from without, in the assaults of Satan, the waywardness of men, persecution, &c. (2) If this be the case, surely the believer should “count it all joy” to be undergoing temptation and that only in the feeling of victory. The very conflict itself is joyous, if Divine and human strength unite; the spirit feels most here what it is to be one with Christ. 3. Thanksgiving enters into all the other elements of the Christian life, and is not merely their supplement. It is here made to spring solely from the sense of redemption. But since the perfecting of the redemptional scheme all the benedictions of providence become redemptional. To pass from the kingdom of darkness into that of God’s dear Son is not to leave the kingdoms of nature and providence, but to add to them, as he shows further on, all the glory of the inheritance of the saints in light. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*)

The apostolic prayer:—Chrysostom said to those who would realize the classical allusion more vividly than we do, “that as in the games we urge on those who are near victory, so Paul here prays for an increase of Christian attainment for the Church that had already attained so much.” Hence he says, “For this cause.” We should rightly consider this prayer for such increase:—(1) Because it teaches us what we should seek in our intercession for Churches. Our standard of Church prosperity is convicted by such a prayer; our right plans for Church increase are here inspired. (2) Because it teaches us what we are to seek and expect for ourselves: what is really worth aiming, struggling, praying for. Paul prays—1. THAT THEIR KNOWLEDGE MAY INCREASE—doubtless partly because of the error that was confusing some, but also because knowledge is always good. Three expressions describe it that are frequently used in combination in Scripture, and which Aristotle denotes as intellectual virtues. 1. Knowledge. This is descriptive of acquaintance with any subject. He has it who has information. It is essential as the basis of culture, but is only the basis. 2. Wisdom is higher than knowledge, and includes both that and understanding. Newman well calls it “Reason exercised upon knowledge.” 3. Spiritual understanding the application of knowledge to practical detail, the following out of its processes to daily duty and to the spiritual realm. II. THAT AS A RESULT OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE THEIR CHARACTER MAY RIPEN. The knowledge of God’s will must result in action, or it is valueless. The character resulting from this knowledge includes—1. Walking worthily of the Lord. The Christian life is an activity, a progress tested by the highest standard. 2. Increasing in the knowledge of God. So knowledge increases. This time it is more than knowledge of God’s will, it is knowledge of God’s self. Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge. 3. Being strengthened with all might. Energy, inner energy, inner energy of the highest sort for endurance. 4. Giving thanks to the Father. Life shall have music in it—the highest music of praise. For what? (1) Fitness for blessedness, “meet for inheritance.” An inheritance is allotted to those who are ready for it. (2) Emancipation from the power of darkness—rescue from the tyranny of confusion, ignorance, peril, evil. (3) Settlement in an empire of liberty, order and honour. (4) And through and above all for Christ as the means to blessing, and Himself the chiefest blessing. (*U. R. Thomas.*)

The power of unceasing prayer:—“If I was ever brought into the kingdom of God,” said a venerable Christian lady, “it was owing to the intercessions of old Dr. L. He married me, and he used often to call and speak a few earnest words to me about my soul. ‘You are now a wife and a mother,’ he would say; ‘do not delay to give yourself to the Lord, and to pray for grace to fulfil your duties. I shall never cease to plead for you.’” The thought that a man of God was pleading for her before God, as well as pleading with her at the bar of her own conscience, was the point which seems to have made the impression. *Sanctified knowledge*:—Sanctified knowledge is the Holy Spirit’s greatest helper. “It carries the torch before faith; it opens the door of eternity to hope; it presents love with a perfectly beautiful object; it furnishes joy with its sweetest melodies; it supplies patience with the strongest motives, and resignation with the noblest patterns.” (*S. Charnock.*)

Spiritual knowledge:—The difference between believers and unbelievers is not so much in the extent, as in the manner of their knowledge. An unbeliever may know more, and be able to talk more of Divine things than many believers, but he knows nothing spiritually and savingly, with a holy, heavenly light. A believer may comprehend less, but he apprehends more.

(*G. S. Bowes.*) *The best knowledge*:—Many there are that are accounted deep scholars, great linguists, excellent mathematicians, sharp logicians, knowing politicians, fine rhetoricians, sweet musicians, &c. These may be good or bad, as the case may be, but he is certainly the best grammarian that has learnt to speak the truth from his heart; the best astronomer that hath his conversation in heaven; the best musician that hath learned to sing the praises of his God; the best arithmetician, that so numbereth his days as to apply himself to wisdom; he is knowing in ethics, that traineth up his family in the fear of the Lord; he is the best economist who is wise to salvation, prudent in giving and taking good counsel; he is the best politician, and he is a good linguist that speaks the language of Canaan. (*J. Spencer.*)

Vers. 9-12. To pray for you and desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge. *The prayer*:—I. THE FOUNTAIN OR ROOT OF ALL CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. "That ye might be filled . . . understanding." 1. The thing desired is the perfecting of the Colossians in religious knowledge. (1) The idea of completeness up to the height of their capacity is given in "filled"; like some jar charged with sparkling water up to the brim. (2) The advanced degree of the knowledge is given in a favourite word which signifies mature knowledge, deeper apprehension of God's truth. (3) The rich variety of that knowledge is set forth in the clauses which may read "filled . . . so that ye may abound in . . . wisdom and understanding," or with "the knowledge of His will," i.e., manifested in that will. That knowledge will blossom out into every kind of wisdom and understanding. 2. The principles which these words involve. (1) That the foundation of Christian character and conduct is laid in the knowledge of the will of God. What concerns us to know is not abstract truth, or revelation or speculative thought, but God's will. No revelation has accomplished its purpose when a man has simply understood it. The light is knowledge which is meant to shape practice. Had this been remembered two opposite errors would have been avoided. (a) The error threatening the Colossians, that Christianity was merely a system of truth to be believed. An unpractical heterodoxy was their danger, an unpractical orthodoxy is ours. The one important question is, does our Christianity work? (b) The converse error to that of unpractical knowledge, that of unintelligent practice, is quite as bad. A numerous class profess to attach no importance to Christian doctrine, but put all the stress on Christian morals. What God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Knowledge is sound when it moulds conduct; action is good when based on knowledge. (2) Progress in knowledge is the law of the Christian life. There should be continual advancement in the apprehension of God's will from the first glimpse which saves to this mature knowledge. The progress does not consist in leaving behind old truths, but in the profounder conception of what is contained in them. The same constellations which burn in our midnight sky looked down on Chaldean astronomers, but how much more is known about them at Greenwich than was dreamed at Babylon. II. THE RIVER OR STEMS OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT. 1. Worthy of the Lord. There are other forms of the same expression (Eph. iv. 1; Rom. xvi. 2; Phil. i. 27; 1 Thess. ii. 12), in all of which there is the idea of a standard to which the practical life is to be conformed. (1) The Christian should "walk" in a manner corresponding to what Christ has done for him. We say that we are not our own, but bought with a price. Then how do we repay that costly purchase. Nothing short of complete self-surrender can characterize the walk that corresponds with our obligations to Christ. Repugnant duties then become tokens of love, pleasant as every sacrifice made at its bidding ever is. (2) The Christian should act in a manner corresponding to Christ's character and conduct. Nothing less than the effort to tread in His footsteps is a walk worthy of the Lord. All unlikeness to His pattern is a dishonour to Him and to ourselves. 2. "Unto all pleasing," which sets forth the great aim as being to please Christ in everything, and satisfy Him by our conduct. We are not to mind other people's approbation. We can do without that. What does it matter who praise, if He frowns? or who blame if He smiles. Nothing will so spur us to diligence, and make all life solemn and grand as the thought that "we labour that . . . we may be well pleasing to Him." Nothing will so string the muscles for the fight, and free us from entanglements as the ambition to "please Him who hath called us to be soldiers." Men have willingly flung away their lives for a couple of lines of praise in a dispatch. Let us try to live and die so as to get "honourable mention" from our Captain. III. THE FOURFOLD STREAMS OR BRANCHES INTO WHICH THIS GENERAL CONCEPTION OF

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER PARTS ITSELF. 1. "Bearing fruit in every good work." (1) Here the man in whom the word (ver. 6) is planted is regarded as the producer of fruit. The worthy walk will be first manifested in the production of a rich variety of forms of goodness. The only true fruit is goodness; all else is leaves. Much of our work and its results is no more fruit than galls on oak leaves. (2) The Christian life is to be "fruitful in every good work." We should seek to fill the whole circuit of the year with various holiness, and to make widely different forms of goodness our own. Let us aim at this all round multiform virtue, and not be like a scene for a stage, all gay and bright on one side, and dirty canvas and stretchers hung with cobwebs on the other. 2. "Increasing in the knowledge of God." The figure of the tree is probably continued here. If it fruits, its girth will increase, its branches spread, its top mount, and next year its shadow will cover a larger circle. Fruitfulness in good works leads to increased knowledge, and all true knowledge tends to influence action. Obedience gives insight. "If any man will do His will, he shall know," &c. Moral truth becomes dim to a bad man. Religious truth grows bright to a good one. 3. "Strengthened . . . joyfulness." Knowing and doing are not the whole of life; there are sorrow and suffering too. (1) Here again we have Paul's favourite "all." Every kind of strength that God can give and man receive is to be sought after. And that Divine power is to flow into us, having this for its measure and limit—"the might of His glory." His "glory" is the lustrous light of his self-revelation; and the far-flashing energy revealed in that is the immeasurable measure of the strength that may be ours. (2) And what exalted mission is destined for this? Nothing that the world thinks great—(a) patience, including the idea of perseverance in the right course and uncomplaining bearing of evil as sent by God; (b) long-suffering, the temper under suffering considered as a wrong and injury done by man. (c) With joy—flowers beneath the snow, songs in the night. 4. Giving thanks unto the Father. This is the summit of all, and is to be diffused through all. Thankfulness should mingle with all our thoughts and feelings, like the fragrance of some perfume penetrating the scentless air. (A. Maclaren, D.D.) *A comprehensive apostolic prayer:*—It was—I. EXPRESSIVE OF DEEP SPIRITUAL INTEREST. 1. Suggested by the report of active Christian virtues. "For this cause." They had believed in Christ, loved the brethren, hoped for the future, borne fruit. All this excites Paul's grateful heart to pray for higher blessings for them. We best show our love for others by prayer. That is always needed since Christian vows are imperfect and may decay or be abused. 2. Constant and fervent. "Do not cease." Paul had undoubted faith in the efficacy of prayer. II. FOR ANPLEST KNOWLEDGE. 1. The main subject of this knowledge. Man thirsts for knowledge, but the highest is the knowledge of God; not simply of His nature, but His will. 2. The measure in which the knowledge may be possessed. The word indicates a living, complete knowledge of the Divine will. There is no limit to our increase in Divine knowledge but our own capacity, diligence, and faith. 3. The practical form in which the knowledge should be exercised. "In all wisdom and spiritual understanding." The word spiritual applies to both wisdom and understanding. The false teachers offered a wisdom which had only a show of it; an empty counterfeit calling itself philosophy. The wisdom and understanding the gospel imparts are the work of the Holy Spirit. No amount of mental or moral culture can supply it. This was the power lacked by the Galatians, and to save the Colossians from their fate Paul prays that they may discern between the true and the false, the carnal and the spiritual. III. FOR THE LOFTIEST CHRISTIAN CAREER. Observe—1. The high standard of Christian conduct. For this purpose we are filled with the knowledge of His will. The end of knowledge is practice. 2. The rule by which that standard is maintained. We are not to please ourselves or others as an ultimate object. If our conduct does please parents, friends, country as well as God, it is well; but though all others are displeased we must please Him. This is the simplest as well as the grandest rule of life, and will settle many perplexing questions of human duty. 3. The productiveness of Christian consistency. It is not enough to bear one kind of fruit; there must be fertility in "every" good work. The Christian is in sympathy with and will promote every enterprise that aims at the physical, social, or moral welfare of man. 4. Progress in Divine knowledge. We can recall no stage in which additional knowledge is unnecessary. Activity in goodness sharpens the knowing faculty and adds to the stores of wisdom, and increased knowledge stimulates the worker (John vii. 17; Matt. xxv. 29). IV. FOR SUPERNATURAL STRENGTH. 1. The appropriateness and fulness of the blessing desired. Man is morally weak by sin.

Christ introduced another force which counteracts sin and will overthrow it. All who believe in Him have this force and it is necessary to realize the blessings for which Paul prays. Our enemies are numerous and our infirmities are many. We need, therefore, every kind of strength to endure onslaught or solioitation. 2. Its supernatural source, "might of His glory." Moral power is not native to the Christian. Power is an attribute of God's glory, and is manifested in the splendid works of creation. 3. Its great practical purpose. Patience is the temper which does not easily succumb under trial: long-suffering, or long-mindedness, is the self-restraint which does not hastily retaliate a wrong. Patience respects the weight of the affliction: long-suffering its duration. The former is exercised in our relation to God, the latter in our relation to man. The true strength of the believer consists, not so much in what he can do, as in what he can endure (Isa. xxx. 15). The characteristic of both patience and long-suffering is "Joyfulness." To suffer with joyfulness is the great distinction and triumph of the Christian spirit. The endurance of the stoic was often the effect of pride or insensibility. Learn: 1. How sublime are the topics of genuine prayer. 2. Deep experimental acquaintance with the things of God is essential to a lofty and useful career. 3. Knowledge, wisdom, spiritual fertility and strength are the gifts of God. (*G. Barlow.*)

A worthy walk:—I. *ITS SOURCES.* The whole ground of this prayer is found in "who hath made us meet," "who delivered us out of the power of darkness." 1. The gift of Divine sonship. 2. An increase in the knowledge of God's will. We must know what God's will is before we can walk worthily, &c. His will is revealed in His Word. 3. The impartation of wisdom and spiritual understanding. 4. The bestowment of Divine strength. Sonship does not stand alone. II. *ITS FRUITS.* 1. Good works. 2. Patient endurance of tribulations as well as perseverance through and in spite of them. 3. Long-suffering towards personal foes and the enemies of the truth. III. *ITS END.* A worthy walk begins in sonship, proceeds to sanctification, and ends in glory. (*Family Churchman.*)

Paul's desire for the Colossians:—The Colossians were distinguished for love, and for that "cause" the apostle shows his interest in them and gratitude for it by praying for them. Noble example! He goes on to say that he desired certain things for them—lit., "asked," lifted up his desires. I. *THE MATTER OF THE APOSTLE'S DESIRE.* 1. That they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will. (1) It is one thing to have a full knowledge and another to be filled with knowledge. As far as God or His will are concerned we cannot have a full knowledge. God only knows the love, the glory, the will of God. But it is possible to be filled with the knowledge of God. The smallest of cups may be as full as the great ocean. So the smallest minds may be filled with the knowledge of God's will. (2) It was not immense spaces of vacant imaginations and day-dreamings that he desired, but knowledge of realities, that knowledge which is "the principal thing." (3) But not numerous details of knowledge in general; man's mind is too limited for that. He must choose between knowing a few things well and a large number indifferently. Hence Paul limits his petition to one all-important department—the will of God. This has two distinct applications—what God is determined to do Himself and what He is desirous that we should do. In the first sense it is used in Ephesians i. 11, and in the confession of Nebuchadnezzar; but it is more frequently used in the second. "Thy will be done on earth"—not done by God's self. So far as God's determination to take His own way is concerned His will is always done. The reference is to that will which we ought to do, and with the knowledge of which Paul prayed that the Colossians might be filled. 2. "In all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Wisdom was needed, profitable to direct to the things worthiest and best; and understanding, that they might penetrate beneath the surface of things, so as to be standing under them and thence understanding them. When thus understood, things are joined together in a unity of subjective thought, and a higher agency than man's gets abundant scope for a gracious and beneficent operation. 3. But the highest knowledge is but a means to an end (1 Cor. xiii. 1-3). The knowledge possessed by God, though immense, is not the most glorious of His attributes; even to Him it is but a means to an end. It is but one of His natural attributes. The most illustrious of God's attributes are the moral—those which have a will within them. II. *THE PURPOSE OF HIS DESIRE.* It is not therefore surprising that the apostle should guard the Colossians against the idea that they need aim no higher than this knowledge. He asked that they might have it, that—1. They should (1) walk—lit., "walk about." He seized a prominent feature of human society. Men walk hither and thither in

their homes, in the streets, and in the country. They walk out in the morning, "go about their business"; and in the evening walk about within the circle of their friends and visit. In the homes mothers walk about adjusting various details. (2) There are different ways of demeaning ourselves as we walk about. Some go about stealthily to entrap the unwary and confiding; some in the dark to conceal their evil deeds; some bent on making profit of others, or on amusement. Paul might have prayed that the Colossians might walk circumspectly, humbly, consistently, with gifts in their hands or love in their hearts; but he chooses to say that ye may walk about in a way worthy of the Lord. (3) It is assumed that the transcendent worth is in the Lord. As the Apocalyptic visions show us, in the estimation of all heavenly beings He is infinitely worthy; and hence it is that He is worth all the possible honour that can be reflected on Him by the most beautiful demeanour and most costly sacrifices of His disciples. Hence we should ever make it our aim to walk worthy of Him, and all our knowledge must be subservient to this. 2. The Colossians are told that if they do so Christ will take note of every step we take, and be pleased. He will appreciate our aim, and have in reference to our conduct a feeling of pleasure. How different this from "putting Him to an open shame." We may make our Saviour happy, and not only in reference to a few acts of exceptional effort, but in reference to all the humble incidents of our every-day life. 3. But nothing will be really pleasing if fruitfulness be wanting. (1) Leaves will not suffice, nor blossoms. Every Colossian was to be a tree of righteousness to bring forth fruit for the refreshment of the great Husbandman. (2) Fruitful in every good work—in long-suffering in the home and beyond; in the continual restraint and guidance of all the passions; in the fruits of the Spirit—"love, joy, peace," &c. (3) What are the means of this abounding fruitfulness? "By the knowledge of God." The most effective guarantee for increase in fruitfulness is the knowledge of God with which he desired they might be filled. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee," &c. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Spiritual knowledge and its practical results*.—I. THE PRECIOUSNESS OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE. Consider—1. The intensity of the apostle's desire for it. It is the subject of earnest, ceaseless prayer. 2. The men for whom it is desired. Saints and faithful brethren, who knew the grace of God in truth, and were bringing forth fruit to God. We must not cease to pray for those who know the Lord that they may know more. 3. The measure of this knowledge. "Filled"—grand scholarship to have mind, heart, whole manhood filled with knowledge. When a measure is full of wheat there is no room for chaff. True knowledge excludes error. If we have empty places in our minds, unstored by holy teaching, they will be an invitation to the devil to enter and dwell. Try and know Divine truth more intimately. You know a man, for you pass him in the streets with a nod; you know another far better, for you lodge in the same house with him; but you know him best of all whose troubles and joys you have shared, and with whom you have had the closest fellowship. 4. The matter of it. The revealed will of God. (1) The perceptive will. "What wilt Thou have me to do?" (2) The will of God as it constitutes the gospel. "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one that believeth." (3) "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." 5. The manner. (1) "In all wisdom," which is better than knowledge, for it is knowledge rightly used. Knowledge may find room for folly, but wisdom casts it out. Knowledge may be the horse, but wisdom is the driver. Wisdom enables you to bring your knowledge practically to bear upon life, to separate the precious from the vile, and rightly conduct your affairs. "All" wisdom—wisdom that will be useful in the shop, the counting-house, the church, &c. (2) That wisdom operates by a spiritual understanding that is powerful within. This is an inward knowledge of truth, a spiritual discernment, taste, experience, and reception of truth whereby the soul feeds upon it and takes it into herself. II. THE PRACTICAL RESULT OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE. "That ye may walk"—not that they might talk, sit down and meditate, and enjoy themselves. He desires that they may be instructed, so as to walk—1. According to the best model. Let not a disciple walk so as to bring disgrace upon his Lord! When you walk with a king you should be royal in gait; when you commune with a prince you should not act the clown. It is well to have no lower standard than the life of Jesus, the life of tenderness, self-sacrifice, love, holy service, and communion with God. 2. So as to be pleasing to our best friend. (1) Some live to please themselves, or their wives, neighbours, and some, the devil. Our business is to please Him whose servants we are. Without holiness no man shall see Him, much less please Him. (2) Unto all

pleasing—from the moment we rise till we lie down, in eating and drinking, &c. (3) Paul desires that we may be filled with knowledge to this end. If I do not know the will of God, how can I do it? 3. That we may produce the best fruit. Without knowledge we cannot be fruitful. Some are hindered in this because they do not know how to set about holy service. How can a man be fruitful as a preacher if he does not know what to preach? In a hundred ways ignorance will make us run risks, lose opportunities of usefulness, and fall into dangerous mistakes. 4. That he may cultivate a comprehensive variety of the best things. "In every." Here is room and range enough. Let works of obedience, testimony, zeal, charity, piety, all be found in your life. Do not select big things as your spiritual line, but glorify the Lord in the littles. The Lord Jesus, if He were here, would gladly do a thousand things which His poor little servants are too great to touch. III. THE REFLEX ACTION OF HOLINESS ON KNOWLEDGE. 1. Holiness is the road to knowledge. 2. This knowledge rises in tone—before it was in God's will, now it is in God Himself. 3. He would have in us increased capacity to know yet more. In verse 9 it is "filled"; but if a man is full of knowledge, how can it increase? Make the vessel larger. Let no man think he can go no further. Bernard says: "He is not good at all who doth not desire to be better." (C. H. Spurgeon.) *Intercessory prayer*:—It would be a useful exercise if we would give thanks for the gifts and graces of our brethren. I am afraid that we are more inclined to spy out their faults, and to suppose that we deplore them, than we are to discern the work of the Holy Spirit in them. Now, Paul surveyed the Church at Colosse, and observed their faith, love, and hope, and thanked God for them. But he noted that they were somewhat lacking in knowledge. They differed from the Corinthians, who abounded in talent and were enriched with knowledge. The Colossians had fewer gifted brethren, and as Paul would not have them come behind in any desirable attainment, he offered this prayer. He knew that spiritual ignorance is the constant source of error, instability, and sorrow; and therefore he desired that they might be soundly taught in the things of God. *Intercessory prayer is—I. A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF THE WORK OF CHRISTIANS FOR ONE ANOTHER.* We are not sent into the world to live unto ourselves, but we are members of one body, and each member is expected to contribute to the health and comfort of the whole. We cannot all preach or distribute alms, but we can all pray. II. AN INVALUABLE PROOF OF LOVE AND THE CREATOR OF MORE LOVE. The man who will pray for me, will forgive me if I offend him, and relieve me if I am in necessity. III. AN INFALLIBLE MEANS OF OBTAINING THE BLESSINGS WE DESIRE FOR OUR FRIENDS. The unselfish devotion which pleads as eagerly for others as for itself is so pleasing to God that He puts great honour upon it. If we desire any blessing for them, our best course is to pray. If we wish them converted, taught of God, quickened to a nobler life, &c., take the case to God in prayer. IV. WILL BE ALL THE MORE VALUABLE IF IT IS OUR IMMEDIATE RESORT. "Since the day we heard it." Paul began to pray at once. Whenever you perceive the holy change begun, pray at once that it may proceed with power, and we shall find that God in answering quickly gives a double blessing. He who wins earthly riches is most diligent in their pursuit, and he shall be richest towards God who is most diligent in supplication. V. WILL BE ALL THE MORE VALUABLE IF THEY ARE INCESSANT AS WELL AS IMMEDIATE. "We cease not." He was always praying for them in the sense he explains, "and to desire." Desire is the essence of prayer. Though you cannot be always speaking in prayer, you can be always desiring. The act of prayer is blessed, the habit more so, the spirit most so, and this can continue for months and years. VI. WILL BE INCREASED IN VALUE IF OFFERED IN UNION WITH OTHER SAINTS. "We also." "If two of you agree as touching My kingdom." Here is Paul, and with him youthful Timothy, who, compared with Paul, is inconsiderable; yet Paul's prayer is all the more effectual because Timothy's is joined to it. Our Lord sent out His servants two and two, and it is well when they come back to Him in prayer two and two. The habit of frequent prayer together is to be commended. (*Ibid.*) *The value of intercessory prayer*:—An aged woman, a member of my church, whom I frequently met, always appeared to me to have a more than common interest in the prosperity of religion. She would often inquire: "Are any of our young people coming to Christ?" One day, as I was passing her house, she called me in. Says she: "I asked you to come in here because I wanted to tell you a revival is coming." "How do you know that?" said I. "Dear me," says she, "now don't think me one of that sort of folks who think themselves particular favourites of the Lord, as they were inspired. But I have got faith, and I have got eyes and ears, and I

believe in prayer. Perhaps you may think me too certain, but I tell you a revival is coming; and I don't know it by a miracle either, or because I am any better than other people, or nearer to God. But, for this good while, every day when I have been out in my garden, I have heard that old deacon" (pointing to his house) "at prayer in his chamber, where he thinks nobody hears him. The window is open just a little way off from my garden, and I have heard him praying there every day. He is not able to leave his house much, because he has got only one leg; but if he can't work he can pray; and his prayers will be answered." A revival did come. Before a year from that time more than a hundred persons in that congregation were led to indulge hope that they had been born of the Spirit. Among them were a son and a daughter of that old man of prayer, and a grandson of this woman who believed in prayer. (*I. S. Spencer, D.D.*) *The blessed occupancy*:—This is possible. Paul was in its enjoyment. I. THE NATURE OF GOD'S WILL. The will is the expression of the inner nature. God is love. His will is goodwill to all. It means happiness for all who will not thwart His loving purpose. II. THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL. This can be obtained by being willing to do, by searching the Scriptures and listening to the voice of the Spirit. III. THE MEASURE OF THIS KNOWLEDGE. "Filled"—no room for self. Every cupboard opened, door unlocked, window raised, and the entire being flooded. Blessings then flow out. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *The knowledge of the will of God*:—I. THE WILL OF GOD. 1. The phrase brings before us the personality of Deity. He is not a blind force, but a conscious being, or He could not have a will. 2. The text contradicts Deism, which says: "God does not concern Himself with us." 3. But imagine God to have a malevolent will concerning us! As it is, however, the will of God moves not merely under the influence of His intelligence and righteousness, but of His mercy. It is "in Christ Jesus concerning us." 4. This will has reference to our whole nature. (1) To our mind; and therefore God has put before us doctrine. God has a will concerning our thoughts, and therefore has provided us with themes for meditation. (2) To our hearts. We may not trust, distrust, love, everything we please. God has indicated the objects and the measure of our confidence and affection. (3) To our will; giving us principles and motives, and rules of action, so that His will directs us in all things. This is not bondage, but freedom. He is the slave who is tethered to his whims and wishes; he is free who moves in harmony with the will which is connected with perfect wisdom and love. II. The will of God REVEALED. 1. Not entirely, as, e.g., to your future circumstances; these are mercifully concealed. 2. The media employed. (1) Conscience—imperfect, but under Christ's influence gradually becoming sound. (2) God's Word. (3) God's Spirit. (4) Providence. (5) Christ, in whom it is perfectly embodied. 3. There is some little difficulty in getting at this will. You must search the Scriptures, and carefully analyze your own conscience to judge whether it is an index of God's will. But the knowledge is well worth the trouble. If you take no trouble you will be perplexed, but if you do He will teach you. III. The will of God KNOWN. The revelation is distinct from the knowledge, and may be possessed without it. The knowledge must be sought. Look at it as—1. Full. (1) We may know doctrine and not precept; both, and not the promises; or all partially. Knowledge is full when we know all we need to know. (2) A young disciple in his novitiate cannot know all that is revealed, nor indeed the mature. There are many things concealed from the Church in its present state. (3) But there are things which can be comprehended in the present age, and the present state of the believer's mind. The Bible opens like flowers. You must sometimes wait before a text and seek a right influence on your spirit before the meaning will be manifest. The Bible to the child has one manifestation, to the young man another, and to the mature man another. 2. Correctly applied. It may be misapplied; hence the prayer "in all wisdom," &c. We must get below the letter to the underlying Spirit, and with Divine sagacity apply it to our circumstances. 3. A fit subject for prayer. 4. A subject of deep anxiety to ministers as essential to the holiness and activity of the Church. (*S. Martin.*) *The knowledge of God*:—1. This knowledge lies at the foundation of all true religion. It is the want or indistinctness of it that occasions the stupidity of sinners, the false hopes of professors, and most of the religious errors that abound. Although it is open to all, there is very little of it. There is so much unbelief, pride, worldliness, guilt, which shrinks from clear views of God, sluggishness, which binds the soul to earth, that the mass even of Christians pass to the grave with a very incompetent knowledge of God. Now and then a Christian arises of pre-eminent piety, and when

you search for the cause of it you find it in his superior knowledge of God. 2. In general, the great end for which we were sent into the world was to learn the character of our Master, by studying His glories in His works and word, that we might obey and enjoy Him. The object on which His eye is fixed, and which He will fully attain, is that the earth may be filled with the knowledge of His glory. 3. He is the Being with whom we have the most intimate and interesting connection, and therefore it chiefly concerns us to be acquainted with Him. "In Him we live and move," &c., and He will be our final Judge. 4. There is room for far more enlarged knowledge of God than any of us have yet acquired. In His nature are treasures of knowledge which eternal research will not exhaust. Of course none but Christ could with perfect propriety say, "I know this," but we may follow on to know the Lord. 5. This knowledge is—I. MOST PURIFYING. A sight of God is transforming. When with open face we behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are charged with the same image. When God is seen in all the majesty of His glory and holiness the Christian cannot, dare not, wilfully sin. II. MOST HUMBLING. Other knowledge "puffeth up," but the more God is seen, the more abased the soul will be. All the glooms of guilt and fears of hell which are not accompanied with a spiritual discernment of God will not humble the soul. When Isaiah saw the Lord he exclaimed, "I am a man of unclean lips," and when Peter discovered the Godhead of Christ he fell at His feet, saying, "Depart from me," &c. III. MOST EXALTING. It will do more to ennoble the mind and elevate it above vulgar disputes, than all other views. If it is a dignity to be intimately acquainted with great men, what is the dignity of knowing and being known by God. IV. MOST BLESSED. One direct view of God fills the soul with greater peace than the most splendid attainments in other branches of knowledge, and than all the glories of the world. This is to be the happiness of heaven, because nothing greater can be provided. (*E. D. Griffin, D.D.*) *The experimental knowledge of God the end of all Christian endeavour*:—It is for the want of keeping this end steadily in view that many persons make so little progress. Their efforts are misdirected. They confound the means and effects of religion with its life. Digging, manuring, pruning, and fruit-bearing are not the life of a tree. What, then, is the soul of religion towards which all efforts are to be directed. I. THE LIFE OF TRUE RELIGION IS AN EXPERIMENTAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. Such an appreciation of the excellence of His character as satisfies the soul. Philip said, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." No earthly source of happiness does suffice. The pursuit of earthly desires is like the countryman's chase after the rainbow. They one after the other disappoint those who attain them. Their prismatic colours all vanish when we come close to them, and some new rainbow is seen ahead to lure us into another fruitless pursuit. But our Creator does not mock us by implanting great yearnings after happiness which have nothing to correspond to them. In the knowledge and enjoyment of Him man can find rest. II. THIS KNOWLEDGE IS THE END OF ENDS, TO WHICH EVERY OTHER PART OF THE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM IS SUBORDINATED. It is the end of the atoning and interceding work of our Lord. This removes barriers which preclude communion. Any knowledge of God independently of Christ must frighten us from Him, for God is infinitely holy, and His holiness is a consuming fire. III. THE EXERCISES WHICH GO MOST DIRECTLY TO THIS END. 1. Living much with Him. If we only come across a man occasionally and in public, and see nothing of his private life, we cannot be said to know him. All the knowledge of God which many professing Christians have is derived from the formal salute they make to Him in their prayers. But no progress can be made thus. Try to draw God down into your daily work; consult Him about it; offer it as a contribution to His service; ask Him to help you in it and to bless it; refer to Him in your temptations; go back at once to Him if you have left Him; in short, walk hand in hand with Him, dreading above all things to quit His side; seek not so much to pray as to live in an atmosphere of prayer. 2. Studying His mind in His Word. We may be said to know an author, when we have so carefully read his works as to imbibe his spirit. It is through His Word that God speaks to us, as it is through prayer we speak to Him. Cultivate a taste for the Holy Scriptures. "Oh, how sweet are Thy words unto my taste. . . . All the day long is my study of it." My mind in which it is stored is always recurring to it in the intervals of business, turning it over with fresh inquiry into its significance, finding new illustrations of its truth in nature, life, and experience. There is a study of Scripture which is analogous to ejaculatory prayer, which interweaves the Word into the daily life of the Christian, a rumination which

can be carried on without book. 3. The discipline of life. If a man has no dealings with us personally, though he may be no stranger to us by reputation, we cannot be said to know him. But if transactions pass between us his character transpires. Now God comes close up to us, if we give our hearts to Him, and deals with us in all the changing scenes of life. So long as people keep Him at arm's length, He only sweeps round the circumference of their existence. Those who desire to have a practical knowledge of Him in His dealings try to learn the lesson of every part of their experience. IV. INCREASE IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, as it characterizes the true Christian's present course WILL BE HIS BUSINESS THROUGHOUT ETERNITY. We are not to conceive of a glorified saint as if he were stereotyped and could advance no further in the knowledge of God. Our nature is so constituted as not to acquiesce in a particular measure of knowledge on any subject. And why, as God is infinite, and His resources of wisdom, power, and love are inexhaustible, may not a blessed eternity be spent in fresh discoveries of His glory, each of which will throw preceding discoveries into the shade? (*Dean Goulburn.*) *God known imperfectly but really*:—No man can take a pencil and mark the features of Jehovah, and say: "Thus far is God, and no farther." How poor a God must that be whom I can understand! He would be no larger than the measure of my thought—and that would be small indeed. No man can limit and define God. after all intellectual statements have been made, after all definitions have been given, immensely more is left untouched than has been touched. But the functions of the Divine nature, the quality of that nature and its moral essence, one may suspect or know without comprehending all of God. Bring me but a glass of water, And I know what water is. I may not know, if I have not travelled, what are the springs in the mountain, what are cascades, what are the streams that thunder through deep gorges, what are broadening rivers, what are bays, or what is the ocean; and yet I may know what water is. A drop on my finger tells me its quality. From that I know that it is not wood, that it is not rock, that it is not air, that it is not anything but water. I am not able, by searching, to find out God unto perfection; and yet I know that, so far as I have found Him out, and so far as He is ever going to be found out, whatever there is in nobility, whatever there is in goodness, whatever there is in sweetness, whatever there is in patience; whatever can be revealed by the cradle, by the crib, by the couch, by the table; whatever there is in household love and in other loves; whatever there is in heroism among men; whatever there is of good report; whatever has been achieved by imagination or by reason; whatever separates man from the brute beast, and lifts him above the clod—I know that all these elements belong to God, the eternal and universal Father. Although I may not be able to draw an encyclopædic circle and say: "All inside of that is God, and anything outside of it is not God;" yet I know that everything which tends upward, that everything which sets from a lower life to a higher, that everything which leads from the basilar to the coronal, that everything whose results are good, is an interpretation of God, who, though He may be found to be other than we suppose, will be found not less, but more glorious than we suspect. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Knowledge of Divine will*:—The knowledge of the Divine will embraces in itself the knowledge (1) of the law, which shows us the abyss of our misery, and also proposes to the regenerate a rule of new life; (2) of the gospel, which opens to us the depths of Divine mercy, and also teaches the method of obtaining salvation. Neither is the bare apprehension of these things called the knowledge of the Divine will, but the efficacious apprehension which applies Christ to ourselves, and expresses the rule of the law in our life and actions, as far as in us lies. (1 John ii. 3) the commandments as well concerning faith as obedience. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *Filled with the knowledge of His will*:—The world is in darkness. This is the beginning of a natural day. The sun has not yet risen. Here is a great building. You see it; the sun rises and touches the top of it; gradually it touches the highest ridges and windows; then it comes down, and touches another story, and another, till at last the light, in all its fulness and amplitude, fills the whole house and bathes the whole building in the splendour of its rays. Every room—from the lowest to the highest—all filled! Now, that gives you a faint idea of what the apostle means. The knowledge of God fills, not one faculty alone, not the intellect looking at truth objectively, but the whole nature; feeling, imagination, sensibility, all flooded with this Divine light. (*T. Binney.*) *The use of spiritual understanding*:—By wisdom and spiritual understanding the Christians at Colosse would be led to "distinguish things

that differ"; to detect the sophistry of new teachers; to discern the dangerous bearings of ingenious but seducing systems; to keep close to the letter and spirit of Scripture; to look around on the whole compass of truth and all the methods of God's dispensations before they committed themselves to any conclusive opinion; to use every part of Divine revelation for the purposes, and in the proportion, and according to the order, and in the spirit of the divinely-inspired record. (*Bishop D. Wilson.*) **That ye walk worthy of the Lord.**—*Life a walk*:—Having entered the world, at once we leave the moment of our nativity, as a starting-place, and incessantly advance towards death, as a common habitation, where, sooner or later, all men meet. Other travellers may, if they please, delay their journey, or retrace their steps; but we cannot do either. Time, enfolding us from the first moment of our life, perpetually carries us forward, whether we wake or sleep, whether we consent to it or resist, without permitting us to turn back, or indulge in the shortest repose. We are like him on board a vessel propelled by sea and wind, whose personal motion does not arrest or abate his course. But as the roads and projects of travellers are very different, so there is a great diversity of habit and manners in men's lives. Wicked men follow one way, and good men another. The pagan steers one course, the Jew another, the Mohammedan another, and the Christian another, each wholly different from the others. This is what the Scripture calls "the way of man"; that is, the fashion and method of life which each man follows. And suitably to this expressive figure, it often makes use of the word walking, to signify a regulating and framing of the life after some certain manner, whether good or evil; meaning the tenor of our lives, and our customary deportment. There is nothing more common in the Psalms, and in the Proverbs, than these forms of speech; "to walk in integrity"; or, on the contrary, "to walk in fraud and iniquity"; and in the writings of the New Testament, "to walk in light," or, "in darkness"; "after the Spirit," or, "after the flesh"; with other similar phrases, all signifying a certain manner and condition of life, good or evil, as it is qualified. Agreeably to this scriptural style, the apostle says here, "that ye might walk"; meaning, that you may live, that you may regulate and form your lives. (*J. Daillé.*)

Walk worthily:—It is said that among the high Alps, at certain seasons, the traveller is told to proceed quietly; for on the steep slopes overhead the snow hangs so evenly balanced that the sound of a voice or the report of a gun may destroy the equilibrium, and bring down an immense avalanche that will overwhelm everything in ruin in its downward path. And so about our way there may be a soul in the very crisis of its moral history, trembling between life and death, and a mere touch or shadow may determine its destiny. A young lady, who was deeply impressed with the truth, and was ready, under conviction of sin, to ask, "What must I do to be saved?" had all her solemn impressions dissipated by the unseemly jesting of a member of the Church. Her irreverent and worldly spirit cast a repellent shadow on the young lady not far from the kingdom of God. How important that we should always and everywhere walk worthy of our high calling as Christians. (*T. Stork.*) **Walking so as to please God**:—1. All mere speculative knowledge is profitless. If the whole world of science were before me, and yet if its principles were not applied, it might puff me up but it would be of no utility. Much more is this so with regard to Divine truth. I may have all knowledge, but if I lack the faith that worketh by love it is vain. 2. But there is one peculiar glory about Divine truth—he that knows one truth cannot be wholly ignorant of its bearings. It is a chain that has involved in it link within link, and he that touches one can move the whole. *E.g.*, He that has a spiritual knowledge of God loves Him, and he that loves Him loves His will, and he that loves His will desires to do it. 1. **THE WORTHY WALK.** There are similar passages in Eph. iv. 1; 1 Thess. ii. 12. 1. Every man living in sin is dead, a cumberer of the ground, and only fit to be cut down. This is his worthlessness. He is an unprofitable servant and spiritually worthless. This is one of the first teachings of the Spirit, and even the saint is compelled to confess that in Him dwelleth no good thing (Gen. xxii. 9-10). This was the confession of the Centurion and the Prodigal. 2. But although in the natural man this is so, and the spiritual man is made to feel it—yet the latter knows that he has been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, redeemed for glory, and renewed by the Holy Spirit, and so is made worthy by grace. 3. Hence he is under powerful obligations to walk worthy by being fruitful in good works. This the natural man cannot be any more than a bad tree can produce good fruit, but the renewed man can be and is. (1) The characteristics of a good work are—(a) that God has commanded it;

(b) that it is the result of faith—for without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith first pleads the righteousness of Christ as the ground of acceptance, and then lays hold of the strength of Christ as the power for performance. "In the Lord I have righteousness and strength." (2) In these sorts of works we are to be fruitful. There must be no reserve. All we have and are is to be devoted to God's service. II. **THE HIGH AIM**—to please God in all things. 1. This is impossible to the natural man who is without faith. Even a child of God does many things that are displeasing to God. There was but one who was perfectly well-pleasing to God. But in Him we are pleasing too—for we are made the righteousness of God in Him. 2. The Christian aims at acting out this righteousness in unreserved obedience, in little things as well as great—in eating and drinking, &c. With such a life God is well pleased. III. **THE DIVINE KNOWLEDGE**. Notice the order of procedure—knowing the will of God, doing it, and by doing it brought into closer acquaintance with God. "If any man will do His will he shall know." "Thus shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord." David knew more than the ancients, because he kept God's precepts. (*J. H. Evans, M.A.*) **All pleasing**. I. **WHAT IS MEANT BY ALL PLEASING?** We are to please everybody that we may please God. 1. The wish to please or to be liked by everybody is a virtue or a sin according as it is a means or an end. If you please only to be admired it is selfish and has no religion in it. But if you wish to please that Christ may be liked, and that you may have more influence for good, then in pleasing others you will please God. 2. By this rule we reconcile St. Paul's apparent contradiction, "If I yet pleased men I should not be a servant of Christ," with "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification." It is evident that we may, on the one hand, so make compromises in order to please that we shall not walk worthy of the Lord, and that on the other we may think we are walking worthy of the Lord by a strictness and severity which are certainly not unto all pleasing. 3. It would be quite a mistake to suppose that Christ did not please men. There were some, of course, He never tried to please—the proud and hypocritical. But he pleased the multitude. The record of his early life is "He grew in favour both with God and man;" and afterwards "all the people rejoiced for the glorious things which were done by Him." II. **HOW DID CHRIST PLEASE MEN? AND HOW MAY WE BY PLEASING LIKE HIM, WALK WORTHY OF HIM?** 1. The first secret of all pleasing is humility. If you meet a man who is in everything your superior, and yet he treats you as if he were your equal without the least appearance of condescension, there is a charm in that which every one feels. This was exactly what Christ did and what we are to do. 2. Sympathy. It is the spring of all power to throw yourself into another's mind, look with his eye, feel with his touch, to do this with all, and with the countenance and manner as well as the word, and to be always respectful with your sympathy. This is the capability to please, and Jesus had it without measure. 3. That potent and rare art of seeing the good in everybody. Christ saw the Israelite indeed in the rude Nathaniel; He loved the impetuous, self-ignorant young man; and asked his Father to forgive His murderers since they knew not what they did. Is there then anything more Christ-like than to see the germ of piety before it develops, the bit of blue on a dark sky, the excuse in every thing? He who knows how to do that "walks unto all pleasing." III. **IT IS THE DUTY AND IN THE POWER OF EVERY ONE TO BE PLEASING**. For to please does not depend upon the face, dress, form, riches, talents, wealth, &c., but upon moral character, tact, effort, and simple motive. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) **Fruitful in every good work**. *Fruitfulness and progress*.—I. **FERTILITY** implies—1. **Life**. A fruit-bearing tree is necessarily a living tree. The fruitful Christian has been grafted into the Saviour and partakes of His life. This life is worthy of our nature, capability, and destiny. How different the idea of many. Business, money, pleasure, science, art—the pursuit of these is life; all that it demands of energy, all that it imparts of joy. 2. **Culture**. The tree left without pruning will soon bring forth leaves only. So the fruitful Christian is one who is under the care of the Divine husbandman (John xv. 2). Abounding fertility is the result of His gracious culture. The pruning processes of His providence are often necessary. Without these there may be woody suckers or luxuriant foliage, but no fruit. 3. The Christian living in Christ and pruned by God is to be fruitful in every good work (John xv. 8). The works to be done must be good in their nature, influence, and issue, glorifying to God, beneficial to man, and worthy of the life the Christian has in union with His Lord. Note the breadth of requirement—"every." The physical and social elevation of the alien, the outcast, and the ignorant should go hand and hand with saving agencies. Was Christ not Physician for body and soul, the loftiest Philanthropist,

the sincerest Patriot, the truest Friend? II. PROGRESS. The fruitfulness is not exhaustive. The tree grows all the more healthily when its fruitfulness abounds. 1. Hence the connection here between fertility and progress. We must bear fruit that we may be strong, and do good that we may grow. Many forget this and find that "withholding more than is meet tendeth to poverty." Their selfishness starves their souls. 2. The real means of growth is the knowledge of God. Our fruitfulness may be a condition, but it cannot make us grow. The knowledge of God is the true nourishment of the soul. A God in shadow or unknown creates superstition, and to view Him in only one aspect of His character will lead either to fanaticism or mysticism. 3. This knowledge is the only knowledge which encompasses our whole being and fills the whole man. It supplies truth for the intellect, conscience, and heart; stimulus and nourishment for every attribute of our being. Devotion to mere human studies may develop the intellectual side of our nature at the expense of the moral and social, but the growth which this promotes is symmetrical and full. Conclusion: These two things embrace two sides of our nature, action and reflection. They act and react on each other. The activity would pass into formalism were it not fed by the contemplation of God. Our meditation would pass into fanaticism were it not regulated by active duty. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Fruitfulness*:—This metaphor is taken from a tree; not every tree, but one bearing fruit (*Psa. i. 3; John xv. 5*). From this comparison note—1. As no tree can bear fruit, unless it hath a certain life-giving seed in itself, and is nourished daily with good sap; so no one can bear spiritual fruit, unless he hath in himself the seed of the Spirit, and is daily watered with the outpourings of Divine grace. 2. As that tree is pleasing to God, which does not occupy the ground in vain, neither dissipates the moisture which it draws on leaves and blossoms alone; but produces good fruits: so he alone is pleasing to God, who does not uselessly occupy room in the Church, neither wears the appearance and form of godliness alone, but puts forth its power and virtue by fruitfulness. 3. As a tree lives and bears fruit not for itself but its owner, and for others to whom he sees fit to impart its fruits: so a godly man ought not to live for himself alone, nor to care only that his life be honourable to himself, but that it may be honourable to God and beneficial to all his brethren. 4. Behold the spacious manner in which the fruitfulness of a godly man is exercised. In this he differs from a tree. For no one seeks different fruits from the same tree, but God expects every Christian to produce every kind of good works (*Gal. v. 22*). There are, therefore, two things to be noted in the matter of the fruitfulness. (1) That God does not approve of every kind of fruitfulness, but restricts it to good works. But those are called good works which are commanded and directed by God. Wisely and piously spake Cyprian, "The exercises of righteousness are to be chosen not by our own will, but by the will of God." And in Isaiah God complains of the Jews, that they worshipped Him by the precepts of men (*Isa. xxix. 13*). (2) That fruitfulness of any one kind is not sufficient, but we must be fruitful in every good work. If any one produce the good fruit of alms deeds, and mingle with them the impure fruits of lewdness; or if any one be conspicuous for chastity, and defile himself by avarice; he would not answer the Divine will, or the apostle's desire of being fruitful in every good work: nay, he is accounted by God bad and unclean. For who shall say that any one is clean, who is wont to wallow even in a single sewer? (*1 Thess. v. 22-23*). (*Bishop Davenant.*) "*Fruitful in every good work*" :—From the decalogue downwards. Scripture teaching has been poured impartially into two moulds—to know the truth and to do the right. I. THE NATURE OF EACH. 1. Fruitfulness in every good work. (1) Work. They who find Christ find rest, but not exemption from work; "peace in believing" only supplies a foothold whereon the labourer may stand more steadily and so work with more effect. (2). Good work, not energy of action merely. (a) The Master is good: God. (b) The motive: love. (c) The aim: the good of the world. (d) The standard: the law. (3) Every. (a) Not that man should go round the world and meddle with everything, but that he should neglect no opportunity that comes in his way. Do not waste time and effort in trying to do all at once, but cultivate a universal willingness. (b) Act those virtues, too, that are not in your nature. When a man of might bears the infirmities of the weakest, and the timid display a martyr courage, there is more conspicuous evidence of grace. (c) Do not pick and choose but do whatever God has put in your way, whether the opening of a church or the digging of a well, the support of a missionary or the widening of a street. (4) Fruitful. This indicates—(a) Spontaneousness. The tree has first been

made good, and then the fruit grows spontaneously. A partaker of Christ gives forth Christ-like actions. There is a good deal of artificial charity. People can tie oranges to a fir-tree; but true Christian beneficence is a fruit that grows and is not tied on. The water in the pipes connected with a reservoir must flow by reason of the pressure from above. "The love of Christ constraineth us." (b) Sweetness and profitableness. (c) Abundance. 2. Increase in the knowledge of God. (1) In obtaining reconciliation through Christ we have the beginning of this knowledge, and those who attain the beginning can never rest there. (2) Among other features of the Divine nature which the experienced disciple knows better now, the Fatherliness of God is perhaps that in which the greatest advances are attained. It is long ere perfect love casts out all fear; but much progress is made in its diminution by the inlet of confiding love. It is like the process of exhausting the air from a glass cup, and so making it adhere more and more firmly to the table. More and more fear is drawn off from the Christian's bosom; more and more firmly therefore does it cleave to the Almighty strength it leans upon. II. THE UNION AND RECIPROCAL RELATIONS OF THE TWO. 1. They grow together not only as two parallel boughs of one tree, one of which might live if the other were wrenched off. The union is like two sides of a human body: if one were wanting the other would die. 2. Contemplate the two sides alternately. (1) Active obedience is necessary to the increase of spiritual experience. Spiritual contemplation soon runs to seed when duty is neglected. The old monks desired to increase in the knowledge of God, and hid themselves in caves where good works were impossible. So they made themselves barren in that wherein God had commanded them to be fruitful. Simon on the top of his pillar with the world wondering at him as a saint, did not know God so well as he might if he had kept a shop all day and played with his children at night. In active life you will make most progress in this knowledge. The more work you do the more you will be wearied, which will lead you to lean oftener on the Father and thus increase your acquaintance. (2) Contemplative communion with God is necessary to successful activity. If you rush into work without prayer the work will wane like the flame of a lamp when the oil is exhausted. When our work increases in bulk we need more of experimental communion to animate the extended body. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Multiform fruitfulness*:—You never saw in nature a tree which yielded all sorts of fruit, and you never will. I have seen a tree so grafted that it produced four kinds of fruit at one time, but I remarked that it was a poor business in reference to two of the varieties; for one of the grafts, more natural than the others to the parent stem, drew off the most of the sap, and flourished well, but robbed the other branches. The second sort of fruit managed to live pretty fairly, but not so well as it would have done on its own stem. As for the third and fourth, they were mere attempts at fruit of the smallest size. This tree was shown to me as a great curiosity; it is not likely that practical gardeners will be encouraged by the experiment. But what would you think of a tree upon which you saw grapes, and figs, and olives, and apples, and all other good fruits growing at one time? This is the emblem of what instructed believers will become: they will produce all sorts of goodness and graciousness to the honour of their heavenly Father. I have no doubt that you will naturally abound most in certain good works for which you have the largest capacity, but still nothing ought to come amiss to you. In the great house of the Church we want servants who will not be simply cooks or house-maids, but general servants, maids of all-work, prepared to do anything and everything. I have known persons in household employment in England who would not do a turn beyond their special work to save their masters' lives: these are a sort of servants of whom the fewer the better. In India this is carried to a ridiculous extreme. The Hindoo water-bearer will not sweep the house, nor light a fire, nor brush your clothes—he will fetch water, and nothing else: you must, therefore, have a servant for each separate thing, and then each man will do his own little bit, but he will not go an inch beyond. When we enter into Christ's Church we should come prepared to wash the saints' feet, or bear their burdens, or bind up their wounds, or fight their foes, or act as steward, or shepherd, or nurse. It has been well said that if two angels in heaven were summoned to serve the Lord, and there were two works to be done, an empire to be ruled, or a crossing to be swept, neither angel would have a choice as to which should be appointed him, but would gladly abide the will of the Lord. Let us be equally prepared for anything, for everything by which fruit can be produced for the Well-beloved. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

The necessity of Divine knowledge to Christian fruitfulness:—There is a well in your garden, and a pump for raising the water to the surface. This for ordinary seasons is sufficient. But at length a drought compels you to make a greater demand upon the well. Every day you ply the handle harder and longer, to preserve the life of the languishing vegetation. At last the supply fails, and you ply your task in vain. No water comes, because there has been too much working; the work degenerates into a barren noise. What then? Sink your well deeper, and it will stand a greater strain. We must go and do likewise when, by too long-continued activity, our movement becomes fruitless labour. When we work till our souls are wrought out, we must go deeper down into the hidden veins of the soul's supply—go deeper into the love of God, by secret communion with the Saviour; and the increase of His favour consciously compassing your soul will sustain a new and greater effort of Christian activity. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*)

The necessity of Christian fruitfulness to Divine knowledge:—In the case of the monks, their kite, so to speak, was pointing heavenward and rising; but it was not rising far enough nor fast enough. It seemed to be struggling upward, but held in check by the string that attached it to the ground. That line which bound it to the earth seemed the only hindrance of its flight to heaven. Like foolish children, they cut the line that bound it to the earth, expecting to see it then rising unimpeded to the sky; but, lo! the kite when so set free, instead of ascending majestically to heaven, whirled round two or three times wildly, giddily, and then fell flat upon the ground. Such was the result of Rome's effort to raise her votaries to heaven, by cutting their connection with the earth. The so-called saints fell lower than before. (*Ibid.*)

The essential connection between knowledge and piety:—As the swing of the pendulum to the right becomes the power which carries it to the left, and its swing to the left the power which carries it back to the right; so true good-doing makes the doer know God more, and true knowledge of God sends back the scholar with a new impulse to his work in the world. Moreover, by the balancing alternations of the pendulum aberrations are prevented, and the steady, true-going of the clock is secured; so the Christian life goes best which goes between a deep, comtemplative, spiritual knowledge of God, and hearty practical work, as far as opportunity offers, for every interest of every brother man. These two God hath joined; let no man dare to put them asunder. (*Ibid.*)

No work must be declined:—You have probably read of a certain renowned corporal in the American service a century ago. A general as he rode along saw a body of men endeavouring to lift timber. They were short-handed, and the work lagged, but their famous corporal stood by ordering them about at a magnificent rate. The general paused and said, "Why don't you lend them help and put your shoulder to it?" "Why, sir," said the great little officer, "how can you think of such a thing? Do you know who I am? I am a corporal!" The general got off his horse, pulled off his coat, and helped to move the timber, and by his judicious help the soldiers achieved their task. Then he turned to the high and mighty gentleman and said, "Mr. Corporal, next time you want a man to do such work as this you can send for me. I am General Washington." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 11. Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power.—*God's all strength*:—I. THE STRENGTH. 1. The reference is not to intellectual strength, although no doubt as a highly intellectual man, the apostle would highly prize this in his brethren. It is important as a shield to protect from imposition, for guidance in times of sifting or wild speculation, and its possession widens the distance between man and the lower creation, and assimilates to Him whose understanding is infinite. 2. Here reference is to power distinctively spiritual. Paul prayed that they might be strengthened in their ethical principles, so that they might be stronger in their faith, hope, and love. This was important for their Christian consistency, usefulness, and prosperity. II. THE STRENGTHENING. "Strengthened in all strength." As if the apostle conceived them as needing to be immersed in some other one's strength greater than their own: and as he was thinking of Divine strength, he did not scruple to say "all" strength, i.e., strength all-sufficient. Not merely enough for some duties and trials, but such as would enable them to say, "I can do all things" (Phil. iv. 13). All kinds of strength belong to God, physical, intellectual, moral. "Nothing is too hard for the Lord." "Power belongeth unto God," and not only that which can create and uphold. What power of perception from which nothing is hidden! of memory! looking back into infinity; of prevision! looking forward into eternity. Hence this moral power. What power of goodness, righteousness, compassion, and forgiving fervour—all inherently infi-

nite. No wonder Paul speaks of "the power of His glory," the power that is inherent in His glory and therefore glorious. No wonder that he desires that the Colossians should be steeped in it. III. THE RESULT OF THE STRENGTHENING. 1. Patience is needed on the part of all in such a world as this. Men everywhere have had trials that have taxed them to the utmost, and will continue to have. But the reference here is to the trials which Christians have in addition as Christians, to which they are exposed for the gospel's sake at home and in society. 2. Long-suffering is akin to patient endurance. It is the opposite of irascibility in relation to persons who deal with us unreasonably or unkindly, whereas patience has to do with things. With trying things our difficulty is to endure; with trying persons to suppress irritability. 3. But these are not enough. Paul wants joyfulness in addition. But he knew that "the happy God" could and would make "all things work together for good," and so enable His people to "rejoice in the Lord always." (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Strengthened with glorious power*.—I. Why does the apostle say, STRENGTHENED WITH "ALL" MIGHT? 1. To intimate that we fight not against one enemy, neither are opposed by weapons on one side only, but by many, and on every side. Unless we overcome these enemies, one and all, we are conquered. There is therefore need of all might against every kind of enemy. II. The apostle could have said, we are strengthened by God, or by His power; but he adds this epithet, GLORIOUS POWER. 1. That we may place the greater confidence in this Divine power. Because this very word contains in itself an earnest of victory and triumph; for this could not be glorious power, if it might be overcome by an evil spirit and sin (*Rom. viii.*). 2. It is called glorious power on account of the admirable mode of conquering the devil, the world, and the flesh. For the Spirit of God not immediately, by His absolute power, beats off these enemies of our salvation; but by inspiring us with strength, causes even ourselves to trample them under. Moreover, that power must necessarily be very admirable and glorious which makes feeble man, clothed with sinful flesh, to overcome the insults and wiles of devils, the alarms and solicitations of the flesh, the hatred, snares, and injuries of the whole world. Of this glorious power God Himself speaks (*2 Cor. xii. 9; 1 Cor. i. 27.*) (*Bishop Davenant.*) *The source and object of spiritual strength*.—I. THE PROCESS EXPERIENCED. "Strengthened with all might." 1. Man is essentially weak, and his frequent boasting of strength is but a sign of it. Adam was weak, and fell before the first assault; and now that sin, thus triumphing, has entered into our world, degenerate men are weaker still. It was when we were without strength that God laid help on One mighty to save. 2. Yet men rarely think of their weakness, and consider themselves equal to all the demands made upon them. It is only when a man receives new power that he is conscious of his weakness. It is when you try to stem a torrent that you know its force, so when a Christian begins to crucify his flesh he knows its power. But for him there is might to overcome. Yet how much weakness is manifest in professors. You see men conquered by the love of the world, and those who began well slackening their pace, and instead of resisting the allurements around them becoming entangled by them and falling into spiritual apostasy. 3. Mark the fulness of the blessing. (1) With might for all the faculties of the soul, so that every power of manhood shall be invigorated. (2) For all the wants of life created by its varied circumstances of prosperity and adversity. II. THE DIVINE PRINCIPLE MANIFESTED—"according to the power of His glory" (*Eph. iii. 16*). 1. Spiritual power, then, is not indigenous to the soul; it is from God, who alone knows its capacities and needs. If the word or smile of an earthly parent can strengthen the soul of his child, much more God. We can only influence from without, God from within. 2. The principle of this Divine action is "according," &c. Often are God's power and glory conjoined (*Psa. lxxiii. 2; Rev. xix. 1*). Power is an essential attribute of the Divine glory. (1) The glory of God is powerful in creation. "The heavens declare," &c. Power is everywhere apparent. Even the thoughtless, who have no eye to trace His wisdom and no heart to acknowledge His goodness, are constrained to see "His eternal power and Godhead." (2) In providence (*Psa. lxxii. 11; Job ix. 19; Dan. iv. 35*). What power in ordering times and seasons, governing a tumultuous world, restraining powers of darkness and preserving a feeble Church. (3) In redemption. Christ, who is "the brightness of His glory," is "the power of God." The exceeding greatness of His power working by His spirit accomplishes the new creation and strengthens the souls of His children. 3. The expression suggests the measure of the might imparted—not according to human power or angelic might, but according to a Divine measure. As the power of the Divine glory is manifested in nature, provi-

dence, or redemption, so will it be in the souls, experiences, and triumphs of His people. 4. It is also the model of our might. We may be strengthened with a might corresponding to the power of God's glory, so that we shall be strong in accordance with our finite nature as God is strong according to His infinite nature.

III. THE GREAT MORAL PURPOSE OF THIS STRENGTHENING—not so much to do as to suffer, which requires the greatest strength. 1. Patience has its sphere in relation to God. (1) In the endurance of trial. Our discipline is often protracted, and we are apt to sink. How much we need the promised strength. (2) In anticipation of coming good. The deliverance is long protracted. We become impatient, and ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?" and impatience often leads to sin, and is always a sign of weakness. To possess our souls in patience and bide God's time requires His strength. Long-suffering has its sphere in relation to man, and means long-mindedness as opposed to shortness of temper in the midst of irritation. It requires the strength of God to imitate His forbearance who "endured such contradiction of sinners." 3. The spirit of this patience or joyfulness produced by a consciousness of power to strengthen, deliver, reward. (*J. Spence, D.D.*)

Patience:—Patience is the superintendent of all the affairs of God, and without it it is not possible to execute His commands or to wait for His promises. It defeats all its enemies without toil. Its repose is more efficacious than the movements and deeds of others. It renders those things salutary to us which, of their own nature, are most pernicious. It changes poisons into remedies, and defeats into victories. It rejoices the angels, it confounds devils, it overcomes the world. It subdues the greatest courage, and converts the most obstinate hearts. It is the strength and the triumph of the Church, according to the saying of the ancient oracle, "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." (*Tertullian.*)

Patience and long-suffering:—"Long-suffering" will be found to express patience in respect of persons, and "patience" the same in respect to things. The man is long-suffering, who, having to do with injurious persons does not suffer himself easily to be provoked by them, or to blaze up into anger. The man is patient who, under a great siege of trials, bears up and does not lose heart or courage (Rom. v. 3; 2 Cor. i. 6). We should speak, therefore, of the long-suffering of David (2 Sam. xvi. 10-13), the patience of Job (James v. 11). Thus, while both graces are ascribed to the saints, only long-suffering is an attribute of God. Men may tempt and provoke Him, and He may and does display an infinite long-suffering in regard of them (Exod. xxxiv. 6; Rom. ii. 4; 1 Pet. iii. 20); there may be a resistance to God in men, because He respects the wills with which He has created them, even when those wills are fighting against Him. But there can be no resistance to God, nor burden upon Him, the Almighty, from things; therefore patience cannot find place in Him, nor is it ever rightly ascribed to Him; for when God is called "the God of patience" (Rom. xv. 5) this does not mean God whose attribute patience is, but God who gives patience to His people. (See also 1 Pet. v. 10; Heb. xiii. 20; Rom. xv. 13). (*Archbishop Trench.*)

The two words occur in the same context in 2 Cor. vi. 4, 6; 2 Tim. iii. 10; James v. 10-11. The difference of meaning is best seen in their opposites. While patience is the temper which does not easily succumb under suffering, long-suffering is the self-restraint that does not hastily retaliate a wrong. The one is opposed to cowardice or despondency, the other to wrath or revenge (Prov. xv. 18; xvi. 32). (*Bishop Lightfoot.*)

Peace in pain:—"I have been ready to doubt," said Dr. Payson, "whether pain be really an evil; for though more pain was crowded into last week than any other week of my life, yet it was one of the happiest weeks of my life, and now I am ready to say, 'Come what will, come sickness, pain, agony, poverty, loss of friends; only let God come with them, and they shall be welcome.'" Later, on his death-bed, he said, "Every bone is almost dislocated with pain; yet while my body is thus tortured, my soul is perfectly happy and peaceful, more happy than I can possibly express to you. I seem to swim in a flood of glory which God pours down on me."

Patient long-suffering:—"I heard of a city missionary who was going along one of the streets and saw a little girl sleeping on the steps of a door, and he awoke her, and said, 'Why are you sleeping here in this drizzling rain?' And she said, 'My father has turned me out of doors. He's a drunkard, and I'm waiting till he falls asleep, and then I'm going into the house.'" The next morning the drunken father awakened from his dream of iniquity, and he saw his little girl preparing his breakfast, and he said, "Milly, why do you stay with me?" "Oh," she said, "father, I love you; and my mother, when she died, said I must

never leave you. She said the rum fiend would sometimes go out of you, and then you would be very kind to me; and so she said I was never to leave you, and, father, I never will."

Vers. 12-14. **Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet.**—*The Father's gift through the Son*.—1. These grounds of thanksgiving are but various aspects of the great blessing of salvation. The diamond flashes green and purple and yellow and red, according to the angle at which its facets catch the eye. 2. All these blessings are the present possessions of Christians. 3. Note the remarkable correspondence with Acts xxvi. 17-18. 1. The first ground of thankfulness which all Christians have is that **THEY ARE FIT FOR THE INHERITANCE**. The metaphor is drawn from Israel's "inheritance" of Canaan. Unfortunately our use of "heir" and "inheritance" is confined to succession on death. In Scripture it implies possession by lot, and points to the fact that the people did not win their land, but "God had a favour unto them." So the Christian inheritance is not won by merit, but given by God's goodness. 1. Is it present or future? Both: because whatever may wait to be revealed, the essence of all which heaven can bring is ours to-day who live in the faith and love of Christ. The difference is one of degree, not of kind. He who can say, "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance" will neither leave his treasures behind by death, nor enter on a new inheritance. Its beginnings are here but as the "earnest," limited, in comparison, as the tuft of grass which used to be given to a new possessor, when set against the broad lands from which it was plucked. Here the idea is that of a present fitness for a mainly future inheritance. 2. The inheritance is "in the light," a realm where purity and knowledge and gladness dwell. 3. From this it follows that it can only be possessed by saints. There is no merit, but there is congruity. If it be a kingdom of light, then only souls who love the light can go thither, and until owls and bats rejoice in the sunshine there will be no way of being fit but by ourselves being "light in the Lord." 4. But men not perfectly pure are fit. The Colossians were made meet at their conversion. Incipient faith in Christ works a change so great as to fit us, for although it be but as a grain of mustard seed, it shapes from henceforth our personal being. There is nothing in this inconsistent with the need of continual growth in congruity. True fitness will become more and more fit. 5. The land was parted among the tribes according to their strength; some had a wider, some a narrower strip. So as there are differences of character here there will be differences in participation hereafter. "Star differeth from star." II. The second ground is **THE CHANGE OF KING AND COUNTRY**. In the "deliverance" there may be a reference to that of Israel suggested by "inheritance," while the "translation" may be derived from the practice of deporting whole bodies of natives from conquered kingdoms to some other part of the conqueror's realm. 1. The two kingdoms and their kings. (1) The power of darkness (Luke xxii. 18) implies harsh, arbitrary dominion, a realm of cruel and grinding sway. Men who are not Christians live in a subjection to darkness of ignorance, misery, and sin. (2) What a wonderful contrast do the other kingdom and King present! The Son who is the object of God's love. Wherever men lovingly obey Christ is His kingdom of light, gladness, hope, knowledge, and righteousness. 2. The transference of subjects. A great conqueror has come, and speaks to us as Sennacherib did to the Jews (2 Kings xviii. 31-32). If we listen He will lead us away and plant us, not as pining exiles, but as happy citizens in the kingdom which the Father has appointed. 3. The transference is effected the moment we yield our heart to Christ. When we die we shall change provinces, but not kingdoms or King, only we shall see the King in His beauty. III. The heart and centre of all thankfulness is **THE REDEMPTION WE RECEIVE THROUGH CHRIST**. 1. Redemption is the act of delivering a captive by ransom. So it is the same as the deliverance of the previous verse, only what is there an act of power is here an act of self-sacrificing love. Christ's death breaks the chains, sets us free, and acquires us for Himself. 2. The essential element of this redemption is forgiveness, not only the removal of legal penalties, however. The truest penalty of sin is that death which is separation from God; and the conceptions of judicial pardon and Fatherly forgiveness unite in the removal of that separation and the deliverance of the heart and conscience from the burden of guilt and a Father's wrath. 3. Such forgiveness leads to that full deliverance from the power of darkness which is the completion of redemption. Forgiveness means "sending away" not only as guilt but as habit. 4. The condition of possessing this redemption is union with Christ. "In whom." We cannot get His gifts

without Himself. 5. Redemption is a present and growing possession. "We have," or "are having." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The inheritance of the faithful*:—1. In the spirit of "joyfulness" Paul stirs up his brethren to gratitude. 2. This gratitude was due to God. They owed much to Epaphras, Paul, and Philemon, and others. Many are the subordinate cisterns out of which all have drawn refreshing water. But the water that is there, is there only because it has been supplied from the overflow of the inexhaustible fountain above. 3. God is "The Father"; not the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, my Father, yours, or ours; but absolutely the original, archetypal fountain from which all other excellent fatherhoods are derived. Full scope is thus left to the Colossians to claim their peculiar share of the blessing laid up in the Divine Fatherhood, *e.g.*—I. MEETNESS FOR THE HEAVENLY INHERITANCE. A desire is expressed that they should be led out beyond themselves. "Giving thanks to the Father who hath made" not you, not myself, Timothy and all true brethren; "us." 1. The inheritance. There are many heritages; some evil. This is "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled," &c., and thus one in heaven, "an eternal inheritance"—in one word, perfected salvation. To the heirs of this angels are ministers, and they, being "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ," are "heirs of all things," as they are Christ's and Christ is God's. 2. It is the inheritance of "the saints." There are two classes among men. The inheritance belongs to the "holy ones." 3. It is in "the light." But it belongs not only to those who are in the light, but to those who are in the dusk. 4. For this God has made us meet to be "partakers," *i.e.*, partners, sharers, which annihilates selfishness. Things are not equally distributed here, but they will be there; and even here, like an earnest of what is coming, one of the greatest of Divine boons, the light, unlike our farthing candles, is wondrously impartial. 5. For this we need "meetness," not for salvation, but for the heritage. Through sin we are disqualified. Happiness is interchangeable with holiness. Hence we need transformation. "Nothing that defileth shall enter" there. II. THE GREAT DELIVERANCE. 1. The apostle was a rescued man, and so was Timothy, and the Colossians. They had all experienced emancipation and were free. 2. The Divine Father, who feels peculiarly at home in heaven, was the Author of their freedom, as He is of all liberty. Men have sold themselves, but as His offspring they have a right to the prerogatives of children, and God has come down in the person of Jesus to make them free. 3. This rescue is from the power of darkness. (1) Men are in the dark in reference to all that was most important to their weal; as to their own nature, the character of God, and forgiveness. (2) This darkness involves the obscuration of all that is fitted to impart delight. When we are out at night we might wander in the choicest gardens, and be surrounded with enchanting scenery, but it would be utterly blank; even if we were in delightful company we should not be able to adequately appreciate it. (3) More than this is involved. Darkness means danger, and hence the Colossians had been under its "power," which is darkness personified. The idea is tyrannous power, power to do harm, because power in which malice predominates. 4. But the Great Father hath rescued us from this and translated us. (1) Paul intended a contrast between the two conditions which lie on the opposite sides of the line that is drawn by faith in Christ. The apostle delighted in this contrast, hence his frequent allusions to it—and no wonder (see Acts xxvi. 17-18). (2) They were translated, *i.e.*, transferred. The Jews were familiar with the idea. Again and again had masses of them been transported as prisoners of war. But this is a translation not into slavery and degradation, but out of them. But Paul does not say as we might expect, into "light," but into "the kingdom of God's dear Son"—the kingdom of heaven where Jesus reigns. In the expression "the Son of His love" we see what we ought to feel towards Jesus. He should be our dear sovereign, and we should "love Him, for He first loved us." (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *The inheritance*:—I. HEAVEN IS AN INHERITANCE. How prone men are to attach importance to their good works, and how averse is human pride to admit that our own righteousness is as filthy rags. This arises perhaps from the feeling that if our works are destitute of merit they must disincline God to save us. But how unscriptural is this fear. One would think that the parable of the Prodigal had been invented to refute it. In spite of what has been written, and the controversies that have waxed hot on the question, the fact that heaven is an inheritance proves that it cannot be the reward of good works. II. HEAVEN IS AN HERITAGE OF FREE GRACE. We have no such legal claim to it as may be established by some earthly inheritance. Heirs have entered on the property of those between whom and them there existed no acquaintanceship. We are constituted heirs of heaven by virtue

of sonship. Thus heaven is not merely an inheritance but a home. III. **THE HEIRS OF HEAVEN REQUIRE TO BE MADE MEET FOR IT.** 1. No elevation from obscurity to honour, or poverty to affluence, represents the difference between a state of sin in which grace finds us and the state of glory to which it raises us. 2. What were the most tempting banquet to one without appetite, or the most beautiful scene to the blind? Just what heaven would be to man with his ruined nature, low passions, and guilty conscience. Incapable of enjoying its holy beauties and happiness, he would find nothing there to delight his senses. Such an inheritance would be like the gift of a library to a savage. 3. It is the curse of vice, that where its desires outlive the power of gratification or are denied indulgence they become a torment. What then would a drunkard do in heaven? Or a voluptuary, or a worldling? 4. Hence the need of being made new creatures in Christ; and, by reason of remaining corruption, of getting with the title to the inheritance, a greater meetness for it; of sanctification as well as salvation. It was the office of Christ to purchase heaven; it is the work of the Spirit to prepare the heirs. Thus renewed and sanctified we shall carry a holy nature to a holy place. IV. **AS HEAVEN IS THE GIFT OF GOD, SO MEETNESS FOR IT IS THE WORK OF GOD.** By whatever instruments God executes His work, the work is not ours but His. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) I. **THE INHERITANCE.** It is—1. God like-ness. Christians are partakers of the Divine nature (2 Pet. i. 4). Children inherit their father's nature; so we receive our heavenly Father's spirit, and the Divine nature is formed in us. We are conformed to the image of God's Son, who is the image of the invisible God in gentleness, beneficence, and perfectness of character. 2. Eternal life. This is no blessedness to the wicked, for it is continuance in sin and misery; for the righteous it is everlasting holiness and happiness. 3. Heaven. It is pleasant to think of heaven as a state, much more so as a place—home. II. **THIS INHERITANCE CANNOT BE MERITED.** 1. All the riches of the earth cannot buy it, nor all its valour win it. "Worthy is the Lamb . . . for Thou hast redeemed us." 2. It is our Father's gift. He is not like Jacob, who selected a favourite son. The inheritance is offered to all. 3. It is meant purposely for the children. Some men die without a will, but God has made special provision for us. 4. It has been purchased by the death of Christ. III. **THE INHERITORS.** "Saints in light." 1. They see the love of God. Some may ask of their professed lovers, "do you love me?" But the saints in light do not need to ask this question of God. 2. They are eternal realities, which to others seem as dreams. (*W. Birch.*) *What is inheritance?*—The pay of a soldier is not inheritance, nor the fees of a physician, nor the gains of trade, nor the wages of labour. Rewards of toil or skill are earned by the hands that receive them. What is inherited, on the other hand, may be the property of a new-born babe; and so you may see the coronet, which was won by the stout arm of valour, and first blazoned on a battered shield, standing above the cradle of an infant. True, the ample estate, the noble rank, the hereditary honours were won. But they that won them are long dead, and underneath tattered banners, once borne before them in bloody fight, but now hung high in the house of God, the grim old barons sleep in their tombs. The rewards of their prowess have descended to their successors, who, holding these, enjoy honours and estates, which we do not grudge them, but which their wealth never bought, and their courage never won. Thus the saints hold heaven. In the terms of law, it is theirs, not by conquest but inheritance. It has been won for them by Jesus Christ. (*T. Guthrie.*) *The inheritance not the reward of merit:*—When one of the kings of England said to the assembled barons, "By what right hold ye your lands?" they stepped forward before the king, and, drawing their swords, exclaimed, "By these we hold our lands." But no deeds of ours can obtain and hold the inheritance of the saints in light. When the first Napoleon had made himself Emperor, and was about to be crowned, the Roman Pontiff approached him bearing the crown; but Napoleon reached out his hand, took the crown, and himself placed it upon his head; then he stood up before the assembled multitude, as if to say, "My own arm hath won the victory, and my own courage hath lifted me to this position." But in our case, which of us can earn the inheritance of the saints in light? If our celestial position depended on our merits, I fear many of us would never get through the gate of the city of the saints. (*W. Birch.*) *The inheritance of light:*—1. Turn from your inheritance of tears, anxiety, transitory stewardship; and you who have an inheritance of fame, respectability, &c., and lift up your eyes to the inheritance of light. 2. We have here an expression incomprehensible to many, but comprehended by a new illumination; as a bird of

the greenwood may comprehend freedom, an antelope the wide wilderness, a creature of the waters its native seas. Thus not only by original but informed instinct do we comprehend the inheritance. 3. The text stands in contrast to that other inheritance from whence we have been delivered—the power of darkness, beneath whose sway we all were born, and familiarity with which enables us to appreciate the inheritance of light. We have heard of the salt mines of Cracow, where human beings labour and never see the eyes of the sun. To one born there how strange the stories of the upper world. It is a picture of the human heart without the Saviour; its faculties are all like spars and crystals in a cavern, and how hearty its rapture when it surveys its new world, and is made meet for the inheritance. 4. It is a purchased and promised possession, and is ours neither by purchase nor conquest. How could we, born in caves of darkness, have battled our way up to the terraces of light? How have passed through opposing hosts of darkness, and entered within the shining enclosures? 5. What is it? We can understand a human inheritance, park and mansion. The inheritance of light is our true and real being; pure vision; the insight of a holy nature. It represents a perfect union of the nature and the state. The mind and heart are full of light, and the light within creates light around. This is heaven; the residence of God who “is light,” and of His people who are “the children of light.” Even on earth we are able, in a degree, to rise to it. We know the light within, without, and beyond, and their respective glories. (*Paxton Hood.*) *The inheritance of the saints*.—I. THE INHERITANCE. 1. It is our common state, just as there is a common salvation. An earthly inheritance is impaired by division, but here the number of possessors really adds to the happiness of the individual partaker. Though one star differeth from another in glory, all shine. 2. How shall we estimate the inheritance? Compared with this what is that of the worldling, of the Jews in Canaan, of Adam before the fall, of the angels? Angels can never know the pleasures of reconciliation. 3. What are we to think of the state of blessedness that is intended to display the value of that blood which purchased it? 4. The possessors are saints, holy beings, for “without holiness no man can see the Lord.” They are partakers of God’s holiness, but are encompassed with infirmities till they join “the spirits of just men made perfect;” then they will be presented “faultless before the throne.” 5. The region. Hell is darkness, and so is the world. But the Church is light, and its members children of the light. And yet while here they are only able to survey the glimmering of the day. Now they walk by faith, mistake appearances for realities, are baffled in their inquiries, unable to discern their privileges and true friends. But it will not be always so, for heaven is all light—perfect, endless light. II. THE MEETNESS FOR IT. Man is both guilty and depraved. Two things are necessary for his restoration—justification and sanctification, the one delivering from condemnation, the other bringing us into communion with God; the one is a change of our state, the other of our nature; the one is derived from Christ’s righteousness, and is instantaneous; the other from the Holy Spirit and is gradual. The one gives us a title to our inheritance, the other gives us meetness for it. 1. The nature of this meetness. The renewing of the Holy Spirit; giving us new views, principles, and habitudes. How is a man made meet for any earthly station? Take a youth: he is apprenticed, begins with the elementary parts and rises to the more difficult, till he reaches the knowledge of the whole, and then launches away for himself. A child learns to walk by walking; a musician learns to play by playing. So we are made meet for heaven by doing its work and enjoying its pleasures now. The work of heaven is to praise and serve God, and its happiness to be in communion with Him. This we enjoy now. 2. Its necessity. A man suddenly gains a fortune for which he is not qualified; the consequence is that “the prosperity of fools destroys them.” The French, living so long under tyranny, were not prepared for the sudden enjoyment of liberty, and so ran mad. The higher the destination of a man, the more he needs meetness. God does not exclude the unregenerate from heaven, they exclude themselves. “Except a man be born again,” &c. The impossibility does not arise from God’s decree, but from the nature of things. The devil would be a torment to himself in heaven. Happiness does not arise merely from the excellence of the object, but from being right suited to it. 3. The author of it is God. The very operation shows this, “He that wrought us for this selfsame thing is God,” &c. If we are a “building” we are “His workmanship;” if fruitful, “in Him is our fruit found;” if a tree, “of His planting.” 4. Its sureness—“hath made us.” III. THE PRAISE. “Giving thanks.” This is—1. Deserved. God has infinite claims

on our gratitude. 2. Distinguishing; more for spiritual than temporal mercies. 3. Practical. "Thanksgiving is good; thanks-living is better." 4. Never ending (*W. Jay*.) *The inheritance of the saints*.—I. AN INTERESTING VIEW OF THE FUTURE WORLD AS INHERITED BY BELIEVERS. There are many such views in Scripture; here it is described as "light," indicating a place of splendour. Light arrays all nature with beauty. 2. Of ceaseless activity. Darkness and sleep are related. "There shall be no night there," but a busy array of spirits which never grows languid, noble exercise which will never end. 3. Of purity. Darkness is an emblem of sin; light of holiness. Evil covets darkness, courts error to stifle conscience, which will work when in the light. A soul desirous of holiness comes to the light, that its deeds, if evil, may be corrected; and if good, be manifested that they are wrought in God. Here our holiness is imperfect, but in heaven the Church is "without spot." There we shall never sin through ignorance, or fail of duty. 4. Of permanent felicity. Night is an emblem of affliction; light of gladness. Sorrow courts the night, joy the day; and the vicissitudes of day and night are emblematical. Our blessings have their dawn, noon, and setting. But the saints are in eternal light, where no sickness blasts, no death devours, no injustice grinds, &c., and where no depression abates spiritual enjoyments, and no temptation clouds the sun of heavenly manifestations. The permanency of holiness gives permanency to bliss. 5. Of knowledge. We come out of darkness into marvellous light, but still we see through a glass darkly. The illuminated circle about us is enveloped in haze. Into the mightier plans of God even piety would humbly pry. Into the difficulties of some great doctrines we are sometimes urged to look. How many Bible texts are obscure, and is there one of which we see the fulness? Who would not have the mystery of his little life unfolded, and all prophecy converted into history, and, above all, rise to a nearer vision of God? But there we shall know as we are known. II. THE MEETNESS BROUGHT BY GOD IN THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO ARE RAISED TO THE ENJOYMENT OF THIS INHERITANCE. 1. A relative meetness expressed by "inheritance." Our natural heirship is forfeited by sin. Redemption has brought it back; but we become heirs by becoming children, and we are made children by the faith which secures for us the blessing of justification. Till this there is no meetness of relation. 2. Personal meetness. "Saints." There is a correspondence between a hallowed state and heaven. A man who has a distaste for God's service cannot enjoy the worship day and night for ever. The man who shuns the light of truth could not bear the eternal light of God's countenance. The lover of pleasure could not relish its spiritual joys. 3. This meetness is the work of God. 4. Give thanks to Him for it in others and in yourself. (*R. Watson*.) *Meetness for heaven*.—I. THE MEETNESS. The subject excludes natural meetness: the only natural meetness man has is for hell, for the sinner has in him all the elements of it. Meetness for heaven refers—1. To the renewal of the Holy Spirit. Heaven is the abode of the holy, and man must be partaker of a nature which corresponds with the purity and enjoyment of heaven (*Eph. v. 5*; *Rev. xxi. 27*; *John iii. 3*). 2. To the atoning work of Jesus. The meetness of the title, justification by faith. 3. To the adoption of the believer. God has made him a son, and so an heir. 4. To all God's disciplinary dealings with His people which are to meeten them for heaven. II. THE INHERITANCE. 1. Heaven is our inheritance. (1) For which we are destined (*Eph. i. 11*); (2) which has been purchased by Christ (*Heb. ix. 15*); (3) which is "incorruptible," &c. (*1 Pet. i. 4*); (4) and of which we have the earnest here. (5) Its vastness and illimitability is unfolded in *Rev. xxi. 7*. 2. Whose this inheritance is. (1) Who are the saints? Fanatics, says the world; the baptized, say the Tractarians; the Lord's holy ones, says the Bible, washed in Christ's blood, renewed by and possessing God's Spirit. (2) They are saints in light, which may refer—(a) to themselves as children of the light, who have the light of truth and holiness without which intellectual or moral excellence is vain; (b) or to the glorified saints in their present abode, which is the dwelling of Him who is "Light, and no darkness at all," the place of perfect purity and knowledge of which light is the symbol (*Isa. lx. 19*; *Rev. xxii. 5, xxi. 23*). 3. The saints are "partakers" of this inheritance. They have it already with all the saints of God, in foretaste and antepast. III. THE PRECEPT based upon the subject. "Giving thanks." 1. To whom the grateful acknowledgment is made—"the Father." Heaven is the Father's gift. 2. On what grounds. (1) The provision of a Saviour. (2) The enjoying of the preparing Spirit. (3) The prepared inheritance. (4) The upholding power which brings us safely to the inheritance. Conclusion: 1. Cultivate an habitual, growing meet-

ness. Be not satisfied with present attainments. 2. Look upon all the Lord's covenant dealings with you as only preparatory to your approaching emancipation from all sin and sorrow. 3. Let the subject cheer you in bereavement. (*O. Winslow, D.D.*) *Meetness for the saintly inheritance*:—The Epistle has been hitherto occupied with prefatory observations. Here Paul enters upon his principal theme. I. THE OPULENT INHERITANCE PROVIDED FOR THE GOOD. 1. It is a present and prospective possession. (1) The saints even now "walk in the light as He is in the light." They have a measure of knowledge, but it is dimmed by many obscurities: of purity, but it is surrounded with imperfections: of joy, but it is moderated by sorrows. The prospective knowledge shall be unclouded, purity unsullied, joy uninterrupted. 2. It is a possession provided for the good. Not for the impenitent, the worldly. It is an inheritance where only the pure in heart can dwell. 3. It is a possession freely given. The legal heir has no need to work for his inheritance: he enters by right of succession, or testatorial bequest. The saint enters upon his inheritance of righteousness, not by natural descent, or self-constituted right. II. THE SPECIAL MEETNESS FOR THE INHERITANCE. This is—1. Absolutely necessary. A monarch can raise the barest slave to a dukedom, but he cannot give him fitness for its duties. He may change his state, but cannot change his nature. 2. Consists in the loving conformity of the human will to the Divine. The celestial spirits find their highest glory and blessedness in this. 3. Is a Divine work. (1) God provides the inheritance, gives the title, confers the moral fitness. None but the Almighty Father could do this. III. THE DUTY WE OWE TO THE GENEROUS DONOR. Gratitude. 1. Practical. 2. Fervent. 3. Constant. (*G. Barlow.*) *Meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light*:—1. It is the special glory of the gospel that it first distinctly enlarged the prospects of men into the depths of eternity; it first authoritatively taught us that the present existence is the meanest portion of our inheritance, and thus changed for ever the whole science of life. 2. Life for eternity is already begun: from the hour of our regeneration we are introduced into the spiritual world. The Christian's life of heavenliness is the first stage of heaven. The doctrine of the New Testament is not that men now wholly mortal, shall hereafter, in reward of fidelity, be miraculously raised to die no more; but that "he that hath the Son hath life." There is a power now within the Christian of which his celestial immortality shall be the proper fruit. 3. Therefore men must not only win heaven as a reward, but be suited to it as a life. Men may reckon on easy pardon, but they cannot suppress dismay if they reflect that pardon itself, were it possible, would be vain as long as the pardoned sinner were unfit for the society of heaven. Such a pardon could but aggravate the keen sense of hopeless, irremediable misery. What we are to be in heaven we must be on earth. 4. We are under a course of education for heaven; the life of heaven then must be practised on earth, if the child of God would learn his profession for eternity. Heaven is the model on which we are to reconstruct our nature. The inheritance for which we are made meet is to determine and regulate the whole course of our present existence. 5. But here arises a difficulty. We know so little of this pattern. Then we know little of the details—the abodes in which we shall dwell, the companions with whom we shall rejoice, the bodies we shall wear; but the principles of that life, these are clear and undisputable, as *e.g.*, that the business and beatitude of heaven must consist in conformity to the will of God. 6. This, then, the great characteristic of heaven, must be equally the law of the earth. The habit must be ours, not merely of acting from higher principles than self-interest or passion, but of acting exclusively from obedience to the known appointment of God. All other motives, however attractive, are of the earth earthy. 7. Here, then, is the charge that religion brings against the world. It is not that the world does not abound in manifestations of moral as well as physical beauty, but that all that is excellent in the natural man is excellent irrespective of his God. No virtue but godliness; no excellence but that which tends to God; no rule of life but that which trains for God can ever be the virtue, or affection, or rule fitted for a creature travelling to God's own eternity. 8. Contrast, then, this sole abiding principle of eternal happiness with the life around us. We shall exclude open and allowed vice, and come among the amiabilities and noblenesses of our social life. That the adulterer and the thief should disclaim subjection to God is not surprising; but the depth and universality of the rebellion is seen in the vast spheres of human excellence into which God never enters; in the amiability which loves all but God; in the self-devotion that never surrenders one gratification for the sake of God. How conspicuously is this often seen in family affection. 9. How, then, shall this

meekness be wrought? Solely by cultivating affections that rest in heaven and God, and by devoting our earthly affections not merely to their own instinctive impulses lead, but also in felt and constant conformity to His appointment. 10. Faith, hope, and love are the instruments which, gradually uniting the heart to the spiritual world and its Lord, separate it from earth, predispose it for heaven, win the will to His service, and train the soul for the fellowship and heritage of the saints. These are the habits that must be attained, or heaven is hopeless. 11. What are the specific functions of these preparatory graces. (1) Faith is the realizing power. Its office is to make us see the unseen, to be the visual sense of the Spirit of God. Beholding God even now around us, it prepares for heaven, by already habituating to the presence of heaven's Master. (2) Hope is the consoling and fortifying power. She prepares for heaven by maintaining the constant desire and expectation of its promised enjoyments. (3) But love is the uniting power, the perfection of all. In its highest degrees it is not so much preparation for heaven as heaven already begun; for we know of nothing more perfect in heaven than the fulness of loving God. Hence "Love never faileth." It makes the commandments "not grievous" here, and thus prepares for a state where their fulfilment shall be supreme delight. (*W. A. Butler, M.A.*) *The joy of light*:—In one of our northern coal-pits there was a little boy employed in a lonely and dangerous part of the mine. One day a visitor to the coal-pit asked the boy about his work, and the child answered, "Yes, it is very lonely here, but I pick up the little bits of candle thrown away by the colliers, and join them together, and when I get a light I sing." (*H. J. W. Burton, M.A.*) *Meekness for heaven*:—A pious military officer desirous to ascertain what were the real feelings and views of a dying soldier, whom he had been instrumental in bringing to the truth, said, "William, I am going to ask you a strange question. Suppose you could carry your sins with you to heaven, would that satisfy you?" The poor dying lad replied, with a most affecting smile, "Why, sir, what sort of a heaven would that be to me? It would be just like a pig in a parlour." "I need not add," continues the officer, "that he was panting after a heaven of holiness, and was convinced that if he died in sin he would be quite out of his element in a heaven of purity. (*IV. Barendse.*) *Meekness for the inheritance*:—We are so far meet that we are accepted in the Beloved, adopted into the family, and fitted by Divine approbation to dwell with the saints in light. There is a woman chosen to be a bride; she is fitted to be married, fitted to enter into the honourable state and condition of matrimony; but at present she has not on the bridal garment, she is not like the bride adorned for her husband. You do not see her yet robed in her elegant attire, with her ornaments upon her, but you know she is fitted to be a bride, she is received and welcomed as such in the family of her destination. So Christ has chosen His Church to be married to Him; she has not yet put on her bridal garment, and all that beautiful array in which she shall stand before the Father's throne, but notwithstanding, there is such a fitness in her to be the bride of Christ, when she shall have bathed herself for a little while, and lain for a little while in the bed of spices—there is such a fitness in her character, such a grace-given adaptation in her to become the royal bride of her glorious Lord, and to become a partaker of the enjoyments of bliss—that it may be said of the Church as a whole, and of every member of it, that they are "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." The Greek word, moreover, bears some such meaning as this, though I cannot give the exact idiom, it is always difficult when a word is not used often. This word is only used twice, that I am aware of, in the New Testament. The word may be employed for "suitable," or, I think, "sufficient." "He hath made us meet"—sufficient—"to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." But I cannot give my idea without borrowing another figure. When a child is born, it is at once endowed with all the faculties of humanity. If those powers are wanting at first, they will not come afterwards. It has eyes, it has hands, it has feet, and all its physical organs. These of course are as it were in embryo. The senses though perfect at first, must be gradually developed, and the understanding gradually matured. It can see but little, it cannot discern distances; it can hear, but it cannot hear distinctly enough at first to know from what direction the sound comes; but you never find a new leg, a new arm, a new eye, or a new ear growing on that child. Each of these powers will expand and enlarge, but still there is the whole man there at first, and the child is sufficient for a man. Let but God in His infinite providence cause it to feed, and give it strength and increase, it has sufficient for manhood. It does not want either arm or leg, nose or ear; you cannot make it

grow a new member; nor does it require a new member either; all are there. In like manner, the moment a man is regenerated, there is every faculty in his new creation that there shall be, even when he gets to heaven. It only needs to be developed and brought out: he will not have a new power, he will not have a new grace, he will have those which he had before, developed and brought out. Just as we are told by the careful observer, that in the acorn there is in embryo every root and every bough and every leaf of the future tree, which only requires to be developed and brought out in their fulness; so, in the true believer, there is a sufficiency or meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. All that he requires is, not that a new thing should be implanted, but that which God has put there in the moment of regeneration, shall be cherished and nurtured, and made to grow and increase, till it comes unto perfection and he enters into "the inheritance of the saints in light." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Unmeetness for the inheritance*:—I knew a man who had amassed great wealth; but had no children to inherit it. Smitten, however, with the strange propensity to found a house, he left his riches to a distant relative. His successor found himself suddenly raised from poverty to affluence, and thrown into a position he had not been trained to fill. He was cast into the society of those to whose tastes and habits and accomplishments he was an utter and awkward stranger. Did many envy this child of fortune? They might have spared their envy. Left in his original obscurity he had been a happy peasant, whistling his way home from the plough to a thatched cottage, or on winter nights, around the blazing faggots, laughing loud and merry among unpolished boors. Child of misfortune! He buried his happiness in the grave of his benefactor. Neither qualified by nature nor fitted by education for his position, he was separated from his old, only to be despised by his new, associates. And how bitterly was he disappointed to find that, in exchanging poverty for opulence, daily toil for luxurious indolence, humble friends for more distinguished companions, a hard bed for one of down, this turn in his fortunes had flung him on a couch, not of roses, but of thorns! In his case, the hopes of the living and the intentions of the dead were alike frustrated. The prize had proved a blank; a necessary result of this fatal oversight, that the heir had not been made meet for the inheritance. Is such training needful for an earthly estate? How much more for heaven. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The saints in light*:—Light! The shadows of a temporary dispensation shall have passed away, and the whole plan of the Creator's dealings be spread before the admiring saints, one blaze of beauty. Light! The discrepancies of Providence, the seeming contradictions in God's government of the universe, the obscurities which are caused by knowing only in part—all this shall have been removed, and no dark spot be left behind. Light! It shall not be the brilliancy of the material sun which makes the future landscape indescribably radiant: "the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of the Lord doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Light! The saints themselves purged from all that is corruptible, the purified soul in the imperishable body, shall be wondrously luminous. Even here, as St. Paul expresses it, they "shine as lights in the world," but hereafter, perfectly conformed to the image of Christ, of whom we are told that at His transfiguration, which exhibited what glorified humanity shall be, "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light," they shall be conspicuous among all orders of intelligence transformed into glowing, beaming likenesses of Him whose irradiations occupy the universe. "Light," said the Psalmist, "is sown for the righteous;" and the seeds, we may add, of the glorious harvest are deposited in our souls whilst working out our own salvation. Holiness is the moral light, and the germ of heavenly purity is the element of heavenly splendour. Be it now, then, our endeavour to walk as children of light, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. There must be—we press this again and again on your attention—there must be a correspondence between the scene and the creature. The inheritance is one of light; therefore the heir also, in the words of St. Paul, must be "light in the Lord." We will aim, then, God being our help, so to improve the state of discipline, that casting off the ignorance and corruption in which we are naturally enveloped, we may at length be placed with those righteous men of whom Christ said, "They shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (*H. Melvill, D.D.*)

Vers. 13, 14. **Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.**—*The great moral translation*:—I. INVOLVES OUR ENFRANCHISEMENT FROM A STATE OF DARK CAPTIVITY. 1. The unrenewed are in a realm of moral darkness. (1) Darkness denotes

ignorance—moral blindness about the great mysteries of being, of sin and suffering, the deep significance of life. It is possible to know much about religion, to hold religious ideas at second hand; yet be totally in the dark as to the experience of those ideas. (2) Darkness denotes danger and misery. 2. In this realm the un-renewed are held in captivity. 3. From this realm God graciously liberates. "Who hath delivered us." (1) For the slaves of sin there is no help but in God. It is the nature of sin to incapacitate its victim for self-enfranchisement. He is unwilling to be free. (2) The word "deliver" means to snatch, or rescue from danger, even though the person seized may at first be unwilling to escape, as Lot from Sodom. God does not force the human will. (3) Our enfranchisement may be painful. II. PLACES US IN A CONDITION OF HIGHEST MORAL FREEDOM AND PRIVILEGE. 1. We are transferred to a kingdom. "Hath translated us into the kingdom." Power detains captives; a kingdom fosters willing citizens. Tyranny has no law but the will of a despot; a kingdom implies good government, based on law. The kingdom of God has an earthly and heavenly aspect, both of which are governed by one and the same sceptre. It resembles a city divided by a river, but both parts controlled by the same municipal authority, and having one common franchise. There is no middle state between the power of darkness and the kingdom of grace: all who breathe are either in the one or the other. 2. We are placed under the rule of a beneficent and glorious King. "The Son of His love." The manifestation of Christ is the manifestation of Divine love (1 John iv. 9). The kingdom into which believers are translated is founded on love: its entire government is carried on by love. The acts of suffering and death, by which Christ won his kingly dignity, were revelations of love. Under such a monarch we are sure of protection, guidance, support, and final victory. III. IS EFFECTED BY "REDEMPTION." 1. The means. "Through His blood." 2. The effects. 3. The Author. (*G. Barlow.*) *The great spiritual change*:—I. THE MOMENTOUS CHANGE. 1. Is from the power of darkness. Darkness is thus personified as a monarch, not a mere force. Under this the Colossians were living till they received the gospel. Neither the light of their Gentile philosophy nor the fitful course of their culture could rescue them. The very light that was in them was darkness. This is the condition of all men naturally. Darkness is—(1) Ignorance. Men are ignorant of God and themselves (1 Cor. ii. 14). They may learn lessons of God's power and wisdom in creation, admire the literature and poetry of revelation, and believe in a future state; but they have no true knowledge of their moral condition, of God as their Father, Christ as their Saviour, or of the blessedness of holiness. (2) It leads to error. In the absence of light the traveller mistakes his way. Men think they are in the road to heaven as they wander up and down the bye-paths of religious formality, of their own resolutions, or of some superstition. Deluded by this darkness they make no effort to live for God and work out their own salvation. (3) Such a condition must be one of danger. The belated traveller cannot distinguish friend from foe, land from water. Unconscious of peril, and perhaps thinking of home, he draws near a precipice, falls over and is killed. (4) Darkness promotes discomfort and fear. There is a gloomy uncertainty and dread of the future, a bondage of the soul through the fear of death. He cannot be happy who knows not God as his Friend, and has no meetness for the future. 2. The process of deliverance. (1) It may involve not a little that is painful. To a man soundly asleep the sudden cry of "fire" is not welcome. So this deliverance involves a distressing inward struggle and the abandonment of many a pleasure. (2) Whither is the delivered soul brought? He is not rescued and left to wander in search of a home, but has a title and guidance to the kingdom of God's Son. (a) This kingdom is so called because it belongs to Him by right, who founded, formed, and rules over it. (b) Something of its character may be learned from His: the Son of God's love (John iii. 35). Who can tell the peace and blessedness of those subjects on whom God's boundless love rests. 3. This deliverance is the most important and wonderful event in a man's history. It is a present privilege and prepares for, and is a pledge of the future inheritance. 4. It is exclusively the work of God. II. THE DIVINE MEANS FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THIS END. 1. A putting forth of power on the part of the deliverer manifested by the mediation of Christ. Although the words, "through His blood," are not found in the earlier MSS., and may have been borrowed from Eph. i. 7; yet the text involves their meaning. Men are sold under sin and condemned; from this state deliverance comes by redemption; redemption implies a price paid; the ransom is the precious blood of Christ. In His Cross there was a vindication of God's righteousness and power to rescue from sin (1 Peter iii. 18, ii. 14; Gal. iii. 13;

Eph. v. 2). 2. This redemption is "in Christ." His blood was the ransom, but He is the Redeemer, and it is only in living union with Him that we can receive its blessing. Just as we rest and walk in Him have we evidence that we are amongst the redeemed. 3. It is easy to see how this redemption must, in effect, be the raising of the soul to obedience and purity (2 Cor. v. 17). The blessing characteristic of redemption: forgiveness. This—(1) is its first blessing (Romans v. 1). (2) Its most urgent and momentous blessing. (3) The most direct, flowing immediately from Christ and reaching us directly through His expiation. (4) The blessing which opens the way for all others. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Redemption*.—I. Who? The Father. And no one else ought to, or could, deliver man, but God. 1. None other ought, because (as Tertullian observes) "by this act he would forcibly take away from the Creator His own servant." For so great is this benefit of deliverance, that it binds us more than the benefit of creation. 2. But neither could any other deliver. For he must necessarily be stronger than the devil who could wrest his prey from him (Matt. xii. 29). But who could overcome and bind this prince of darkness except the mighty God alone? It was He, therefore, who plucked us from him. II. Whom, or what sort of persons God delivered? And this consideration may be twofold. 1. Of those who were to be delivered. Previous to our deliverance we were not only diseased and weak, but opposed to our own deliverance (Rom. v.). (1) Observe the immeasurable love of God, who would deliver such persons: for no one cares to redeem a thing of no value. (2) The infinite power of God who delivered man in spite of the devil. 2. As to those who have been delivered; after that they are faithful and holy, who before were rebels and unholy. "Us" refers to verses 4-6. Hence it is manifest—(1) The dreams of carnal men of deliverance are vain. The Israelites, while serving Pharaoh and lusting after the fleshpots, were not in the enjoyment of liberty; so Christians while obeying the devil and delighting in sin are not delivered. (2) Hence, also, we infer for the consolation of the godly that they alone are free; the ungodly, although they glitter in the eyes of men, are slaves. III. From what? The power of darkness. 1. From the power of the devil who is the prince of darkness. We all are born under his kingdom, so that he worketh in us according to his own will. But this prince of darkness is bruised under the feet of the faithful (Rom. xvi. 20), to whom, by the Spirit of God, new strength is administered to trample upon this unclean spirit. 2. From the power of sin, which hath blinded the understanding, corrupted the will, and placed us in a condition of darkness both as to knowledge and to spiritual and saving practice (Eph. v. 8; John i. 5, iii. 19). Now from this darkness God has rescued us. He pours in the light of faith and imparts the Spirit of holiness; which blessings being bestowed, this power and dominion of sin is dissolved (Rom. vi. 14). 3. From the power of hell, i.e., from the miseries and calamities which arise from the guilt of reigning sin. From the power of this they are delivered by the Divine mercy (Rom. viii. 1). Observe—(1) For instruction. The whole world is involved in darkness under the devil, neither is there a spark of saving light before deliverance; for we are in "the power of darkness." (2) For caution. The redeemed ought to have no fellowship with the works of darkness; for they are rescued from the power of the devil and of sin, and, therefore, by serving these they show themselves to be deserters (Rom. xiii. 12). (3) For consolation. Although the godly are often troubled yet they are delivered from a misery compared with which all external evils are trifling. IV. To what? 1. The nature of the translation. (1) The word is borrowed from those who plant colonies and compel persons to migrate to inhabit some new region. So God has translated us from the kingdom of darkness, which is the native soil of us all. (2) How hath He translated us? We may understand that from the context. God translates us when He illuminates our hearts by pouring into them faith, when He changes our will by imparting grace; for, being enlightened and sanctified, a man is by that very act translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His Son; because He cannot possibly be at the same time a citizen of two cities which observe contrary laws. Here observe, To be delivered it is not enough that we be called to this kingdom, and admonished to desert that other. (3) Therefore He is to be regarded with the highest honour, for so colonies are accustomed to regard their founder. 2. What is intended by this word kingdom? The Kingdom of God, Christ, heaven. (1) Is put for the state of glory (Matt. vi. 33; 1 Cor. vi. 9). This the saints have by right, and hope, but not in possession. (2) For the promulgation and knowledge of the gospel (Matt. xiii. 11; xxi. 43). But this the saints have only in common with other professors. (3) For a state of grace, remission of sins, renovation, and Divine favour on account

of Christ, the Mediator ; and for the whole multitude of those who are in this state (Luke xviii. 21 ; Rom. xiv. 17). I deem this to be the proper sense of this expression. 3. Why the apostle calls it the kingdom of the Son, and not of heaven, or of light. Because—(1) God admits no one to it except through His Son as Mediator. He is the channel of grace. Through Him its streams flow to us, and we are planted in the kingdom (Eph. i. 3, 8). (2) Christ, the Mediator, received it from the Father to govern it to the end of time (Luke xxii. 29). (3) Paul wished to open the way and make an easy transition for discoursing on the person of the Son. For he immediately enters upon that doctrine, which he could not so aptly have proceeded to unless he had expressly named the Son. (4) Christ is rightly called the Son of the Father's love, because He hath the Father's whole and entire love communicated to Him, even as He had His essence. This is a great consolation to the godly man, when he calls to mind that he is not merely a subject, but a member of Christ so beloved of God. For hence he derives the hope of obtaining from God whatever is necessary to salvation. (*Bp. Davenant.*)

I. MAN IS NOW IN SOUL MISERY. 1. Naturally. We are children of wrath by nature. 2. Judicially. We are under condemnation. 3. Universally. Soul death hath passed over all men. **II. MAN NEEDS DELIVERANCE.** 1. We are sensible enough of bodily misery, but insensible to soul misery ; yet the former is but to make us sensible of the latter. 'Tis God pulling the rope without to make the bell speak within. 2. Without our sense of the need of deliverance, that deliverance will never come. 3. What temporal and eternal horrors are there for the unsaved. **III. MAN MAY BE DELIVERED.** Christ "snatched" souls out of darkness and danger. 1. He moves strongly to save. Snatching speaks an act of force ; Christ overturns all that stands in His way when He puts forth to deliver a soul. 2. He moves swiftly to save. Snatching notes swift motion. There is but a step between hell and that soul that is under the power of darkness ; what, therefore, is done must be done speedily or the soul is lost. 3. Christ moves thoroughly to save. Snatching, speaks a full assuming of that which was wholly another's. That which I snatch from my enemy in war is wholly mine own, and Christ, having plucked us out of the hands of Satan, claims us as his own. 4. Christ moves preventingly. Snatching speaks an act unthought of, force surprising, the surprised dreaming nothing. Christ catcheth sinners in a dead sleep. Soldiers are sometimes so caught ; the devil's soldiers are all so. 5. Christ moves ravishingly. This is love smiling, and the soul is taken. **IV. THE DELIVERED.** 1. Love the Redeemer. 2. Obey Him. (*N. Lockyer, M.A.*)

The power of darkness :—I. Look at the STATE OF NATURE AND SIN AS ONE OF DARKNESS. Sin is as opposed to holiness as darkness is to light, and as different from holiness as midnight from noonday. Our state by nature is one of double darkness. We have neither light nor sight. That we may be saved we require two things—a medium to see by, and eyes to see with ; the revelation of the gospel, and regeneration of the Holy Spirit ; Christ as an object for faith to see, faith as an eye to see Christ. As inhabitants of a Christian land we already possess one of these. There is fulness of light, and yet multitudes are wrecked and perish, and unless He, who gave sight to the blind, touch your eyes their fate will be yours. There are animals that are born blind ; but after a few days their eyelids are unsealed and they are delivered from the power of darkness. But not ten years will do for us such friendly office. Not that we shall be always blind. Eternity opens the darkest eyes, but when too late, "He lift up his eyes, being in torment." 1. Darkness is a state of indolence. Night is the proper period for rest. Yet in its hours of darkness and repose, this city presents no true picture of our state by nature. We see it where a city sleeps, while eager angels point Lot's eyes to the break of day, and urge his tardy steps through the doomed streets of Sodom. Rouse thee, then, and betake thee to the Saviour. The plague of Egyptian darkness is, perhaps, the best illustration. "They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days." Many a man has not risen from his place for ten times three years and more. He is no nearer heaven than he was long, long ago. "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure." 2. Darkness is a state of ignorance. Ugliness and beauty, friend and foe, are all one in the dark, and so are the solid ground and the yawning precipice. Many a gallant ship has perished in a fog, and many a sinner in guilty ignorance. The greatest of mistakes is to miss the path of heaven, and yet how many, turning from Christ, are missing it ? Some think that their charities and duties will save them ; others a routine of outward services ; others that they may go on a little longer in sin and then turn. 3. Darkness is a state of danger. (1) As locks and bars prove neither life nor property is safe at night. The prowling thief, the hiding

assassin, the gaudy tempter are but types of the great enemy who takes advantage of spiritual darkness to ruin sinners. (2) Such danger is there in darkness that people have perished almost at their own doors: and many die at the gate of salvation, and by the very door of heaven (2 Cor. iv. 4). (3) In respect of its power over men what can be compared to mental, moral, and spiritual darkness? (a) Look at Popery! She immures her votaries in a gloomier dungeon than ever held her victims. God sends them His blessed Word, but they dare not open it; and, greatest triumph of darkness, they refuse instruction. "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?" (b) But how many among ourselves lie under the delusion that though the happiness they seek in the world has eluded their grasp, they will yet embrace the mocking phantom! How many are putting away the claims of Christ and their souls to a more convenient season? Many fancy themselves safe who are ready to perish. II. EVEN GOD'S PEOPLE REMAIN IN MORE OR LESS DARKNESS, SO LONG AS THEY ARE HERE. 1. They may be in darkness through ignorance. (1) Having abandoned the works of darkness, and "become children of light," yet all do not enjoy the same measure of light, nor possess equal powers of sight; hence those conflicting views which have separated brother from brother. (2) While some saints enjoy a clear assurance of their salvation, others pass their days in despondency. By the help of God's Word, their compass, they succeed in steering their way to heaven, but it is over a troubled sea, and under a cloudy sky. 2. They may be in darkness through sin. So long as you walk in the path of God's commandments you walk in the light; but in turning aside from that we have withdrawn from it. He that descends into a pit leaves the light, not the light him. And the deeper the saint sinks in sin, the darker it grows. God will not smile on His child sinning; and that which would befall our world were the sun withdrawn, befalls his soul; a chilling cold follows on the darkness, and but for restoring grace death would ensue. 3. They may be in more or less darkness as to their spiritual state. It is easy to account for such a case as David's; but there are cases of religious desertion that do not admit of being thus explained. Hear that "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me." In such cases, however, God does not leave you comfortless. You may retain your hold when you lose your sight of Him; and the sun, which has struggled through clouds all day long, often breaks forth into golden splendour at his setting. Not seldom have hopes that never brighten life broken forth to gild the departing hour. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The unconsciousness of the sinner under the power of darkness:*—If we lay in some darksome prison laden with irons, as many as we could bear, committed to the custody of some Cerberus-like keeper; how would we lament our hard fortune? but to lie in such a condition wherein is no light of knowledge of God, laden with chains of darkness, hellish lusts of wrath, covetousness, pride, filthiness, in the custody of the devil himself, this none bewaileth. (*P. Bayne, B.D.*) *The kingdom of Christ:*—I. THE IMPORTANCE WHICH CHRIST HIMSELF ATTACHES TO HIS KINGLY CLAIMS. 1. There are crowns worn by living monarchs of which it would be difficult to estimate the value. The price paid for their jewels is the least part of it. They cost thousands of lives. And yet in His esteem, and in ours, Christ's crown outweighs them all. He gave his life for it. 2. The connection between our Lord's sufferings and these claims marks some of the most touching scenes in His history. The people rejected Him in His kingly character. "We will not have this King to reign over us." The soldiers reviled Him as a King; and His claim to be such was the crime for which He was crucified. It was a kingly inscription that stood above His dying head. 3. Our Lord had the strongest temptation to abandon these claims; and if He refused to give them up in the desert when tempted by the devil, when He had not a morsel to eat, and at the bar, when to have parted with them would have saved His life, He is not likely to yield them now. He has now no inducement to do so. A friendless prisoner no more, He stands at the right hand of God, and claims to reign over all whom He has conquered by love and redeemed by blood. 4. Would God we could live up to that truth. How often is it forgotten! each of us doing what is right in his own eyes, as though there were no King in Israel. Oh, that we were all as anxious to be delivered from the power as we are to escape the punishment of sin. II. FROM WHOM CHRIST RECEIVED HIS KINGDOM. 1. Not from the Jews. "His own received Him not." Once they tried to thrust royal honours on Him: afterwards they bore Him in royal state to the capital, and then they crucified Him. The only crown our Lord gets from man is woven with thorns. Had Christ consented to rule on their terms the Jews would have made Him king. Now to-day how many would accept

Jesus if He would allow them to retain their sins. But He accepts not the crown if sin is to wield the sceptre. 2. Not from His own people. The sceptre which a female hand sways so gracefully over the greatest, freest empire in the world was wrenched two hundred years ago from the grasp of a poor popish bigot; and his successor was borne to the vacant throne on the arms of a people who considered crowned heads less sacred than their liberties and religion. Is it by any such act that Christ is crowned? Is He a popular monarch in this sense? No. Here the king elects His subjects, not the subjects their king; and in that and other senses His kingdom is not of this world. Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and enemies to God, it is necessary that Christ should first choose you as His subjects, before you can choose Him as your King. Christ reigns by conquest, but His reign is not one of terror. He reigns as He conquered, by love. Enthroned in the heart He rules through the affections. 3. From God. When we look at the two great occasions on which our Lord was crowned, what a contrast do they present. The scene of the first is laid on earth. Behold Him stripped of His garments, tied to a post, scourged, clothed with an old purple robe, a wreath of thorns upon His head. Some in bitter mockery bend the knee as to a Cæsar and shout, "Hail, King of the Jews." Turn now to the other. The cross is vacant, the court empty, and from the vine-covered sides of Olivet a band of men are joyfully descending. While the disciples come down to the world, Jesus goes up to heaven escorted by a host of angels. His battle over, and the great victory won, the Conqueror is now to be crowned. Behold the scene as revealed by anticipation to the rapt eyes of Daniel (vii. 13). III. IN WHAT CHARACTER JESUS HOLDS THIS KINGDOM. Not as God or as man, but as God-man. Our Lord appeared in both these characters at the grave of Lazarus. "Jesus wept," and yet Death cowers before His eye. So on the Sea of Galilee, the Son of Mary sleeps, but raising His hand He said to the rude storm, "Peace, be still." Those two natures He still retains. As both God and man He occupies the thrones of grace and providence—holding under His dominion all worlds; for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and He has been made Head over all things to His Church. Simply as God there could be no addition to His possessions, nor could He receive them simply as man. IV. SEEK AN INTEREST IN THIS KINGDOM. Your eternal welfare turns on that. You must be crowned in heaven or cursed in hell. 1. Are you poor? That is no bar. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." 2. Are you degraded? That does not exclude you from the mercy and grace of God. 3. Have you done nothing to merit this kingdom? Who has? 4. Though you are not saved by obedience, remember that submission to Christ's commandment is required of all who belong to His kingdom. 5. In a general sense we are all His subjects; but in a saving sense Christ's kingdom is not without, but within. Unless the heart be right with Christ, all is wrong. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) "*His dear Son*":—Or more correctly, the Son of His love. Christ is so because—I. HE IS MOST WORTHY OF ALL OTHERS TO BE LOVED. As Judas is the "Son of Perdition," i.e., most worthy to be condemned. II. HE WAS FROM EVERLASTING BEGOTTEN OF THE LOVE OF HIS FATHER. He is God's "own" Son. III. HE IS INFINITELY FILLED WITH A SENSE OF HIS LOVE. "I always do the things that please Him." IV. IT IS HE BY WHOM LOVE IS DERIVED INTO OTHERS. He makes all other sons beloved. They are all loved because of Him and through Him. He imparts the lowest graces. This is all very comfortable. 1. He is like to speed anything He requests the Father for us, and will be sure to preserve us. 2. He is a King's Son, and infinitely beloved of His Father. How excellent a thing, then, to be Christ's member. (*N. Byfield.*) *Religion a great change*:—In an early period of the ministry of the Rev. John Wesley, he visited Epworth, in Lincolnshire, where his father had formerly been minister, but found the people greatly opposed to what they considered his new notions. He tells us, in his journal, that many persons were convinced of the importance of the truths he delivered from the tombstone of his father, some of whom were conveyed in a waggon to a neighbouring justice of the peace, to answer for the heresy with which they were charged. Mr. Wesley rode over also. When the magistrate asked what these persons had done, there was a deep silence; for that was a point their conductors had forgotten. At length, one of them said, "Why, they pretend to be better than other people; and, besides, they pray from morning to night." He asked, "But have they done anything besides?" "Yes, sir," said an old man, "An't please your worship, they have converted my wife. Till she went among them, she had such a tongue, and now she is as quiet as a lamb." "Carry them back, carry them back," replied the justice, "and let them convert all the scolds in the town." (*Arvine.*) "*Translated us*":—

The word is a metaphor, and the comparison is taken from plants in nature, and there are divers things signified unto us in the similitude. As trees are translated in winter, not in the spring, so commonly our redemption is applied in the days of special affliction and sorrow: and as the plant is not first fruitful and then translated, but therefore translated that it may bear fruit, so we are not therefore redeemed because God was in love with our fruits; but therefore translated out of the kingdom of darkness, that we might bring forth fruit unto God. And as a tree may be truly removed, and new planted, and yet not presently bear fruit, so may a Christian be truly translated, and yet in the first instant of his conversion he may not show forth all the fruit he doth desire. In particular, translating hath two things in it. I. **PULLING UP.** The pulling up of a tree shadows out three things in the conversion of a sinner. 1. Separation from the world: he cannot be in Christ that hath his heart rooted in the earth, and keeps his old standing amongst these trees, the wicked of the world. 2. Deliverance both from original sin in the reign of it (which is the moisture of the old earth), and also from hardness of heart (for translating hath removing of the mould and stones that were about the root). 3. Godly sorrow raised by the sense of the strokes of the axe of God's threatenings, and by the loss of many sprouts and branches that were hidden in the earth. A Christian cannot escape without sorrow; for he hath many an unprofitable sprout of vanity, and sinful profit and pleasure he must part with. II. **THE SETTING OF THE TREE** notes—1. Our engrafting into Christ by the Spirit of God through faith. 2. Our communion with the saints (the fruitful trees in God's orchard), as also it notes our preservation by the infusion of the sap of holy graces. Conclusion: And it is worthy to be noted that He saith "translated us," to teach us that there remains in man the same nature after calling that was before; for our natures are not destroyed in conversion, but translated: there remains the same faculties in the soul, and the same powers in the body; yea, the constitution and complexion of man is not destroyed, as the melancholy man doth not cease to be so after conversion, only the humour is sanctified unto a fitness for godly sorrow, and holy meditation, and the easy renouncing of the world, &c., and the like may be said of other humours in man's nature. (*N. Byfield.*) *The translation*:—I. **IN DELIVERING HIS PEOPLE FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS, CHRIST SAVES THEM FROM ETERNAL PERDITION.** People talk about the mercy of God in a way for which they have no warrant in His Word: and ignoring His holiness, justice, and truth, they lay this and the other vain hope as a flattering unction to their souls. II. **HOW WE ARE BROUGHT INTO CHRIST'S KINGDOM.** 1. By translation. (1) There is a difference between being transformed and translated. The first describes a change of character, the second of state. These changes are coincident; but the transformation is not complete until the time for the second translation. Then those who were translated at conversion into a state of grace, are translated at death into a state of glory. (2) It is a great mistake to suppose that God is only active and man passive in this work. You may translate a man from one earthly kingdom into another while he is asleep, and at death a man may be translated to glory in a state of unconsciousness; but it is not in this placid way that sinners pass out of darkness into Christ's kingdom. 2. This translation is attended by suffering and self-denial. Killed by a blow, or deprived of existence and consciousness by an opiate, a man may die to natural life unconsciously, but never to sin. Hence those striking figures of crucifixion. But the crown is worthy of the cross. True there is much more pain in going to hell than to heaven, and although this were not, one hour of glory will recompense all the sufferings of earth. But be assured that as it is among pangs and birth struggles that a man is born the first time, so when he is born again, Christ baptizes with fire. How often has water fallen on the calm brow of a sleeping infant who has been translated thus into the visible Church. But a fiery baptism! Can a man take fire into his bosom and not be burned? God is a consuming fire to His people's sins, and He cannot be so without them knowing it. 3. In this translation God and man are active. Our Lord ascended from earth to heaven without effort; not so His people from nature unto grace. We receive salvation, still we must put forth our hand to take it, as a drowning man clutches the saving rope. God works in grace as in nature; helps the man who helps himself. The reason why men are not saved is not that God hath forgotten to be gracious, or that the blood of Christ has lost its efficacy; but because men will take no pains to be saved. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The duty of thankfulness for the deliverance*:—If we had some grievous tyrant ruling over us, and God should take him away and set a prince of singular clemency over us, should not the blessing of all the kingdom come upon Him for so singular a

change? But when He taketh the devil's iron yokes off our necks and bringeth us under the kingdom of that most meek King who will not bruise a broken reed, nor quench the smoking flax, here none in comparison is thankful. (*P. Bayne, B.D.*) *God is the Deliverer*:—King Theodore kept two or three British subjects in prison, and no entreaty, expostulation, threat, could induce him to release them. At last the British nation arose and said, "At all costs the prisoners must be released;" and so General Napier led his army along the defiles over the mountains. At length he came to Magdala, the capital of Abyssinia. King Theodore was conquered and slain, and so General Napier ascended to the capital. But perhaps some of you do not know that as General Napier rode into the city, those captives, bowed down with their long imprisonment, came near to him, and laid their hands upon his horse's saddle and thanked him as their deliverer. He said to them, "Do not thank me; God is the deliverer. The Christians in England have been praying for you." (*J. L. Nye.*)

Vers. 14-20. *In Whom. The deity of Christ*:—Christ is Divine because—I. HE HAS REDEEMED US. II. HE IS THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS. III. ALL THINGS WERE CREATED FOR HIS GLORY. IV. HIS ETERNAL PRE-EXISTENCE. V. BY HIM ALL THINGS CONSIST. (*B. W. Noel, M.A.*) *Christ first*:—I. IN THE METAPHYSICAL ORDER. 1. He is the image of the invisible God. 2. It pleased God that in Him should all fulness (of the Divine attributes) dwell. He is therefore the Mediator of the knowledge of God. II. IN THE PHYSICAL ORDER. The first thesis determined the relation of Christ to God; this establishes His relation to Nature. 1. He is before all things, the firstborn (heir) of all creation. 2. He is the Author of all that exists. Consequently He is the Mediator of existence or natural life. III. IN THE THEOLOGICAL ORDER, which, as does the following, refers to His relations with men. 1. He is the Redeemer. 2. The reconciler. Thus He is the Mediator of the restoration of the normal relation of man to God. IV. IN THE MORAL ORDER. He is the head of the spiritual body—the Church—and therefore is the Mediator of the new life or the spiritual creation. V. IN THE APOCALYPTIC ORDER, *i.e.*, of the order of the things to come. He has died, as all men die, but He has also risen, and in that He has taken precedence of all, and His own will follow Him. Consequently He is the Mediator of life eternal. (*Professor Reuss.*) *Jesus Christ the end of the creation*:—(text in conjunction with Eph. i. 9-10; iii. 9-11.) I. STATEMENT. 1. The creation looked forward to the Christ from the beginning. Without Him for its goal it were purposeless. Not that he was latent in nature to be evolved, but it was the plan of creation that it should reach its consummation in Him. 2. In Him the universe subsists, is banded together because it completes itself in Him. Without Him it would disintegrate and be a chaos instead of a cosmos. 3. Although sin has disturbed the scheme of things and would wreck all, the original plan holds in Christ. The injury will be repaired and the universe attain its end. II. PLAN OF CREATION. 1. Matter is brought into being (Gen. i. 1), and is rudimental (Gen. i. 2). The Holy Ghost whose province is evolution and organization broods over the elemental abyss. At length light becomes with, doubtless, its kindred agents, heat, electricity. Processes go on, and the atmosphere is constituted. The new agents become additional forces, and there results the mineral kingdom (Gen. i. 3-10). 2. This is a preparation for higher planes of being. The floral world has a becoming, assimilating all that has gone before, and transforming them into the living organisms of root, trunk, bough, fruit, &c. 3. The vegetable world is a prophecy of something higher. In due time the animal world gathers up the elements of all below it, and exalts them into more complex and nobler organisms. 4. There is a pause. The eternal Three-in-One sit in council (Gen. i. 26; ii. 7). (1) The creation has been in travail with man as to his bodily nature in all the preceding formations. Man is the compendium, the apex of physical nature. (2) In his creation another department of the spiritual world comes in view. It seeks to ally itself with the physical. It also would complete itself in man. By the inbreathing of the Almighty man becomes a living soul. The two realms thus meet in him, and invest him with unique dignity and prerogative. He is the microcosm of the universe. (3) Of what man is this ideal true? Of the first Adam? He is man inchoate, in germ and possibilities only, not in the fulness of perfection. Can he raise himself and put all nature under him as its head? The tree of life blossoms with promise, but he cannot bridge the chasm between the Infinite and the finite. There must be a higher sphere than nature or man to bring out their meaning. If the Eternal Word will become man the problem is solved—the mighty void between God and man will be filled up. 5.

The Son of God did become man. He passed through every ordeal triumphantly, and was glorified at the right hand of God. The universe is glorified in Him. Thus did He sum up in Himself the creation. It tended towards Him from the first, and finds its last, deepest sense and full satisfaction in Him the true, archetypal Man.

III. COROLLARIES. 1. The creation is a unity, not a granulated mass of things having no other relation but mechanical juxtaposition; but an organic whole, having one Head who fills all things from Himself, and sends energy and direction through the whole. Each several part has its due relation to the others, and the whole to Christ. 2. The Incarnation belongs to creation. It is its crown, and is essential to its order and perfection. It is not an intrusion. It is sin that is the innovation in the order of the universe. And the Incarnation carries in it plenary resources for the overcoming of sin. By His obedience unto death the Head of the universe rendered satisfaction for human guilt; and by the powers of the Incarnation He will cast out sin. Somewhere, in the outer darkness, some cesspool shall receive all the filth of the universe and hide it for ever. 3. There is suggested a solution of the problem of miracles. They are no violations of the plan of creation. Each succeeding system bore in itself higher forces and methods than the preceding, but without disturbance. So humanity imported into the world methods and powers supreme over all beneath it, but in entire harmony therewith. That such ascendancy should show itself in our Lord's miracles there is nothing contranatural. Sin being foreign has brought an unnatural condition of things, and our Lord's hushing of the storm, expulsion of demons, healing the sick, and raising the dead, were but foretokenings of the coming restitution of all things to their natural state of purity, health, and life. To put creation back again into its regular condition is not to do violence to nature. As Augustine says, "A miracle is not a contradiction of nature, but of nature as man knows it." 4. Here is the solution of the astronomical objection to Christianity. Astronomy is supposed to demonstrate man's extreme littleness, and to show that his actions good or bad are beneath the notice of God. But man in Christ is the end of the universe. In Him man stands in closest union with the Infinite centre of all being. "All things are His" (1 Cor. iii. 21-23). It is quality, not quantity, that counts in the transcendental calculus. Man must be intrinsically of greater value than all that went to prepare the way for him. This will serve to explain the interest of angels in him. The Incarnation signifies that man has an inherent dignity no hugeness of the physical world and no grandeur of angels can equal. He has no superior but God, and to Him alone his knee should bow. 5. If the all is one organic unity, the lower joined to the higher, and looking forward to it, then there must be a correspondence between the lower and the higher. The natural will be a parable of the supernatural, and all types must sum themselves up in Christ their prototype. Science will yet see the harmony of reason and faith. 6. Christ being the Firstborn and Head of the creation, He is the Priest of the universe (Heb. v. 7). All other priesthood must be derived from Him. All worship must be offered through Him. All blessing will return from God through Him. 7. Christ is the end of history. The movement of our race is a process towards manhood in Christ. Sin has distracted the current, but has not arrested it. The religions, philosophies, and governments of the old world prepared the way for the first advent. A mighty impulse was thrilled through the nation from that day directing all movements towards the second advent. 8. Seeing that Christ is head over all, all things must become subject to Him. We see not yet all things put under Him. Sin has disnaturalized man, but it shall be overruled and made to serve the very ends it sought to frustrate (1 Cor. xv. 24-28; 2 Tim. ii. 19). Evil does not inhere in matter. Matter will be transformed (Rom. viii. 19-22). 9. The Incarnation must needs be perpetual. Were the Son of God to lay aside His humanity, the creation would fail of its end and complement. It confers upon the creation supreme blessing; to relinquish it would entail a deep curse. 10. Men must needs come into full and permanent union with Christ. Severed from Him they can do nothing. Sin, the discord in the everlasting order, must be renounced. Christ must abide in men and they in Him, in order that sin may be eliminated. Only thus can they attain the Divine Ideal transformation into true manhood in the image of God. (C. P. Jennings.) *The witness of creation to the gospel.*—1. The subject of the chapter is the glory of the Son of God. (1) In His essential relation to God He is the true *eikon basilike*—only image which it is not idolatry to worship. (2) His relation to the universe is that of immediate Creator. (3) His permanent relation to every creature is that of a central point for all phenomena. (4) His headship over the new redeemed humanity is that of the first-born among the dead, the source of

risen life to all the body. (5) His central pre-eminence in the whole spiritual world lies in the fact that He is Peacemaker by blood, the sole Reconciler to God. Never did John soar higher or sweep a wider horizon than this. 2. To confine ourselves to one thought here. Christ is the only link of connection between created minds and the unapproachable, unknowable Godhead. "Image of the invisible God" is parallel with John's "No man hath seen God at any time," &c., with Heb. i. 1-2, and with the Master's "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." The function of Revealer, however, does not attach to Christ's incarnate life only; He was the Word of God before, and revealed God in creation. From this follows that God the Revealer, when He tells of God in Nature and in Redemption must speak in harmonious terms. Both discoveries must agree, and hence we expect to find certain lines in physics leading up to Christianity, certain thoughts of the Divine mind which grow clearer when I cast back fresh light from redemption. 3. What, then, is there in nature to fit into the representation of Deity which we gather from—I. THE INCARNATION. 1. This stands on the threshold of the Christian system, and has no parallel in history, and at first sight none in nature. Yet look a little closer, and you will find that it rests upon the fact that man was made in the image of his Maker. For the Son and perfect Image of Godhead to become man—making the thoughts, emotions, and activities of our nature a glass wherein to mirror the heart of Deity—implies some affinity between the Divine and human, or some previous resemblance of man to God. Reason must, in some fashion, reflect the thoughts of God, and virtue His holiness, and points of moral and intellectual contact must bind the human spirit to that of the Incarnate Redeemer. How else could God become incarnate to redeem? 2. Now nature is alive with thoughts that are very human. God utters His mind in His works, and that mind is like our own. If that were not so science would be impossible. The world's Maker and its observer must have something in common, if the observer is to understand the Maker's meaning. A world put together by a Being whose notions of truth, utility, purpose, &c., bore no relation to mine would be a world unintelligible to me. But the world satisfies the reason and gratifies the taste of the human student, who detects in it with joy another mind at work similar to his own. (1) You know how keen is the pleasure many take in mechanical contrivance, but the pages of modern books of science are full of beautiful contrivances. (2) Equally human is the parsimony of nature. He who made this world does not overcome difficulties by inventing some fresh force for every occasion; He will rather go round about to make existing instruments answer a new purpose. To the same economical habit it is due that through the organized tribes of being certain radical types are perseveringly adhered to. A few governing ideas, modified in details only as far as needful, are made to do service, and give rise to endless diversity. This is just the style of workmanship that workmen admire. (3) Very human, too, is the place occupied in the works of God by beauty and utility. In man's productions decoration is always subordinated to convenience, and wise men will sacrifice the ornamental without remorse when it can be gained only at the expense of human well-being. Now the original school of all art is the handiwork of God. So lavish is His decoration of the most unnoticed objects that He must do it because He loves it; yet it is never put before utility. Nay, some animals have been made unlovely to suit their convenience; but even in them ornament is introduced where it can do no harm. 3. Nature, then, betrays in its Creator a mind so like our own as to lay a foundation for the Incarnation. The Son in impressing on all things His stamp, as God's image left a signature so human-like that we can well credit the old Scripture when it says man wears the likeness of the Son of God; and we see a propriety in the announcement of the new scripture that the same Son wears the nature which He had on purpose made so correspondent with His own. Creation of man's mind in God's image; incarnation of God's image in manhood—these are two answering facts, the one witnessed by science, the other by the gospel. II. THE ATONEMENT. 1. In so far as this is a moral fact, whereas in nature there is neither sin nor retribution, and therefore no need of atonement, we cannot expect to find there any suggestion of reconciliation with God. Nevertheless nature indicates that the Creator possesses moral qualities, and is a character as well as an intellect. 2. Some particulars of this. (1) Thinkers have been startled by the gospel declaration that God cares for so insignificant a creature as man. But does He appear to the student as a person likely to overlook any interest because it is minute. Remember what pains the scientists tell us have been expended on the most tiny and obscure piece of organized matter to perfect its adaptation to its

place, and to elaborate every organ of it for its proper purpose. It is for investigators to tell us whether they do not find traces of kindness in this such as bespeak a benevolent heart as well as a contriving intellect. If they do, then the love of God, which seeks and saves one lost soul, is but the crown of a character patient, considerate, which has left its traces on the lower creation. (2) But there are facts of an opposite order. Violence, death, extinction have always obtained. But whatever difficulties attend this frightful havoc of life, the sacrifice ministers always to some upward movement. Lower life feeds higher life, or the individual becomes a victim to some agency needful for the general good, the gale, the flood, the lightning: or, as the earth grows fit to bear nobler forms, the earlier ones pass away. We read here the law of sacrifice—unconscious and involuntary, indeed, because these creatures have no power of moral choice; but true, nevertheless, because sacrificed for some nobler good and more enduring end. See how beasts of prey have to make room for population, and serviceable animals are slaughtered for man's use. When I pass from this scene to Golgotha I am not conscious of any violent shock. There is pain for the good of others, and death as the price of life. The Maker of the suffering creation is not afraid to suffer for others. He obeys His own law, and the cross would have been a far more surprising spectacle had it stood upon an earth where no creature ever bled to advance creation's good. (3) The only key we can find to the Atonement lies in the inviolability of Divine law. To magnify that God gave His Son to die. Now it would have been surprising had the Son as Creator betrayed any indifference to the violence of natural law, and yet come as Redeemer to die to vindicate moral law. No such inconsistency appears. Physical students insist on the constancy with which the former avenges transgression; and so the latter decrees death for disobedience. And it could so little be set aside in favour of mercy, that not until the Lawgiver had Himself honoured His own statute, and suffered His own penalty, did He forgive. 3. As far, then, as such indications go, the face of God, as traced indistinctly in Creation, answers to His face as its glory shines in the gospel of Christ. (*J. O. Dykes, D.D.*) **We have redemption through His blood.**—I. **REDEMPTION.** Deliverance—1. From the guilt of sin, original or actual, of omission or commission. 2. From the power and prevalence of sin (Rom. vi. 14; Heb. ix. 13–14; Acts iii. 26; 1 Pet. i. 18; Matt. i. 21; Titus ii. 14). 3. From the tyranny of Satan (Col. i. 13; 1 John iii. 8; Luke xxii. 31–32). 4. From the curse of the law (Gal. iii. 13; iv. 5). 5. From the wrath of God. (1) In this world (Rom. v. 1; Luke ii. 14). (2) In the next (1 Thess. i. 10; Acts iv. 12). II. **ITS MEANS:** “His blood.” 1. It was necessary that our Redeemer should be man as well as God (1 Tim. ii. 5; Heb. ii. 14–17), that He might mediate between both parties (Job ix. 33). 1. That He should suffer (Heb. viii. 5; Luke xxiv. 26) a bloody death (Heb. ix. 22). (1) To expiate our sins (1 John ii. 2; Isa. liii. 5–6). (2) To conquer Satan (Heb. ii. 14). (3) To reconcile God to us and us to God (Rom. v. 10–11; Eph. ii. 16). III. **ITS BENEFIT.** “Forgiveness of sins.” 1. The names in Scripture given to it. (1) Remission (Acts ii. 38), dismissal, releasing (Isa. lxi. 1). 2. Mercifulness to our sins (Heb. viii. 12; Luke xviii. 13). (2) Passing over sin (Rom. iii. 25). (4) Purging from sin (Psa. li. 7). (5) Not remembering our sins (Jer. xxxi. 34; Heb. viii. 12). (6) Covering sin (Psa. xxxii. 1; lxxxv. 2; li. 9). (7) Taking away and removing sin (Psa. ciii. 10–12; Exod. xxxiv. 7; Lev. xvi. 20–22). (8) Casting behind God's back (Isa. xxxviii. 17; Psa. xo. 8). (9) Blotting out sin (Isa. xliii. 25; xlv. 22). (10) Not imputing sin (Psa. xxxii. 1–2; Rom. iv. 7–8). (11) Casting it in the depth of the sea (Mic. vii. 18–19). 2. The nature of it: an act of God's grace, whereby He absolves us from the obligation to those punishments, which by His law are due to us for those sins. (1) In general it is an act of God's grace. (a) Of God. It is ascribed to Him alone (Exod. xxxiv. 7; Mark ii. 7). We are to ask it of Him only (Matt. vi. 12). He alone justifies (Rom. viii. 33). Our sins are only against Him (Psa. li. 4). (b) Of His grace—not wisdom, power, justice (Isa. xliii. 25)—in Christ (Eph. i. 7). (2) The specific difference. (a) We are obliged to bear the punishments due by God's law to sin (Gal. iii. 10). (b) God takes off that obligation (2 Sam. xii. 13; Mark iii. 28–29). IV. **THIS BENEFIT IS ONLY BY CHRIST'S DEATH.** 1. All mankind is guilty before God, and so obnoxious to His wrath and everlasting punishment (Rom. iii. 19; Gal. iii. 22). 2. The eternal Son was pleased to take man's nature upon Him so as to become both God and man in one person (Isa. vii. 14; Rom. ix. 5; Phil. ii. 6–7). 3. Christ in this nature was pleased to suffer disgrace, the curses of the law (Gal. iii. 13). The wrath of God (Matt. xxvii. 46). An ignominious, accursed, painful, and bloody death; and all for sin, the only cause of death (Heb. x. 12).

4. Christ suffered all this, not for Himself (1 Pet. ii. 22, iii. 18; Heb. vii. 26), but for us who partake of that nature in which He suffered (Isa. liii. 5-6; Rom. iv. 25; Gal. i. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 3). 5. These sufferings were of greater worth than if all men had suffered eternal death (Acts xx. 28). 6. Hence God was pleased to accept of them as a sufficient price of our redemption, and satisfaction to His justice for our sins (Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Eph. i. 6). 7. God's justice being thus satisfied, He is reconciled unto us, and takes off our obligations to punishment, by reason of what His Son underwent for us; and therefore for His sake is said to pardon our sins (Rom. v. 10; Col. i. 20; 2 Cor. v. 21). V. Use. 1. Hence you may learn what ground we have to trust in Christ for pardon (Rom. viii. 34). 2. Hence be advised to make it your business to get your sins forgiven: considering—(1) How miserable you are without it: God is angry (Psa. vii. 11); hell is threatened. (2) How happy with it (Psa. xxxii. 1-2). Your persons accepted and justified (Psa. xxxii. 1-2; Rom. iv. 6-7); God reconciled and become your friend (Rom. v. 1, 9-10. 3. All things working for your good, and glory for your reward. (*Bishop Beveridge.*)

Redemption:—The liberty for which the slave longs is, perhaps, the sweetest earthly cup man drinks. Health has been often said to be the greatest earthly blessing. What are money, luxury, titles, a crown even, without it; but what is health without liberty. We sympathize with the instinctive love of freedom in animals—the noisy joy of the dog when he gets off his chain; the noble eagle chained to the perch, strangling in its struggles to escape. Much more do we sympathize with our fellow-creatures, whether slaves or citizens, who have made the altars of liberty red with their blood, preferring death to bondage. But there is a more degrading and dreadful slavery, that of the slaves of Satan, who are sold under sin. Would that we set the same price on spiritual as we do on earthly liberty! What struggles would then be made and prayers offered for salvation! And when saved ourselves, how anxious we should be for the salvation of others.

I. **WE ALL NEED REDEMPTION.** To a man who knows he is nigh unto death offer a medicine that will cure him, and he will buy it at any price; but offer the same to one who believes himself in health and he holds it cheap. For a similar reason are Christ and His redemption rejected of men. So the great work of God's Spirit is to rouse a man from the torpor induced by the poison of sin. And blessed the book, preacher, or providence that sends the conviction into our hearts. For to a soul convinced of misery who so welcome as the Saviour? 1. The slavery of sin is natural to man. We pity the mother as robbed of one of her best joys, who knows that the little creature on her bosom is a slave. But that calamity is ours. "In sin did my mother conceive me." "I am carnal, sold under sin." "Ye were the slaves of sin"—not one hired for a period, but branded with the mark of a perpetual bondage. 2. This slavery is the universal state of man. Slavery is the worst and oldest of human institutions. At an early period, in Cain, he who should have been his brother's keeper, became his murderer; and when man did become his brother's keeper, it was too often as an owner. But, wherever slavery obtained, some were free. It is not so with sin. The king and the beggar are both slaves; every man's heart is black, whatever his face may be. 3. This slavery is the state of all unconverted men. (1) Some are slaves of gold. What bondage is equal to that? for a man to harden his heart to the claims of pity, to deny his own flesh and blood, to lie and cheat, or, if not, throw his soul away for money. (2) Some are slaves of lust. To what base society and acts of villainy do their tyrant passions condemn them. The thief that steals my money is a man of honour compared with him who steals a woman's virtue. (2) Some are slaves of drunkenness. Of all slavery this is the most helpless and hopeless. Other sins drown conscience, this reason as well. (3) Some are slaves to the opinions of the world. The Macedonian boasted that he had conquered the world; the world can boast that it has conquered them. Theirs' the miserable condition of a servant who has to bear in some ill-governed household the caprices, not of one mistress, but of many. II. **OUR REDEMPTION IS NOT A SIMPLE MATTER OF TIME.** Every fifty years, and in certain cases, seven, redeemed the Hebrew. Everywhere time works changes, the young grow old, the poor get rich, the rich poor. Time alters the form of the globe. But amid these changes the condition of the sinner alters not. The longer you live in sin the more hopeless is salvation. Do you say, But what am I to do? Can I redeem myself? Assuredly not. But are we to sit still as though redemption would come like a jubilee in the common course of providence? No, we are to be up and doing. I do not say that we are to rise like an oppressed nation which wrings its liberties from a tyrant hand; nor that we can purchase redemption; nor that through works of righteous-

ness we can lay any claim to its blessings. And yet I say, "Labour for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life." There are various ways of being diligent. Though men call him idle the poor beggar is as diligent as others; and such as that suppliant's, along with the use of other means, are the labours to which God's mercy and your own necessities call you. Unable to save yourself, besiege the throne of grace. III. CHRIST IS THE REDEEMER. There is no other. His types and symbols teach this. There was but one ark in the flood, and all perished save those who sailed in it. There was but one altar in the Temple, one way through the Red Sea, "one Mediator between God and man." 1. Christ does not redeem us by simply revealing the truth. Were He a Saviour only in this sense there are others. From "the Sun of Righteousness" He changes into a star, one of a constellation which is formed of Moses and the prophets. Many of them, indeed, had more to do in revealing God's will than Christ. No book bears His name, and the truths which fell from Him form but a fraction of Scripture. Yet who but He is set forth as the Redeemer, in whose name else are we commanded to believe and be baptized? 2. Christ does not redeem us by His example. That man is in a sense my saviour who leads me safely along any dangerous path, and in a corresponding way some say Christ redeemed us. He set us such an example, that by following His steps we may enter the kingdom of heaven. Alas for safety if it turn on that! Walk as He walked! Who is sufficient for that? We should certainly attempt to follow Jesus, yet our best attempts will leave us more and more convinced that our only hope for redemption lies in the mercy of the Father and the merits of the Son. 3. Christ has redeemed us by suffering in our room and stead. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) I. WHAT REMISSION OF SINS IS. 1. Sin is a violation of the law of God (1 John iii. 4). In this law there is the precept which is the rule of duty, and the sanction or penalty which shows what God might do if He dealt with us according to our merit. Accordingly in sin there is—(1) The fault. Man, God's subject, and obliged to Him by His benefits, swerves from the rule of his duty and exposes himself to God's judgment. (2) The guilt, which is liableness to punishment. 2. Forgiveness is a dissolving the obligation to punishment, a freedom in God's way from the consequences of sin. (1) It is not a disannulling of the act as a natural action. What is done cannot be undone. (2) Nor is it abolished as a criminal action. Forgiveness does not make a fault to be no fault. The innocent are acquitted, but the guilty are pardoned as sinners. (3) Nor is the merit of the sinful act lessened, it still deserves punishment. (4) Forgiveness therefore is a passing by the fault so that it shall not rise up in judgment against us. The fault is the sinner's, the punishment the Judge's, which He may fashion on certain terms stated in the law of grace. I prove it (1) from the nature of the thing, for there is such a relation between the fault and the guilt, the sin and punishment; that the one cannot be without the other. Therefore, if the Judge will not impute the fault there will be an immunity from punishment. (2) From the common rule of speaking among men. He cannot be said to forgive a fault who exacts punishment; and what do men mean when they pray for pardon but that they may be exempted from punishment? (3) It would impeach the justice and mercy of God were He to punish where He has pardoned. (4) Scripture phrases show that God blots out our sins (*Psa. lxxi. 2, xxxii. 1; Isa. xxxviii. 17; Micah vii. 19; Jer. xxxi. 34*). II. THE NATURE OF REDEMPTION. 1. Our being redeemed supposes a captivity and bondage. (1) Unrenewed men are slaves to sin (*Titus iii. 3; John viii. 34*). Men imagine a life of vanity to be a very good life, and it were so if liberty consisted in doing what we list rather than what we ought. But it is not, and experience shows that men cannot leave their base satisfactions. (2) As they are under sin so they are under Satan (*Eph. ii. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 26*). (3) For this they are under the curse of God. 2. To recover us there was a price to be paid by way of ransom to God. We are not delivered by prayer, nor mere force, nor out of pity, but by just satisfaction to provoked justice. The price was not paid to Satan, who is a usurper—from him we are delivered by force—but to God. Man had not sinned against Satan, but God, to whom belong condemnation or pardon. And God being satisfied, Satan has no power over us. That redemption implies payment of a price is clear (*Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6*). Christ in recovering men in dealing with God is set forth as a Lamb slain (*Rev. v. 5, 6*); in dealing with Satan as a lion recovering the prey. A ransom was necessary because God had made a former covenant which was not to be quit but upon valuable consideration, lest His moral attributes should fall to the ground. (1) The

honour of His justice was to be secured (Rom. iii. 5, 6; Gen. xviii. 25). If God should pardon without satisfaction how should He be revered as the holy Governor of the world? Hence Rom. iii. 25, 26. (2) His wisdom. If the law should be recalled, the Lawgiver would run the hazard of levity. (3) His holy nature would not permit it. Some way must be found to signify His hatred of sin (Psa. xi. 6). (4) His authority. It would be a derogation to the authority of His law if it might be broken with impunity. (5) His truth. God's word is not to be regarded as a scarecrow (Gen. iii. 5; Deut. xxix. 19, 20). 3. None was fit to give this ransom but Jesus Christ, the God-man. He was man to undertake it in our name, God to perform it in His own strength; a man that He might be under the law and die, God that He might put the stamp upon the metal and make it current coin. By taking human nature a price was put into His hands, to which His Divine nature gave the requisite value (Acts xx. 28; Heb. ix. 13). 4. Nothing performed by Christ could be a sufficient ransom but His death. (1) To answer the types wherein without shedding of blood was no remission. (2) In the nature of the thing (John viii. 20). Death was threatened to sin, and feared by the sinner, and must be borne, therefore, for deliverance. 5. From this ransom there is a liberty resulting to us; but not a liberty to sin (Rom. vi. 22). Christ came not to free us from the duty of the law, but its penalty, otherwise it would promote the devil's interest. He redeemed us that we might serve God. 6. We are not partakers of this liberty till we are united to Christ by faith "in whom." III. REMISSION OF SINS IS A PRINCIPAL PART OF REDEMPTION.

1. How a part. (1) Redemption is taken for the laying down of the price. That was done on the cross (Heb. ix. 12). (2) In its application. Besides the ransom there is actual deliverance. Complete redemption we shall enjoy at the last day (Rom. viii. 23; Eph. iv. 30, i. 14). Begun deliverance, which we now enjoy by faith, consists of justification (Eph. i. 7), where sin is freely pardoned, and we delivered from evil and wrath; and sanctification (1 Peter i. 18; Titus ii. 14). 2. A principal part, for—(1) The power of Satan is destroyed (Acts xxvi. 18). (2) The reign of sin is broken. The gift of the sanctifying Spirit is part of our pardon applied (Col. ii. 13). (3) We are eased of our tormenting fears. (4) Death is unstinged (1 Cor. xv. 56). (5) The obligation to eternal punishment ceases. IV. USE. To persuade you to seek after this benefit.

1. We all once needed it. Nothing but pardon will serve your turn. (1) Not forbearance on God's part. (2) Not senseless forgetfulness or baseless hope on yours. 2. The best of us still need it. Renewed sins need new pardon; daily infirmities daily repentance. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) 1. The apostle had been speaking of Christian privileges as being matters of present enjoyment—meekness for heaven; deliverance from sin, &c., are in the actual possession of the Christian. 2. There are two methods proposed by which men hope to secure God's favour. Thousands consider it presumption to profess to have it, but hope to do so after they have prayed more and done more good deeds. God's method is the reverse. What man places at the end He places at the beginning; what man says "work for," He says "work from." Turning away our thoughts from self He fixes them on Christ. 3. The different results on feeling resulting are immense. The man who works for future forgiveness has at best the spirit of a servant; he who takes forgiveness now as God's free gift in Christ enjoys reconciliation and sonship. I. REDEMPTION AS IDENTICAL WITH FORGIVENESS OF SINS. 1. Redemption is something more than rescue. If you see a man in danger and pluck him out you save but not redeem him. If you see a man oppressed and snatch him from his enemy you deliver but not redeem him. Redemption is the release of a man by the payment of ransom. We by our transgressions have exposed ourselves to God's law, which knows no pity, holds us in its grasp, and will inflict, unless we are delivered, the fearful penalty of eternal death. But if that penalty be remitted we are redeemed, and so forgiveness is equivalent to redemption. But sin has also brought us under its own power, and so made us its slaves; and the only way of securing us and setting us free is forgiveness. 2. The one thing we absolutely require as sinners is the remission of the horrible penalty, and it is neither irrational nor immoral to be afraid of that penalty; but we must be released from the power of sin before our happiness can be secured. Tell me that I am not to be punished and you have made me glad, but you have not inspired me with love to God. But tell me that the means of forgiveness is the sacrifice of God's dear Son, that God pardons not only as a Sovereign but as a Father, and the power of sin will be broken, and I enter on the joyful, ennobling service of love. II. REDEMPTION AS EFFECTED THROUGH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. 1. In Phil. ii. the apostle, in speaking of Christ's

death, has in view Christ's obedience; here in using the term "blood" his idea is expiation, and so elsewhere where the word is used; because in the Jewish sacrifices it was not the death of the victim, but its blood that was the typical instrument of expiation. 2. Such a redemption is necessary to meet the demands of the heart and to produce a changed feeling towards God. (1) Forgiveness must be a righteous forgiveness; not a mere easy, weak-minded passing over of transgression. Redemption by the blood of Christ meets this demand of the awakened conscience, for in the cross God appears more awful than elsewhere in His hatred of sin and His determination to punish it. (2) But it is also the forgiveness of a Father we want, and nowhere have we such an exhibition of God's love as in the cross. Conclusion.—This redemption is only to be had in Christ. Out of Him, however respectable and moral, we are slaves of sin and exposed to the curse. (G. Calthrop, M.A.) *Plan of redemption*:—Suppose a large graveyard surrounded by a high wall, with only one entrance by a large iron gate which is fast bolted. Within these walls are tens of thousands of human beings, by one disease descending to the grave. There is no balm to relieve them, no physician there: they must perish. This is the condition of man as a sinner. All have sinned, and the soul that sinneth shall die. While man was in this deplorable state, Mercy, an attribute of Deity, came down and stood at the gate, looked at the scene, and wept over it, exclaiming, "Oh, that I might enter! I would bind up their wounds; I would relieve their sorrows; I would save their souls." While Mercy stood weeping at the gate, an embassy of angels, commissioned from the court of heaven to some other world, passing over, paused at the sight, and Heaven forgave that pause. Seeing Mercy standing there, they cried, "Mercy, Mercy, can you not enter? can you look upon this scene, and not pity? can you pity, and not relieve?" Mercy replied, "I can see;" and in her tears she added, "I pity, but cannot relieve."—"Why can you not enter?"—"Oh!" said Mercy, "Justice has barred the gate against me, and I cannot, must not, unbar it." At this moment Justice himself appeared, as it were to watch the gate. The angels inquired of him, "Why will you not let Mercy in?" Justice replied, "My law is broken, and it must be honoured: die they or Justice must." At this there appeared a form among the angelic band, like unto the Son of God, who, addressing Himself to Justice, said, "What are thy demands?" Justice replied, "My terms are stern and rigid. I must have sickness for their health; I must have ignominy for their honour; I must have death for life; without the shedding of blood there is no remission."—"Justice," said the Son of God, "I accept thy terms. On Me be this wrong, and let Mercy enter."—"When," said Justice, "will you perform this promise?" Jesus replied, "Four thousand years hence, upon the hill of Calvary, without the gates of Jerusalem, I will perform it in My own person." The deed was prepared and signed in the presence of the angels of God. Justice was satisfied; and Mercy entered, preaching salvation in the name of Jesus. The deed was committed to the patriarchs; by them to the kings of Israel and the prophets; by them it was preserved till Daniel's seventy weeks were accomplished; and, at the appointed time, Justice appeared on the hill of Calvary, and Mercy presented to him the important deed. "Where," said Justice, "is the Son of God?" Mercy answered, "Behold Him at the bottom of the hill, bearing His own cross;" and then he departed, and stood aloof at the hour of trial. Jesus ascended the hill, while in His train followed His weeping Church. Justice immediately presented Him with the important deed, saying, "This is the day when this bond is to be executed." When He received it, did He tear it in pieces, and give it to the winds of heaven? No: He nailed it to His cross, exclaiming, "It is finished!" Justice called on holy fire to come down, and consume the sacrifice. Holy fire descended: it swallowed His humanity; but, when it touched His divinity, it expired, and there was darkness over the whole heavens; but, glory to God in the highest! on earth peace, and good-will to men. (Christmas Evans.) *The greatness of redemption*:—If that a king should empty all his coffers, and alienate all his crown land to rescue his subjects, he should show himself a natural prince: but what is this to that ransom which our King hath tendered? (P. Bayne, B.D.) *Redemption incomplete until accepted by faith in Christ*:—Suppose there were twenty traitors in the Tower lay condemned; say again, the prince should yield his father such satisfaction for some whom he would save, wherewith the king his father should be contented, and give him their pardon thereupon; here the thing is done betwixt the king and his son, yet till the prince send to them, write to the keeper to deliver such and such to him, they are in the state they were in, and so continue. So it

is with God, Christ, and us : the redemption is all concluded betwixt God and His beloved Son ; yet till this is effectually made known to our hearts, so that they believe on this grace of Christ, we are as we were, in hold, in the fear of our condemnation. We are justified through the redemption in Christ, but so that before it can be applied in us we must have faith in His blood, being set forth unto us in the word preached. Can we have the strength of bread without eating bread ? No more can we have any benefit by the bread of life without believing on Him. In Christ by faith we have these things. (*Ibid.*) *Redemption partial and complete* :—We have that redemption which consists in the forgiveness of sins, and having obtained it are delivered from the bondage of the devil, of sin, and of hell. The devil cannot any longer detain us as captives, rule us as his slaves, and drive us here and there as he pleases ; sin itself which cleaves to us cannot reign in us ; finally, even hell cannot torment us with perpetual fear, or claim any lordship over us. For, our sins being remitted, the power of the devil is broken, the wrath of God is removed, the condemnation of eternal death is taken away. From all these things, therefore, we have redemption at the same time that we have forgiveness of sins. But there is yet another bondage, viz., that of the corruption of our bodies, and of eternal sufferings, from which the elect are not yet redeemed, but shall be redeemed at the coming of Christ (Luke xxi. 28). The apostle calls this the redemption of the purchased possession (Eph. i. 14). This also Christ merited for us : but He would not bestow upon believers at once this incorruption of their bodies, and deliverance from present external miseries, and from the remains of sin, for the following reasons. 1. Lest the condition of the Head and of the members should be plainly dissimilar. For Christ Himself was a Man of sorrows : He did not at once sit down at the right hand of the Father in glory, but first underwent hunger, thirst, crucifixion, and death : it is therefore but consistent that the members of Christ should pass likewise through sufferings and death itself to glory. 2. They are not fully redeemed from these bodily afflictions, neither from the remains of sin, that they may have matter for glorifying God, whilst they endure them with the greatest constancy and patience, whilst they resist with all their might all the lusts of sin ; that God, even as a just Judge, may confer upon them, after having well fought this fight, the unfading crown. 3. He would not straightway deliver the faithful from this bodily misery instantly, lest Christians should seem to embrace Christ on account of this temporal deliverance, rather than on account of that spiritual one. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *Redemption God's forgiveness as King and Father* :—Suppose that a son had sinned grievously against a parent who was also a king. By the son's breach of the laws he has exposed himself to a certain penalty ; but he has also alienated himself from his father—produced in his heart a spirit of distrust and aversion which becomes deeper and more intense the longer he holds aloof. There are two things then to be considered : the punishment to which the son is liable ; and the depraving, alienating influence which his transgression exercises over his mind. Now, if the breach is ever to be healed, it will not be enough for the father to say, "I remit the penalty of your transgression : I forbear to strike : you may go." The son may, will, be glad to escape suffering, but he will not be drawn thereby in love towards his father. The old alienation will rankle still, and will break out presently in fresh offences. Something more, then, is needed, viz., the exhibition of the father's love towards the erring son ; there is needed that it be said, "I not only release you from merited suffering ; but I forgive you : I open my heart to you, and take you back into it. I am only too glad to welcome you to my heart and home, with the feeling that my child is no longer a wanderer and an alien, but has given me back his love." Then the power of the transgression will be broken, and the interrupted relation between father and child will be restored. Precisely in the same way, if forgiveness of sin meant simply the remission of penalties, there would be in the heart of the sinner nothing but a cold and selfish thankfulness and self-congratulation for escape from pain. But our sins are forgiven us in such a way that the heart of a loving Father is displayed in the act. (*G. Calthrop, M.A.*) *Redemption atonement for and remission of sin* :—It is the Day of Atonement. Two young kids of the goats are presented before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle. Those young spotless creatures are a double type of Jesus when in the councils of eternity He presented Himself before Jehovah, saying, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." The lot is cast—one for the Lord, the other for the scapegoat—to determine which shall represent our Saviour in the act of His death, and which in the fruit of His death, viz., the bearing of the sins of the people. The first falls as a

sin-offering. The high priest having caught its flowing blood in a golden bowl, enters within the veil, and, alone, sprinkles it upon the mercy-seat. Coming forth, he goes up to the living goat; standing over it, he lays his hands upon its head; and, amid solemn silence, confesses over the dumb creature all the sins of the people. The prayer finished, that goat bears on its devoted head the guilt of the people. And now observe the act which foreshadowed how Jesus by taking our sins bore them away. The congregation opens, forming a lane that stretches away from the tabernacle to the boundless desert. While every lip is sealed, and every eye intent, a "fit" man steps forth, and taking hold of the victim, he leads it on and away through the parted crowd. Amid the haze of the burning sands and distant horizon their forms grow less and less, and at length vanish from sight. He and that goat are now alone. They travel on and further on, till, removed beyond the reach of any human eye, far off in the distant wilderness, he casts loose the sin-laden creature. And when, after the lapse of hours, the people descri a speck in the distance, which draws nearer and nearer, until they recognize the "fit" man, the people see, and we in figure see also, how our Lord, when He was made an offering for sin, took the load of our guilt upon Him, bearing it away, as it were, to a land that was not known. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*)

Pardon, not justice, wanted:—A French girl of fourteen appeared before Napoleon, and casting herself at his feet, cried, "Pardon, sire! pardon for my father!" "And who is your father?" asked Napoleon, "and who are you?" "My name is Lajolia," she said, and with flowing tears added, "but, sire, my father is doomed to die." "Ah, young lady," replied Napoleon, "I can do nothing for you. It is the second time your father has been found guilty against the State." "Alas!" exclaimed the poor girl, "I know it, sire; but I do not ask for justice, I implore pardon. I beseech you to forgive my father!" After a momentary struggle of feeling, Napoleon gently took the hand of the young maiden, and said, "Well, my child, for your sake I will pardon your father. That is enough. Now leave me."

The value of pardon:—A man named John Welsh lay in prison in Chicago under sentence of death. His friends tried to get his sentence commuted to imprisonment for life. The day before that fixed for his execution arrived without any favourable reply being received. The prisoner sat in his cell listening and longing earnestly for a respite. Presently he heard the rumbling of a car. It brought the materials for the scaffold, and soon he heard the stroke of the hammers, and pictured himself hanging on the scaffold he could hear them raising. The sound almost drove him frantic, and he begged that he might be taken anywhere away from the dreadful noise. He was taken to a distant cell, and there he sat on the edge of his bed, haunted with gloomy thoughts, all hope gone. He was startled from his reverie by a hurried step along the corridor. The key was thrust into the lock, and one of the officers of the prison stood before him. He held in his hand a paper signed by the Governor of the State of Illinois. It was a commutation of his sentence. How the truth burst upon his mind! When the paper was handed to him he could not read it for tears, but it was a paper bringing him his life, and he hugged it and kissed it. (*H. W. Taylor.*)

Forgiveness and remission of sins:—Strictly speaking it is not sins that are forgiven, but their penalty. All men know what "to give" is; but what is it to *for-give*? To *forth-give* or give forth. When a man in ancient times forgave, he gave forth from himself something he was entitled to retain. When a man does injury to another he is liable to a penalty, and formerly every penalty short of death consisted of valuable material such as live cattle or money; and it was that, laid at the injured person's feet, that was given forth from the receiver, when he was willing to forgive the injurer. Precisely speaking it was not the injury that was forth-given; the injury was never at the disposal of the injured person. It was the penalty incurred by the injury that was forth-given. And whatever the penalty might be, though death itself, if it was not exacted it was forgiven. So when God forgives He generously refrains from exacting the penalty we have incurred. Another word is remission, which is a beautiful variation. There is *mission* in it. When any one is sent forth some end is contemplated. That end is his mission. *Re* of course means back. To remit is to send back. In ancient times when the material of the penalty of a transgression was sent to the injured person, he had it in his option graciously to send it back. That was the remission of the penalty of the sin. The phrase is now condensed, and we speak not only of the remission of the penalty, but of the remission of the sin. The expression is practically equivalent in Biblical representation

to the word *redemption*, so that the two phrases reciprocally throw light on each other. In this light it is seen that, as a matter of principle, it must always be a difficulty in moral government to give scope to the forgiveness of crimes, or the remission of the penalty of transgressions. No wonder, therefore, that there should be difficulty in the Divine government. (*J. Morison, D.D.*)

Vers. 15-19. **Who is the image of the invisible God.**—This is the most exhaustive assertion of our Lord's Godhead to be found in St. Paul's writings. This magnificent dogmatic passage is introduced, after the apostle's manner, with a strictly practical object. The Colossian Church was exposed to the attacks of a theosophic doctrine which degraded Christ to the rank of one of a long series of inferior beings supposed to range between man and the Supreme God. Against this assertion Paul asserts that Christ is: I. **THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD.** The expression supplements the title of "the Son." As "the Son," Christ is derived eternally from the Father, and of one substance with Him. As "the image" Christ is in that one substance, the exact likeness of the Father, in all things except being the Father. He is the image of the Father, not as the Father, but as God. The "image" is indeed originally God's unbegun, unending reflection of Himself in Himself, but is also the organ whereby God, in His essence invisible, reveals Himself to His creatures. Thus the "image" is naturally, so to speak, the Creator, since creation is the first revelation God has made of Himself. Man is the highest point in the visible universe; in man, God's attributes are most luminously exhibited; man is the image and glory of God (1 Cor. xi. 7). But Christ is the adequate image of God, God's self-reflection in His own thought, eternally present with Himself. II. As the image Christ is **THE FIRST-BORN OF ALL CREATION, i.e.,** not the first in rank among created beings, but begotten before any created beings. That this is the true sense of the expression is etymologically certain; but it is also the only sense which is in real harmony with the relation in which, according to the context, Christ stands to the universe. Of all things in heaven and earth, of things seen and unseen, of the various orders of the angelic hierarchy, it is said that they were created: 1. In Christ. There was no creative process external to and independent of Him; since the archetypal forms after which the creatures are modelled and the sources of their strength and consistency of being eternally reside in Him. 2. By Him. The force which has summoned the worlds out of nothingness into being, and which upholds them in being is His; He wields it; He is the one producer and sustainer of all created existence. 3. For Him. He is not as Arianism pretended, merely an inferior workman creating for the glory of a higher Master; He creates for Himself; He is the end of all things as well as their immediate source; and in living for Him every creature finds at once the explanation and law of its being. For He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. III. After such a statement it follows naturally that the **FULNESS, i.e.,** the entire cycle of the Divine attributes, considered as a series of forces, **DWELLS IN HIM**; and this not in any ideal or transcendental manner, but with that actual reality which men attach to the presence of material bodies which they can feel and measure through the organs of sense (chap. ii. 9). Although throughout this Epistle the word *Logos* is never introduced, it is plain that the Image of St. Paul is equivalent in His rank and functions to the *Logos* of St. John. Each exists prior to creation; each is the one agent in creation; each is a Divine person; each is equal with God and shares His essential life; each is really none other than God. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The person of Christ:—* I. **AS RELATED TO GOD.** "Image." Some interpret this of the essential image; others as setting forth Christ as God's messenger, or as perfect man, in allusion to Gen. i. 26. But there is a great difference between man made "in," "after," or "according to" God's image, and Christ "*the image*" itself. 1. An image (1) differs widely from a shadow. The Old Testament discoveries of Christ are called "shadows," and though a shadow presupposes substance, it is only a mere appearance (Heb. x. 1). (2) Is more than a similitude. One thing may be very similar to another in some things, and yet in others be very unlike. The sun is a similitude, but not an image of God. (3) Corresponds entirely with that which it represents—a perfect model and transcript. The cast is an exact sampler of the mould; the wax bears a correct impress of the seal, not merely in general figure, but in every line. The word therefore shows that Christ is the very form of God in whom are embodied all His perfections. 2. This suggests that (1) the dignity of our Saviour's person stamps infinite merit on His work. (2) Since it is to the Divine image that believers have to be conformed, we have some idea of the privileges and dignity to

which we shall be exalted. (3) In Christ's glorious person we may read our own defects. II. AS RELATED TO THE UNIVERSE. 1. He is Creator: from which it is clear that all things had a beginning, and that nothing exists that does not owe its existence to Christ; and therefore Christ is the lawful proprietor of all things. That there may be no cavil we have a particular enumeration of His works: (1) In their universality, "all things"; (2) their properties, "visible and invisible"; (3) their grades in the scale of being, "thrones, &c." Try to elevate your thoughts to the dignity of this subject. What an Almighty Saviour you have. He is above all human portraiture. His name is "Wonderful." 2. But if Christ be all this, then (1) here is an end of Atheism, Deism, Unitarianism. (2) What a claim have Christ's meanest creatures on our consideration. (3) How desperate their condition who will not have Him to reign over them. III. AS RELATED TO HIS CHURCH. "Head." 1. By Divine appointment; and as the natural head is the highest part of the body, so Christ has in all things the pre-eminence. 2. In respect of His wisdom. The head is the seat of mind. There are all the organs and mental phenomena: the eye to see, &c. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." 3. As regards spiritual sustenance and support. The head is where most of the vital functions are which impart energy through the system, and diffuse pleasure or pain, joy or sorrow. So Christ transmits whatever supplies are required for the Church's welfare; through Him the whole body increases with the increase of God. Lessons: We have a Saviour—1. Almighty. 2. Sympathizing. 3. Everlasting. (T. Watson, B.A.) *The dignity of Christ*.—I. CHRIST IN HIS PRE-INCARNATE STATE. This dignity is represented by two brief clauses dealing with—1. His relation to the God-head, "image." There is a distinction between image and likeness. Likeness represents superficial resemblance, as when two leaves from the same tree are said to be like each other; image indicates resemblance by participation in the same life by reproduction of essence. Likeness is that which is superficial and partial, image that which is essential and exhaustive. Our Lord is that representation of God which God could not but have. Whatever of glory dwells in the Eternal Father is eternally imaged in His Son. 2. His relation to the universe. (1) "In Him all things were made," i.e., the creative energy not only passed through Him, as the volume of a river's waters passes through its rock-hewn channels, but the creative energy dwells in Him, belongs to Him, as the life of His life, essentially and eternally. (2) In Him also all things consist, stand together; in Him the universe finds its unity and coherence. We talk about the laws of nature. If it were possible for us to trace the laws of nature and of history to their point of convergence, we should find that to be nothing less than the personal sovereignty of Jesus Christ. (3) He is the universal Governor. For Him all things exist, to serve His purpose and to manifest His glory. Jesus Christ is the first, efficient, and final cause of all created existence. 3. Now these separate clauses are dove-tailed into the clause preceding them, "the firstborn," for that expression does not mean that our Lord is the first creature, either in time or in rank. The emphasis must be put upon both adjectives, "firstborn." The primacy of Jesus Christ in the creation is the primacy of birth. He alone is born, not made; all other things are made, not born; and there is a very marked distinction between these two. Our thoughts are born of our intelligence; our works are the product of our hands. The things that we make are outside of ourselves; they may perish, and our being be not affected; but the thoughts that are born within us and of us are a part of our being; when you touch them you touch yourself. Our Lord's place in the universe is that of the firstborn; His own being is rooted in the very being of God, as inseparable from Him as thought is from being. Therefore He is called the Eternal Word of God. Thought always precedes achievement, just as a great cathedral is born in the mind of the architect before the click of a chisel is heard. Even so is Christ the first-born of creation as holding in His living thought all the realms and ages. Thus far the essential majesty of the Divine Christ. This is a glory that blinds us, but does not kindle nor transfigure us. II. The apostle passes to THE GLORY OF HIM WHO TABERNACLED IN HUMAN FLESH. As creation finds in Him its head, unity, and coherence, so also does the kingdom of grace. These are not two systems, joining each other as two circles might have their contact at a single point, or overlapping, but are one, because the sovereignty of each and both is invested in Christ. 1. In His relation to redemption Christ is "the beginning, the firstborn from among the dead," not the first who came forth from the grave in rank or time. His relation to the kingdom of grace as to that of nature is birth, i.e., in Him the resurrection finds its original and eternal home. It is not merely said that He is risen, but

that He is "the Resurrection and the Life." 2. As He is said to be the source of spiritual creative energy, so also is it declared that the authority of spiritual control is vested in Him. He is Head of the Church, to whom alone our prayers are to be addressed, and through whom alone the answer of God can come to us. Between us and God there are no hierarchies of principalities and powers, no army of saints and martyrs. The way is clear through Christ. There is but one Mediator. Just as the head interprets, gathers up, and responds to the multitudinous demands of the body that are telegraphed along the nervous filaments of sensation, so also does Christ, as the Head of His Church, interpret her needs and respond to her prayers. The heart does not always pray as do the lips, and our wishes are sometimes very different from our wants: but the great Head of the Church knows how to interpret, and always pierces to the deepest need. And so when the strength of our hands fails us, and our wisdom is staggered by the problems that front us, a larger wisdom and a mightier hope come pulsing into our feebleness. 3. Great prerogatives are these, but they are not a temporary investiture. They belong to Him by eternal right, "for it pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell." Grace has in Him its eternal dwelling-place. And so long as the redeemed shall endure will He be their loving and loved Head. For in Him both God and man find their sufficient and eternal reconciliation. 4. This great reconciliation is not merely problematical and partial, it is positive and universal. The tenses are in the past. We are living to-day, not in the dispensation of the wrath of God, but in the dispensation of His redeeming grace. God is sending forth His ministers, bidding all to repent, assuring them that the feast is ready, and that it is only waiting for the guests. The age of demoralization passed away eighteen hundred years ago. The age of reconstruction began when on the cross our Lord said, "It is finished!" That was the burial of the old, as it was the birth of the new; and ever since, and until the end of time, in spite of opposition and apparent defeat, all things have been and shall be working together for good, and surely, though slowly, advancing the cause of God's eternal righteousness. III. PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

1. We have been led by the apostle to the most exalted conceivable position whence we can look out on the works of God and upon the history of the world. We have been led through all the grades of being, from matter in its crudest form to mind in its loftiest manifestation, and we have seen that in Christ the whole universe of created existence finds its unity and coherence, while the awful struggle of right against wrong, truth against falsehood, find in Him its consummation and ending. This is something that neither science nor philosophy can give. In Him all contradictions are solved between the seen and the unseen, the created and the uncreated, the sin of man and the righteousness of God. 2. If it be true that both creation and redemption find in Christ their living centre, then it is also plain that only in proportion as we enter into the mind of Christ can we understand aright either the works of God, or the history of the race, or the revelation of His character and purposes in Scripture. 3. Here, too, is the only solution of the vexed question of Christian union. How shall that unity be brought about? Certainly not by creeds nor by forms. There is only one name, one sign, that can subdue us all, and that is the sign that must conquer the world, the flaming cross of Jesus Christ. When we bow before that, and all our faces are turned reverently toward the One on the throne, then shall enmity perish, and we shall be one, even as He and the Father are one. 4. The incomparable dignity of our Lord should awaken in us a three-fold attachment. (1) It should awaken in us a feeling of reverence. As no one of us would think of standing before a throned king without becoming humility, it behoves us when we come into our Creator's presence to bow with reverence at His feet. (2) But incomparable as is His dignity, it is for ever joined with our common nature; and therefore, while it calls for reverence it also calls for trust. He is the Head of the Church, and therefore we ought to come not only reverently, but confidently and boldly. There ought to be joy as well as reverence in our worship and in our service. (3) This incomparable dignity ought also to fill us with assurance and courage. (*A. J. F. Belrends, D.D.*) *The Divine pre-eminence of Christ:—*

I. CHRIST'S PRE-EMINENCE. 1. His supremacy in relation to God. "Image" means (1) The supreme likeness of God. (2) The supreme representation of God. (3) The supreme manifestation of God. 2. His supremacy in relation to nature. We have (1) His dignity, "firstborn," telling of His age, heirship, authority. (2) His creative and sustaining agency. All is made by Him and consists in Him. In His miracles He was the Divine Ulysses whose use of his love proclaimed him lord. (3) His consummating glory. Creation exists for Him as well as by Him. He is

its end as well as its origin. 3. His supremacy in relation to His Church. He is (1) Its sovereign, "Head"; (2) Its force, "Beginning." (3) Life, "Firstborn from the dead." His risen life is the life of the Church. II. THE EXPLANATION OF HIS PRE-EMINENCE IS HIS DIVINE PLENITUDE. He is the Pleroma, the totality of Divine attributes and powers. 1. In Him are all the Divine resources. He is the fulness of wisdom, power, love. 2. In Him all those resources permanently "dwell." Because He is thus full of God, He must in pre-eminence be fully God. III. THE WORK OF CHRIST IN HIS PRE-EMINENCE AND PLENITUDE IS THE WORK OF RECONCILIATION. 1. Reconcile what? "All things." 2. How? "By the blood of His cross." (U. R. Thomas.) *The glory of the Son*:—There are here three grand conceptions of Christ's relations. I. To God. Paul uses language which was familiar on the lips of his antagonists. Alexandrian Judaism had much to say about the "Word," and spoke of it as the Image of God. Probably this teaching reached Colossæ. An image is a likeness as of a king's head on a coin or a face in a mirror. Here it is that which makes the invisible visible. 1. God in Himself is inconceivable and unapproachable. "No man hath seen," &c. He is beyond the sense and above understanding. There is in every human spirit a dim consciousness of His presence, but that is not knowledge. Creatural limitations and man's sin prevents it. 2. Christ is the perfect manifestation of God. Through Him we know all that we can know of God. "He that hath seen Me," &c. The great fathomless, shoreless ocean of the Divine nature is like a "closed sea." Christ is the broad river which brings its waters to men. Our souls cry for the living God; and never will that orphaned cry be answered but in the possession of Christ, in whom we possess the Father also. II. To CREATION. "Firstborn." 1. At first sight this seems to include Him in the great family of creatures as the eldest, but it is shown not to be the intention in the next verse, which alleges that Christ was before, and is the agent of, all creation. The true meaning is that He is firstborn in comparison with, or reference to, all creation. 2. The title implies priority in existence and supremacy. It applies to the Eternal Word and not to His incarnation. 3. The necessary clauses state more fully this relation and so confirm and explain the title. (1) The whole universe is set in one class, and He alone over against it. Four times in one sentence we have "all things" repeated, and traced to Him as Creator and Lord. (a) "In the heavens and earth" is quoted from Genesis, and is intended, as then, to be an exhaustive enumeration of the creation according to plan. (β) "Things visible and invisible" includes the whole under another principle of division—there are visible things in heaven, and may be invisible on earth, but wherever they are He made them. (γ) "Whether thrones," &c., an enumeration alluding to dreamy speculations about an angelic hierarchy filling the space between God and men. (2) The language employed brings into strong relief the manifold variety of relations which the Son sustains to the universe. The Greek means "all things considered as a unity." (a) "In Him," regards Him as the creative centre or reservoir in which all creative force resided, and was in a definite act put forth. The error of the Gnostics was to put the act of creation and the thing created as far away as possible from God, and is here met. (β) But the possible dangers of that profound truth are averted by the preposition "through" Him. That presupposes the clear demarcation between creature and creator, and extricates the person of the firstborn from all risk of being confounded with the creation, while it makes Him the medium of the Divine energy, and so shows His relation to the Divine nature. He is the image of the invisible God, and accordingly through Him have all things been created. "The express image of His person by whom He made the worlds." (γ) "For Him," All things sprung from His will, and return thither again. These relations are more than once declared of the Father. What theory of Christ's person explains the fact? 3. His existence before the creation is repeated. "He" is emphatic, "He Himself"; "is" emphasises not only pre-existence, but absolute existence. "He was" would not have said so much as "He is before all things." "Before Abraham was I am." 4. In Him all things hold together. He is the element in and by which is that continued creation which is the preservation of the universe. He links all creatures and forces into a co-operant whole, reconciling their antagonisms, and melting all their notes into music which God may hear, however discordant it may be to us. III. To THE CHURCH. A parallel is plainly intended between Christ's relation to the material creation and to the spiritual. As is the pre-incarnate word to the universe, so is the incarnate Christ to the Church. 1. Christ the Head and the Church His body. Popular physiology regards the head as the seat of life. So our Lord is the source

of that spiritual life which flows from Him into His members, and is sight in the eye, strength in the arm, swiftness in the foot, colour in the cheek, richly various in its manifestations, but one in its nature and all His. That thought leads to Him as the centre of unity by whom the many members become one body. The head, too, is the symbol of authority. 2. Christ is the beginning of the Church. In nature He was before all, and the source of all. So "the beginning" does not mean the first member of a series, but the power which causes the series to begin. The root is the beginning of flowers, although we may say the first flower is. 3. He is head and beginning by means of His resurrection. (1) He is firstborn from the dead, and His communication of spiritual life to His Church requires the historical fact of His resurrection, for a dead Christ could not be the source of life. (2) He is the beginning through His resurrection, too, in regard to raising us from the dead. He is the firstfruits, and bears promise of a mighty harvest. Because He lives we shall live also. 4. So Paul concludes that in all things He is first, and all things are that He may be first. Whether in nature or grace the pre-eminence is supreme. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Ver. 15. Christ the Image of the invisible God.—I. CHRIST IS THE IMAGE OF GOD. Image signifies that which represents another, and as things are variously represented, so there is a great variety of images. 1. Some are imperfect, and express but some particular, and that defectively. (1) Artificial images, whether drawn, sculptured, or embroidered, represent only the colour, figure, and lineaments, and have nothing of life and nature. (2) Adam, who was called God's image because the conditions of his nature had some resemblance to the properties of God—intellect, will, and lordship; but he had not God's essence. 2. Some are perfect. We call a child the image of his father, inasmuch as he has not merely the colour or figure of his parent, but his nature and properties, soul, body, life, &c. So a prince has not only the appearance of his predecessor's power, but its substance (Gen. v. 3). 3. In which of these two senses is the figure true of Christ? Surely not in the sense that man is the image of God. For intending to exalt Christ and to show that His dignity is so great as to capacitate Him to save us, it would ill suit his design if the apostle attributed no more to Him than what holds good for any man. Read our Lord's own testimony (John xiv. 9, xii. 45). Now where is the portrait of which it may be said that he who has seen it has seen him whom it represents? This can only be found in one which contains the nature of the original (Heb. i. 3). (1) God's nature is perfectly represented in Christ. Hence He is called God over and over again. (2) Christ represents the Father in His properties, eternity, immutability, wisdom, &c. (3) In His works (John v. 19; Heb. i. 10; John i. 3, &c.). 4. Now no child perfectly represents his father; there are differences of manner, disposition, feature: but Christ represents the Father in everything. 5. This sacred truth overthrows two heresies—the Sabellian and the Arian. The former confounded the Son with the Father, the latter rent them asunder. Those took from the Son His person, these His nature. Paul demonstrates the Sabellian error here, for no one is the image of himself; and the Arian, for Christ could not be a perfect image unless He had the same nature as the Father. II. GOD, WHOSE IMAGE JESUS IS, IS INVISIBLE. 1. The Divine nature is spiritual, and hence invisible, inasmuch as the eye sees only corporeal objects. For this cause, Moses, in teaching that there is nothing material in the Divine essence that might be represented by pencil or chisel, remonstrates to them that when God manifested Himself they "saw no similitude" (Deut. iv. 12, 15). Whence He infers they must make no graven image. 2. But the meaning here is also that God is incomprehensible. Seeing is often put for knowing. The Seraphim cover their faces to embody this truth (Isa. vi. 2). Through His grace indeed we may know something of His nature (Heb. i. 1); but however clear it does not amount to a seeing, *i.e.*, an apprehension which conceives the proper form of the subject. 3. Why is this quality mentioned here? To show us that God has manifested Himself to us by His Son. There is a secret opposition between image and invisible. God has a nature so impenetrable that without this His Image men would not have known Him. (1) By Him He made, preserves, and governs the world. To Him we must refer the revelations of God under the Old Testament. (2) But here the reference is to what took place in the fulness of time. In Christ we see all the wonders of the invisible Father—His justice, mercy, power, &c., in all their completeness, whereas creation only shows the edges. (*J. Daillé.*) *The image of God*:—We believe in many things we never saw, on the evidence of other senses

than sight. We believe in music, invisible odours, nay, in what we can neither hear, taste, smell, nor touch—our own life, our soul. Thus it were irrational to disbelieve in God because He is invisible. Still we are tempted to forget His existence, and as for the ungodly "God is not in all their thoughts." I. I WOULD WARN YOU AGAINST ALLOWING GOD TO BE OUT OF MIND BECAUSE HE IS OUT OF SIGHT. 1. This is a danger to which our very constitution exposes us. Hence the necessity of striving to walk by faith, not by sight. This is difficult because we are creatures of sense. The dead are out of sight and so often forgotten, the eternal world, the devil, and so God. 2. Why should the invisibility of God be turned into a temptation to sin? It should rather minister to holy care. How solemn the thought that an unseen Being is ever at our side! Were this realized, then bad thoughts would be banished, and unholo deeds crushed, and purity and heavenliness imparted to the life and conduct. II. THE VISIBLE REVELATIONS OF THE INVISIBLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WERE MOST PROBABLY MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SON OF GOD. To Jacob at Peniel, to Joshua at Jericho, to Manoah, to Isaiah (chap. vi.), and to others God appeared. How are we to reconcile this with "No man hath seen God at any time"? Only by regarding these appearances as manifestations of Him who is "the image of the invisible God." This is in perfect harmony with other passages in the history of redemption. We know for certain that the fruits of the incarnation were anticipated, and the fruits of His death enjoyed before He died. Why not, then, the fact of the incarnation? Viewed in this light, these Old Testament stories acquire a deeper and more enduring interest. In the guide of Abraham's pilgrimage I see the guide of my own. Jacob's success in wrestling imparts vigour to my prayers. III. THE GREATNESS OF THE WORKER CORRESPONDS WITH THE GREATNESS OF THE WORK. It is not always so. Sometimes God accomplishes mighty ends by feeble instruments in both nature and grace. But redemption is differentiated in greatness, grandeur, and difficulty from all the other works of God. It cost more love, labour, and wisdom than all yon starry universe. But great as is the work the Worker is greater—the visible Image of the invisible God. IV. GOD AS REVEALED VISIBLY IN JESUS MEETS AND SATISFIES ONE OF OUR STRONGEST WANTS. 1. The second commandment runs more counter to our nature than any other. (1) Look at the heathen world. For long ages the world was given up to idolatry with the exception of a single people. To fix the mind on an invisible Being seemed like attempting to anchor a vessel on a flowing tide. And as a climbing plant, for lack of a better stay, will throw its arms round a rotting tree; rather than want something palpable to which their thoughts might cling, men have worshipped the Divine Being through the most hideous forms. (2) Look at the proneness to sensuous worship among the Jews. (3) We find the evidence of this propensity in the Christian Church. Fancy some old Roman rising from his grave on the banks of the Tiber, what could he suppose but that the "Eternal City" had changed her idols, and by some strange turn of fortune had given to one Jesus the old throne of Jupiter and assigned the crown which Juno wore in his days to another queen of heaven? 2. In what way are we to account for this universal tendency? It is not enough to call it folly; the feelings from which it springs are deeply rooted in our nature. You tell me that God is infinite, incomprehensible; but it is as difficult for me to make such a Being the object of my affections as to grasp a sound or detain a shadow. This heart craves something more congenial to my nature, and seeks in God a palpable object for its affections to cling to. 3. Now see how this want is met in the Gospel by Him who "knoweth our frame." In His incarnate Son the Infinite is brought within the limits of my understanding, the Invisible is revealed to my sight. In that eye bent upon me I see Divine love in a form I can feel. God addresses me in human tones, and stands before me in the fashion of a man; and when I fall at His feet with Thomas I am an image worshipper but no idolater, for I bend to the "image of the invisible God." V. IN WHAT SENSE IS CHRIST THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD? 1. It means much more than mere resemblance; it conveys the idea of shadow less than of substance. I have known an infant bear such a resemblance to his father that what his tongue could not tell his face did: and people struck by the likeness exclaimed, "He is the very image of his father." Such was Adam in his state of innocence. Now it may be said that as our Lord, like the first Adam, was holy, he is therefore called the image of God; yet that does not exhaust the meaning, nor is it on that account that Paul calls Him the second Adam. Nor have they sounded the depths who say He was so called because He was endowed with power to do the works of God. For many others have been in that sense equally images of God. But where are they represented as "God mani-

fest in the flesh"? 2. In Christ's character and works we have a living, visible, perfect image of the invisible God. (1) In Him we see the power of God, and notably at the grave of Lazarus. To make something out of nothing is a work more visibly stamped with divinity than to make one thing out of another—a living man out of lifeless dust, and then on that mountain side the bread multiplies. (2) In Christ we have the image of a holy God. (3) In Christ we have the image of a God willing and waiting to save. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The image of the invisible God*:—I draw out from my pocket a little miniature, and look upon it and tears drop from my eyes. What is it? A piece of ivory. What is on it? A face that some artist has painted there. It is a radiant face. My history is connected with it. When I look upon it tides of feeling swell in me. Some one comes to me, and says: "What is that?" I say, "It is my mother." "Your mother! I should call it a piece of ivory with water-colours on it." To me it is my mother. When you come to scratch it, and analyze it, and scrutinize the elements of it, to be sure it is only a sign or dumb show, but it brings to me that which is no sign nor dumb show. According to the law of my mind, through it I have brought back, interpreted, refreshed, revived, made patent in me, all the sense of what a loving mother was. So I take my conception of Christ as He is painted in dead letters on dead paper, and to me is interpreted the glory, the sweetness, the patience, the love, the joy-inspiring nature of God; and I do not hesitate to say, "Christ is my God," just as I would not hesitate to say of that picture, "It is my mother." "But," says a man, "you do not mean that you really sucked at the breast of that picture?" No, I did not; but I will not allow any one to drive me into any such minute analysis as that. Now I hold that the Lord Jesus Christ, as represented in the New Testament, brings to my mind all the effluence of brightness and beauty which I am capable of understanding. I can take in no more. He is said to be the express image of God's glory. He reveals to us a God whose interest in man is inherent, and who through His mercy and goodness made sacrifices for it. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die for it. What is the only begotten Son of God? Who knows? Who can know? That His only begotten Son is precious to Him we may know, judging from the experience of an earthly father; and we cannot doubt that when He gave Christ to come into life, and humble Himself to man's condition, and take upon Himself an ignominious death, He sacrificed that which was exceedingly dear to Him. And this act is a revelation of the feeling of God toward the human race. (*H. W. Reecher.*) *Christ the image of God*:—There is in Rome an elegant fresco by Guido—"The Aurora." It covers a lofty ceiling. Looking up at it from the pavement your neck grows stiff, your head dizzy, and the figures indistinct. You soon tire and turn away. The owner of the palace has placed a broad mirror near the floor. You may now sit down before it as at a table, and at your leisure look into the mirror, and enjoy the fresco that is above you. There is no more weariness, nor indistinctness, nor dizziness. Like the Rospiglioso mirror beneath "The Aurora," Christ reflects the glory of the Divine nature to the eye of man. *Christ is intended to be familiarly known*:—The whole value of the gospels to Erasmus lay in the vividness with which they brought home to their readers the personal impression of Christ Himself. "Were we to have seen Him with our own eyes, we should not have so intimate a knowledge as they give us of Christ, speaking, healing, dying, rising again, as it were in our very presence. . . . If the footprints of Christ are shown us in any place, we kneel down and adore them. Why do we not rather venerate the living and breathing picture of Him in these books? . . . It may be the safer course," he goes on, with characteristic irony, "to conceal the state mysteries of kings, but Christ desires His mysteries to be spread abroad as openly as was possible. (*Little's "Historical Lights."*) *The firstborn*:—The expression as it stands is somewhat ambiguous. 1. Does it imply that all creatures have been born, but that Jesus was born before them? Impossible. All human creatures have been born, all at least but the first; and even he was "the son of God" (Luke iii. 38). We are all "God's offspring." But, except in poetry, we can scarcely speak of the birth of the earth, ocean, stars, &c. They have been created, not born; they are the creatures rather than the children of God. 2. Nor can the meaning be first-born within the circle of all creation; for the higher nature of Jesus is not within that circle: it is far above it; before Abraham, and sun, moon, and stars, He was and is. 3. The apostle's idea is that Jesus is the hereditary Lord of the whole creation. The representation is based on the prerogative that is still attached in many lands to primogeniture. That prerogative is great. In virtue of it the first-

born of the Queen is Prince of Wales; of the Emperor of Germany, Crown Prince; of the late Emperor Napoleon, Prince Imperial. In ancient times and among the apostle's people, in the days of their national grandeur, there was a corresponding privilege attached to the royal firstborn. And hence in the course of time the word came to be so employed that the ideas of birth and priority of birth got sometimes to be merged out of sight, while the ideas of special hereditary privilege, prerogative, and honour stood prominently forth. Hence God said to Pharaoh, "Israel is My son, My firstborn," because they were in distinction from other peoples the recipients of the advantages which were the natural prerequisites of primogeniture. Again in Jer. xxxi. 9 the idea of priority in birth is entirely shaded off, for that priority could not be affirmed of Ephraim—the reference is to peculiarity of prerogative and honour. Take again Heb. xii. 22, 23. Here Christians are called the firstborn, and not Christians in heaven, for they are distinguished from the "spirits of just men made perfect," but Christians on earth. All such Christians, though scattered, and variously denominated, are "the one general assembly and Church of the firstborn." This shows that the term may be and is used without priority of birth, and in the sense of being God's very highly-favoured children. All the blessings of primogeniture are theirs because they are Christ's, the Firstborn. As He is the Crown Prince of the universe, the Prince Imperial and hereditary Lord of the whole creation, they are constituted joint heirs with Him of the "inheritance incorruptible," &c. Again, this interpretation is supported by Rom. viii. 29. "Firstborn among many brethren" is a notable expression. We cannot suppose that God desired to secure the Saviour a relation of chronological priority. Jesus was already before all. The idea is that it was the aim of God to remove from the peerless Son the condition of solitariness in the parental and heavenly home. This aim was accomplished by surrounding Him with a circle of multitudinous brethren, bearing the familiar family likeness, who might be sharers with Him in His inheritance of glory. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Christ is one of us*:—On the centenary of the birth of Robert Stephenson, there was a very large demonstration at Newcastle. The town was paraded by a vast procession who carried banners in honour of the distinguished engineer. In the procession there was a band of peasants, who carried a little banner of very ordinary appearance, but bearing the words, "He was one of us." They were inhabitants of the small village in which Robert Stephenson had been born, and had come to do him honour. They had a right to a prominent position in that day's proceedings, because he to whom so many thousands did honour was one of them. Even so, whatever praise the thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers can ascribe to Christ in that grand celebration when time shall be no more, we from earth can wave our banners with the words written on them, "He was one of us."

Ver. 16. **By Him were all things created.**—I. SOME OF THOSE CASES WHICH ILLUSTRATE THE HARMONY BETWEEN NATURAL RELIGION AND OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH. 1. The doctrine of the being of a God. I do not need to open the Bible to learn that. It is enough that I open my eyes, and turn them on the book of nature, where it stands legibly written on every page. 2. So also is the doctrine that man is a sinner. It is enough to open my heart, or read in the light of conscience the blotted record of my past life. 3. Such also is the doctrine that sin deserves punishment. Hell is no discovery of the Bible. In vain do men flee from Christianity to escape what their uneasy conscience feels to be a painful doctrine. 4. Such also is the doctrine that man cannot save himself. In what country or what age of heathenism does man appear standing erect before his God, demanding justice? In none. All her temples had vicarious sacrifices and atoning altars. 5. Such also is the doctrine that the soul survives death. This hope has been a star that shone in every sky, a flower that bloomed in the poorest soil. Although it cannot be said that the doctrine of the resurrection is to be placed in the same class with those universal fixed beliefs, yet may not the feelings which prompt to such tender care of the lifeless body have suggested the idea? Different from these, the doctrine of God incarnate is one which nature nowhere teaches us. Our proofs of this must be sought for in Scripture. In illustration of this remark, notice that—II. THE WORD OF GOD BOTH HERE AND ELSEWHERE ASCRIBES THE WORK OF CREATION TO JESUS (1 Cor. viii. 6; Eph. iii. 9; John i. 3). Our Lord has been connected with creation sometimes more in beautiful fancies than in plain facts. There is a flower, e.g., which the piety of other days associated with the piety and love of Calvary. In the form and arrangement of its parts it presents such a remarkable

resemblance to the cross and nails, enriched by a halo of floral glory, that, as if originally made to anticipate and afterwards left to commemorate our Redeemer's sufferings, it has received the name of the *passion flower*. And I remember how, in wooded dell, or on brown heather hill, we were wont to pull up a fern, and having cut its root across wonder on the initials Jesus Christ printed there on the wounded stem. And when the mariner, leaving our northern latitudes, pushes southward, he sees a starry cross emerging from the deep; and as his course tends further it rises higher in the heavens, till, when the pole-star has dipped beneath the wave, he gazes with awe and wonder at the sign of salvation blazing above his head. In these things a devout superstition sought to gratify its affections. It is not, however, in these fancies that we seek or see our Lord's connection with nature. But as, with the genius that aspires to immortality, the painter leaves his name in the corner of the canvas, so Inspiration, dipping her pen in indelible truth, has inscribed the name of Jesus on all we see—on sun and stars, flower and tree, rock and mountain, the unstable waters and the firm land; and also on what we do not see—angels and spirits, the city and heavens of the eternal world. This is not fancy, but fact. No voice ever sounded more distinctly than that of revealed truth proclaiming the Creatorship of Jesus, and hence His Lordship of all. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Christ the Creator*.—I. CONSIDER THE STATEMENT ITSELF. 1. Heaven itself was created by and for Christ Jesus. (1) There is such a place, as well as such a state, and of that place Jesus is the centre. (2) It was created for Jesus, and for the people whom He will bring there to be one for ever with Himself. (3) It exists by Jesus and for Jesus. (a) Prepared by Jesus. He is the designer of it. (b) Reflects Jesus. He is the soul of it. (c) Praises Jesus. He is the King of it. 2. The angels. All their ranks were made by Him and for Him. (1) To worship Him, and glorify Him with their adoration. (2) To rejoice with Him and in Him, as they do when sinners repent. (3) To guard Christ's people in life, and bring them to Him in death. (4) To carry out His purposes of judgment, as with Pharaoh, &c. (5) To achieve His purposes of deliverance, as Peter from prison. 3. This world was made by Him to be—(1) A place for Him to live and die upon. (2) A stage for His people to live and act upon. (3) A province to be fully restored to His dominion. (4) A new world in the ages to come, to bless other worlds, if such there be; and to display, for ever, the glories of Jesus. 4. All the lower creatures are for Jesus. "And that are in earth." (1) They are needful to man, and so to our Lord's system of grace. (2) They are illustrations of Christ's wisdom, power, and goodness. (3) They are to be treated kindly for His sake. 5. Men were created by and for Christ. (1) That He might display a special phase of power and skill, in creating spiritual beings embodied in material forms. (2) That He might become Himself one of them. (3) That He might Himself be the Head of a remarkable order of beings who know both good and evil, are children of God, are bound to God by ties of gratitude, and are one with His Son. (4) That for these He might die: to save them, and to make them His companions, friends, and worshippers for ever. (5) That human thrones, even when occupied by wicked men, might be made to subserve His purpose by restraint or by overruling. II. REVIEW THE REFLECTIONS HENCE ARISING. 1. Jesus, then, is God. "By Him were all things created." 2. Jesus is the clue of the universe; its centre and explanation. All things are to be seen in the light of the cross, and all things reflect light on the cross. For Him all things exist. 3. To live to Jesus, then, is to find out the true object of our being, and to be in accord with all creation. 4. Not living to Jesus, we can have no blessing. 5. We can only live for Him as we live by Him, for so all things do. 6. It is clear that He must triumph. All is going well. If we look at history from His throne, all things are "for Him." "He must reign." Let us comfort one another with these words. What an honour to be the smallest page in the retinue of such a prince! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Advent in Creation*.—A very narrow notion of the functions of Christ is afloat in the atmosphere of popular religious thought, though not formulated into dogmatic phrases. It is that our Lord is limited in work and even in nature to the mission of redemption. Such an idea implies that Christ is dependent on the existence of sin, and that His very being is but an expedient required for the deliverance of man. So stated the doctrine is monstrous. If there had been no sin, Christ would have visited the world in some way of Divine goodness. He came in the creation before the birth of sin. I. THE FACT. 1. As regards the relation of Christ to creation. This is threefold. (1) In Christ is the fundamental basis of creation. "In Him," i.e., His thoughts, are the archetypes of the worlds and their

contents, and the genesis of them follows the principles of His nature. (2) Christ is the instrumental agent of creation "through Him." He is the Mediator in creation as well as redemption. (3) Christ is the end of the creation. "Unto Him," i.e., all things grow into His likeness, they move upwards towards the realization of His life. Christ in His human nature was the highest development of the upward movement of creation. They are also destined to serve and glorify Him. 2. As regards the scope and range of the work of Christ. This was universal in creation. It included: (1) All things visible and invisible, i.e., physical and spiritual existences, or things within our observation and the infinite population of the spaces beyond. (2) All orders of being, "thrones," &c., none too great for His power, none too small for His care. (3) Every variety and every individual. Different classes are specified. Creation is not a work merely of general laws, it implies individual formation under them. II. INFERENCES. 1. As regards Christ. (1) His pre-existence. That which was Divine in Christ was before all things. The Christ-side of God, all that is so touching and winning in the marvellous revelation of God in Jesus, is no new phase of His character. It was before the sterner revelation of Sinai. It is eternal (Heb. xiii. 8). (2) His glory. All that is great and beautiful in creation glorifies Him through whom it came into existence. 2. As regards the creation. (1) This must be in harmony with Christ. Therefore—(a) We must interpret its darker phases by what we know of the spirit and character of Christ. (b) We must expect that ultimately its laws and forces will make for Christianity, breathing benedictions on the faithful followers of Christ, and bringing natural penalties on those who rebel against His rule. (2) We should endeavour to trace indications of the presence of Christ in nature. (*W. J. Adeney, M.A.*) *The work of creation by and for Jesus Christ*:—I. CHRIST IS THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS. Whatever is the act of creation it must be the Divine act; and whoever is the Creator He must be Divine. 1. Creation is always averred to be a Divine act (Gen. i. 1, &c.). It answers to our idea of the highest omnipotence, for "the things which are made were not made of the things which do appear." 2. The creating act is always set before us as the basis on which the exclusive honours of the Deity are challenged. (1) God puts His right to worship on this act. (2) He suspends the veracity of His statements on it. (3) His majesty and pre-eminence are made to depend upon it. 3. The creating act is always represented as designed to manifest the glory of Him by whom it was done. "For thy pleasure they are and were created." "The heavens declare the glory of God." 4. The creating act constitutes the very groundwork of natural religion. "We will wait upon Thee, for Thou hast made all these things." 5. There is a validity stamped upon all the blessings of revelation, because they issue from Him who is this universal Creator. The great blessings of the gospel are placed in immediate connection with this omnific act. (1) Reconciliation. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us." (2) Atonement. "It became Him, for whom are all things," &c. (3) Illumination. "God, who hath commanded the light to shine," &c. (4) Protection. Let us commit our souls to Him as a faithful Creator. 6. Idolatry is rebuffed on this exclusive ground, that it is offered to those who are not the makers of the universe. "Worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator." 7. Creation is always considered an unassisted act. "I am the Lord that maketh all things." 8. Now, without any qualification or exception, creation is attributed to Christ; how, then, can we deny Him to be Divine? II. ALL THINGS WERE CREATED FOR CHRIST, AND FORM HIS RIGHT AND PREROGATIVE. 1. There are two forms of the Divine foreknowledge. (1) God is acquainted with actions however future. (2) God realizes in His own mind what would be the issue of circumstances had they been different from what they are. "They would have repented long ago." 2. We are assured, then, that this universe being created for Christ was not a supplementary design upon some previous arrangement that had been tried and had failed. This is our method, not God's. Christ wrought this instrument, and it shall go on in His service. 3. Foreseeing sin He made the world in which it was to be vanquished, and hence we read of God's eternal purpose, and of "the Lamb which was foreordained before the foundation of the world." The world is still in revolt, but the eternal purpose shall be accomplished, and all the forces of nature and history shall contribute to it. 4. More particularly all things are created for Christ, inasmuch as—(1) They furnish the scenes of His mediation. "Lo, I come!" The earth claimed His birth, life, and entombment. He made it the seat of His Church. Here is the sphere of His Spirit's influence. This is the receptacle of His most complacent operations, where He is

satisfied for all the travail of His soul. This is the arena of His spiritual victories. (2) They are tributaries to His praise. All things are created to do Him direct homage. Angels do; the redeemed will; devils and sinners shall. III. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO PROPOSITIONS. That Christ is the Creator and Proprietor of all things. 1. This is shown by arguing the difficulty of our redemption, because only the Creator could surmount it. 2. The sufficiency of that redemption because the Creator has wrought it. (*R. W. Hamilton, LL.D.*) *Christ the end of creation*:—I. The text furnishes a PROOF OF OUR LORD'S DIVINITY. 1. He is in the position of a servant who works for others; He is a Master who, by other hands or His own, works for Himself. Look at the condition of man. Whatever office he fills in Providence he is a servant, and on crowned monarchs, who are but upper servants, Paul lays the duty of doing all to the glory of God. Nor do angels, although holding a much higher rank, differ from us in this respect. "I am thy fellow-servant." "The Lord hath made all things for Himself." This prerogative is held by Christ. 2. Some have attempted to evade the argument for our Lord's Divinity based on the fact of creation. The objectors say that He created by such power as Elijah received from God to restore the widow's son, &c. But the text cuts the ground under their feet. Did Elijah bring back the dead for himself and his own glory? If Christ was less than God, then in kindling the sun He no more acted for Himself than a domestic does in kindling a fire. It is the nature of a creature to hold a servant's place. Now if Jesus were man He was justly condemned, for He laid Himself open to the charge of blasphemy, since, as the Jews truly averred, He made Himself the Son of God, "equal with God." To the "all Mine are Thine," Christ adled "Thine are Mine." All that is God's is Christ's, is the consistent testimony of the New Testament. II. THE GLORY OF GOD WAS THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF CREATION. Sin had to some extent blighted the beauty of creation. Still the Psalmist said, "The heavens declare," &c., and the closer we examine the works of God, the higher our admiration rises. "The whole earth is full of His glory." Some things remain unaffected by the blight of sin, as God made them for Himself; the flowers have lost none of their fragrance, and seas and seasons, obedient to their original impulse, roll on as of old to their Maker's glory. But from man, alas! how is the glory departed! Look at his body when the light of his eye is quenched; or look at his soul. What glory does God get from many of us! III. GOD WILL MAKE EVEN THE WICKED AND THEIR SINS REDOUND TO HIS GLORY. A strange machine is this of Providence. Virtue is struggling with the temptations of poverty, the wicked are in great power, spreading like a green bay-tree. Sin triumphs, and devils seem to defeat the purposes of God. Defeat the purposes of God! Impossible. Did you ever stand beneath the leaden lowering cloud, and mark the lightnings leap, and think that you could grasp the bolt and change its path? Still more foolish and vain his thought who fancies that he can arrest God's purposes. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. Do you, e.g., injure a godly man? God is using you to train up His child in the grace of patience. Messenger of Satan! dost thou buffet an apostle? God uses thee to keep him humble, and to teach him to wear his honours meekly. No man liveth for himself. The most bold and God-hating sinners may rest assured that when the machine of Providence has done its work, and the secret purposes of God are fully completed, it shall be seen how the Lord hath made all things for Himself. IV. SINCE CHRIST HATH MADE ALL THINGS FOR HIMSELF, HIS PEOPLE ARE CALLED TO CONSECRATE THEMSELVES AND THEIR ALL TO HIS GLORY. To this we are called by the obligations of both a natural and spiritual creation. This may expose us to pain; but what pain Jesus endured for us! What owest thou unto thy Lord? You cannot tell that; therefore lay your all at His feet. He who lives for Christ has one end in view which lends dignity to his life. Glorify Christ and you shall enjoy Him. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) What is said of the Father in 1 Cor. viii. 6, the same is here said of the Son. All things must find their meeting-point, their reconciliation, at length in Him from whom they took their rise—in the Word as the mediatorial agent, and through the Word in the Father as the primary source. The Word is the final cause as well as the creative agent of the universe. This ultimate goal of the present dispensation in time is similarly stated in several passages. It is represented—1. As the birth-throe and deliverance of all creation through Christ (Rom. viii. 19, &c.). 2. The absolute and final subjection of universal nature to Him (1 Cor. xv. 28). 3. The reconciliation of all things through Him (ver. 20). 4. The gathering in one head of the universe in Him (Eph. i. 10). The Eternal Word is the goal of the universe, as He was the starting-

point. It must end in unity, as it proceeded from unity, and the centre of this unity is Christ. (*Bp. Lightfoot.*) "Thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers":—The Colossian heretics seem to have held that all matter was evil, and that therefore the material creation could not have come directly from a good God, but was in a certain sense opposed to Him, or at all events separated from Him by an immense gulf. The void space was bridged by a chain of beings, half abstractions and half persons, gradually becoming more and more material. The lowest of them had created the material universe and now governed it, and were all to be propitiated by worship. Paul opposes the solid truth to these dreams, and instead of a crowd of powers and angelic beings in whom the effulgence of Deity was gradually darkened, and the spirit became more and more thickened into matter, he lifts high and clear against that background of faith the solitary figure of the one Christ. He fills all the space between God and man. There is no need for a crowd of shadowy beings to link heaven with earth. There is a tone of contemptuous impatience in Paul's voice as he quotes the pompous list of sensuous titles which a busy fancy had coined. It is as if he had said, You are being told a great deal about these angel hierarchies, and know all about their ranks and gradations. I do not know anything about them; but this I know, that if, amid the unseen things in the heavens or the earth, there be any such, my Lord made them, and is their Master. He is first and last in all things, to be listened to, loved, and worshipped by men. As when the full moon rises, so when Christ appears, all the lesser stars with which Alexandrian and Eastern speculation had peopled the abysses of the sky are lost in the mellow radiance, and instead of a crowd of flickering ineffectual lights there is one perfect orb, "and heaven is overflowed." "We see no creature any more save Jesus only." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Ver. 17. By Him all things consist.—That is, Christ upholds, rules, and governs all things by His providence, as is shown elsewhere (*Heb. i. 2, 3; Prov. viii. 15; John v. 12*). Christ is not like a carpenter that makes his house and then leaves it, or like a shipwright that frames his ship and never guides it. I. ALL THINGS ARE SAID TO CONSIST IN HIM in respect of 1—Conservation: in that He keeps all things in their being. 2. Precept: in that from Him are prescribed the laws by which nature, policy, and religion are governed. 3. Operation: in that all things move in Him. 4. His position of means to end. 5. As the universal cause of nature and natural instincts in all creatures, by which they further their own preservation. II. In Him all things consist. 1. As He is God—(1) In respect of ubiquity; He comprehends all things, and is comprehended of nothing. The nations are but a drop of His bucket, and time but a drop of His eternity. (2) In respect of power; in that this whole frame stirreth. (3) In respect of omniscience and wisdom, for all is within His knowledge, and receiveth order from His wisdom. (4) In respect of decree, for the world to be made did from everlasting hang in the foreknowledge and pre-ordination of Christ. 2. As He is Redeemer. All things consist in Him—(1) Because He is that atonement which kept the world from being dissolved. (2) Because the respect of Him and His Church is that which keeps up the world to this day. Were His body complete the world could not stand one hour. (3) Because the promise made to man concerning His prosperity in the use of all creatures is made in Christ. III. In Him all things consist. Which word notes—1. Order. By an excellent order the creatures agree together in a glorious frame; for God is the God of order, not of confusion. (1) But are there not many evils in the world? (a) There may be order in respect of God, though not in respect of us. (b) It follows not that there is no order because we see none (*Rom. xi. 33*). (c) Many of the reasons of human misery are revealed—sin entailing punishment. (d) There may be order in respect of the whole, though not in respect of every part. (2) But there are many sins in the world, and those consist not in Christ, neither tend they to order. (a) These are restrained by Christ. (b) Work out His purposes. 2. Continuance. The world, men, and lower creatures, &c., are maintained in being by Christ. 3. Co-operation. By the providence of Christ all things work together. (1) For Christ's glory; (2) for His people's good. 4. Immortality. Uses—1. For reproof of men's security in sin. Seeing that all things consist in Christ, they cannot stir but He seeth them. 2. It should teach us to trust in Christ, not in second causes. 3. If all things consist in Christ, then much more are the righteous preserved with a special preservation. (*N. Byfield.*) All things exist in Christ:—All things stand together in Him as the causal and conditional sphere of their continued existence. In Him they live

and move and have their being, and in Him the sustentation or upholding of the universe rests. How wondrous, then, the glory and power of the Son of God! Without Him the sun would not shine, nor the seasons revolve; without Him the rain would not descend, nor the rivers run, nor the trees grow, nor the oceans ebb and flow. His power is necessary to summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, to earth and sky. He upholdeth all things by the word of His power, and without Him creation would collapse. Every province of the empire of immensity, with all its contents of life, force, and motion, depends on Him. The intellect of angels reflects His light, the fire of seraphs is the glow of His love, the energy of our own souls is an evidence of His beneficence and skill. In Him all things consist—the power of their support, the primal centre of their order, the rule of their operation. This is the Being in whom we have redemption. What sublimity His greatness sheds around the gospel! What moral richness His gospel throws around nature and humanity! How lofty should be our adoration, how strong our confidence, how warm our love, how complete our submission! (*J. Spence, D.D.*)

Ver. 18. And He is the Head of the body, the Church.—*Christ and His Church*.—I. THE CHURCH. 1. The English word is formed from *ἐκκλησίαν*—belonging to the Lord. (1) Sometimes a distinction is drawn between Church and congregation. Although Christ is Lord of all, yet He bears a peculiarly endearing relationship to the company within the congregation who constitute the Church proper. They are His “peculiar” possession, people, servants, and friends. (2) Sometimes we call the edifice in which the disciples assemble a church, and properly, because it belongs to the Lord. 2. The word is a translation of *ἐκκλησία*, and is peculiarly applicable to the people as distinguished from the place. It was borrowed from those Greeks who had free municipal institutions. Slaves were not permitted to form part of the company, and were not eligible to municipal offices and honours, and had no voice or vote. A church, therefore, is a company of free men. 3. The two meanings in combination reach the idea that the Church of Christ is the company of free men whose privilege it is to belong to the Lord. 4. Christians are a “body,” an organized community, in which all the members, however humble, find a place and do a work, and not a mere heterogeneous mob. Each member can be helpful to the others. II. THE HEAD. This implies—1. That Christ belongs to the body, the Church. He is not outside and merely over it. He is within it as its principal member. He partakes of its moral nature, and then of the moral nature of all its members. He is free as they are, only more gloriously; it is His joy also to be useful, only His devotion is far more sublime. 2. The representation is incomplete. He is Heart too—both head and heart in one; even as He is corner-stone at every corner, and all round the Temple of God. As the Heart, He is the centre of all the vitalizing influences that build the whole body into the fulness of health and vigour; the fountain of the love which is the sweetest outcome of manhood. 3. As the Head, He thinks for the whole body, and plans and guides. The hands cannot think for themselves, though they are noble workers; the feet do not know where to go, but beautiful are they when running errands at the bidding of the love that is in the heart, or of the life that emanates from the head. III. THE BEGINNING. Of what? Jesus was “the beginning of the creation of God.” Here He is at once—1. The beginning of the resurrection life, being Himself “the firstborn from among the dead,” and thus—2. The beginning of the Church of the living God; the Head of that body in which, even as it exists on earth, there is a spring-seed of that higher life that has been brought within the reach of all. IV. Christ is consequently eminently qualified to have in all things THE PRE-EMINENCE. It was the Father’s pleasure that he should have it. He has it now as His right, and will continue so to have it, until all opposition to its rule be swept away for ever. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Christ the Head of the Church*.—I. CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH IN EACH OF HIS NATURES. For here He is called the Head of the Church, who had before been called the image of the invisible God. But that image was the eternal Son of God, the incarnate Word: therefore Christ, the God-man, is the Head of the Church. For the Church ought to possess such a head as might have a natural conformity with the rest of the members to be incorporated in it. Now this conformity suits Christ according to His human nature; whence Christ and the Church are called one flesh (Eph. v. 31). But it was also necessary that the Church should have such a head as could infuse into it spiritual life. This is the province of God alone; whence God is plainly called the husband and the Head of the Church (Ps. xlv. 10). Hence

many observations arise: 1. Whereas the Head of the Church is God, we infer (1) that the Church will abide for ever, neither shall the gates of hell prevail against it; for if God be with us, who shall be against us? A less than God would have been incompetent to the protection of the Church; for the devil, and almost the whole world, wage constant war against it. (2) That the members of the Church ought to obey their Head in all things. For there is an infinite obligation which binds every creature to obey its God; but that obligation, if possible, surpasses infinite, whereby the Church, redeemed and sanctified, is bound to be subject to its God, its mystical and life-giving Head. (3) That the ascension of Christ into heaven has not deprived the Church of its Head: nay, He is present, and will be always present, with His whole Church, by the power of His Divinity, although He may not appear to our eyes by His bodily presence. 2. Inasmuch as our Head is a man, we infer two things: (1) On account of His alliance of nature, He must of necessity intimately love us, and have such a keen sense of our miseries as to be most ready to succour us (Judg. x. 16; Heb. ii. 17, 18). (2) We have this comfort, that every ground of triumphing over us is taken from the devil. He overcame the first Adam, the head of the race; but the Second Adam, the Head of the Church, overcame him. Nay, in Christ, we who are His members conquer, just as in Adam we were conquered. II. IN WHAT RESPECTS CHRIST IS CALLED THE HEAD. 1. The head differs from its members—(1) In eminence or dignity. The head possesses more perfectly all the senses than the subordinate members; so Christ, the mystical Head, possesses all spiritual grace more abundantly than men and angels put together (John iii. 34). (2) In way of direction or government. The head regulates and directs; the members are ruled and directed. So Christ has the absolute government of the Church (Eph. v. 22, 23). (3) In way of causality or influence. For the head communicates sense and motion to all its members. So Christ sends forth spiritual life and the motion of grace into His members which are otherwise insensible, dead, and destitute of all spiritual motion (John xv. 5; Phil. iv. 13). 2. Those things in which the agreement of the head and the members is perceived. (1) The natural head hath a natural conformity with the rest of the members; for as Horace hath rightly said, it would be monstrous and ridiculous “if a painter should form a design of uniting a horse’s neck to a human head.” Thus monstrous would it be if the Head of the Church had not a natural conformity with the Church. But Christ hath this, as is shown (Heb. ii.). (2) The head and the members have a conformity in their destination to the same end, viz., the preservation and safety of the whole person: thus Christ, and His members, which are one person, are ordained to the attainment of eternal glory and happiness; and to the accomplishment of this end both head and members assiduously co-operate. This is the care of the Head, to lead its members to final blessedness (John xvii. 12). Hence He is called the Saviour of the body (Eph. v. 23). (3) They agree in the circumstance of their having a continuous union with each other, and all of them deriving their motion and intellectuality from the same soul. So this mystical Head, and all the members of it, have a certain mutual continuity, and have their spiritual intellectuality and vivifying principle from the same source. For there is between Christ and His members an uninterrupted union by means of the Holy Spirit (Eph. iv. 16). III. WHO AND WHAT ARE THEY OUT OF WHOM THE BODY OF CHRIST IS COMPOSED? 1. The term Church is derived from a word signifying “to call out”; it is therefore an assembly of those called out. And this calling is effected by the ministry of the gospel, and other means which God has appointed. 2. This external vocation and profession constitutes the visible Church. But there is also another more effectual vocation joined to this in some persons, namely, by grace implanted through the power of the Spirit in the hearts of the called. 3. Then it follows—(1) That those who stand related to the Church as evil humours to the human body are not true members of the Church; for each sound body desires the preservation of its members; but it does not preserve evil humours, but expels them. (2) That those who stand related to the Church as dead men to humanity are not true members of the Church; such as wicked men and infidels. (3) That those whom the Church itself would not acknowledge as members or its parts, if it knew what they are, Christ, who knows all things, does not acknowledge. (4) That the Church, which is the body of Christ, hath no member which doth not receive a vital influx from the Head: for the same Spirit is diffused from the Head to all the members (Rom. viii. 9). But infidels and the wicked have not this vitality of grace flowing from the Head. (5) That the same man is not at the same time a member of Christ and of the

devil; but the wicked men are numbered amongst the servants and the children of the devil (John viii. 38, 44), therefore they are not to be reckoned among the members of Christ. 4. We conclude, therefore, that this body of the Church, of which Christ Himself is the Head, does not consist of any unfaithful and wicked members, but of the pious and holy alone; whom God delivers from the power of darkness, and translates into the kingdom of His dear Son. 5. Hence we may learn—(1) It is not sufficient for salvation to be a member of any visible Church by an outward profession of faith, unless you are a member of the Catholic Church by a true faith and the Spirit dwelling in the heart. (2) It is not befitting Christians to envy those who are endowed with the more excellent gifts; because they are members of the same body: what, therefore, is conferred on one, that should be esteemed as given to all. (3) Since godly members are of the same body, it behoves them to be ready to assist each other; and they ought to feel equally affected with the good or evil which fall to others as with their own (1 Cor. xii. 26). (*Bp. Davenant.*)

The Head of the Church:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY OUR LORD'S HEADSHIP? 1. His representation of the Church as a body. At the first creation God dealt with the race as represented in Adam—hence original sin. In order to salvation, which was only possible, perhaps, because we did not fall singly, God instituted a second federation, of which Christ is the Head, the second Adam. Christians are chosen, accepted, and preserved in Him. 2. Our Lord is Head in a mystical sense (Col. ii. 19). (1) The head is indispensable to life; so Jesus is the vitalizing Head of all His people. "He is our life." Separation from Him is spiritual death. (2) The head is the throne of supreme government. It is from the brain that the mandate issues which uplifts the hand, &c. Thus in the Church Christ is the great directing Head; from Him the only binding commands go forth; to Him the spiritual yield a cheerful homage. (3) The head is the glory of the body. There the chief beauty of manhood dwells. Christ is fairer than the children of men, and in Him the beauty of the Church is summed up. 3. Christ's Headship is conjugal. He is the Bridegroom, the Church is His Bride. As the husband exercises headship in the house, not at all tyrannical or magisterial, but founded upon the rule of nature and endorsed by the consent of love, so Christ rules in His Church, not as a despot compelling His subject bride against her will, but as a husband well beloved, obtaining obedience from the heart. 4. Christ is Head as King in Zion. "One is your Master," &c. To no other do we render spiritual obeisance. Martyrs have bled for this truth. Some Churches have not learned it. II. *WHAT IT IMPLIES.* Since Christ is Head of the Church—1. He alone can determine doctrines for her. It is nothing that a doctrine comes down with gray antiquity to make it venerable. All the fathers, divines, and confessors put together cannot add a word to the faith once delivered to the saints. Nothing is doctrine to the Church but what is contained in the Scriptures. 2. He only can legislate for the Church. In a state, if a knot of persons should profess to make laws for the kingdom they would be laughed at; if they should attempt to enforce them they would be amenable to punishment. So the Church has no power to make laws for herself since she is not her own head; and no one has any right to make laws for her but Christ. 3. He is the living administrator in the Church; but as monarchs often administer through lieutenants, so Christ administers through His Spirit who dwells in the hearts of His people. When we search the Law Book He is their guide. 4. This sole authority must be maintained rigorously. (1) Some would have us guided by results. It has been discussed whether missions should continue since there are so few converts. But how can the question be raised when He has said, "Go ye into all the world," &c. (2) We are not to be guided by the times. Our King and laws are the same, and let the times be scientific or barbaric, our duty is the same. III. *ON WHAT DOES IT REST?* 1. On the natural supremacy of Christ's nature. He is perfect man and God over all blessed for ever. 2. On His redemption. 3. On His conquest. 4. On the Divine decree (Psa. ii.). IV. *WHAT DOES IT TEACH?* 1. Does it not make each inquire, "If the entire Church is to yield this obedience, am I yielding it?" 2. Am I in the habit of judging according to my wishes or according to the Statute Book of the King? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The body and its Head:—*What striking figures are employed to describe the union between Christ and His Church! 1. They are the flock, He is the Shepherd (John x. 11-14). They are the bride, He is the Bridegroom (Rev. xxi. 2-6). 3. They are the branches, He is the Stem. 4. Here, and elsewhere, they are the body, He the Head. I. *How close the connection between the head and the body.* Yet as close is that between Christ and His Church. Not only is it

near and dear to Him, it is identified with Him (Eph. i. 23). His human body was not less necessary to His completeness as a man than His Church is to the completeness of His glory. It was much for Christ to notice, more to pity, more still to die for sinners, but to draw so near to them as this—well may Paul call it a great mystery. II. What a FELLOW FEELING there is between the body and the head! Is a man's body in pain, and does not the head know and feel, and the tongue complain? So when the Church suffers the Saviour feels (Heb. iv. 15; Matt. xxv. 40). III. What a beautiful CONFORMITY; how exactly is the head proportioned to the body, and how precisely is it suited in its make to the body's wants! Suppose the head of a brute were affixed, not only would the sight be monstrous, but that which the body's fashion renders necessary could never be supplied. And is not the Head of this Church exactly what it wants? Christians need Almighty succour and support, such as could be given by no merely human head. IV. What an EMINENT STATION does the head occupy, when by its various senses and faculties it is capable of regulating and directing all our movements! So Jesus is made "Head over all things to His Church," that He may preside over all its concerns, and order the whole course of its events. He sees, hears, speaks, and thinks for it. It is guided by His eye, directed by His wisdom, recommended by His intercession. V. The human head MAY BE SEPARATED from the body. Hence the body in that case dies. But the Church cannot die because no separation can take place between it and its Head (Rom. viii. 35-39). Conclusion—1. Is the Head gone up into heaven? Then the members will follow. 2. Are we members of this body? not members of the visible Church, nor professors of Christianity. 3. This union is effected by faith, cemented by love, and exhibited in obedience. (*A. Roberts, M.A.*)

The Head:—The importance of a military position may be always estimated by the determination with which it is on the one hand assailed, and on the other defended. According to this rule we should conclude that the Church has regarded the Headship of her Lord as the very key of the position. For Christ's crown, and His sole right to rule His own house without Cæsar's interference, her costliest and most powerful sacrifices have been made. Peter and John were the first to publicly maintain this doctrine (Acts iv. 19, v. 29). I. CHRIST'S BODY IS THE CHURCH. While all other bodies shall die, this is deathless. "Because I live," &c. This body, paradox as it sounds, is ever changing and yet unchangeable; one undying whole formed of dying parts. Yet not more strange than things in nature. You are not the same person you were a year ago. Look at a river. The exile returns to the haunt of his early years, and there the river flows as it did when he was young; yet the liquidations have undergone perpetual change. And so the stream of time bears on to eternity, and the stream of grace on to glory, successive generations, while the Church herself, like a river fed by perennial fountains, remains unchangeable in Christ's immutability, in His immortality immortal. II. CHRIST'S BODY, WHICH IS NOT IDENTICAL WITH ANY ONE CHURCH, IS FORMED OF ALL TRUE BELIEVERS, TO WHATEVER DENOMINATION THEY MAY BELONG. Mothers are prone to think their own daughters loveliest, and nothing is more natural than to say of our own denomination, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." But to foster a spirit of sectarianism is an offence as great as to sin against His truth. In some respects bigotry is worse than heresy; and most hateful of all in God's sight is the haughty Churchism which says, "Stand by, I am holier than thou." III. CHRIST'S BODY, IN A SENSE, EMBRACES ALL THOSE CHURCHES WHICH HOLD THE ESSENTIAL TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL. There is a broad line between the essentials and the circumstantialia of the faith. Yet what unnatural attempts at uniformity have men made, as if uniformity were a law of God! On no such model has God constructed our world. God, while He preserves unity, delights in variety. Why then insist on all men observing a uniform style of worship, or thinking alike on matters non-essential to salvation? You might as well insist on all men wearing the same expression, or speaking in the same tone. How tolerant was Paul of differences! His Church has not followed her Lord's example. Christ drove thieves from the temple, but His followers have cast out their brethren. Divisions are bad things. I have no sympathy with those who, confounding charity with indifference, regard matters of religion as not worth disputing about. Such a state of death is worse than war. Yet divisions are bad things. Therefore we ought to aim to heal them, and where we cannot do that to soften their asperities. "Blessed are the peacemakers." Let us recognize a common brotherhood, and love one another as Christ has loved us. Branches of a tree which is still one in root, stem, sap, flower, and fruit; members of the same family, travellers to the same home,

see that ye fall not out by the way. IV. AS HEAD OF THE CHURCH CHRIST IS THE LIFE OF THE MEMBERS. 1. By means of the connection which grace establishes between Him and the believer, He maintains our spiritual life. "Without Me ye can do nothing." All our wishes, words, and works, however expressed in looks, sounds, and movements, are born in the brain, and there is not a good wish, word, or work but Christ was its fountain-head. 2. He is the source of our spiritual life. We must not confound the means of life with its first cause. The life which Christ gave you was His own. If any heavenly fire burns in you Christ kindled it. The spirit life is not hereditary, "not of blood or of the will of the flesh." By His life He now maintains us. V. AS HEAD OF THE CHURCH CHRIST RULES ITS MEMBERS. It is not pain that makes the insect go spinning round and round to the entertainment of the thoughtless boy who has beheaded it. It has lost in the head that which preserves harmony among the members, and prevents such anarchy as there was in the body politic when there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right to his own eyes. Seated as becomes a king, in the highest place, the head gives law to all beneath it. Its subjects never mutiny. Patterns of the obedience we should yield to Christ, the members hesitate not to obey the head even to their own loss and suffering. How happy we should be were our hearts, minds, bodies, as obedient to Christ as the hand and tongue to the head that rules them! What else but this is needed to preserve the purity and peace of our souls, and restore the same to distracted churches? There is no essential difference between the evangelical denominations, and what should hinder them from being as ready to love and help one the other as my foot is ready to run in the service of my hand? VI. AS HEAD OF THE CHURCH CHRIST SYMPATHIZES WITH HIS MEMBERS. "All the rivers run into the sea;" all the nerves run into the brain, and through them mind corresponds with matter, looking through the eyes, &c. Let the foot but touch a thorn, and it is instantly withdrawn. How? Pain thrilling along the nerves flashes the danger upward to the head, which, by another set of nerves, flashes back an immediate order, so that before the thorn is buried in the flesh the foot is withdrawn. Such is the sympathy between Christ and His people. He is in closest communication with them, and by means of lines which pass from earth to heaven the meanest cottage is joined to the throne of God. No accident breaks that telegraph. The lines of Providence radiate out, and the lines of prayer radiate in. (T. Guthrie, D.D.) *One with Christ*:—The moment I make of myself and Christ two, I am all wrong. But when I see that we are one, all is rest and peace. (Luther.) *The Holy Catholic Church*:—I. ITS NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS. "A congregation of faithful men," &c. (Acts xix.). 1. The members of which it is composed. (1) Their privileges. They are believers—faithful men, chosen, redeemed, regenerated, sanctified. (2) You must view them as brought together in the bonds of a common profession; for they are faithful men assembled. Solitary individuals, however eminent for piety, cannot form a church (Matt. xviii. 15). (3) They must be brought together for religious purposes. A company of believers brought together for secular ends would not be a church. They must assemble to worship God, hear His Word, communicate, &c. (4) These thus congregated are distinguished by the general consistency of their outward behaviour. Hypocrites and evil persons may be found in the Church, but they are not of it. 2. Its characteristics. (1) Unity. The Church is one in (a) The foundation on which it rests. "Other foundation can no man lay." (b) Its worship. "Through Him we all have access." (c) Its sympathy and spirit, which is much to be preferred to uniformity of opinion. (2) Sanctity. This does not refer to external and ritual holiness, but to real and internal. "Be ye holy." (3) Catholicity, diffusiveness, generality. We may each of us have our denominational preferences, but we must not unchurch one another. The Church is catholic in the following particulars: (a) It is the true Church wherever it may be, as to country or clime. (b) It is found equally among all denominations who are in connection with the Head. II. THE RELATION IN WHICH CHRIST STANDS TO IT. 1. He is the teaching Head. From Him as the great Prophet of the Church flows all the light by which it is illumined and cheered. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom," &c. 2. He is the Head of influence. 3. The Head of government—both legislative and executive. 4. The only Head. (1) Appointed as such. (2) Necessarily so. There can be but one head of the body. 3. All-sufficient. III. THE DUTIES WE OWE TO THIS HALLOWED CONFEDERACY. 1. To try the spirits, whether they be of God—the pretensions of those who offer themselves to our notice as assumed members of the Church. 2. To admire the goodness of Christ in undertaking this government. 3. To in-

quire whether we belong to the Holy Catholic Church. 4. To exult in its prospective triumphs. 5. To look forward to the glorious consummation when this one Church shall be presented in its full numbers before the throne. (*G. Clayton, M.A.*)

Church authority :—It is indispensable to every society to have a central person or idea round which it may revolve; a supreme government to which it must refer and submit. The will of the person, the essence of the idea, is the reason and law of its existence. Such in the Church is Christ. Accordingly He combines in Himself all the elements of which the Church is to consist. The idea of Christian life is that the qualities of spiritual and visible worlds should be brought together. It recognizes, therefore, as its appropriate Head the God-man who combines the Divine nature to be communicated, and the human capacity for its communication, and who embodied in His incarnate life the model of what human nature should be. Around the Mediator, then, all believing men are gathered. He is the central figure around whom the Church is grouped, the essential bond and reason of its existence. As Head of the Church Christ is—I. THE SOURCE OF THE PECULIAR TRUTHS WHEREBY IT IS FOUNDED. That which constitutes a society is not the truth it has in common with others, but that which is peculiar to itself. A literary society may have a morality common to themselves and hundreds about them; but it is their peculiar element of literature which constitutes them a literary society. So the Church may have a great deal of the morality common to them and unregenerate men, and so with theological ideas. Hence the name Christian cannot be accorded to those who deny the Deity and atonement of Christ, and the personality and regenerating influence of the Holy Ghost, because these are the characteristic revelations of the New Testament. Of these truths Christ is the source, and all His work concerns itself with them. As the great Prophet of the Church He announces them, as its Priest He realizes them, as its King He reigns to enforce them. II. THE SOURCE OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE WHEREIN IT CONSISTS. The idea of a society is the reception by its members, and their practical embodiment of its peculiar truths. The Church is, therefore, more than an association of theoretic believers in the atonement and regeneration; it lives under their power and for their promulgation. Common theories only bring men into juxtaposition; common experiences knit them together. The truth which Christ has given the Church becomes a quickening thing. 1. This supposes that previously men were dead. Moral death is the most lamentable of all deaths. 2. In this condition Christ finds him. "You hath He quickened." Restoration to moral life is effected—(1) By His atonement, by which He rescues men from legal death, and procures a reversal of the sentence of condemnation. (2) By His Spirit the soul is quickened, and men having the Spirit of Christ are born again. (3) This moral life is a right state of the heart towards God, and is sustained by these truths. They constrain to holy obedience. III. THE SOURCE OF ALL THE AUTHORITY OR LAW WHEREWITH IT IS REGULATED. He determines the precise, direction and shape which spiritual feeling should assume, but such direction need not interfere with the spontaneousness of the feeling. And so the Christian precept prompts the desire for duty and directs it, but is nowhere arbitrary. Thus it is also in the associated life of the Church. Whatever law Christ has given He has given in accordance with the spontaneous prompting of Church life; the prompting might be vague, the precept enlightens it. At the same time, when institutions are needed Christ alone has authority to enjoin them as laws. This we see *e.g.*, in the sacraments. Christ is the sole legislator, and for any individual to interpose an authority between Christ and the Church is open rebellion. IV. CHRIST ADMINISTERS THE PROVIDENCES WHICH CONSTITUTE ITS EXPERIENCE. This is part of His mediatorial right in pursuance of His purpose of world restoration. 1. Within the Church He orders the succession and distinctions of its ministry, the accession or removal of its members, their spiritual birth or translation, their trials and privileges. 2. Without the Church He determines or permits the experiences that shall visit it; the waves that shall beat upon the ark; the assaults upon the fortress. Lessons—1. If Christ be the source of all spiritual truth and life, our constant temper should be practical gratitude for our participation of it. 2. If Christ be the source of all authority, our constant habit should be holy obedience. 3. If Christ provides, then we may safely leave all things in His hands. 4. Let us assure ourselves of its final and glorious triumph. (*H. Allon, D.D.*)

Who is the beginning.—Names and titles among men are generally insignificant, and not characteristic of the persons who wear them; but Christ's are both descriptive and commendatory. He is the beginning. I. As to His DIVINE NATURE. It implies His eternity and self-existence. He is not God by derivation and

commission. He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. He is therefore the beginning and fountain of created existence. He who received life from none communicates life to all. Not only our being but our intellectual and moral excellencies are from Him. By His power we are what we are as men; by His grace we are what we are as Christians. II. As MEDIATOR. 1. He is the origin of the Church of God. It is He that has raised it out of the ruins of the fall. Is it a temple? He builds it. Is it a garden? He plants it. 2. He is the beginning to individual saints. Our life is from His death, and all the streams of blessedness flow from His fulness. More particularly (1) He is the source of reconciliation and the beginning of our peace with God. Our prayers and tears have no influence; neither our own work nor that of the Holy Spirit. There is no admission to Divine favour without satisfaction to Divine justice; and Christ alone has made that by the Cross. (2) He is the beginning in reference to the change wrought in us by regeneration. This change is wrought by the Holy Spirit, but as the Spirit of Christ "He shall receive of Mine." Christ within us is the hope of glory. He is our Life. 3. With respect to the resurrection. His own was the pattern and pledge of that of His saints. The same Spirit who quickened Him shall also quicken us. Learn—1. The honour that is due to Christ. 2. As Christ is the beginning of all spiritual blessings, so those blessings can belong to none but those who are in Him. 3. He who is the beginning is also the end; and this secures the happiness of all the saints. He who has begun will also finish (Heb. xii. 2). *Christ the beginning*:—The same place and dignity that Christ has in the order of nature He has in the order of grace; He is the beginning of the new as He was also of the old creation. I. IN THE WAY OF ORDER AS FIRST AND CHIEF OF THE RENEWED STATE. 1. As Founder and Builder of the Church (Matt. xvi. 18; Heb. iii. 3-5). One of the noblest of God's works is His Church of the firstborn; none could constitute it but the God-man. For the materials are sinful and guilty men. Neither men nor angels could raise them into a holy temple to God. 2. As the Lord of the Church (Heb. ii. 7). II. IN THE WAY OF CAUSALITY. 1. As a moral, meritorious cause (1 John iv. 9, 10). 2. As an efficient cause by His Spirit who works in the members of His mystical body (2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. ii. 10). The influence we have from our Head is—(1) Life (Gal. ii. 20; John vi. 57). (2) Likeness (Gal. iv. 19; 2 Cor. iii. 18). It is for the honour of Christ that His image should be upon His members, to distinguish them from others. As to life, He is the root (John xv. 1, 2); as to likeness, He is the pattern (Rom. viii. 29). III. THE REASON OF THIS. 1. It is for the honour of the Son to be the Head of the new world. In the kingdom of Christ all things are new; a new covenant, paradise, ministry, ordinances, members, and so a new Head or Second Adam (1 Cor. xv. 45). It is suited to our lost estate. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The beginning*:—I. THIS TERM EXPRESSES CHRIST'S DIVINE NATURE. He must be Divine who is "almighty," and "who is, and was, and is to come"; and since "the beginning" is a title applied in the same passage (Rev. i. 8), Paul pronounces Him Divine. II. IT EXPRESSES CHRIST'S RELATION TO HIS CHURCH. 1. The beginning of a tree is the seed it springs from. The giant oak had its origin in the acorn. Now as a seed Christ was apparently of little promise, "a root out of a dry ground," yet out of Him has grown that Church which shall bear the blessings of salvation to the ends of the earth. 2. A house, again, begins at the foundation. The first stone laid is the foundation-stone. Christ is this, a tried stone, a firm and immovable basis for the believer. 4. The Author of our faith, the Founder of the Church, began it, ere sun or stars shone in heaven. He provided for the fall before it happened. He had the lifeboat on the beach before the bark was stranded, or launched, or even built. He was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." III. HE IS THE BEGINNING OF SALVATION TO EVERY INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER. 1. Whatever was the instrument employed it was His grace that began what had a beginning. The preacher was a man but drawing a bow at a venture. It was Christ's eye that aimed the shaft, and His strength that bent the bow. When our sins were carrying us out to burial He stopped the bier and imparted life. 2. As Christ is the beginner, so is He the finisher of our faith. He does no half work, half saving, or half sanctifying a man. Trust Him that when He has begun a good work He will carry it on to the end. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The firstborn from the dead*.—I. OPEN THE TERMS. "Firstborn." If the grave was as a womb to Christ, and His resurrection as a birth, then Christ was in a manner born when He rose. Only He hath the precedence; surely others will follow Him (Acts xxvi. 23; 1 Cor. xv. 20). As in the consecration of the firstfruits the whole harvest was consecrated, so Christ by rising

raises all. II. VINDICATE THE NOTION. Two objections lie against it. 1. Many were raised before Him or by Him (1 Kings xvii.; 2 Kings iv., xiii. 21; Luke vii. 15, viii. 55; John xi. 44; Matt. xxvii. 52). (1) We must distinguish between a proper and improper resurrection. He arose by a proper, which is to rise to a life immortal; they only to a mortal estate, and so the great disease was rather removed than cured (Acts xiii. 34). (2) Others were raised by the power and virtue of His resurrection, but He by His own power (John viii. 18). Thus Christ is said not only to be raised again, but to rise (Rom. iv. 25). (3) All those who rose before, rose only by special dispensation to lay down their bodies again when God should see fit, and rose only as private persons. But Christ rose as a public Person, and once for all. 2. Concerning the raising of the wicked. Christ cannot be the firstborn to them who belong not to His mystical body. The firstborn implies a relation to the rest of the family. The offering of the firstfruits did not sanctify the tares and weeds. (1) Certainly the wicked shall rise again (Acts xxiv. 15; John v. 28, 29); but (2) they will be raised by Christ as a Judge, not as a Redeemer. The one sort are raised by the power of His vindictive justice, the other by the Holy Ghost by virtue of His covenant (Rom. viii. 11); the one by Christ's power from without as Judge of dead and living, the other by an inward quickening influence flowing from Him as their proper Head. (3) The wicked are forced to appear to receive their sentence, the other go joyfully to meet the Bridegroom and enter into eternal life. III. HOW IS THIS AN EVIDENCE AND ASSURANCE TO ALL CHRISTIANS OF THEIR HAPPY AND GLORIOUS RESURRECTION? 1. There shall be a resurrection. It is necessary to prove that—(1) Because it is the foundation of all godliness (2 Cor. xv. 32). (2) Because it is not easy of belief. The great and public evidence thereof is Christ's which makes ours—(a) Possible. That is the least we can gather from it (1 Cor. xv. 13). (b) Easy. By rising Christ has conquered death (1 Cor. xv. 57; Heb. ii. 14). (c) Certain and necessary from—First, our relation to Christ as Head. He cannot live gloriously in heaven and leave His members under the power of death (Eph. i. 23, iv. 13), otherwise He would be a maimed Christ. Second, the charge and office of Christ (John vi. 39). Third, the mercy of God through the merits of Christ to the faithful who have hazarded their lives for His sake (1 Thess. iv. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 14). 2. The resurrection to the faithful will be happy and glorious. (1) Because Christ's is not only a cause, but pattern. The members were appointed to be conformed to their Head (Rom. viii. 19; 1 Pet. i. 21). (2) By the grant of God. They have a right and title to it. Being admitted to His family they may expect to be admitted into His presence; and they have the Holy Spirit as an earnest till it be accomplished (Eph. i. 14, iv. 30; Rom. viii. 28). IV. THE USE IS TO PERSUADE YOU TO THE BELIEF OF THESE TWO GRAND ARTICLES OF FAITH. 1. The resurrection of Christ. That is the great foundation of faith (1 Cor. xv. 14). All the apostles' preaching was built on this supposition. (1) Partly because this is the great evidence of the truth of Christianity (Acts xiii. 31, xiii. 33). (2) Partly to show that He is in a capacity to convey spiritual and eternal life to others; which, if He had continued in the state of death, He could not be (John xiv. 19; 1 Pet. i. 3; Eph. i. 20–21). 2. Your own resurrection. (1) Consider it as a work of omnipotency. To an infinite power there can be no difficulty (Phil. iii. 21; Zech. viii. 6). (2) We have relief from the justice of God. He is the rewarder of good and bad, but He does not dispense His rewards in this life (1 Cor. xv. 29). (3) God's unchangeable love, which inclines Him to seek the dust of His confederates; therefore Christ proves the resurrection from God's covenant title (Matt. xxii. 31). (T. Manton, D.D.) *The firstborn*.—Christ is the firstborn from the dead. I. IN THE DIGNITY OF HIS PERSON. He is the greatest who ever entered or shall ever leave the gates of death. Isaiah in one of his boldest flights of fancy sets forth the destruction of the Babylonian monarchy. He sees a mighty king descending into the grave, breaking its awful silence and entering alone the dark domain of a monarch mightier than himself. On his ear fall the voices of kings long buried, muttering, "Art thou become as we?" When we die we sink into the grave as snowflakes on the water, but Christ being the Lord of glory, the fountain of life, His descent into the tomb was an event which may well be set forth by the prophet's imagery. I can fancy all the dead astonished at His coming. Fancy some great, good monarch thrust into the common jail; and were such a reverse of fortune borne out of love to His subjects, how would it move their love and admiration as well as their wonder and pity! Yet what were such an event compared with what, unnoticed by the world, took place in the garden? Christ's descent into the tomb awoke death from its deepest apathy. That awoke those who are heedless of the shock of earthquakes,

The graves were opened. Waiting for Him to lead the way, many dead saints left the tomb. II. BECAUSE HE ROSE BY HIS OWN POWER. There is no sensibility, passion, or power in the dead. They can do nothing to help themselves. In all cases but Christ's, life was given, not taken back. III. BECAUSE HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO NEVER ROSE TO DIE AGAIN. The others twice drank the bitter cup. IV. BECAUSE HE HAS TAKEN PRECEDENCE OF HIS PEOPLE. It is better for me, if I am a poor man standing in need of royal favours, to have a friend at court than in my own humble cottage; and it is better for us that Christ is with the Father in heaven than with us on earth. But apart from that, precedence was His right. The King precedes His train; the Head was first out of the grave, afterwards the body and its members. It is as the prelude to our own resurrection that Christ's is to us the object of the greatest satisfaction and joy. Henceforth the grave holds but a lease of the saints. Because He rose we shall rise. If we are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ what reconciling views of death does this open to us! (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The Divine harbinger*:—Sweeter to our ear than the full chorus of bright skies and green wood are the first notes of the warbler that pipes away the winter, and breaks in on its long, drear silence! And more welcome to our eye than the flush of summer's gayest flowers is the simple snowdrop that hangs its pure white bell above the dead, bare ground. And why? These are the firstborn of the year, the forerunners of a crowd to follow. In that group of silver bells that ring in the spring with its joys and loves and singing birds, my fancy's eye sees the naked earth clothed with beauty, the streams, like children let loose, dancing and laughing, and rejoicing in their freedom, bleak winter gone, and nature's annual resurrection. And in that solitary simple note my fancy hears the carol of larks, wide moor, hillside, and woodlands full of song and ringing with all music. And in Christ, the Firstborn, I see the grave giving up its dead: from the depths of the sea, from lonely wilderness and crowded churchyard they come, like the dew of the grass, an innumerable multitude. Risen Lord! we rejoice in Thy resurrection. We hail it as the harbinger and blessed pledge of our own. The first to come forth, Thou art the Elder Brother of a family whose countless numbers the patriarch saw in the dust of the desert, whose holy beauty he saw shining in the bright stars of heaven. (*Ibid.*) **That in all things He might have the pre-eminence.**—*The Pre-eminent One*:—It is the ordination of providence that in every society or profession there should be a head—some one who should have the pre-eminence. The father ought to be the chief of his house. Israel was governed by God, yet He chose Moses as His vice-gerent, and when the nation was afterwards divided into tens, hundreds, &c., still Moses retained the pre-eminence. No society could hang together without this. The same ordination holds good in the Church. From its members some are made eminent pastors, &c., yet there is but one to whom the pre-eminence belongs. And we are told the reason of it. Among men we see eminence variously displayed: one is eminent for wisdom, another for power, and so on; but Christ is pre-eminent in *all* things. Therefore Christ is reserved for this honour; and that not simply as God, but as Mediator. Christ has pre-eminence. I. IN THE ESTIMATION OF DEITY. 1. On whom does the Father concentrate His love and delight? Jehovah calls Him His own Son, His dear Son, His beloved Son. Christ is the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, and He speaks of the glory He had before the world was. Thrice did the Father glorify Him—at His baptism, transfiguration, and just before His passion. At His incarnation the Father said, "Let all the angels of God worship Him," and after His burial sent angels to roll away the stone. 2. The same pre-eminence is given by the Holy Spirit. He anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows—descended on Him at His baptism, glorifies Him, and receives of His. II. IN THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES. "They wrote of Me." "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Every metaphor that the glowing glories of earth or heaven have offered is selected to put honour on His brow. 1. Consider His titles—Foundation, Door, Captain, Advocate, Judge, &c. 2. His offices—Prophet, Priest, King, Shepherd, &c. III. AS EXHIBITED IN THE GLORY OF HIS WORKS. 1. Creation. Angels have done wonders, and men; but whoever saw anything equal to the works of Christ? 2. Providence. "The government is on His shoulders." 3. Redemption. IV. IN THE OPINION OF BELIEVERS. There are many who are very dear to us on earth and in heaven; but who has the pre-eminence? "Unto you that believe He is precious." "He is the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." V. IN THE HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN. To be with Christ, apart from the consideration of its other glories, that

is heaven. Conclusion. Give Christ the pre-eminence. 1. In your hearts. 2. In your houses. 3. Labour that He may have it in the whole world. (*J. Sherman.*)

Christ pre-eminent.—I. HE IS THE FIRST. 1. He is pre-eminent in age (ver. 15). "Before Abraham was I am." 2. In the work of redemption, "firstborn from the dead." II. HE IS THE MIGHTIEST. 1. As Creator (ver. 16). 2. As Preserver (ver. 17). 3. As Destroyer. We cannot destroy the tiniest piece of matter. He can desolate a world. III. HE IS THE RICHEST. He owns—1. All the treasures of creation (ver. 10). 2. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (chap. ii. 3). 3. All the treasures of grace (ver. 19). IV. HE IS THE HIGHEST. 1. He now occupies the throne of mercy. 2. He will leave this for the throne of judgment. 3. He will finally sit on the throne of glory and reign for ever and ever. V. HE IS THE LOVELIEST. "The altogether lovely." 1. As the brightness of His Father's glory. 2. As the fairest of the children of men. VI. HE IS THE LAST as He is the First. He only hath immortality; ours is derived from Him. (*H. G. Guinness.*)

Christ pre-eminent in all things.—Some are eminent for one thing, some for another. Some are distinguished for vast wealth, some are ennobled by intellectual resources, some obtain a name for personal bravery, but none has pre-eminence in all things. But in whatever light we look at Christ He is pre-eminent. I. IN HIS DIVINE AND MYSTERIOUS NATURE. "God manifest in the flesh," "mighty God," &c. II. IN THE UNRIVALED GLORY OF HIS PERFECTIONS. He has every attribute of Deity, and "Whatever things the Father doeth, these doeth the Son likewise." III. IN THE STUPENDOUS CHARACTER OF HIS WORKS. 1. All creation is His handiwork. 2. In the work of Providence governing and sustaining the universe. IV. IN THE ILLUSTRIOUS DIGNITY OF HIS OFFICES. Shepherd and Bishop of souls; His throne is for ever and ever; He is the Mediator of a better covenant; in Him, as Prophet, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. V. IN THE CONSISTENT TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE. Take any doctrine you choose, it must have some connection with Christ. Promises send us to Christ to fulfil them; precepts send us to Christ, by whose strength alone we can perform them; threatenings send us to Christ, by whose atonement and intercession alone they can be averted. Take Christ from the Bible and you its life; its promises have no reality, its prophecies are empty words, its laws lose their power, and its hopes their animation and realization. VI. IN THE STUPENDOUS WORK OF HUMAN REDEMPTION. For this He alone was competent. Salvation begins and ends with Him. VII. IN CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. The Christian's faith is faith in Christ; his joy, joy in Christ; his strength, strength in Christ; his life, life in Christ. Think of what is necessary to a perfect Christian and you will find it all in Christ. All worship is to be offered in His name, and all obedience rendered Him. VIII. IN CHRISTIAN PREACHING AND TESTIMONY. To bear witness to Christ and to secure Him homage is the end of our creation. IX. Christ will yet have pre-eminence in the world. (*W. P. Applebe, LL.D.*)

Christ in all things the pre-eminent.—Nature and the Bible are alike in this respect—that you find in each two kinds of objects: the one simple, quiet, beautiful; the other grand, majestic, overpowering. In this chapter we get amongst the Highlands of Revelation. I. THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST. 1. As extending over two spheres, the realms of nature and grace, the universe and the Church. (1) He is the "firstborn of every creature." We cannot suppose Him to be a creature, because "He is before all things," &c. In Rabbinical literature Jehovah is styled the firstborn of creation, by which is meant that He is supreme over the universe; for the birthright carried with it supremacy. In like manner the phrase must be taken in reference to Christ. His dominion extends to all things in heaven: sun, moon, stars, &c., and angels who never fell; to things on earth: the globe and its inhabitants, all mineral, vegetable, animal, and human existence. (2) He is Head of the Church. Lord of the Church's mind—in their religious thinking believers are to think under Him. Lord of the Church's heart—in their affections believers are to be guided by Him. Lord of the Church's life—for His Word is law. 2. This supremacy has been obtained in two different ways. (1) Christ's birthright of authority and power over the universe is by creation. (2) In His redemptive work He is the firstborn of the dead. He is the firstborn in both, but creation is by life; redemption is through death. 3. There is a distinction between the relations in which the created universe and the redeemed Church stands to Him. He made the one; He is the Head of the other. The universe is a grand collection of things made by His power and for His use. Thus we are led to separate between the universe and Christ. He is no part of it. But in relation to the Church the distinction is dropped, and an idea of most intimate union introduced—it is His body, which is

nowhere attributed of nature. 4. This pre-eminence issues in the union of the two realms. Ver. 20 should be read in connection with this. The reconciliation goes further than persons and laws and governments. Thus much appears. (1) That Christ, in His mediatorial reign, through His death, becomes the Lord and Guardian of the entire universe of holy beings, redeemed and unfallen; that He gathers all in one unto God, and is equally King of earth and heaven. (2) That the sin of man has disturbed the relation between Him and angels; that man getting out of place, throws into disorder the whole sphere of existence to which he belongs, as a wandering star would the solar system, and that Christ, by putting men right, reconciles them to angels and angels to them. (3) That without an atonement it was an unbecoming thing that heaven should receive depraved mortals; but that with an atonement it is quite befitting that men redeemed and sanctified should enter the ranks of the glorified; and that in the end such will be the number of the saved, and the relation in which they stand to the rest of the universe, that in some sense a reconciliation of all things will be accomplished. 5. Let me ask whether in correspondence with these views of Christ's supremacy He has pre-eminence in our hearts and lives? II. THE PLENITUDE (ver. 19). 1. The fulness of the Father exists in Christ as it nowhere else does. In nature there are streams of the Divine glory, yet the ocean fulness is not there. In the reason of man there are Divine sparks; in the history of the world Divine footprints; in the souls of believers and the united virtues of the Church there is much Divine light and goodness; but the fulness nowhere, not even in the Bible, only in Christ. And wherever else in any measure it is, it is from Him. He is the Creator and Upholder of the world; Light and Lord of human reason; Sovereign of the ages; Giver of gracious power; Inspirer and Subject of the Book of books. 2. This plenitude must be taken in connection with the supremacy of Christ. (1) In creation He has the pre-eminence, because in Him all fulness dwells of infinite power, wisdom, goodness. (2) How could He be Head over all things to His Church if He were a man? A created Saviour could not supply all our need; but in the Divine Christ there is all fulness of pardoning mercy, renewing power, supporting love, strength for a day of trouble, a dying hour. 3. The pre-eminence and fulness of Christ constitute the leading object of our blessed faith. Agencies are needed to bring men to Him, but nothing can add to the completeness of those who are in Him. (J. Stoughton, D.D.) *Christ is pre-eminent*.—I. AS TO HIS PERSONALITY. He stands unique. All the elements in Him make up to which the term human can be applied show Him to be pre-eminently human. He came into the world by the gateway of the Hebrew nation, but He is not a Jew. He belonged to 1800 ago, and yet He is of no age. He spent His days and nights under the Eastern skies, but He is of no clime. He gathers up into Himself all the best elements in Jewish, Greek, and Roman life. He was pre-eminently moral and devotional; He was in sympathy with everything beautiful; He glorified the moral law, was loyal to the national, and had worldwide ambitions, only, unlike those of Rome, they were benevolent. II. AS TO HIS IDEAS OF GOD AND MAN. The test of pre-eminence of nature is largeness of idea on these themes. 1. The idea Christ gave us of God was pre-eminent. No one ever approached it. There had been many attempts to put the nature of God into a word, but all had failed till He said "Father." 2. So with His idea of the nature of man. The noblest man among the Jews was the chief of the Pharisees or Sadducees; among the Greeks the most physically beautiful; among the Romans the strong man able to trample every one who was in His path into the dust. Under the influence of Jesus the noblest man is the gentlest, humanest, chastest, and most charitable. This is a new idea. 3. Other ideas help us to see how pre-eminently Jesus was the world's greatest thinker, such as the brotherhood of man; the idea that love of God is best expressed in the service of man, the idea that the worst man may be saved. III. AS TO HIS MISSION IN THE WORLD. No other man ever carried on such a mission or was capable of entertaining the idea of it. It was to bring a revolted world back into such an allegiance as is worthy of God to accept and man to give; not forced, but based on love. The accomplishment of such a mission seems to us impossible, but in individuals it has been accomplished, and will yet be in the whole world. IV. AS TO UNBIASSED HUMAN OPINION OF HIM. Only one conspicuous man in the world of literature has been blind to His excellency—Voltaire; but Rousseau, another great sceptic, wrote, "If the life and death of Socrates be those of a saint, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God." Napoleon I., the old Roman, back again in the Christian centuries, said, "I know men, Jesus was not a man." (R. Thomas, D.D.)

Vers. 19-22. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.—*The reconciling Son*.—I. As before we have CHRIST in RELATION TO GOD. 1. In the use of the term "fulness," which was a very important term in Gnostic speculations, there is a reference to some of the heretical teachers' expressions. What fulness? (chap. ii. 9). The abundance or totality of the Divine attributes. We have no need to look to nature for fragmentary revelations of God's character—that He has fully and finally declared in His Son. 2. "Dwell" implies permanent abode, chosen, perhaps, to oppose the view that the union of the Divine and human in Christ was but temporary. 3. This is the result of the Father's good pleasure. The Father determined the work of the Son, and delighted in it. II. Again, as before, we have CHRIST and THE UNIVERSE, of which He is not only the Maker, Sustainer, and Lord, but through the blood of the Cross reconciles all things to Himself. Probably the false teachers had dreams of reconciling agents. Paul lifts up in opposition the one Sovereign Mediator whose Cross is the bond of peace for the universe. 1. Observe the distinct reference of these words to the former clauses. "Through Him" was creation; "through Him" is reconciliation. "All things" were made, sustained by, and subordinated to Him; the same "all things" are reconciled. A significant change in the order is noticeable. "In the heavens and upon the earth" the order of creation; but in reconciliation the order is reversed. 2. The correspondence shows that the reconciliation affects not only rational and responsible creatures, but "things." The width of reconciliation is the same as that of the creation. Then these words refer mainly to the restitution of the material universe to its primal obedience, and represent Christ the Creator removing by His Cross the shadow that has passed over nature by reason of sin. 1. Man's sin has made the physical world "subject to vanity." Man by sin has compelled dead matter to be his instrument in acts of rebellion against God. He has polluted the world by sin, and laid unnumbered woes on the living creatures. This evil shall be done away by the reconciling power of the blood of the Cross. The universe is one because the Cross pierces its heights and depths. 2. The reference to things in heaven may also be occasioned by the dreams of the heretical teachers. As to reconciliation proper among spiritual beings in that realm, there can be no question of it. There is no enmity among angels. Still, if the reference be to them, then we know that to the principalities and powers in heavenly places the Cross has been the teacher of unlearned depths in the Divine nature and purposes, the knowledge of which has drawn them nearer to the heart of God and made their union with Him more blessed and close. 3. Sublime and great beyond all our dreams shall be the issue. Certain as the throne of God is it that His purposes shall be accomplished. The great sight of the Seer of Patmos is the best commentary on our text (Rev. v. 9-13). III. CHRIST AND HIS RECONCILING WORK IN THE CHURCH. We have still the parallel kept up. As in verse 18 He was representing as giving life to the Church in a higher-fashion than to the universe, so, with a similar heightening of the meaning of reconciliation, He is here set forth as its giver to the Church. 1. Observe the solemn description of men before it. "Alienated," not "aliens," but having become so. The seat of the enmity is in that inner man which thinks and wills, and its sphere of manifestation is "in evil works" which are religiously acts of hostility to God because morally bad. This is thought nowadays a too harsh description. But the charge is not that of conscious, active hostility, but of practical want of affection as manifested by habitual disobedience or inattention to God's wishes and by indifference and separation from Him in heart and mind. 2. Here as uniformly God Himself is the Reconciler, it is we who are reconciled. The Divine patience loves on through all our enmity, and though perfect love meeting human sin must ever become wrath, it never becomes hatred. 3. The means of reconciliation. (1) "The body," &c., an exuberance of language to correct, perhaps, the error of that our Lord's body was only a phantasm, or to guard against the risk of confounding it with "His body the Church," or as showing how full His mind was of the overwhelming wonder of the fact. (2) But the Incarnation is not the whole gospel; "through death" Christ's death has so met the requirements of the Divine law, that Divine love can come freely forth and forgive sinful men. (A. Maclaren, D.D.) *The reconciling work of the great Mediator*.—I. THE UNIQUE QUALIFICATION OF THE GREAT MEDIATOR. 1. In Him all fulness dwells. 2. It is the good pleasure of the Father that this fulness should reside in the Son. II. THE RECONCILING WORK OF THE GREAT MEDIATOR. 1. The extent of the reconciliation. (1) Sinful creatures on earth are reconciled to God in Christ. (2) Sinful and sinless creatures are reconciled. (3) Sinless and unfallen

creatures are brought nearer to God in Christ. III. THE MEANS BY WHICH THE RECONCILIATION IS EFFECTED. Lessons:—1. The great Mediator has every qualification for His stupendous work. 2. The reconciliation of a disorganized universe is beyond the power of any subordinate agent. 3. Rebellious man can be restored to peace with God only as he yields himself up to the great Mediator. (*G. Barlow.*)

Reconciliation.—I. IN THE PERSON THAT REDEEMS US WE FIND FULLNESS. 1. And there had need be so. (1) He found our measure of sin full towards God. When a river swells it will find out all the channels and overflow the whole field; so sin hath found an issue at the ear, eye, tongue, hands, feet, and so overflows all. (2) God's measure of anger was full too. (3) Then it pleased the Father that there should be another fullness to overflow these. 2. This is "all fullness," and is only in Christ. Elijah had a great portion of the Spirit; Elisha sees that that will not serve Him, and so asks a double portion; but still but portions. Stephen is full of faith, a blessed fullness where there is no room for doubt; Dorcas is full of good works, a fullness above faith; Mary is full of grace, which is a fullness above both; but yet not "all fullness." I shall be as full as Paul in heaven, *i.e.*, have as full a vessel, but not so full a cellar. Christ only hath an infinite content and capacity, and so an infinite fullness. 3. But was Christ God before, and is there a supplementary fullness? Yes. To make Him a competent person to redeem man something was to be added to Christ though He were God; wherein we see the incomprehensibility of man's sin, that even to God Himself there was required something else than God before we could be redeemed. Perfect God, there is the fullness of the Redeemer's dignity; perfect man, there is the fullness of His capacity to suffer and pay our debt. This was a strange fullness, for it was a fullness of emptiness, all humiliation and exinanition by His obedience unto death. 4. How came Christ by all this fullness? "It pleased the Father." II. THE PACIFICATION. It is much that God would admit any peace; more that for peace He should require blood; more still that it should be the blood of Him who was injured; most of all that it should be the blood of the Cross, *i.e.*, death. 1. Then there was a heavy war before; for the Lord of Hosts was our enemy; and what can all our musters come to when He is against us? 2. But what is the peace, and how are we included in it? A man must not think himself included in it because he feels no effects of this war. Though there be no blow stricken, the war remains in the time of truce. But here is no truce. All this while that thou enjoyest this imaginary security the enemy undermines thee, and will blow thee up at last more irrevocably than if he had battered thee with outward calamities all the time. But in this text there is true peace, and one already made, and made by Him who lacked nothing for the making of it. 3. Is effusion of blood the way of peace? That may make them from whom it is drawn glad of peace. But here mercy and truth are met together. God would be true to His own justice and be merciful to us. Justice required blood, for without it is no remission. Under the law it was blood of bulls and goats; here it is His blood. "Greater love," &c. (*John xv. 13*); but He who said so laid down His life shamefully and painfully for His enemies. III. THE APPLICATION THEREOF TO ALL TO WHOM THAT RECONCILIATION APPERTAINS. All this was done, and yet the apostle prays us to be reconciled to God. The general peace was made by Christ's death, as a general pardon is given at the King's coming; we have to accept it. 1. There is a reconciliation of things in heaven. (1) The saints, who reached forth the hand of faith to lay hold of Christ before He came. (2) Angels, who were confirmed in perfect holiness and blessedness. 2. Things on earth. (1) The creature who by virtue of it shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. (2) Men. 3. But the most proper and literal meaning is that all things in heaven and earth be reconciled to God; *i.e.*, His glory, to a fitter disposition to glorify Him, by being reconciled to one another in Christ; that in Him, as Head of the Church, they in heaven and we on earth be united together as one body in the communion of saints (*Eph. i. 10*). 4. Here there is still reconciliation to be made, not only toward one another on the bond of charity, but on ourselves. In ourselves we find things in heaven and on earth to reconcile. There is heavenly zeal to be reconciled to discretion; heavenly purity to one another's infirmities; heavenly liberty to a care for the promotion of scandal. Till the flesh and spirit be reconciled this reconciliation is not accomplished; but both are, in Christ, when in all the faculties of soul and body we glorify Him. (*J. Donne, D.D.*)

The fullness.—I. A PARTICULAR FULLNESS dwelt in Christ. The definitive article "the" has reference not to fullness in general. It would not be to the honour of Jesus to have all fullness whatsoever. We read of some whose cups and platters were full of extortion and

excess; of Elymas, who was "full of subtlety," &c.; of men who were "full of envy, murder," &c. In Jesus it is some conspicuously glorious fulness. II. A DIVINE FULNESS. The apostle refers to it in chap. ii. 9—the fulness of the Godhead, not only really and spiritually, but bodily, in an incarnated condition, and thus conspicuously, and in such a way as made it a reasonable thing to ascribe to our Lord the work of creation on the one hand, and the headship of the Church on the other. 1. The Godhead is full of power. "Nothing is too hard for the Lord." All that fulness, too, is in Jesus, so that He is able to wheel the worlds in their orbits and "to save to the uttermost," &c. 2. The Godhead is full of righteousness. In God is "no darkness at all." Our Lord is "Jesus Christ the righteous," whom no one can convict of sin; and He is so full that His righteousness is available, not to Himself alone, but "unto all and upon all them that believe." 3. The Godhead is full of love. "God is love." Jesus said, "Greater love than this," &c. 4. Hence, too, there was in Him fulness "of grace and truth," of meekness, tenderness, gentleness. III. A PERMANENT FULNESS. "Dwelt." The Father did not desire that the fulness of Godhead should stream through our Saviour, illuminating and glorifying His nature as it passed, and then vanish. It is the same in glory "to-day, yesterday, and for ever." (*J. Morison, D.D.*) I. THE FULNESS THAT IS IN CHRIST. 1. All fulness. Ahasuerus promised Esther that her request should be granted though it cost him half his kingdom. Christ offers nothing by halves. "It pleased the Father," &c. Transferring Divine wealth to our account in the bank of heaven, and giving us an unlimited credit there, Jesus says: "All things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." 2. All fulness of mercy to pardon sin. The gospel proclaims a universal amnesty. When the last gun is fired, and pardon proclaimed in reconquered provinces, is it not always marked by notable exceptions? But from Christ's pardoning mercy none are excepted save those who except themselves. It reaches the vilest sinner. It binds a zone of mercy round the world, and perish the hands that would narrow it by a hair's breadth. None shall be damned but those who damn themselves. One might fancy that now all are certain to be saved. Who will not accept of it? Offer a starving man bread, a poor man money, a sick man health, a lifeboat in the wreck, how gladly will they be accepted! But salvation, the one thing needful, is the one thing man will not accept. He will stoop to pick up a piece of gold out of the mire, but he will not rise out of the mire to receive a crown from heaven. What infatuation! 3. All fulness of grace to sanctify. Why are the best of us no better, holier, happier? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? No. He who justified can sanctify, and with holiness give fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore. There is efficiency and sufficiency in Jesus to complete what He has begun. There are stores of grace which are like the widow's barrel that grew no emptier for the meals it furnished. "My grace is sufficient for thee." With a well ever flowing our vessels need never be empty. No earthly fortune will stand daily visits to the bank, but this will. You may ask too little, but you cannot ask too much; you may go too seldom, but you cannot go too often to the throne. II. THERE IS A CONSTANT SUPPLY OF SANCTIFYING AND PARDONING GRACE IN CHRIST. "Dwelt," not come and go, like a wayfaring man, like a shallow, noisy, treacherous brook that fails when most needed, but like the deep-seated spring that, rising silently, though affluently, at the mountain's foot, and having unseen communication with its exhaustless supplies, is ever flowing over its grassy margin, equally unaffected by the long droughts that dry the wells and the frosts that pave the neighbouring lake with ice. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) The fulness of Christ:—I. THE FULNESS OF CHRIST. 1. A fulness of all Divine attributes and perfections. Omnipotence in creation; omniscience, wisdom, and goodness in providence; grace in the dispensation of the Spirit; justice in the grand assize, &c., are all His. Hence fulness of worship is offered Him in heaven (Rev. iii. 2) and earth. 2. A fulness of truth and wisdom for the instruction of man. John tells us that He is full of truth; Christ says, "I am the truth"; and Paul says, "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (1) All the rays of Divine truth which have ever enlightened prophets and apostles, guided wandering sinners back to God, and blessed the Church with purity and consolation, were emanations from Him, the great Prophet of the Church. (2) In the Scriptures we have the mind of Christ. (3) But while the Bible is sufficient, such is the power which prejudice, unbelief, and ignorance exert over the mind, that the influence of Christ is requisite to the reception of the truth. Our prayer, then, before the open Bible should be, "Open mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things," &c. 3. A

fulness of merit to justify every believer in His name. (1) Convinced of sin, our great question is, "How can man be just with God?" It is evident that we cannot be just in our own righteousness, nor in that of the holiest saints, for they were indebted to another for the robe they wear; nor in that of angels, for no creature, however elevated, can render an obedience exceeding the law of his creation, and consequently can have no works of supererogation which can be disposed of for the benefit of others. (2) No cheering answer can reach us but that which comes from Calvary. By His obedience unto death, the law broken by us is honoured, its precepts fulfilled, and its penalty endured. (3) By faith we become interested in Jesus, and thus are justified freely by His grace. 4. A fulness of power to accomplish all the purposes for which the mediatorial office was instituted. He sits upon the throne wielding the omnipotent sceptre of universal dominion, and reigns over all for the benefit of the Church. 5. A fulness of grace and compassion to relieve and comfort His afflicted servants (Heb. iv. 14). II. IT IS THE PLEASURE OF THE FATHER THAT THIS FULNESS SHOULD DWELL IN CHRIST. 1. It is in harmony with the Divine counsels. 2. It meets with the Divine approbation. Conclusion: The subject—1. Directs believers to the source of all consolation. 2. Sinners to the source of all salvation. (*Congregational Remembrancer*.) *Fulness of grace in Christ*:—I. By FULNESS OF GRACE we understand all those perfections to which the term grace extends itself. II. WHY WAS IT NECESSARY THAT THIS FULNESS OF GRACE SHOULD BE IN CHRIST? 1. The fitness of things required it, on account of the union of His soul with the Word. For it is proper that in proportion as anything is nearer to the influential cause, so much the more abundantly should it partake of the influence itself. Since, therefore, God Himself is the fountain of grace, the soul of Christ, so near to God, cannot but abound in grace. 2. Necessity requires it, from consideration of the end, on account of the relation between Christ and the race. For grace was to be bestowed on him, not as on a private person, but as the universal fountain from whom it might be transfused into the rest of men. But in this fountain all the parts ought to be full and combined. The evangelist shows that grace is shed abroad from Christ (John i. 16; Eph. iv. 7). III. THIS FULNESS OF GRACE IS PECULIAR TO CHRIST ALONE. To prove which, notice: In the saints militant there is not a fulness of grace; for it cannot consist with so many remains of the old man: for a fulness of grace leaves no room for sin. But not even in the very saints triumphant. For if one star differeth from another star in light and magnitude, then how much more does it differ from the sun? But an objection is raised, that the Virgin Mary, for instance, is said to be "full of grace" (Luke i. 28); and Stephen also "full of grace and power" (Acts vi. 8); and that therefore a fulness of grace is not peculiar to Christ. I answer, The fulness of grace is twofold: one may be regarded on the part of grace itself, when a man hath it in the greatest extent, both as to every kind of grace, and in the greatest perfection as to degree. This is the fulness of Christ alone. The other regards grace on the part of the possessor when a man hath it as fully and as sufficiently as his state and condition can contain. Hence observe—1. That God is not accustomed to impose an office upon any one without at the same time conferring upon him all those powers which are necessary for the discharge of it: He lays upon Christ the office of Head of the Church; but He also imparts to Him a fulness of grace. Therefore, whoever thrust themselves into offices, for the administration of which they are altogether incompetent, are not called to them by God, but are impelled either by avarice or ambition. 2. Since there is a fulness of grace in Christ alone, we must expect its streams to flow to us from Him alone: they who seek grace elsewhere commit two evils (Jer. ii. 13). (*Bishop Davenant*.) *The fulness of Christ the treasury of the saints*:—I. THERE IS A GLORIOUS FULNESS IN JESUS. 1. Enough to enable a saint to rise to the highest degree of grace. If there be anything lacking for the attainment of the Divine image, it is not a deficiency Christward; it is occasioned by shortcomings in ourselves. If sin is to be overcome, the conquering power dwells in Him in its fulness; if virtue is to be attained, sanctifying energy resides in Him to perfection. 2. Enough for the conquest of the world. The Lord God omnipotent shall reign from shore to shore. We have in Christ all the might that is needed for subduing the nations; let us go into His armoury, and we shall receive invincible weapons and almighty strength. 3. Every fulness for teaching, convincing, converting, sanctifying, and keeping unto the end. II. THE FULNESS IS IN JESUS NOW. 1. The glory of the past exercises a depressing influence over many Christians. Scarcely any Church

realizes that it can do what its first promoters did. A people are in an evil case when their heroism is historical. In Jesus all fulness dwells for Paul, Luther, Whitfield, you and me. Christianity has not lost its pristine strength; we have lost our faith. Why should we not have a greater Pentecost than Peter saw? The times have altered, but Jesus is the Eternal. 2. A great many have their eye on the future only. But it doesn't say that the fulness shall dwell. Whatever shall yet be done by His grace may be done to-day. Our laziness puts off the work of conquest; and want of faith makes us dote upon the millennium instead of hearing the Spirit's voice to-day. 3. Our churches believe that there is great fulness in Christ, and that sometimes they ought to enjoy it. The progress of Christianity is to be by tides which ebb and flow. There are to be revivals like spring, which must alternate with lethargies like winter. But it is not the Lord's pleasure that a fulness should reside in Jesus during revivals, and then withdraw. May we feel that we have not to drink of an intermittent spring, nor to work with an occasional industry! III. THE POSITION OF THIS FULNESS IS ENCOURAGING TO US IN THE MATTER OF OBTAINING IT. It is "in Him," where you can receive it, in your Brother, who loves to give it. It is yours. Since Christ is yours, all that is in Him is yours. It pleases God for you to partake of it. It is a matter for gratitude that it is not placed in us, for then we should not have to go so often to Christ; nor in an angel, who would not be so attractive as Christ. IV. WE OUGHT TO USE THIS FULNESS. 1. Believe in great things. 2. Expect them. 3. Attempt them. 4. Do not talk about this, but set about it. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *The fulness of Christ*:—The fulness of power which creation manifests, and the fulness of glory which the Church reveals, and the fulness of grace which the Godhead contains, dwell in Christ. That is His fulness. But oh, "how small a portion is heard of Him!" (Job xxvi. 14). A little child is led down to our sea-coast, and is told, "That is the ocean"; a little child is taken to the sea-coast in Canada, and is told, "That is the ocean"; and a little child is taken to the sea-coast in Australia, and is told, "That is the ocean." But the ocean fills the intervening two thousand five hundred miles between the first and second, the fourteen thousand miles between the second and third, and the fifteen thousand miles between the third and the first. They have seen the ocean, but its fulness fills all that lies between them, and all that is beyond the horizon which bounds their vision. (H. Brooke.) *No limit to the fulness in Christ*:—I have felt it an interesting thing to stand by the grassy edge of a rolling river, and think how it has been rolling on for six thousand years, slaking the thirst and watering the fields of a hundred generations, and yet there is no sign of waste or want there; and it is an interesting thing to mark the sun rise above the shoulder of a mountain, or where the sky is thick with clouds to see him leap from his ocean bed, and think he has melted the snows of so many winters, revived the verdure of so many springs, painted the flowers of so many summers, and ripened the corn of so many autumns, and yet is as big and as brilliant as ever, his eye not dimmed, his strength not abated, and his floods of glory none the less for centuries of profusion. But what is that rolling river, what is yon bright sun, but images of the blessed fulness that is in Jesus Christ, a fulness that should encourage the most hopeless of you to hope, a fulness that should prevail upon the vilest sinner to come, and a fulness that should animate the efforts of missionaries and of missionary societies to go on in the strength of Him who has all power in earth and heaven, who shall carry on His triumphs till the whole world has been subdued, and all the nations of this world and its kingdoms shall "become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." (T. Guthrie, D.D.) *Fulness of Christ cannot be supplemented*:—Truly the revelation is by no means scant, for there is vastly more revealed in the person of Christ than we shall be likely to learn in this mortal life, and even eternity will not be too long for the discovery of all the glory of God which shines forth in the person of the Word made flesh. Those who would supplement Christianity had better first add to the brilliance of the sun or the fulness of the sea. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *And having made peace by the blood of His Cross*.—It is great to "reconcile"; greater "through Himself"; greater, again, "through His blood"; greatest of all "through His Cross." Here are five things to be admired—reconciliation, to God, through Himself, by death, by the Cross. (Chrysostom.) *The Reconciler*:—I. BY NATURE MAN IS AT ENMITY WITH GOD. As God is love, so the carnal mind is enmity; this being so much the nature, essence, element of its existence, that if you took away the enmity it would cease to be. It is not always in activity, but sins, like seeds, lie dormant, and only await circumstances to develop them.

This is a doctrine into which the believer does not need to be reasoned. He feels it. The text takes it for granted; for what need can there be to make peace between friends? Not friends require to be reconciled, only foes. But does God appear as reciprocating our enmity, as the enemy of man? No; not even when He condemns him. He does not hate the sinner, though He hates his sins. He hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked. II. GOD DESIRES TO BE RECONCILED TO HIS ENEMIES. 1. Man stands upon his dignity. The injured says to the injurer—and each generally thinks not himself, but the other such—"He is to come to me; I am not to go to him." You may tell him that it is noble to make the first advances. "No," he says, "he must acknowledge his offence, and I will not refuse my hand." Strange terms for those to stand on who know the grace of God. If God had so dealt with us, we should have gone to hell. 2. Does God stand upon His dignity, the justice of the case? If ever any might, it was He. No, He takes the humiliation to Himself, and might be supposed to be the injurer, not the injured. Veiling His majesty, and leaving heaven to seek our door, He stands, knocks, waits there, beseeching us as though it were a favour to be reconciled. Salvation has its fountain, not in the Cross, but in the bosom of the Father. III. TO MAKE OUR PEACE WITH GOD, JESUS CHRIST LAID DOWN HIS LIFE. 1. The price of pardon was nothing less than "the blood of God." 2. Purchasing our peace at such a price, God has done more for us than for all the universe besides. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The atonement*.—I. The influence of the blood of the Cross on God. "Peace" cannot mean the actual reconciliation of man to God, for it is prior to and with the design of afterwards effecting it. It must therefore have been peace that looked toward God, for He is the only other party to the enmity. But this could not have been a change in God Himself or His purposes, for He is immutable; nor any alteration in His feelings towards sin, for that must ever be the abominable thing which He hates; still less the purchase of His love for man, for the whole purpose of reconciliation sprang out of His "pleasure." But it is the effect produced by the death of Christ upon God's moral government, so that it became possible for Him to forgive righteously. It will follow.—1. That they are greatly in error who maintain that the only purpose of Christ's death was to reconcile man to God by the simple manifestation of Divine love. The fact is there are two elements in the Cross—love and righteousness—and we must allow neither to overshadow the other. If we do, in one case the gospel will assume the appearance of indifference to evil, in the other it will be made to assume an appearance of terror. 2. That they are greatly in error who make little of the death of Christ. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." II. The blood of the Cross as it respects man. "Things on earth" may perhaps be taken to mean the whole lower creation which "groans and travails in pain," &c.; but as the curse passed on the earth through man, so must the blessing. How, then, are men reconciled to God? More than pardon through the satisfaction of God's justice was needed; for sin has not only broken the law, but filled the sinner's heart with enmity against God. But—1. The atonement of Christ has also secured the Holy Spirit for the regeneration of human hearts. 2. Then the Spirit uses the story of Christ's love and death to remove the enmity. All along the sinner has been misjudging God; but when he, through the Spirit, is led to see that God has given Christ to secure his pardon, he discovers that he has done God the foulest wrong, and returns in penitence and affection to Him. III. The blood of the Cross as it affects angels. They, of course, cannot be reconciled in the strict sense of the term; but the work of Christ has let them see further into the heart of God, drawn them nearer to Him, and given them a higher degree of blessedness. Conclusion: 1. All obstacles have been taken out of the way of a sinner's salvation as far as God is concerned. If they are not saved, it is because they reject God's overtures of reconciliation. 2. If the sinner passes from earth unreconciled, there is no salvation for him. The text says nothing of "things under the earth." (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Peace through the blood of the Cross*.—I. THE FATHER MAKES THIS PEACE. This is noteworthy. A different representation might have been given—has been given elsewhere. Christ is our peace, and through Him we can approach the Father without dismay. But the teaching here is that the great transaction of the Cross was not needed to enlist the interest of the Father, or to render Him willing to rescue us, or to procure our love. It was His love that procured the Cross. The Son can do nothing of Himself, but delights to do the will of the Father. II. THIS PEACE HAS BEEN MADE. 1. The idea

is not that war has ceased. (1) Alas! it has not in our world. (2) Nor in the human heart (ver. 21). (3) Nor in other spheres (Eph. vi. 12). 2. But it has been made in this sense that, so far as the earth's populations are concerned, an armistice has been proclaimed by the Lord Paramount of the universe. A halt has been called to the legions of retribution. All the steps have been taken by the Divine Governor that were needful to render it a fit, safe, and glorious thing on His part to conclude peace, and has sent messengers to proclaim peace to them that are afar off and to them that are nigh. III. He has made peace THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS. The idea is that at a very great cost He has made the peace. The Father while infinitely loving the Son saw it to be a fitting thing to surrender Him to a cruel death. But in the endurance of the crucifixion there was a manifestation of high regard for the law, hatred to sin, and love of the sinner. IV. He is now LABOURING TO SECURE THE ACCEPTANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS PEACE. Not only did the Divine Father make peace 1,800 years ago, and then leave sinners to accept it or reject it, indifferent as to the result. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Both Father and Son are working together at every point in the world of matter and on every heart in the world of mind. (*J. Morison, D.D.*)

Peace by the blood of Christ:—There is a young girl in heaven now, once a member of our Church. I went with one of my beloved deacons to see her when she was very near her departure. She was in the last stage of consumption. She said to me, "It is sad to be so very weak, but I think, if I had my choice, I would rather be here than be in health, for it is very precious to me. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and I am waiting for the moment when He shall send His chariot of fire to take me up to Him." I put the question, "Have you not any doubts?" "No, none, sir; why should I? I clasp my arms around the neck of Christ." "And have not you any fear about your sins?" "No, sir; they are all forgiven. I trust the Saviour's precious blood." "And do you think you will be as brave as this when you come actually to die?" "Not if He leaves me, sir; but He will never leave me, for He has said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind.—*Reconciliation by Christ*:—1. There are only two kinds of goodness possible, that of those who have never erred, that of those who have been recovered. It is plain that ours must be the latter. 2. Appointed to these are two kinds of happiness, the blessedness of entire ignorance of guilt, and the blessedness of forgiveness, the latter of which is superior in intensity and fulness. 3. There are two kinds of friendship, that which has never had a shock, and that which, after having been doubted, is at last made sure. The happiness of the last is perhaps the greater, as illustrated by the parable of the Prodigal. This leads us to our subject—**Reconciliation**. I. **ESTRANGEMENT**. 1. Its cause. "Wicked works," voluntary deeds. Sin is not merely a foreign disease introduced into the constitution. You are a responsible individual, have done deeds that are wrong of the mind, hand, tongue. 2. Its result. (1) Alienation—the feeling that God is our enemy. Alienation was a more forcible expression then. There is now little difference between the alien and the citizen. But the alien from the Jewish commonwealth had no power to share in its religious privileges, and was popularly regarded as a "dog." In the Roman commonwealth the word had a still stronger meaning; it was to be separated from the authority and protection of Roman law, and to be subject to degrading penalties. Hence Paul's protest at Philippi against scourging, as he was not an alien. Paul's conception of alienation is given in Eph. ii. 12: it is to have no place in the universe, to feel God your enemy, to be estranged from Him and banished from His presence. What is this but hell? (2) Enmity against God. The illustration of the process we have seen in everyday life. Strength of attachment settles down to indifference, and at last to hatred. A secret sense of wrong intrudes, and we cannot escape, save by throwing the blame somewhere. By degrees a cankered spot begins, you irritate it until the mortification becomes entire, and alienation settles down into animosity. And such is the history of alienation from God. Different characters arrive at it in different ways. (a) Weak minds throw the blame on circumstances, and regard themselves as victims of a cruel fate, the blame belonging not to them, but God. (b) In the case of stronger and more vicious characters, humiliation degrades, and degradation produces anger. The outcast turns with defiance on respectability merely because it is respectable. So some sinners stand at bay, as it were, to their Maker. II. **RECONCILIATION**. 1. Christ has reconciled man to God. (1) By exhibiting the character of God. The sacrifice of Christ was the voice of God proclaiming love.

(2) When the mind has comprehended this, then comes the blessed feeling of reconciliation. The change of feeling within us changes God to us. 2. Christ has reconciled man to man. (1) Men have tried other methods. Let the political economist come forward with his principle of selfishness and tell us that this is that by which alone the wealth of nations can accrue. He may get a nation in which there are a wealthy few and a miserable many, but not a brotherhood of Christians. Try the principle of moral rule; say that men should love one another—will that *make* them? You may come forward with the crushing rule of political authority. Papal Rome has tried that and failed. She bound up the masses of the race as a gigantic iceberg; but she could give only a temporary principle of cohesion. (2) Therefore we come back to the Cross: through this alone we learn that there is one Father, one Elder Brother, in whom all can be brothers. Catch the spirit of that Cross, the spirit of giving, suffering, loving, and man will be reconciled to man. 3. By the Redeemer's atonement man becomes reconciled to himself. That is necessary because it is so hard to forgive ourselves. You may obtain remission, but you cannot get back the feeling of self-respect and unity within. The sacrifice of Christ was surrender to the will of God; go and sacrifice yourself for the happiness of others, and the calm feeling will come. 4. Man becomes reconciled to duty. There is no discord more terrible than that between man and duty. There are few of us who fancy we have found our proper places in this world. We think that we are fit for higher things. But study that marvellous Life and you will see that the whole of its details are ungenial, mean, trivial, wretched circumstances. It is not by change of circumstances, but by fitting our spirits to the circumstances in which God has placed us, that we can be reconciled to life and duty. If the duties be not noble, let us ennoble them by doing them in a noble spirit. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*)

The nature and issues of reconciliation.—I. THE CHRISTIAN'S PAST CONDITION. 1. Alienation. The idea is that of belonging to a different community, morally at a distance from God. Man's spirit formed for God is naturally averse from Him. No sooner was our first father guilty than he fled from the presence of his Maker. (1) This alienation is spiritual death, for the soul cannot realize its true life away from God. (2) The spirit of alienation is hostility. 2. The seat of this enmity is in the thought and feeling. It need not be apparent. If we are wilfully separated from one to whom we owe love and allegiance, hard thoughts of him to justify ourselves will arise and then enmity of heart. Men may profess to like an ideal God, but the God of the Bible who claims their affection and service is no object of attraction to the natural mind. Take any gathering of men and you can introduce no subject more forbidding than that of God. 3. This hostility has an outward embodiment in the practical sphere of wicked works not necessarily into flagrant vice. Every act of disobedience is evil, however compatible with social virtue and refinement, because rebellion against God. 4. This is a melancholy indictment, but a true one. Perhaps the darkest count against humanity is that in regions of civilization and culture there can be so much that is pleasant and elevating without any recognition of God. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S PRESENT PRIVILEGE. 1. It is not God who is said to be reconciled. God is reconciled in Christ, and is seeking to reconcile the world unto Himself. 2. In this reconciliation—(1) Friendship is restored. The alienation and enmity are removed, and the sinner brought nigh. No friendship can be compared with this: that of the world worketh death, this is life and glory. (2) Fellowship is resumed. Man was formed for this, but sin interrupted it, and now in it man finds his highest enjoyment. 3. But how does it come? "In the body of His flesh," &c. (1) The assumption of a human body brought Jesus into fraternal relationship with men. (2) His death brings us into relationship. 4. The apostle utterly demolishes these theories which make little of the death of Christ while they profess to make much of His life and teaching. III. THE CHRISTIAN'S FUTURE PROSPECT (ver. 23). (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The personal blessings of reconciliation.*—I. SIN HAS PLACED MAN IN ANTAGONISM TO GOD. 1. Man is estranged from God. Sin severs the soul from God. The principle of cohesion—the consciousness of rectitude—is gone, and the sinner, breaking away from the centre of all goodness, drifts into the wilderness of alienation. Sin leads man to shun the Divine presence and disregard the Divine overtures. It is a state of danger and spiritual death. How few are conscious of it! 2. Man is hostile to God. Enmity follows estrangement, and both have their seat in the mind. The mind of man opposes the mind of God, sets up a rival kingdom, and organizes an active rebellion against the Divine Ruler (Rom. viii. 7). If the hostility is not always

open, it is in the mind. 3. Man's estrangement and hostility are evident in his actions. II. MAN IS RECONCILED TO GOD IN CHRIST. 1. The distinguished blessing. "Now hath He reconciled." 2. The gracious medium of the blessing. "In the body of His flesh through death." III. THE DIVINE PURPOSE IN RECONCILIATION IS TO PROMOTE MAN'S HIGHEST BLESSEDNESS. 1. The highest blessedness of man consists in his moral purity. "To present you holy." 2. In His personal blamelessness. 3. In His freedom from censure. (G. Barlow.)

Vers. 22, 23. **To present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight.**—*The ultimate purpose of reconciliation*:—I. THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF GOD IN THE WORK OF CHRIST. 1. In "present" there is possibly a sacrificial allusion (Rom. xii. 1), or the more eloquent metaphor of the bringing of the bride to the husband by the friend of the bridegroom (2 Cor. ii. 2; Eph. v. 27), or perhaps it means simply "to sit in the presence of." The reference is to the day of judgment (2 Cor. iv. 14). In the light of that revealing day His purpose is that we shall stand "holy," i.e., devoted to God, and therefore pure, "without blemish," as the offerings had to be, and "unproveable," against whom no charge can be brought. They must be spotless indeed who are "without fault before the throne." 2. All the lines of thought in the preceding section lead up to this peak. The meaning of God in creation and redemption cannot be fathomed without taking into view the future perfecting of men. The Christian ideal of the possibilities for men is the noblest vision that can animate our hopes. Nothing short of this satisfies God's heart, for it has to be connected with "It pleased the Father." Nor will anything less exhaust the power of the reconciling Christ. His Cross and passion reach no adequate result short of the perfecting of the saints. We ought, then, to keep before us this as the crowning object of Christianity; not to make us happy except as a consequence of holiness. Nothing less should satisfy us. II. THE CONDITIONS ON WHICH THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THAT PURPOSE DEPENDS. 1. Generally speaking, a steadfast adherence to the gospel. "If ye continue in the exercise of your faith." This continuance is explained—(1) Positively, "grounded," i.e., built into a foundation, and "steadfast," as banded into the firm rock, and so partaking of its fixedness. (2) Negatively, "not moved away," a process that may be continually going on, and in which, by some force constantly acting from without, they may be imperceptibly pushed off from the foundation, i.e., the hope evoked or held out by the gospel. 2. Some plain lessons may be drawn from these words. (1) There is an "if." However great the powers of Christ, and deep the desire, and fixed the purpose of God, no fulfilment of these is possible except on the condition of our habitual exercise of faith. The gospel does not act on men by magic. "He could not do, . . . because of their unbelief." (2) It must be present faith that leads to present results. We cannot make an arrangement by which we exercise faith wholesale once for all, and secure a delivery of its blessings in small quantities for a time after. (3) If our lives are to be firm we must have a foundation outside of ourselves. If my practical life be not built on Christ the blows of circumstance will make it reel and stagger. (4) This Christ-derived steadfastness will make us able to resist influences that would move us away from the hope of the gospel. If we do not look to our moorings we shall drift away down stream and never know we are moving. Many a man is completely unaware how completely his Christian faith has gone till some crisis comes when he needs it. III. A THREE-FOLD MOTIVE FOR ADHERENCE TO THE GOSPEL. 1. "The gospel which ye heard." Paul would have them recall what they heard at their conversion, and tamper with no teaching inconsistent with it. He also appeals to their experience. "Have these truths become less precious?" To us the same appeal comes. The word has been sounding in our ears since childhood. The "one thing" we know is not to be lightly abandoned. 2. This gospel was "preached" in all creation under heaven," whereas the heretical teachings only belonged to a class. All errors are transient and limited; but the gospel can go into any corner under heaven. 3. "Whereof I Paul am made a minister." (1) This is not merely an appeal to their affection, though that is perfectly legitimate. (2) He puts stress upon the fact that he became a minister, as being an evidence of Christianity; which indeed it is. (A. Maclaren, D.D.) *Holiness through Christ*:—"What are you doing here by yourself?" asked a man of his neighbour one day. "I am reading a book that has only two leaves," was the reply. "Then it won't take you long to read it," said the other. Months passed away, and they met again. "Well, what are you doing now?" "I am still reading my little book." "What! and only two leaves

in it?" "Yes; a white leaf and a red one." "I don't understand you." "Well, the white leaf is the holiness of God, and the red leaf is the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son. When I study the white leaf, and see my sin in the light of God's holiness, I am glad to turn to the red leaf and rest my eye on the blood of Jesus. And when I realize the preciousness and efficacy of the Saviour's blood, I feel a longing for holiness, and turn again to the white leaf. The little book will occupy me all my life, and I expect it will be my joyful meditation through eternity." (*New Encyclopædia of Anecdotes.*)

Ver. 23. If ye continue in the faith.—*The condition of man's final blessedness:*—Man's final blessedness depends on—I. His UNSWERVING CONTINUANCE IN THE FAITH. There is implied a continuance in—1. The doctrines of the faith. What a man believes has a powerful influence in moulding his character. Unbelief lures the soul from its confidence, sets it adrift amidst the cross currents of doubt, and exposes it to moral shipwreck. The soul's safety is ensured not by an infatuated devotion to mere opinions, but by an intelligent and constant faith in Divine verities. 2. In the profession of the faith. The believer is a witness for the truth, and it is imperative that he should bear his testimony (Rom. x. 9, 10; Matt. x. 32). 3. The practice of the faith. Faith supplies the motive and rule of all right conduct. 4. Continuance in the faith must be permanent. "Grounded and settled." In order to permanency in the faith, the truth must be—(1) Apprehended intelligently. (2) Embraced cordially. (3) Maintained courageously. II. His UNCHANGING ADHERENCE TO THE GOSPEL HOPE. 1. The gospel reveals a bright future. 2. The gospel to be effectual must come in contact with individual mind. "Which ye have heard." Epaphras had declared to them the Divine message. 3. The gospel is adapted to universal man. "Which was preached to every creature which is under heaven." 4. The gospel invested the apostle with an office of high authority. "Whereof I, Paul, am made a minister." There is an implied possibility of relinquishing our hold of gospel hope. The multiplicity and fulness of our blessings may prove a snare to us; prosperity tempts to relax watchfulness. Our retention of the gospel hope is rendered immovable—(1) By constant prayer; (2) Growing acquaintance with the Word of promise; (3) Continual anticipation of future bliss. (*G. Barlow.*) *Our life-work:*—In the end of vers. 22 and 28 we learn the great object of salvation. We should be fellow-workers with God in this (Phil. ii. 12). Like an artist student copying the work of a great master under his superintendence, we must "work out" the beauty of Christ in our lives, though the great Master Himself must give the finishing touch and make it perfect. Here we are told what the Christian's course of conduct must be if this end is attained. I. THE FOUNDATION, the starting-point, "the gospel." 1. From various expressions in the chapter we can learn what Paul means by "gospel." (1) News of a personal Saviour (vers. 20, 28; cf. 1 Cor. iii. 11). (2) The blood of the Cross (ver. 20; cf. Heb. ix. 22). (3) An indwelling Saviour (ver. 27). The searching medicine; the healing balm; the pledge and security of salvation. 2. The responsibility of the Colossians in connection with this gospel. (1) "Which ye have heard." The hearing has put them in a new position (John xv. 24). (2) It was preached universally. Every one now has the offer. (3) Paul a minister of this gospel. The gospel you have heard from Epaphras your minister is mine. I got it by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. i. 12). 3. This gospel demands faith and hope. These, like light and heat, go together; the two poles on which Christian life turns. Faith fixes the lower end of the ladder on the Rock, and Hope rests the higher end in the promised glory. II. PERSEVERANCE THEREIN. 1. Faith must be kept in continual exercise. Religion is a life of faith. (1) Continuance a necessary consequence of true faith. Three things are wanted for a good harvest—good seed, soil, sunshine, and shower. Having these the harvest is a necessity. So in spiritual things; the only thing we have to do with is the soil; the seed is good, and sunshine and shower are assured. If the soil "receives" and retains the Word, there must be "first the blade, then the ear," &c. (2) Here, then, is the test of faith. Is it the faith that continues and overcomes the world? That opens the soil, and draws down the roots into its bosom? That keeps the vessels filled with oil while the virgins wait? That draws the fruit-bearing sap from the True Vine? (3) The connection of faith is not loose and wavering. "Grounded" like the foundation of Eddystone—a grip—an identification. "Settled"—seated, restful, satisfied, undoubting. 2. Hope meanwhile is steadily maintained. We have the object of hope in two words—"with Him," "like Him." That consummation we are never to lose

sight of. Faith helps here; it makes substantial the things hoped for, and makes evident the things not seen: the telescope which brings within the range of hope's vision the unseen. Conclusion:—1. There is danger implied in this waning, and experience shows how real it is. 2. Steady progress inculcated. To move on the only way to keep from moving away. The unseen should act as a magnet drawing us to itself. "Looking for and hasting unto." (*J. J. Black, LL.D.*) **Be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.**—*Stand fast*:—It has cost many a soul a great struggle to obtain this hope, and when attained do not think that the conflict is over. It then becomes more fierce. Be not moved away, however—I. FROM THE SUBJECT OF THAT HOPE. What is that? It is the hope—1. Of full salvation, that we shall be "presented holy, unblameable," &c. "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself," &c. 2. Of final perseverance, that He who has begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. 3. Of the resurrection. Christ brought not one-half, but the whole trinity of our manhood. 4. Of the second advent. 5. Of being, not in purgatory, but for ever with the Lord. II. FROM THE GROUND OF THAT HOPE. 1. The rich, free, sovereign grace of God. He who could save the dying thief can save all. 2. The merit of Christ, which is the only ground on which God saves men. 3. The Divine pledge that whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, &c. 4. The immutability of God. 5. The infallibility of the Scriptures. III. HOW WE MAY BE MOVED AWAY FROM THAT HOPE. 1. By a conceit of ourselves. "Let him that thinketh he standeth," &c. 2. By despondency. Satan does not mind whether you jump up or jump down from the rock. The least sin ought to make you humble, the greatest ought not to make you despair. 3. By false teaching. If you have been persuaded that Christ is not Divine, or not the only Priest, or that you have merit of your own, you are removed. 4. By hoping to live by feelings instead of faith. 5. By a dazzle of intellect and "modern thought." 6. By persecution, sneers, and ridicule. IV. WHY WE WILL NOT BE MOVED AWAY FROM THAT HOPE. 1. Because there is nothing to take its place. 2. Because if we did we should soon be in bondage. 3. Because we should become mean, miserable wretches who have deserted their Saviour. 4. Because it would be something like a soldier entrenched in an impregnable fortress accepting an invitation to come out. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A good hope distinguished*:—I. ITS DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS. 1. It is in harmony with God's plan of salvation. 2. It springs from the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. 3. It is grounded on the truth and power of God. Not upon impressions and feelings—no, but upon the declarations, promises, and Almighty power of Him who has "laid up the hope for us in heaven." II. ITS INVARIABLE INFLUENCE. 1. It produces holiness (1 John iii, 2, 3). 2. It begets Christian resignation (Heb. vi, 18, 19). 3. It kindles pious zeal (1 Thess. i, 3). 4. It lights up the valley of death. Reflections:—1. It is dismal to be without hope (Eph. ii, 12). 2. It is madness to deceive ourselves. 3. It is necessary to be watchful and persevering. (*Congregational Pulpit.*) *Changeful Christians*:—Oh, how many there are that are never settled. The tree which should be transplanted every week would soon die. Nay, if it were moved, no matter how skilfully, once every year, no gardener would expect fruit from it. How many Christians there be that are transplanting themselves constantly, even as to their doctrinal sentiments. There be some who believe according to the last speaker; and there be others who do not know what they do believe, but they believe almost anything that is told them. Men have come to believe that it does not matter what they do believe—who are like the weathercock upon the steeple, they will turn just as the wind blows. As good Mr. Whitfield said, "You might as well measure the moon for a suit of clothes as tell their doctrinal sentiments," for they are ever changing. Now, I pray that this may be taken away from any of you, if this be your weakness, and that you may be settled. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Immovable Christians*:—Cyprian, when on his road to suffer martyrdom, was told by the emperor that he would give him time to consider whether he had not better cast a grain of incense into the fire, in honour of idols, than die so degraded a death. The martyr nobly answered, "There needs no deliberation in the case." John Huss was offered a pardon when at the stake, about to suffer for his attachment to Christ, if he would recant; his reply was, "I am here ready to suffer death." Anne Askew when asked under similar circumstances to avoid the flames, answered, "I came not here to deny my God and Master." Mr. Thomas Hawkes, an Essex gentleman, said, on a like occasion, "If I had a hundred bodies, I would suffer them all to be torn in pieces, rather than recant." When the cruel Bonner told John Ardy of the pain connected with burning, and how hard it must be to

endure it, with a view to leading the martyr to recant, he replied, "If I had as many lives as I have hairs on my head, I would lose them all in the fire, before I would lose Christ." Galeazius, a gentleman of great wealth, who suffered martyrdom at St. Angelo, in Italy, being much entreated by his friends to recant, replied, "Death is much sweeter to me with the testimony of truth, than life with its least denial." (*Arrine*.) Which was preached to every creature.—There may be seven observations gathered out of this speech of the apostle. 1. That doctrine only is true which is agreeable to the doctrine of the apostles, by which the world was converted to God. 2. That no power is like the power of the Word of God. Here it converts a world in a short time. And our eyes have beheld that it hath almost in as short time restored a world of men from the power of antichrist. 3. That the words "all" and "every one" are not always in Scripture to be understood universally of all the singular persons in the world, as the universalists conceive. 4. They were but a few fishermen that did this great work, and they were much opposed and persecuted, and in some less matters they jarred sometime among themselves. Whence we may observe that doctrine may be exceeding effectual, though (1) but few teach it; (2) though they be but of mean estate and condition; (3) though it be opposed by cross and contrary teaching; (4) though it be persecuted; (5) though the people be indisposed and nozzled in sin and superstition, as the Gentiles were; (6) though the preacher be often restrained; (7) though there be some dissension in less matters. 5. That in the conversion of sinners God is no respecter of persons; men of any age, nation, sex, condition, life or quality, may be converted by the gospel. 6. It is that preaching is the ordinary means to convert every creature, so as ordinarily there is none converted but by preaching. 7. If any one ask what shall become of those nations, or particular persons, that never yet heard of the gospel, I answer, the way of God in divers things is not revealed, and His judgments are a great deep. It belongs to us to look to ourselves to whom the gospel is come. (*N. Byfield*.)

Ver. 24. **Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you.—Joy in suffering:**—The vast region of human sorrow is to most a dark and dreary desert. But if we saw truly we should find many streams of refreshment, many sunny spots, and on all sides evidences of the Divine tenderness. Here we find Paul at home in the region of suffering—rejoicing amid mysteries which fill most men with darkness. And no wonder, for he had been led to gather that his sufferings were supplementary to those of Christ, and essential to the well-being of the Church. I. THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST. 1. This is a subject of which we can know little. All the notes that have been marshalled into harmony by the great rulers of song tell most of the unexplored regions of music. The fire which sparkles from the flint when struck with steel tells most of the unspent fire within. And so all the outward manifestations of Christ suffering tells most of the inexpressible anguish of His heart. That it was terrible beyond human thought is indicated—(1) by the prophecies concerning the Man of Sorrows; (2) by His sudden death of a broken heart; (3) by the exquisite sensibility of His holy nature. 2. But while it is impossible to know fully His sufferings, some facts concerning them are revealed. (1) They were borne voluntarily for men. (2) The spring of His sacrificing of Himself was His infinite love. (3) Consequently His sufferings were not only compatible with His unspeakable joy, but were the cause of what was unspeakable in it (*Heb. xii. 3*). 3. Christ in His life of sacrifice declared the Father's love for men, and in His life mirrored the life of God. God is ever spending Himself for His children, and is ever unspent. "He that spared not," &c. We infer, then, that the purest joy of heaven is sacrifice, and since Christ is the firstborn among many brethren, that He should furnish the ideal of all true living; which throws light upon the text. II. THE SUFFERINGS OF PAUL. These were twofold; those which He voluntarily endured for the sake of the Church, and those which were personal and inevitable. 1. He did not seek suffering for its own sake. As an end it was contemptible, but as a means to the well-being of the universe it was sublime. Paul's joy was not in the suffering, but in the love of which suffering was the medium of expression. As the love of fatherland inspires the patriot to bleed for his country, so the love of men made the apostle ready to sacrifice anything for them. And as he did so he was filled with Divine ecstasy. 2. But His love for Christ was a richer source of gladness amid His suffering. We want always to know all we can about those we love. One of the great ends of Paul's life was to know Christ, and the idea of being in fellowship with Christ in His sufferings was

full of glory to Him. He would be in a position for realizing more of that love which passeth knowledge. Love's fullest revelations can only be made in suffering. The mother never knew the strength and blessedness of a mother's love until her child became ill, and until she lost herself in all-consuming love for it. It has been the common testimony of Christ's most afflicted ones, that in the hour of their greatest suffering they have had the profoundest sense of Christ's love. Christ meets us where Love's grandest revelations are possible. There Paul rejoiced in His sufferings. III. THE SUPPLEMENTARY CHARACTER OF PAUL'S SUFFERINGS TO CHRIST'S AND THEIR SUBSERVENCY TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE CHURCH. 1. There cannot be anything meritorious in suffering. "After ye have done all, ye are unprofitable servants." Yet there is a vicarious element in suffering borne for others. Our Lord's life affected men through the idea of sacrifice. In the Cross we see sin condemned and the glory of the Divine rectitude and mercy displayed. But Christ is no longer with us, and His sufferings are over. How, then, shall we convey the idea of His self-sacrificing love? By preaching partly, but mostly in the imitation of it in the self-sacrificing lives of His people. Thus do Christians "fill up" that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ. 2. The sufferings of Christian people are among the chief means of deepening and enlarging their power of sympathy. In Christ sympathy was one of the mightiest forces for saving men. "The bruised reed will He not break," &c. Sympathy is the secret of true blessedness and usefulness. Christ was perfected through suffering.—"And in that He suffered," &c.—and by having it perfected in Himself the apostle felt that He was "filling up," &c. 3. Affliction is everywhere regarded in the Scriptures as a necessity for the Christian in this world. When sanctified it breaks down our wills, subdues our hearts, moulds us more and more into the likeness of Christ. How does this affect the Church? Is it not Christ's body? The increased life of the individual members then, must affect the whole body through the spiritual veins and nerves and joints which bind the members to each other, and all to Christ the Head. The lowliest sufferer, therefore, is not suffering in vain, he is "filling up," &c. (*H. Simon*). *Joy in suffering*:—A great pleasure in giving. No pleasure so great as to be able to give or serve. Pleasure in personally going without, in order to give to another, or serve another; that is, in putting yourself to pain for the sake of another. Our sufferings really are a giving to others and serving others, though possibly we may not see how. It is very often the case that losses or pain do a great deal of good to the person who suffers them. When we know that a pain or loss of ours does some good to some one else, to some one whom we truly love, then it is a very different thing—then we rejoice in it. The mother rejoices in her pain for her child. In this way, look at the misery and sorrow in the world; to think of it as being borne, not by each one for himself, but by every one for others; as serving others in some unseen way. We shall see in the future state how our pain was borne for others, and be glad that thus we served. God has revealed to us in Christ both that His own life is a life of sacrifice and service, and that ours truly is so too. The work of making mankind perfect is helped on by all that we are called upon to bear. We help God's work by our sorrows. They are God's special gift to us of serving; it is God's best gift to us—the privilege He gave His Son—to be used and sacrificed for the best and greatest end. The result which glorifies and makes good the painful part of human life is one that we cannot see. To make sacrifice for others always joyful to us, our own life must be made more perfect. (*James Hinton*). *The joy of suffering for the Church*:—A stolid indifference to, and heroic endurance of, suffering, was not unknown to paganism. But Christianity alone has taught us to rejoice in it. Observe—I. THE REPRESENTATIVE CHARACTER OF THE APOSTLE'S SUFFERINGS. 1. He represented the suffering Saviour. We are not to suppose that Christ's sufferings were incomplete. His passion was the one perfect and sufficient sacrifice for sin. No one could represent this. But while His personal sufferings are over He so thoroughly identifies Himself with His people that their afflictions become His own. Paul represented the suffering Saviour in what he endured for Him and the Church. Thus He could say, "The sufferings of Christ abound in us;" and so may the Church as Christ's representative to-day (*Matt. xxv.*). 2. The sufferings of the apostle supplemented what was lacking in the afflictions of Christ. "Fill up." Every age of the church has its measure of suffering. The church is built up by repeated acts of self-denial in successive individuals and generations. They continue the work which Christ began. The great Mediator suffered to effect our salvation; and His people, on their part, fill up the suffering needed for the perfection of their spiritual life, and for the full display of the Divine glory. II.

THE VICARIOUS CHARACTER OF THE APOSTLE'S SUFFERINGS. "For his body's sake, which is the Church." 1. The apostle's sufferings for the Church (1) confirmed the faith of her converts; (2) were for the consolation of the Church. "Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation." "Great hearts can only be made by great troubles. The spade of trouble digs the reservoir of comfort deeper, and makes more room for the water of consolation." When James Bainham, who suffered under the reign of Henry VIII., was in the midst of the flames which had half consumed his arms and legs, he said aloud: "O ye Papists, ye look for miracles, and here now you may see a miracle; for in this fire I feel no more pain than if I were in a bed of down; but it is to me a bed of roses"; (3) tended to promote its increase. The more the Egyptians afflicted the Hebrews the more they multiplied. The devil's way of extinguishing goodness, is God's way of advancing it. **III. THE HIGH-TONED SPIRIT OF THE APOSTLE'S SUFFERINGS.** "Who now rejoice." Nature shrinks from suffering. It is altogether above nature to triumph in it. It is Christianity alone that inspires us with joy in tribulation. (G. Barlow.) *Suffering working perfection:*—Just as a certain amount of heat in the furnace is required to produce certain definite effects upon the metal, so it would seem as though a certain definite amount of suffering, recognized by the infinite wisdom of God, were necessary to work out the perfection of that body of which Christ is the Head. As we each cheerfully and thankfully bear our share, what a joy to think that, along with the Head, we are contributing in our measure to the perfecting of the whole. (W. M. H. Aitken, M.A.)

Vers. 25-27. Whereof I am made a minister.—*The pre-eminent honour and sublime theme of the Christian ministry:*—**I. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IS A DIVINE INSTITUTION.** 1. The Christian minister is divinely commissioned. "Dispensation" involves the idea of stewardship. 2. The true minister is charged with the most complete proclamation of the Divine Word. **II. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY DEALS WITH A THEME OF PROFOUND SIGNIFICANCE AND INEFFABLE WORTH.** 1. It is designated a mystery. The gospel is still a mystery to the unconverted. 2. It is a mystery unveiled to those who are morally fitted to understand it. "To His saints." God chose His own time for making it known. Like all the Divine procedures, the development was gradual, increasing in clearness and completeness as the fulness of time approached. It is an axiom in optics that the eye only sees what it brings with it the power to see: and in spiritual things the soul comprehends the revelation of God only as it is fitted by the Spirit. 3. The revelation of the mystery was an act of the Divine will. "To whom God would make known." There was nothing impelling Him to unfold it but His own good pleasure. 4. The revelation of the mystery endowed humanity with a vast inheritance of moral wealth. "What is the riches of the glory of this mystery." (1) This inheritance enriched the most needy. It was exhibited "among the Gentiles." (2) This inheritance includes the hope inspired by the indwelling Christ. "Which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." **Lessons**—1. The Christian ministry involves solemn responsibilities. 2. The transcendent theme of the Christian ministry is divinely revealed. 3. Personal experience of the grace of God endows man with the clearest insight into its mystery and the most satisfying possession of its spiritual riches. (G. Barlow.) *Divine ordination to the ministry:*—If they say, "You have gifts for preaching, and you might have been a tolerable preacher if you had been properly ordained," I reply that I was properly ordained. My father ordained me. Ah! I was better ordained than that: my greater Father ordained me. He ordained me twice: first, when He put his hand on my head before I was born, and said, "Be a head;" and then, after I had carried it round a few years, when He stretched out His hand and touched my heart rather than my head, and said, "Be ordained again." First, He makes the head-piece to think; and then He touches the heart, and says, "Go preach My gospel." When a man has had that done to him, he is ordained. A pope could not make him any better; a bishop could not make him any better; a whole presbytery could not make him any better. (H. W. Beecher.) *St. Paul a proof of his gospel:*—This is not merely an appeal to their affection for him, though that is perfectly legitimate. Holy words may be holier because dear lips have taught them to us, and even the truth of God may allowably have a firmer hold upon our hearts because of our love for some who have ministered it to us. It is a poor commentary on a preacher's work if, after long service to a congregation, his words do not come with power given to them by old affection and confidence. The humblest teacher who has done his master's errand will have some to whom

he can appeal, as Paul did, and urge them to keep hold of the message he has preached. But there is more than that in the apostle's mind. He was accustomed to quote the fact that he, the persecutor, had been made the messenger of Christ, as a living proof of the infinite mercy and power of that ascended Lord, whom His eyes saw on the road to Damascus. So here he puts stress on the fact that he became a minister as being an "evidence of Christianity." The history of his conversion is one of the strongest proofs of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. You know, he seems to say, what turned me from being a persecutor into an apostle. It was because I saw the living Christ, and "heard the words of His mouth," and, I beseech you, listen to no words which make His dominion less sovereign, and His sole and sufficient work on the Cross less mighty. (A. Maclaren, D.D.)

Ver. 26. **The mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations.** *The gospel mystery* :—The term "mystery," as here used twice, and often in this epistle, does not describe what is essentially incomprehensible, but rather what was hidden and is now revealed. The gospel is a mystery, but a mystery that is to be preached fully, and into which (as the word borrowed from the ancient mysteries in ver. 28 suggests) every man may be initiated. I. **THE GOSPEL A MYSTERY.** All religion deals with mystery. Genuine mystery is the stamp of a religious Divinity—false mystery is the counterfeit superstition stamp. In its aspect towards the vast, the infinite, the Divine, religion must always have some mystery to man. II. **The gospel a mystery that was long secret from man.** "The secret things belong unto God." There are hidden facts and laws in nature, that science has only gradually discovered, or is now only gradually discovering; hidden moral meanings in nature and history that poets' sight only can descry, and poets' song only describe. There were hidden things in religion that only holy men of old, moved by the Holy Ghost, could reveal. III. **The gospel is a mystery that is now fully revealed.** Whatever may have been the guesses of nobler pagans, or the anticipations of patriarchs, or the predictions of prophets, it was only as the pale light of very early dawn upon the hills of antiquity. It was noon when Christ lived, taught, died. The seal was broken, the secret revealed. What secret? IV. **The gospel is the revealed secret of God's universal redeeming love.** Christ is fully proclaimed, and Christ is the mystery. In Him are all the treasures of God stored away. 1. All the mystery is proclaimed in Christ. As the rainbow has all possible colours in its wondrous arc, as the fabled music of the spheres has all possible tones in its chord, so in Christ is *all* the wisdom, righteousness, love of God. 2. All men may receive the blessings of this mystery. Christ, and Christ freely given to the Gentiles, given to be an indwelling power in them, is the great mystery which, as Paul dwelt in it, made Him proclaim it with newer and deepening joy. (U. R. Thomas.) I. **THE MYSTERY.** 1. The term is borrowed from the ancient systems in which certain rites and doctrines were communicated to the initiated (Phil. iv. 12, and the word "perfect," which means "initiated," in ver. 28). Potentous theories have been spun out of this word. The Greek mysteries implied secrecy; the rites were done in deep obscurity; the esoteric doctrines were muttered in the ear. The Christian mysteries are spoken on the housetop, nor does the word imply anything as to the comprehensibility of the doctrines or facts which are so called. 2. We talk about "mysteries," meaning thereby truths that transcend human faculties. But the New Testament mystery may be, and most frequently is, a fact perfectly comprehensible when once spoken. "Behold I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep," &c. There is nothing incomprehensible in that. We should never have known it if we had not been told; but when told it is quite level with our faculties. The word is most frequently used in connection with the notion of declaring. It frequently occurs in this epistle and in the Ephesians, and in every instance but one refers to a fact perfectly plain when once made known—the entrance of the Gentiles into the Church. 3. Then it follows that "a steward of the mysteries" is simply a man who has truths, formerly unknown but now revealed, in charge to all who will hearken, and neither the claims of a priesthood nor the demand for the unquestioning submission of the intellect have any foundation in this much-abused term. II. **THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MYSTERY.** 1. The wonderful fact that all barriers were broken down. He saw in that the proof and prophecy of the world-wide destination of the gospel. There is no greater revolution in history than the cutting loose, through Him, of Christianity from Judaism, and widening the Church to the width of the race. No wonder that he

was misunderstood and hated by Jewish Christians all his days. He thinks of these once heathens and now Christians at Colossæ, and of many another little community in Judea, Asia, Greece, and Italy; and as he thinks of how a solid bond of brotherhood bound them together in spite of their differences of race and culture, the vision of the oneness of mankind in the Cross of Christ shines out before him as no other man had seen it till then. 2. That Christ dwelt in their hearts. That dwelling reveals the exuberant abundance of glory. To Paul the "mystery" was all running over with riches, and blazing with fresh radiance, and the possession of Christ was a pledge of future blessedness. The closer we keep to Him the clearer will be our vision of that blessedness. Anything seems more credible to a man who has Christ abiding in Him, than that such a trifle as death should have power to end such a union. This hope is offered to all. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The mystery manifest*:—Christ, by His incarnation, answered the vague and unsatisfactory queries of the world. 1. The Second Person of the Godhead was suspected by the ancients to be the active agent of the unknown God. Seneca: "Whoever formed the universe, whether the Almighty God Himself, or that incorporeal reason which was the artificer of these vast concerns." 2. The ancients conceived this Second Person to stand to the First in the relation of a word to the thought which it expresses. Zendavesta: "O, Ormuzd, what is that great word given by God, that living and powerful word, which existed before the heavens, before the waters, before the earth, before the flocks?" Compare Philo's "Philosophy of the Logos" with the Introduction to John's Gospel. 3. The ancients looked for some incarnation of the Divine Word. Persian Serosch, Hindoo Vishnu. Plato: "It is necessary that a Lawgiver be sent from heaven to instruct men; and this Lawgiver must be more than a man." Jewish expectancy. 4. The ancients tried to furnish the ideal of perfect human character—e.g., the ideals of Confucius, Socrates, Seneca. The mythologic personages. Christ appeared manifestly (1) perfectly a man, (2) a perfect man, and challenged all moralists. "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" 5. The ancients had the idea of atonement. Altars lined the track of history. Christ's cry when coming into the world: "A body hast thou prepared Me. Lo! I come to do thy will." John the Baptist's recognition: "Behold the Lamb of God!" 6. The ancients tried to demonstrate the perpetuity of human life. Our strongest points in the philosophy of immortality announced by Plato. The mythology of Greeks and Scandinavians. Christ's declaration, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," demonstrated by His resurrection. (*Homiletic Review*).

Ver. 27. To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery.—*The gospel mystery*:—The gospel is the grand secret. To the mass of mankind it was utterly unknown, and the chosen people only perceived dimly through the smoke of sacrifices and the veil of types. It must ever have been a mystery but for revelation, and must be so still unless Christ comes to dwell within. Then all is clear. I. THE ESSENCE OF THIS MYSTERY IS CHRIST. It is uncertain what is the antecedent to "which"—"mystery," "riches," or "glory." If it be mystery, then Christ is "the mystery of godliness"; if glory, Christ is the brightness of His Father's glory; if riches, there are "the unsearchable riches of Christ." The essence of this mystery is—1. Christ Himself: God-Man, in which connection we must remember the glorious work He undertook and finished on our behalf; and (2) His offices, prophet, priest, king, friend, brother, head, &c. Whatever Christ is His people are in Him: crucified, dead, risen in Him; in Him we live eternally, and sit in heavenly places. This is the essence of the whole gospel, He who does not preach Christ preaches no gospel. There is no more possibility of a gospel without Christ than a day without the sun or a river without water. 2. Christ Himself and no other. Never be put off with books or conversations. Nothing short of reaching and touching Christ will serve your turn. 3. Christ Himself rather than anything which Christ gives. How different He is from all our other friends and helpers. They bring good things, but Jesus gives us Himself. He does not merely give us wisdom, righteousness, &c., He Himself is made of God all these things to us. When you are ill you are glad to see the doctor, but when you are well you want to get rid of him; but you can never do without Christ. When cured we want to see Jesus more than ever. 4. Christ alone is enough. Some hold a candle to the sun by preaching Christ and man's philosophy or priestcraft. II. THE SWEETNESS OF THIS MYSTERY WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU. This is a grand advance. Christ in heaven, Christ free to poor sinners is precious, but Christ in the heart is most precious of

all. A loaf is a good thing, but if we could not get it within us we should die of starvation. A medicine may be a noble cure, but if kept in the phial would do us no good. Christ in you is—1. Christ accepted by faith. It is a wonderful thing that Christ should enter a man, but still more wonderful that He should enter by so narrow an opening as our little faith. There is the sun, yet it can come through the narrowest chink; but we should pull up the blinds, and let him shine in all his glory. Grow in faith, then, and take in Christ more fully. 2. Christ possessed. Nothing is so much a man's own as that which is within him. Men may question whether an acre or a house is yours, but not yesterday's meal. 3. Christ experienced. There may be a valuable medicine, but it is of no efficacy to a man until it is within him. When it commences to purify and strengthen, he knows it without the testimony of others. When Christ is in you curing your sin, and filling your soul with love to holiness, then will you know the Lord. 4. Christ reigning. 5. Christ filling. 6. Christ transfiguring. You thrust a bar of iron into the fire, and keep it there till the fire enters it, it is then like fire itself. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." III. THE OUTLOOK OF ALL THIS IS CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY. 1. Glory. Surely that belongs to God only. Yes, but Christ says, "The glory Thou hast given Me I have given them." 2. How do we know that we are to have glory? (1) Christ makes us glorious now by His coming, which is a pledge of future glory. (2) Christ has entered into covenant with God to bring His people home to glory. (3) The Christ who has come to live with us will never leave us till we are glorified. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *Christ in you*:—I. CHRIST IN YOU means Christ embraced by faith as our righteousness and strength. This is the sure ground on which we may hope for glory (Eph. iii. 17). When a sinner's heart is opened to see the excellence of the Saviour, it inwardly embraces Him, and every discovery renews this act of inward cleaving. Then every reproach, temptation, fall, affliction, makes the soul more fully embrace Him (see Gal. iv. 19; John xv. 4, xvii. 23, 26). II. THE EFFECTS OF THIS UNION. 1. The mind of Christ is formed in the soul (1 Cor. ii. 16). The believer thinks as Christ does, and so has the spirit of a sound mind (2 Tim. i. 7). Not, of course, that he has the omniscience and infallible judgment of his Lord, but up to his light he sees as Christ does. (1) Sin to be abominable. (2) The gospel, its glory and completeness. (3) The world and its vanity. (4) Time and its value. (5) Eternity. As did Christ he sees everything in its light. 2. The heart of Christ. (1) There is the same love to God in both. (2) The same aversion to God's frown. (3) The same love to the saints. (4) The same compassion for sinners. (R. M. McCheyne, M.A.) *Christ in you an expanding force*:—When Christ once enters into a soul, by degrees He occupies the whole of it. Did you ever hear the legend of a man whose garden produced nothing else but weeds, till at last he met with a strange foreign flower of singular vitality. The story is that he sowed a handful of this seed in his overgrown garden, and left it to work its own sweet way. He slept and rose, and knew not how the seed was growing till on a day he opened the gate and saw a sight which much astounded him. He knew that the seed would produce a dainty flower and he looked for it; but he had little dreamed that the plant would cover the whole garden. So it was: the flower had exterminated every weed, till as he looked from one end to the other from wall to wall he could see nothing but the fair colours of that rare plant, and smell nothing but its delicious perfume. Christ is that plant of renown. If He be sown in the soil of your soul, He will gradually eat out the roots of all ill weeds and poisonous plants, till over all your nature there shall be Christ in you. God grant we may realize the picture in our own hearts, and then we shall be in paradise. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *Christ in you the hope of glory*:—I. THE SUBJECT of the Apostle's declaration. 1. "Glory" refers to the felicity of a future life as discovered by the gospel; "the hope" is that "laid up for us in heaven." Of a life after death the Gentiles knew nothing with certainty, and the Jews only dimly. "Life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel." 2. This glory was one of (1) character, "a glory to be revealed in us"—a personal perfection to adorn the world, "wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2) Condition and place. It refers to the light and participation of that incomparable splendour which emanates from the throne and pervades the residence of Deity. God is light, and "dwelleth in a light which no man can approach unto." In consistency with this the heavenly mansions are "the inheritance of the saints in light"; all the luminaries of heaven are excluded as unnecessary appendages in consequence of the surpassing splendour derived immediately from God and the Lamb. II. THE MEDIUM of this hope: Christ. He was the author and bestower of it. He had not only revealed the object, and imparted knowledge respecting it,

but had opened the way to its enjoyment. He was "the way, the truth, and the life," and they needed nothing besides. It was inconsistent with His grace and truth, omnipotence, love, and with the perfection of His work on earth, for Him to have recourse to Jewish ceremonies, personal suffering, or philosophic speculations, as a means of augmenting their confidence, or securing their possession of the anticipated eternity. III. THE SENSES IN WHICH CHRIST IS IN US PERSONALLY AND EXPERIMENTALLY. 1. Faith in Christ as the great sacrifice. It is thus that the life is derived that can never perish, and that a union is established with Christ which will lead Him to remember us when He cometh in His kingdom. "I am crucified with Christ," &c. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." 2. The influence of His Spirit who effects that change in our nature which "makes us meet for the inheritance," &c. 3. The habitual remembrance of His laws and the consequent exhibition in affectionate obedience (John xv. 4, 7, 10, 11). Lessons—1. The unspeakable importance and value of religion. 2. How delightful to have such a hope of glory to cling to; an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, among the billows and eddies of that turbulent stream on which we are embarked. (T. Binney.) I. GLORY, another word for heaven, setting forth—1. Its excellence. Nothing is esteemed glorious but what is of transcendent worth. The Jews felt this, hence the Hebrew word signifies also weight and substance. So heaven is called "an exceeding weight of glory." 2. Its magnificence. Mere excellence is not glory, to be that it must be known and seen. The sun is not glorious behind a cloud; a diamond must be brought forth and polished to be glorious. So the glory of heaven consists in the discovery of its excellencies—the Father in His majesty, the Son in His grace and love, holiness in its perfection and beauty, &c. "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty." II. THE HOPE OF GLORY. This brings us down to earth, but still with heaven in our sight. But there is a hope even of heaven not worth the having. We read of a hope that perishes, that shall be cut off like a spider's web and the giving up of the ghost. May that be destroyed, for a false hope is worse than none at all. The true hope is distinguished from this by three marks. 1. It comes down from heaven. We cannot create it; no fellow-creature can persuade us into it. It is the gift of the heavenly Spirit to the renewed heart. It resembles faith and rests on the same foundation, yet it differs from it. "There is a world of glory," says faith. "I am going to it," says hope. 2. It longs and looks for heaven. It is an "earnest expectation" like that of the storm-tossed mariner for the desired haven. 3. It carries the soul on towards heaven and makes meet for it. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself," &c. III. CHRIST. He is connected not with the glory but with the hope, as its foundation. Take Him away and there is no hope. 1. Christ has purchased glory for us. As sinners and rebels we were farther from it than any beggar is from a crown. But He has paid the ransom which delivers us from condemnation, and which entitles us to glory. 2. He has actually taken possession of glory for us. Hence the believer's hope is connected with the ascension—"The anchor of the soul," &c. 3. Christ has pledged Himself to bring believers to glory. IV. CHRIST IN US. What this means is more than we can tell. Picture to yourselves a house, comfortless within, and falling to decay. Let a stranger enter it, he may act in two ways. He may secrete himself in some dark corner, and, watching his opportunity, do much mischief without its inhabitants even knowing he is there. Thus Satan is acting in the hearts of thousands, who little think he is near them, much less within them. But suppose that stranger to be a man of another character, and, as soon as he goes in, to throw open the windows, and to let in the air and light. See him then discovering himself to the inhabitants of it. "I am come to live with you," he says, "if you will let me, as your friend and brother. But this filthiness I cannot bear, nor this disorder. I love comfort and cheerfulness." And then he sets about cleansing that house, putting it in order, adorning and repairing it, strengthening its walls and closing up every fissure, so that when the wintry storm beats, no wind or rain can enter it, and nothing shake it. And then while he is doing this, he goes about enlivening it with his presence, and making the voice of joy and praise to be heard from day to day in every room of it. Oh, you would say, what an altered house! What a blessed guest has that man proved in it! Now the Lord Jesus when he enters a sinner's soul acts exactly thus. (C. Bradley, M.A.) *Christ in you*:—This strange thing once startled an emperor. Ignatius, who had assumed the name Theophorus to express this gospel truth, stood before him to vindicate his profession of Christianity. "Who is Theophorus?" haughtily asked the heathen monarch. "He who has Christ in his breast," said the martyr.

"Dost thou, then, carry Him, who was crucified, within thee?" Raising his voice with holy animation, while an almost heavenly brightness played upon his pallid countenance, the Christian hero replied, "I do—I do; for it is written, 'I dwell in them, and walk in them!'" (*W. H. Luckenbach.*) 1. Glory is the greatest word in our language. It is one of God's most magnificent titles. It is the object of the true believer's hope, and whatever else he relinquishes he will not part with this. He lives and dies in hope. 2. This hope arises from the indwelling of the Saviour. He is in us as the source of life and the principle of action. 3. This union is not essential like that which subsists between the sacred Three; nor is it personal like that between the Divine and human natures of our Lord, nor merely an operative or influential union like that between God and His creatures; but a mystical and spiritual union, a union of affection, interest, and design. It is also mutual and reciprocal. He dwells in us, and we dwell in Him (John xiv. 23; Gal. ii. 20; Rev. iii. 20).

I. EXPLAIN AND ILLUSTRATE THE TRUTH OF THE TEXT. 1. Christ is revealed in the gospel as the hope of glory. In order that He may be received He must be outwardly proposed by the ministration of the Word (Rom. x. 14; Rev. i. 2). By the discovery the gospel makes of Christ's ability and willingness to save, it opens a door of hope to the vilest (Rom. xv. 4; Col. i. 23; Heb. vi. 18). 2. Christ crucified is the foundation of our hope, by becoming the meritorious cause of it. 3. Christ is the hope of glory efficiently by the operation of His Spirit in our hearts (Rom. viii. 9). Without that any hope of salvation is visionary. 4. Christ dwelling in the heart is the evidence that He is to us the hope of glory, and by no other means can that hope be ascertained. He is our life; but in order to this He must live in us. After all that He has done and is doing for us, there is something continually to be done within (Rom. x. 6-9).

II. ESTABLISH AND CONFIRM THE LEADING SENTIMENT. 1. Christ being in us is the best evidence of our being in Him, and the testimony of an angel could not make it more satisfactory (1 John v. 11-12; Eph. i. 3-4; 1 Tim. i. 9). 2. Christ in us is the nourishment of our hope. "Greater is He that is in you," &c. 3. Christ in us is the pledge and earnest of our hope. To have Christ in us is the life of grace; to be with Christ is the hope of glory; and the two go together. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *The hope of glory*:—The late Isaac Pitt was suffering from what appeared to be an attack of rheumatic gout, from which no serious danger was apprehended. His friends were startled by the announcement of the physician, "There is no hope." Another medical man was called for consultation. "Doctor," said the sick man, "I wish to know the very truth; do not conceal anything. Do you think I shall recover?" "We will do all we can, but we fear there is no hope of recovery." "Thank you," he rejoined, "I should like you to do all you can; but if not successful, I have a hope. A ransom has been provided, a Saviour has been sent: I accept the ransom, I believe in the Saviour." When the doctor says there is no hope for the body, this hope of glory is an anchor for the soul. (*New Testament Anecdotes.*)

Christ in the heart:—David Hume, the great historian of England, and noted enemy of the Christian faith, once overheard his servant-man John repeating the text, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." "You know that's all nonsense," said Hume; "I wonder that a sensible man like you can believe it. If Christ be in heaven, as you say, how can He be in you? He can't be in two places at one time. And then to be 'in you,' I don't understand it." "David Hume," said John, "you wrote the 'History of England,' and I read it page by page with great delight. You say in that history that the one redeeming feature in the life of 'Bloody Mary' was, that when she was dying, the news came to her that Calais had been captured, and that on that occasion she raised herself up in bed, and said to her maids of honour, 'When I die, take out my heart, and you will find "Calais" written on it.' Now, what more Calais written on Mary's heart, than Christ on mine? Take out my heart, and you will find Christ written on it." (*J. L. Nye.*)

Christ in the heart the believer's hope:—I. CHRIST DWELLS IN BELIEVERS. 1. Christ is in you who truly believe in him. Faith brings Him into union with the soul. 2. Christ is in you as He engages your first affections. 3. Christ is in you as His likeness is impressed on your souls. Where this is there will be—(1) Aversion to sin. (2) Delight in the law of God. (3) Zeal for the Divine glory. (4) Habitual submission to the Divine will. 4. Christ is in you if His Spirit dwell in you—"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ," &c. II. CHRIST IN BELIEVERS IS THE HOPE OF GLORY. 1. Their hope is founded in Christ (1 Tim. i. 1). Nor can the hope of a sinful creature rest anywhere else with safety. 2. Their hope is communicated by Christ. 3. Their hope is maintained by Christ. They cherish this hope as Christ is in them. Learn—1.

The happy condition of the believer. He may rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 2. The importance of earnest endeavours to know our state before God. 3. The fallacy of that hope that is not founded on the Saviour, and productive of conformity to Him. (*Congregational Remembrancer.*) *The Indwelling of Christ:*—There are four methods by which we arrive at the knowledge of Christ. 1. The historical. Without this we cannot become acquainted with the true portraiture of Christ. It is true that one may study the Gospels intellectually, and derive from them a conception of Christ that is truly noble, but which is not vital and powerful: but this is the abuse of a right thing. The study of the work and character of Christ is antecedent and auxilliary to a true experience of Christ. 2. The theological. This is often carried to excess and abused, but none the less there is a place for it. It is a matter of transcendent interest to know whether Christ believed He was Divine. Views of the Divinity of the Saviour which run low will, averaging them through the ages, be productive of a low tone of spirituality and *vice versa*. Nevertheless a man may have a right theology of Christ, and yet not be possessed of Christ. It is auxilliary only. 3. The apostle taught that there was something more than this, viz., a living Christ who may be a part of our lives. I. IN ORDER THAT HE MAY BE MY CHRIST HE MUST BE ONE IN WHOSE HANDS IS THE WHOLE SPHERE IN WHICH I LIVE AND ACT, Lord over all the causes which are influencing me. 1. No man ever contests in himself and strives to release himself from what is low and base, and reaches toward the higher and nobler, if he does not feel the need of God. When we are looking down we are our own gods, but when we strive upwards we feel the necessity of supernal influences. 2. Now as when I hunger, my hunger says there is food, as when my eye was made it said there was light to match it, so I know that certain struggles and yearnings point to something higher. 3. These yearnings are met in Him of whom the previous verses of this chapter point. No man who is limited by specialities, physician, teacher, friend, &c., can give me the help I need. He must be as He is, the embodiment of all power, and Lord over all. 4. But in order to this He must be *mine*, mine as really as if I were the only human being in the universe: not of course to the exclusion of others—but as my father was not less wholly mine because he was my brothers' too. II. IN ORDER TO MEET THE EXIGENCY OF MY NATURE AND EXPERIENCE I MUST HAVE A CHRIST WHO LOVES ME. 1. I cannot live without love; but human love is inadequate. 2. Yet how am I to be loved, and thus live. I can never hope to deserve it. Here the transcendent love of Christ comes in. He loves the loveless, and asks no more but that I let Him love me. 3. The consciousness of this unspeakable love is most potent and inspiring. III. IT IS NECESSARY THAT CHRIST SHOULD BE IN ME, a Being whose love, power, and whole nature and influence I feel within developing in me the superior qualities of the spiritual elements, and giving authority and power to love and hope, and faith and conscience. And there is a direct sympathetic action of the Divine mind on ours. Indeed, we act on each other. If you sigh in the presence of another man, he will sigh; if you laugh, he will smile. And so if the heart be open and the moral nature sensitive, Christ acts upon the thought and feeling so that we are guided by Him. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The Indwelling Saviour:*—There are three features which mark the relationship indicated by the text. I. IT IS AN INTIMATE RELATION. 1. It is not a mere sacramental relation. That may exist and be altogether an external thing, and leave the heart possessed entirely by another than Christ. 2. The relationship between Christ and His people is not exhausted by such images as shepherd, husband, &c., which are external, however intimate. Persons may be near and yet be utter strangers. 3. This relation is internal as the branch is in the vine, than which nothing can be closer. II. AN ENDURING RELATION. All other relations, parent and child, husband and wife, teacher and scholar, are terminable; but this is not affected by the vicissitudes of time. It is everlasting; by faith now, by sight by and by. III. AN INTENSELY PRACTICAL RELATION. 1. There are many relations that are merely nominal and honorary, gratifying to ambition, but conveying no substantial good. It is not so with this. For Christ is in His people. 1. As the ground of their pardon and acceptance. 2. As their best Friend. We turn to a real friend—(1) To counsel us in perplexity. (2) To lessen our sorrow. (3) To heighten our joys. Jesus does all this as the best earthly friend can never do. Conclusion: The subject suggests its proud point of distinction between the man who is a Christian and the man who is not. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *The true Christ of Man is*—I. IN THE SOUL. He is not the Christ of the Book and the creed merely. He is in the soul—1. As the chief

object of love. 2. The chief subject of thought. 3. The chief sovereign of activities. II. THE INSPIRER OF THE SUBLIMEST HOPE. This hope is—1. Directed to the highest object, "glory." The glory of goodness, of moral assimilation with God. Hope for goodness is the virtuous hope. 2. Based on the surest foundation—Christ's word and influence. (D. Thomas, D.D.)

Ver. 28. **Whom we preach.**—*The Apostolic Ministry*.—I. ITS SUBSTANCE. "Christ." 1. In the dignity of His person (verses 12-19.) 2. Therefore Christ only. Some preach themselves, morality, human systems, philosophy. 3. Christ always. If I come into the pulpit with another theme, concluding I shall have other opportunities, and so compel Him to give place, it may be the last time I shall preach. Christ in you, the hope of glory. This includes two things—(1) Christ, in His intimate relation to the believer. (2) Christ, in all the animating hopes of futurity. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." This can counteract the darkness of the future. II. ITS MANNER. 1. Warning. (1) Fidelity demands this. The world must not only be instructed, but admonished. Let us take warning. A few blessings yet remain; but they will soon be gone; let us not trifle with them also. (2) The voice of death urges this upon us. (Read Ezek. xxxiii. 2-9.) 2. Teaching. Here two things are essential. (1) Simplicity. No one can teach who does not make himself understood. There must be ability to communicate. Some look up their ideas as the miser his wealth, and perishes with it. (2) Diligence also is necessary. We must be "instant in season and out of season." (3) This must be done individually, "teaching every man." Here much care, prudence, and promptitude is required. Let men see how intent we are on their salvation. (4) Wisely also—"In all wisdom," seeking out suitable season to speak to the heart. Various means must be employed, and we must accommodate ourselves to the capacities of those whom we address. III. ITS END. 1. A final presentation. Christ is to present all to the Father, and the minister all to the Son. 2. A personal presentation, i.e., all must stand before Him. 3. A presentation of acceptance; therefore all will not be presented. 4. It is a perfect presentation—"That we may present every man perfect." (1) It is a perfection of knowledge—"What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." (2) It is a perfection in righteousness. (3) As to the perfection of glory, "Eye hath not seen," &c. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." 5. It is a ministerial presentation. The minister must of necessity be a witness as to the reception or rejection of his ministry, and give an account. (W. B. Collyer, D.D.) I. THE GREAT SUBJECT OF AN EVANGELICAL MINISTRY. We preach Christ. 1. In the dignity of His person. 2. His deep humiliation. 3. His infinite atonement. 4. His distinct offices as Prophet, Priest, and King. 5. The fulness and sufficiency of His grace for all the purposes of our present, complete, and everlasting salvation. 6. The purity of His character, "leaving us an example that we should follow His steps." 7. As our great Leader to a mighty and glorious victory. 8. As our judge. II. THE MANNER IN WHICH THIS SUBJECT IS TO BE APPLIED TO THE UNDERSTANDING AND THE CONSCIENCE. 1. Warning every man of the danger of (1) Denying Christ. (2) Substituting anything in the room of Christ. (3) Slighting Christ or neglecting Him in any way. (4) Perverting the grace of Christ or neglecting to improve it. 2. Teaching every man (1) His privilege—to enjoy through Christ remission of sins—to be adopted into God's family—to be sanctified wholly—to obtain a seat at last in the kingdom of God's glory. (2) The way to obtain these privileges—"Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (3) His duty (a) to God, to love, serve, honour, and obey Him, and that until death; (b) to the nation, of which he is a subject, "to fear God and work righteousness." (c) To the world, of which he is a citizen. III. THE GREAT END WHICH A CHRISTIAN MINISTER HAS TO KEEP IN VIEW. That every man may be—1. Perfectly instructed in the doctrines, privileges, and duties of the Christian faith. 2. Perfected in the love of Christ. 3. So as to be presented blameless at the coming of Christ. (J. Waterhouse.) I. WHOM A GOSPEL MINISTER SHOULD PREACH. Christ. 1. On the cross. No other sacrifice but His could avail to roll the reproach from a guilty world. There is salvation in none other. 2. In the grave triumphing over death, bringing life and immortality to light, becoming the pledge of our resurrection. 3. On the throne able to save, protect, rule. 4. On the judgment-seat. II. HOW A GOSPEL MINISTER SHOULD PREACH. 1. Warning every man (1) by the threatenings of the Divine law; (2) of his responsibility for religious privileges. 2. Teaching every man—(1) The love of God. (2) The duty of man. III. THE GREAT END OF THIS PREACHING. To present

every man—1. Perfect in the attributes of a renewed and glorified nature. 2. To be secured by union with Christ. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) I. THE NATURE of the Apostolic Ministry—"Preach." 1. Paul was no ritualist. The day for ritualism was gone by. The Christ dimly seen in the world's childhood through the old economy was now fully revealed, and must be presented in a manner suited to the reason and heart of full-grown men. 2. Paul had no philosophy to elaborate; the realities of the gospel had superseded its speculations useful as they once were. 3. Paul was a preacher. He proclaimed war against sinners, peace to the penitent.

II. ITS SUBJECT. 1. A personal act, not a sublime legend or poetic myth. 2. Christ as distinguished from every other person. (1) From angelic or saintly mediators. (2) From himself, "We preach not ourselves," etc. 3. Christ as a Person as distinguished from Christianity or any part of it as a thing. Christ, and not merely (1) Christ's example. (2) Christian theology. (3) The sacraments.

III. ITS CHARACTERISTIC was to so present Christ that the Master might do His own work in His own way. Hence his ministry was—1. Admonitory. (1) He preached a Saviour. So as to show that the cost and character of His salvation were such as to involve those to whom He was offered in a tremendous responsibility. (2) He preached Christ as the only Saviour, and thus set the issues of accepting or rejecting Him clearly before men. (3) As the Judge. 2. Instructive. Paul teaches every man by (1) Setting forth the Instructor. (2) The Teacher as the education—"That I may know Him." (3) Wise. "In all wisdom." (4) Universal. "Every man." IV. ITS AIM. 1. Christ is the sphere in which Christian perfection is to be attained. 2. In Christ the believer is perfect. 3. Perfect in Christ we are presented for acceptance, consecration, work, warfare, and reward. (*J. W. Burn.*)

The Christian Ministry. The false teachers had a good deal to say about a higher wisdom reserved for the initiated. They apparently treated the Apostolic teaching as trivial rudiments only fit for the vulgar crowd. They had their initiated class to whom their mysteries were entrusted in whispers. Such absurdities excited Paul's special abhorrence. He had broken with Judaism on the very ground of its exclusiveness. These dreamers were trying to enforce an intellectual exclusiveness quite as opposed to the gospel. So the apostle takes up their phrases—"Mystery," "perfect" or initiated, "wisdom," and presses them into the service of the principle that the most recondite secrets of the gospel were for every man. Our business is to tell out as fully and loudly as we can to all, all the wisdom we have learned.

I. THE APOSTLE'S STATEMENT OF HIS WORK. 1. Not a theory or a system, but a living Person. (1) The peculiarity of Christianity is that you cannot take its message and put aside Christ. His Person is inextricably intertwined with His teaching, which centres in Him who is "The Truth." You may separate between Buddha's and Confucius's teaching and themselves, but you cannot do so with Jesus. If we think less of Him than Paul does in this chapter, we shall scarcely feel that *He* should be the preachers theme; but if *He* is to us what *He* was to him, then our own message will be "Behold the Lamb." Let who will preach abstractions, the Christian minister has to preach Christ. (2) To preach Him is to set forth His person, and the facts of His life and death, and to accompany these with that explanation which turns a biography into a gospel. "The gospel which" Paul preached was "how that Christ died." That is biography, and to stop there is not to preach Christ; but add "for our sins," etc., and you preach Christ. (3) A ministry of which Christ is manifestly the centre may sweep a wide circumference, and include many themes. The requirement bars out no province of thought or experience, but demands that all themes should lead up to Christ, and that His name, like some deep tone on an organ, shall be heard sounding on through all the ripple and change of the higher notes. 2. The manner of the Apostle's activity. (1) "We proclaim," tell out fully, clearly, earnestly. We are not muttering mystery-mongers. We cry in the streets to every man. (2) This implies that the speaker has a message, that he is not a speaker of his own words or thoughts, but of what has been told him to tell. 3. This connection of the minister's office. (1) Contrasts with the priestly theory. "We preach," not we sacrifice, work miracles at any altar, or impart grace by any rites, but by the manifestation of the truth discharge our office, and spread the blessings of Christ. (2) Contrasts with the false teacher's style of speech, which finds its parallel in much modern talk. Their business was to argue and refine and speculate. They sat in a lecturer's chair; we stand in a preacher's pulpit. If the Christian minister allows the philosopher in him to overpower the herald, and substitutes his thoughts about the message or his arguments in favour of it for the message itself, he abdicates his office. 4. We

hear many demands to-day for a "higher type of preaching," which I would heartily echo, if only it be preaching, the proclamation of the great facts of Christ's work. But many are trying to play up to the requirements of the age by turning their sermons into dissertations, philosophical, moral, or æsthetic. We need to fall back upon this "Whom we preach," and oppose that to the demands of an age one half of which "require a sign," and would degrade the minister into a priest, and the other calls for "wisdom," and would turn him into a professor. II. THE VARYING METHODS BY WHICH THIS ONE GREAT END IS PURSUED. 1. Warning or admonishing. (1) The teaching of morality is an essential part of preaching Christ. But the moral teaching which is confined to general principles is woefully like repeating platitudes and firing blank cartridges; yet if the preacher goes beyond these toothless generalities, he is met with the cry of "personalities." But there is no preaching Christ completely which does not include plain speaking about plain duties. (2) Nor is such preaching complete without plain warning of the end of sin. People like to have the smooth side of truth always uppermost; but there are no rougher words about what wrong-doers come to than some of Christ's; and he has only given one half of his Master's message who hides or softens "the wages of sin is death." (3) But all this must be connected with and built on Christ. Christian morality has Jesus for its perfect exemplar, His love for its motive, His grace for its power. Nothing is more impotent than mere moral teaching. 2. "Teaching." In the facts of Christ's life and death, as we grow up to understand them, we get to see more and more the key to all things, and the Christian minister's business is to be ever learning and teaching more and more of the manifold wisdom of God. He must seek to present all sides of truth, teaching all wisdom, and so escaping from his own limited mannerisms. The Christian ministry is distinctly educational, and is more than the "simple preaching" which is the "avoidance of mere dogma" or the repetition of "Believe." The New Testament and common sense require more from a teacher. 3. Observe the repetition of "every man," which is Paul's protest against an intellectual aristocracy, and his affirmation that Christianity is for all. III. THE ULTIMATE END OF THESE DIVINE METHODS. 1. Presentation at the Judgment. 2. Perfection. The word may be used in its technical meaning of "initiated," but negatively it implies the entire removal of all defects, and positively the complete possession of all that belongs to human nature as God meant it to be. 3. This completeness is attainable only in Christ, by that vital union with Him brought about by faith, which will pour His Spirit into ours. 4. This is possible for every man. There are no hopeless classes. IV. THE STRUGGLE AND THE STRENGTH WITH WHICH PAUL REACHES TOWARD THIS AIM. 1. He has found that he cannot do his work easily. That great purpose made a slave of him. I not only preach, I toil like a man tugging at an oar, and putting all his might into each stroke. Perhaps there were people who thought the preacher's life an easy one, and so the apostle had to insist that the most exhaustive work is that of heart and brain. The minister who is afraid of putting all his strength into his work, up to the point of weariness, will never do much good. 2. There must be not only toil, but conflict, "striving," contending with hindrances, without and within, which sought to mar his work. 3. Now for the strength. The measure of our power is Christ's power in us. He whose presence makes the struggle necessary, by His presence strengthens us for it. We have not only His presence beside us as an ally, but His grace within us. Let us take courage then for all work and conflict. (A. Maclaren, D.D.) *Christ personally the subject of preaching:*—Suppose that a man has heard of a great physician who understands his complaint. He has travelled a great many miles to see this celebrated doctor; but when he gets to the door they tell him that he is out. "Well," says he, "then I must wait till he is in." "You need not wait," they reply, "his assistant is at home." The suffering man, who has been often disappointed, answers, "I do not care about his assistant, I want to see the man himself: mine is a desperate case, but I have heard that this physician has cured the like; I must, therefore, see him." "Well," say they, "he is out; but there are his books; you can see his books." "Thank you," he says, "I cannot be content with his books; I want the living man, and nothing less. It is to him that I must speak, and from him I will receive instructions." "Do you see that cabinet?" "Yes." "It is full of his medicines." The sick man answers, "I dare say they are very good, but they are of no use to me without the doctor: I want their owner to prescribe for me, or I shall die of my disease." "But see."

cries one, "here is a person who has been cured by him, a man of great experience, who has been present at many remarkable operations. Go into the inquiry-room with him, and he will tell you all about the mode of cure." The afflicted man answers, "I am much obliged to you, but all your talk only makes me long the more to see the doctor. I came to see *him*, and I am not going to be put off with anything else. I must see the man himself, for myself. He has made my disease a speciality; he knows how to handle my case, and I will stop till I see *him*." Now, if you are seeking Christ, imitate this sick man, or else you will miss the mark altogether. Never be put off with books or conversations. Be not content with Christian people talking to you, or preachers preaching to you, or the Bible being read to you, or prayers being offered for you. Anything short of Jesus will leave you short of salvation. You have to reach Christ, and touch Christ, and nothing short of this will serve your turn. Picture the case of the prodigal son when he went home. Suppose when he reached the house the elder brother had come to meet him. I must make a supposition that the elder brother had made himself amiable; and then I hear him say, "Come in, brother; welcome home!" But I see the returning one stand there with the tears in his eyes, and I hear him lament, "I want to see my father. I must tell *him* that I have sinned and done evil in his sight." An old servant whispers, "Master John, I am glad to see you back. Be happy, for all the servants are rejoiced to hear the sound of your voice. It is true your father will not see you, but he has ordered the fatted calf to be killed for you; and here is the best robe, and a ring, and shoes for your feet, and we are told to put them upon you." All this would not content the poor penitent. I think I hear him cry—"I do not despise anything my father gives me, for I am not worthy to be as his hired servant; but what is all this unless I see *his* face, and know that he forgives me?" We are not content to preach unless Jesus Himself be the theme. We do not set before you something about Christ, nor something that belongs to Christ, nor something procured by Christ, nor somebody that has known Christ, nor some truth which extols Christ; but we preach Christ crucified. We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *Ministerial faithfulness*.—You will be interested in hearing the particulars of the final interview between the Prince of Wales (afterwards George IV.) and the late Bishop of London (Porteus), which have lately been communicated to me. Among other good people with whom my informant is intimate is Mr. Owen, minister of Fulham, who was in a manner the Bishop's parish clergyman, and long his chaplain. It seems his Royal Highness had sent out a summons for a great military review, which was to take place on a Sunday. The Bishop had been confined to his house, and did not hope, nor, I suppose, wish, ever in this world to go out again. He ordered his carriage, however, upon hearing this, proceeded to Carlton House, and waited upon the Prince, who received him very graciously. He said, "I am come, sir, urged by my regard to you, to your father, and to this great nation, who are anxiously beholding every public action of yours. I am on the verge of time; new prospects open to me; the favour of human beings, or their displeasure, is as nothing to me now. I am come to warn your Royal Highness of the awful consequences of your breaking down the very little that remains of distinction to the day that the Author of all power has hallowed, and set apart for Himself." He went on in pathetic terms to represent the awful responsibility to which the Prince exposed himself, and how much benefit or injury might result to the immortal souls of millions by his consulting or neglecting the revealed will of the King of kings; and, after much tender and awful exhortation, concluded with saying, "You see how your father, greatly your inferior in talent and capacity, has been a blessing to all around him and to the nation at large, because he made it the study and business of his life to exert all his abilities for the good of his people, to study and to do the will of God, and to give an example to the world of a life regulated by the precepts of Christian morality; he has been an object of respect and veneration to the whole world for so doing it. If he has done much, you, with your excellent abilities and pleasing and popular manners, may do much more. It is impossible for you to remain stationary in this awful crisis; you must rise to true glory and renown, and lead millions in the same path by the power of your example, or sink to sudden and perpetual ruin, aggravated by the great numbers whom your fall will draw with you to the same destruction. And now, were I able to rise, or were any one here who would assist me, I should, with the awful feeling of a dying man, give my last blessing to your Royal Highness." The Prince upon this burst into tears, and fell on his knees

before the Bishop, who bestowed upon him, with folded hands, his dying benediction; the Prince then, in the most gracious and affecting manner, assisted him himself to go down, and put him into his carriage. The Bishop went home, never came out again, and died the fifth day after. On hearing of his death, the Prince shut himself up, and was heard by his attendants to sob as under deep affliction. I think I have now given you a brief but faithful account of this transaction as I heard it. (*Memoirs of Mrs. Grant of Laggan.*) *Sinners must be warned*.—John Elias was a Welsh preacher of great power. On one occasion he went to Rhuddlan to preach in the open air on Sunday, during which a fair was held there to sell and buy articles used in the time of harvest. Scythes, sickles, etc., were sold there on that day. Crowds of ungodly people were present. Mr. Elias ascended some steps near a public-house, as a messenger of God to denounce the desecration of His day. His prayer arrested at the commencement the attention of all present. He acknowledged with trembling voice how the people in the fair were bringing God's wrath upon their heads by violating His holy day. The contagion of serious apprehension of danger spread through the throngs in the fair. They hid their sickles and scythes as if the Judge of the world had come to call them to account for their rebellion against Him. Mirth and music were hushed under the power of the dread which ruled all hearts. At the conclusion of his discourse the people quietly but quickly wended their way toward home, glad that a storm of fire and brimstone had not consumed them. *On preaching Christ*.—There was a devoted clergyman of the Church of England, Mr. Mackenzie, of Holloway, London, who used to go down to Wemyss Bay every year for his holiday; and then he would also preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. God laid His hand heavily upon that godly minister, and when he was lying on his death-bed, the saintly Mr. Pennefather, of Mildmay, went to see him; and the dying minister looked up at his kind visitor and said, "If God should raise me up from this sick bed, I should not preach the doctrines less, but I should preach the person of Christ more." (*Mr. Wilson.*) *Motives to earnestness*.—We read that the Rev. Charles Simeon kept the picture of Henry Martyn in his study. Move where he would through the apartment, it seemed to keep its eyes upon him, and ever to say to him, "Be earnest, be earnest; don't trifle, don't trifle"; and the good Simeon would gently bow to the speaking picture, and, with a smile, reply, "Yes, I will be in earnest; I will, I will be in earnest; I will not trifle, for souls are perishing, and Jesus is to be glorified." Oh, Christian, look away to Martyn's Master, to Simeon's Saviour, to the omniscient One. Ever realize the inspection of His eye, and hear His voice of tenderest importunity, "Be instant; entreat with all long-suffering and tears. Be faithful unto death; for lo, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me." (*S. J. Moore.*) *An earnest preacher*.—When Dr. Chalmers occupied the chair of philosophy in the College of St. Andrews, he used to gather into his own house each Sabbath evening the poorest and most ignorant of the vagrant children of the neighbourhood; and his biography states that for that audience he prepared himself as carefully, with his pen in his hand, as for his class in the University. So, on a winter day, through frost, and in the face of a driving snow-storm, you might have seen him walking five miles to fulfil an appointment of religious worship with a little company of rustic people at Kilmany—and there, amid some illiterate, shivering cottagers, too few for a church or chapel, met in a damp room—an audience that many men would have thought it expedient to dismiss at once, "on account of the weather," and many more would have put off with some crude, unpremeditated talk—he preached as laboured and as eloquent a sermon as would have moved to rapture and wonder the learning and fashion of Glasgow or of London. It is only of such earnest stuff as this that the truly commanding persons in any of the elevated ranges of action or of learning are made. *Faithfulness reciprocated*.—I was seventeen years old when I went to Boston. On Sunday I went into a Bible-class in one of the churches. I had been there but a few Sundays before that teacher came down into the shoe-store where I was engaged, and put his hand on my shoulder, and spoke to me about my soul. He was the first man that ever spoke to me about my soul. He shed tears. I forget now what he said, but I never will forget the pressure of his hand and those tears. Seventeen years rolled away, and one dark, rainy night I was speaking in Worcester; a young man, after the meeting, came up the aisle and said to me, "I have heard my father speak of you, so after that I thought I would like to become acquainted with you." "Who is your father?" "Edward Kemble." My old teacher! The thought passed across my mind, "Oh, if I could do for his son what he did for

me." I put my hand on his shoulder, and said, "Henry, are you a Christian?" The tears started as he said, "No, sir; but would like to be." Thank God for that! I preached Christ to him; but he could believe all that was in the Bible against sinners, like many others, but not what was for them. . . . Briefly, he believed at last, and comforted his dying mother with the knowledge of this fact. And his sister's conversion followed. (*D. L. Moody.*) *Earnestness in warning men*:—A story is told of a traveller who was journeying in the darkness along a road that led to a deep and rapid river, which, swollen by sudden rains, was chafing and roaring within its precipitous banks. The bridge that crossed the stream had been swept away by the torrent, but he knew it not. A man met him, and after inquiring whither he was bound, said to him in an indifferent way, "Are you aware that the bridge is gone?" "No," was the answer. "Why do you think so?" "Oh, I heard such a report this afternoon, and I think you had better not proceed." Deceived by the hesitating and undecided manner, the traveller pushed onward. Soon another, meeting him, cried out in consternation, "Sir, sir, the bridge is gone." "Oh, yes," replied the wayfarer, "some one told me that story a little distance back; but from the careless tone with which he told it, I am sure it is an idle talk." "Oh, it is true, it is true!" exclaimed the other. "I know the bridge is gone, for I barely escaped being carried away with it myself. Danger is before you, and you must not go on." And in the excitement of his feelings he grasped him by the hands, and besought him not to rush upon manifest destruction. Convinced by the earnest voice, eyes, gesture, the traveller turned back and was saved. (*W. Bazendale.*) *Perfect in Christ Jesus*.—*The exalted aim of the Christian minister*:—In one of the compartments of the London Express the other day, an eminent artist was trying to hurt the feelings of a Baptist minister who was travelling in his company. The artist said, contemptuously, "Preaching is such a very low occupation!" The minister replied, "Pray, sir, will you tell me what is your chief object in life?" The painter said, "Why, of course, my chief object is to make great pictures." The minister observed, "Well, that may be a worthy object; but, in my opinion, the highest aim in life is to make good men. Pictures perish; men are everlasting." "Ah," said the painter, "you are right; the humblest preacher who by example as well as precept inspires goodness in men is much more useful to the world than the most eminent artist." (*W. Birch.*) *I. THE FAITHFUL ARE SAID TO BE PERFECT.* 1. Comparatively with the unconverted. Religion will make a man perfect in comparison of that which by nature men can attain unto. 2. They may be said to be perfect who want nothing that is absolutely necessary for salvation. 3. In righteousness there is perfection, and so they shall be absolutely perfect at the day of judgment, and are already perfect in respect of justification; yea, this word is given to the sanctification of the faithful, and that two ways—(1) As to be perfect notes nothing else but to be a strong man in Christ (*Heb. v. ult.*). (2) As to be upright is accepted with God for perfection, by the benefit of the covenant of grace and the intercession of Christ. Thus I think the very word is used in these places: 1 Cor. ii. 6, Phil. iii. 15, James i. 17, Heb. vi. 1, 12, 13. Thus there is perfection in doctrine (*Heb. vi. 1*), in faith (*James ii. 22*), in hope (*1 Peter i. 13*), in love (*1 John iv. 18* and *John xvii. 23*), in understanding (*1 Cor. xiv. 20*). *II. BUT WHO IS A STRONG MAN IN CHRIST OR A PERFECT MAN?* 1. He that can forgive his enemies, and pray for them, and do good to them (*Matt. v. 48*). 2. He that finishes his work; he doth not begin slightly and work for a spirt, but perseveres (*John xvii. 4*). 3. He that holds constant amity and holy communion with God's children (*1 John iv. 12*; *John xvii. 23*). 4. He that renounces the world, denies himself, and consecrates his life to God (*Rom. xii. 12*). 5. He that is not carried away with every wind of doctrine, but follows the truth with all constant unmovableness (*Eph. iv. 13, 14*). 6. He that presseth after perfection (*Phil. iii. 13, 14, 15, x. 9*). 7. He that hath a plerophory or full assurance of the will of God towards him (*Col. iv. 12*). 8. He that can digest the stronger doctrines of religion (*Heb. v. 14*). 9. Patience hath in him her perfect work (*James i. 4*). 10. He sins not in word (*James iii. 12*). 11. He keeps the word (*1 John ii. 5*). 12. He is settled in the love of God, and hath not fear, but boldness (*1 John iv. 17, 18*). (*N. Byfield.*) *Aim at perfection*:—Aim at perfection in everything, though in most things it is unattainable. They who aim at it and persevere will come much nearer to it than those whose laziness and despondency make them give it up as unattainable. (*Lord Chesterfield.*) *Attaining perfection*:—At present the believer is like the marble in the hands of the sculptor; but though day by day he may give fresh

touches and work the marble into greater emulation of the original, the resemblance will be far from complete until death. Each fresh degree of likeness is a fresh advance towards perfection. It must then be when every feature is moulded into similitude, when all traces of feebleness and depravity are swept away for ever, the statue breathes, and the picture burns with Deity—it must be that then we “shall be filled.” We shall look on the descending Mediator, and, as though the ardent gaze drew down celestial fire, we shall seem instantly to pass through the refiner’s furnace, and leaving behind all the dishonour of the grave, and all the dross of corruptible humanity, spring upward, an ethereal, rapid-glowing thing, Christ’s image extracted by Christ’s lustre. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Growth in perfection*:—The thing which is most perfect, if it be susceptible of growth at all, will have the most sure and rapid growth. Which grows most and in the best manner, the flower which is whole and perfect in its incipient state, or that which has a canker in it, or is otherwise injured in its parts? Which will grow the most rapidly and symmetrically, the child which is perfect in its infancy, or one that is afflicted with some malformation? Facts of this kind make it clear that, although it is possible for a person who is partially holy to grow in holiness, a person who is entirely holy will grow much more. (*T. G. Upham, LL.D.*) *Perfection a life’s work*:—The process of Christian perfection is like that which a portrait goes through under the hand of an artist. When a man is converted, he is but an outline sketch of a character which he is to fill up. He first lays in the dead colouring; then comes the work of laying in the colours; and he goes on day after day, week after week, year after year, blending them and heightening the effect. It is a life’s work; and when he dies, he is still laying in and blending the colours and heightening the effect. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver. 29. Whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working.—*Work in us and work by us*:—The work of Christ in us and for us does not exempt us from work. Nor does the Holy Spirit’s operation supersede human effort, but rather excites it. This truth is illustrated in—I. THE BELIEVER’S SALVATION. If any man be saved, the work within is entirely wrought by the Holy Ghost, but that does not exempt from, but necessitates, energetic labour. To enforce this we remark—1. That the Christian life is always described as a thing of energy: as a journey, a race, a boxing match. 2. That there is no illustration in Scripture which allows the supposition that heaven is won by sloth. That is everywhere condemned. 3. That it is natural it should be so. When the Holy Spirit comes the sinner sees his danger, and exclaims, “What must I do to be saved?” He sees the excellence of salvation, and is desirous of finding the pearl of great price at all costs. Having found Christ, the believer is moved at once to glorify Him with all his powers. 4. That it is most certain that all saving acts must be performed by the man himself. Faith is the gift of God, but the Holy Ghost never believed for anybody. Repentance is His work, but the sinner must repent. He helps our infirmities in prayer, but we have to pray. 5. That if He were not made active, but one simply called upon, there is a reduction of manhood to materialism. There is no moral good or evil to me in a work which is not my own. In the Square of St. Mark, at Venice, at certain hours the bell of the clock is struck by two bronze figures as large as life, wielding hammers. Now, nobody ever thought of presenting thanks to those bronze men for the diligence with which they have struck the hours; of course, they cannot help it, they are wrought upon by machinery, and they strike the hours from necessity. Some years ago a stranger was upon the top of the tower, and incautiously went too near one of these bronze men; his time was come to strike the hour; he knocked the stranger from the battlement of the tower and killed him; nobody said the bronze man ought to be hanged; nobody ever laid it to his charge at all. There was no moral good or moral evil, because there was no will in the concern. It was not a moral act, because no mind and heart gave consent to it. Am I to believe that grace reduces men to this? 6. I warn any who imagine a man is a merely passive being in salvation against putting their theory into practice. II. THE MINISTRY OF THE SAINTS IN THE CONVERSION OF OTHERS. The Holy Spirit alone can convert a soul, but wherever He works, as a general rule, it is in connection with the earnest efforts of Christian men. This is clear—1. From the example of the text. Paul certifies that the salvation of souls is the sole work of Christ, but he declares that He laboured “agonizing.” Labouring means—(1) Abundant work. No man can be said to labour who only does half a day’s work; and a soul labourer will not

make his work a by-play. but put in long hours, and be ever at it. (2) Hard work. He is no labourer who takes a spade to play with it as a little child upon the sand. (3) Personal work. No man is a labourer who works through his servants; and the power of the Church lies in the personal influence of her members. (4) All this must have combined with it inward soul conflict. If your heart never breaks for another, you will never be the means of breaking his heart. 2. This is plain from the work itself. (1) Souls are not converted, as a rule, without previous prayer. So we must be stirred up to prayer, and the petitions God hears are not those of people half asleep. (2) Souls are saved instrumentally through teaching, but not cold, dead teaching. Some warn souls in such a careless tone as to create unbelief. (3) Teaching is not all; we must use earnest, persevering persuasion. 3. Earnest zeal is a natural result of the Spirit's working on the soul. (1) He sanctifies in each the natural instinct which leads them to wish others to be like themselves. Having experienced salvation, we desire others to have the same happiness. (2) He bestirs in us the impulse of gratitude to Christ, and so consecration to Him. (3) He sanctifies the desire for the prosperity of the community to which we belong, and so we ardently labour for the success of the Church. 4. The whole history of the Church confirms what has been stated, our Lord's ministry, Pentecost, Chrysostom and Augustine, Luther, &c. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

CHAPTER II.

VERS. 1-4. For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you.—
Ministerial anxiety:—This anxiety was occasioned by the subtle errors prevalent in Colossæ. Error cannot come into collision with truth without creating confusion of ideas, mental distraction, and moral restlessness. This anxiety was—
I. INTENSE. The thought of the preceding verse is here expanded. The conflict refers not so much to outward trial, &c., as to his fervent and importunate wrestling with God. The error must have been serious to occasion this struggle; great souls are not affected with trifles. People little know what their pastors pass through. A knowledge of this anxiety, however, is often necessary to create a responsive sympathy, and to teach the people the care they should have for their own salvation.
II. DISINTERESTED. "As many as have not seen my face"—not only Colossians and Laodiceans. **III. HAD REFERENCE TO THE HIGHEST SPIRITUAL ATTAINMENTS OF BELIEVERS.** Paul was solicitous—1. For the confirmation of their faith, "comforted," *i.e.*, encouraged, confirmed. He knew how error disintegrated the heart's confidence and produced trouble, doubt, perplexity. 2. For their union in love. Without this no solid comfort. Error snaps the bond of love and splits the Church into parties. 3. For their enrichment with the unspeakable wealth of the Divine mystery. (1) This mystery is explained in the unique Person and endowments of Christ. (2) The believer is privileged to attain to a full knowledge of the Divine mystery. (3) This understanding is the true enrichment of the mind. "Unto all riches." This vast store is opposed to the poverty of the mind which has only a few confused unconnected truths about the gospel. "Full assurance" means unclouded perception and firm conviction. This is secured only by diligent study and inner illumination of the Spirit. Every other kind of knowledge is poor and unsatisfying.
IV. PROMPTED THE APOSTLE TO FAITHFULLY WARN THE CHURCH. Error is seductive. It is needful to keep a vigilant outlook in regard to its enticing words. The most effectual antidote to any heresy is the simple proclamation of the doctrine of Christ. **Lessons**—1. The true minister is anxious to promote the highest good of the people. 2. All truth finds its explanation and error its refutation in Christ, the source of eternal wisdom. 3. False doctrine should be fearlessly and faithfully exposed. (*G. Barlow.*) **Paul's striving for the Colossians:**—The strain of the apostle's agony for the Colossian Church is here continued. Note the consummate art with which he prepares the way for his warnings. **I. THE CONFLICT ITSELF WAS THAT OF THE ARENA, AND "GREAT."** 1. No external conflict can be meant, for he could strike no blows for them; but he could send them ammunition, and this Epistle has been a magazine and arsenal ever since. But the real struggle was in his own

heart. In that lonely prison cell, and with burdens enough of his own, like some soldier left behind to guard the base, his thoughts were in the field. 2. For all Christians, sympathy in the battle of God, which is being waged all over the world, is a plain duty. Wheresoever our prison may be, we are bound to take an eager share in the conflict by interest, such help as we can render, and that intercession which may sway the fortunes of the field though the uplifted hands grasp no weapons. The men who bear the brunt of the battle are not the only combatants. In many a quiet home where wives and mothers sit there is an agony as intense as in the battle. It was a law in Israel, "As his part is," &c. (1 Sam. xxx. 24). So all Christians who in heart and sympathy have taken part shall be counted as combatants and crowned as victors. II. THOSE FOR WHOM THE CONFLICT WAS ENTERED. "As many as have not seen," &c. The Colossians might think that he cared less for them than for those communities he had planted or watered. They had never felt the magnetism of his personal presence, and were at a disadvantage from not having had the inspiration and direction of his personal teaching. But Paul shows them that from this very fact they had a warmer place in his heart. He was not so enslaved by sense that his love could not travel beyond the limits of his eyesight. III. THE OBJECT IN VIEW. 1. That their hearts might be comforted. (1) Heart, in Scripture, means thought as well as emotion. (2) Comfort is more than consolation. The cloud that hung over the Church was not about to break in sorrows needing consolation, but in practical errors needing strength to resist. So Paul desires that they may be *encouraged* not to quail, but to fight with good cheer. And what we want is the brave spirit and the serene assurance of victory in our struggles. What have we to do with fear, seeing that One fights by our side who teaches our hands to war? 2. The way to secure this is union in love. (1) Love is the true bond which unites men, and therefore adds to the strength of each. Little faggots bound together are strong. The solitary heart is timid and weak, but many weaknesses brought together make a strength, as slimly built houses in a row hold each other up. Loose grains of sand are moved by a breath; compacted they are a rock against which the Atlantic beats in vain. A real moral defence against even intellectual error is found in the compaction of Christian love. A community so interlocked will throw off many evils, as a Roman legion with linked shields roofed itself over against missiles from the walls of a besieged city, or as the imbricated scales of a fish keep it dry. (2) But the love is not merely love to one another, but common love to Christ, the bond of union and true strengthener of men's hearts. 3. This compaction in love will lead to a wealth of certitude in the possession of the truth. It tends to "all riches of the full assurance," &c. (1) In times of religious unsettlement Christian men are tempted to lower their own tone, and to say "It is so" with less certainty, because so many are saying "It is not so." Some are so afraid of being thought narrow that they seek the reputation of liberality by talking as if there were a film of doubt over even the truths "most surely believed." Few things are more needed now than this full assurance. (2) This wealth of conviction is attained by living in the love of God. If we love we shall possess an experience which verifies the truth for us. Rich in the possession of this confirmation of the gospel by the blessings it brings, and which witness to their source as verdant banks do to the stream, we shall have a right to oppose to many a doubt the full assurance born of love; and while others are disputing whether there be any Lord, or living Christ, or forgiveness, or providence, we shall know that they are ours because we have felt the wealth and power they have brought into our lives. 4. This unity of love will lead to full knowledge of the mystery of God. (1) That mystery has its stages. The revelation is finished, but our apprehension of it may grow, and although we shall never outgrow it, reflection and experience will explain and deepen it. Suppose a man could set out from the great planet that moves in the outermost rim of our system, and travel slowly inwards to the great central sun, how the disc would grow, and the light and warmth increase with each million of miles, till what had seemed a point filled the whole sky! (2) The stages are infinite because in Him are all the treasures, &c. These four words are all familiar on the lips of later Gnostics, and were no doubt in the mouths of the false teachers. The apostle would claim for his Gospel all which they falsely claimed for their dreams. (a) All wisdom and knowledge are in Christ. He is the Light of men, and all thought and truth of every sort came from Him who is the Eternal Word. All other media of revelation have but uttered broken syllables. Christ still pursues this work. (b) In Christ, as in a great storehouse, lie all the riches of spiritual wisdom, the massive ingots of solid gold, which when coined into

creeds and doctrines are the wealth of the Church. (c) In Christ these treasures are hidden, but not as the heretic's mysteries from the vulgar crowd, but only from eyes that will not see them; hidden that seeking souls may have the pleasure of seeking, and the rest of finding; hidden as men store provisions in the Arctic regions, in order that the bears may not find them, and shipwrecked sailors may. Conclusion: Such thoughts have a special message for times of agitation. We are surrounded by eager voices proclaiming profounder truths and wisdom than the gospel gives us. In joyful antagonism Christian men have to hold fast by the confidence that all Divine wisdom is laid up in Christ. The new problems of each generation will find their answers in Him. We need not cast aside the truth learned at our mothers' knees; but if we keep true to Christ and strive to widen our minds to the breadth of that great message, it will grow as we gaze, even as the nightly heavens expand to the eye which steadfastly looks into them and reveal violet abysses, sown with sparkling points, each of which is a sun. (*A. MacLaren, D.D.*) *Three wonderful things*:—I. A NOBLE ANXIETY. Paul pictures here his eagerness as that of the racer and wrestler. So far there is nothing very rare, for the spectacle of anxious men struggling with keenest eagerness to gain some purpose of their own is common. But the elements of nobleness here discovered in Paul are—1. His anxiety for others. He says to the men of Colossæ, "My conflict is for you." It is no self-centred life that Paul lives when he spends himself lavishly for these early church's. 2. His anxiety for the absent. There is a counterfeit coin in current speech, "Out of sight, out of mind." It is a proverb coined in the mint of a very shallow and selfish life. Such a spirit (1) limits power, (2) narrows character. Whilst real care for the absent—(1) Increases the power of the mind. It gets strong enough to wing its pinions over oceans, and even to pierce other worlds. (2) Cultivates spiritual habit. It delivers a man from being the creature of sense. 3. His anxiety for those with whom he had no direct connection. He is caring for a group of churches on the Lycus that he had not even visited. It was pure, disinterested love. Wherein does the modern gospel of altruism excel this gospel Paul believed and practised? and where has altruism the motives with which Christianity pulsates, or the examples that Christianity can cite? II. A BLESSED EXPERIENCE. Analyzing these verses we find signs—1. Of personal comfort. The word "comfort" here, as in the word "Comforter," points to more than solace, it tells of encouragement and strengthening. What better experience could he desire for the members of this young Church than that their hearts should be comforted? But to that is added the blessing of social security. Few expressions can describe a completer unity than this "knit together." It means an interweaving of sympathies, an interlinking of destinies; and this is obtained by the highest and surest method "in love." 3. Of firm conviction, "and all assurance." There is much more than opinion, there is conviction; and conviction of man's noblest faculty, the understanding, which is more than the reason alone. And this supreme conviction is, as to the truth, of the supremest importance, viz., the acknowledgment of the open secret about God. III. AN OPEN SECRET. Paul did not mean by mystery an unknowable, mystical something; but rather a truth once hidden but no longer concealed; a truth fully, freely revealed. The self-revelation of Christ is the revelation of man, of duty, of God, of heaven. In Him were stored away all the riches of truth and love for which men cried. He is the exhaustless storehouse of God's supplies for man's higher nature. He is the vast mine of thought, of sympathy, of grace; and only the industrious who sink the shaft of inquiry, fellowship, faith, will know what the mine contains. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *The full assurance of knowledge*:—The second Colossian prayer is the sequel of the first (chap. i. 9-14), inasmuch as it shows at once the end of all practical obedience and the ground of all practical knowledge. The words that introduce it show it to be a supplement, and also that the apostle's request now deepens into a "great agony" which is akin to our Lord's. The matter of his supplication is expressed in the form of the end which its answer would obtain, the full assurance of their understanding of Christ, the mystery of God. I. HOW THIS IS TO BE OBTAINED. 1. It is hardly possible to separate the "full assurance" from the process by which it is reached. It is a branch, together with the "knitting together in love" of the one common trunk, "the comfort of the heart." This last root principle of all religious establishment is the full work of the Paraclete, and the "heart" is the inner man in which the Spirit carries on His renewing work. Hence from this common principle spring two developments—one of charity, the other of knowledge—and these are united. The love of God strong in the heart of

each, the bond of perfectness, is as "brotherly love," the bond of union in which all are edified. Thus while carnal knowledge "puffeth up," and makes a hollow fellowship, love "buildeth up" both the individual and the community. They have the riches of the knowledge of God imparted to them in the radiations of Divine light through the Word, by the Spirit. These riches are the common heritage of the sacred Treasury; but every one's individual knowledge is His own.

2. This "full assurance" is the clear, deep, unclouded confidence in the reality of the objects of knowledge which the understanding grasps, excluding hesitation and fortifying against error. This grace comes from the "comfort" of the Spirit, through the diligent study of the mystery hid in Christ. St. Paul speaks of three kinds of assurance. (1) The full assurance of faith—the deeply wrought conviction of the reality, and the possession of the present object. (2) The assurance of hope—the full conviction of the reality of its objects as our own in reservation. (3) The full assurance of understanding is more general in its object, including all the truths of the common salvation, of the unity, harmony, and practical consequences of which the understanding is fully assured. So far as the individual truths of this knowledge are embraced for salvation, the soul exerts its faith in full assurance; so far as they belong to the future, its hope; but so far as they are independent of present and future, and are the possession of the mind and not of the experience, the soul delivers them to the care of the understanding.

II. WHAT IT IS IN ITSELF. The mystery of God which is Christ. This being the precise sentence which St. Paul wrote, we are taught by him that the Person of Christ, God-man, is the central and all-comprehending mystery. 1. The secret as it has been expounded in the previous chapter is impenetrable to human intellect. It is the mystery of God, and He alone can understand it. 2. But it is shown forth in such a manner that we may have a full and distinct knowledge, for this is the word, not acknowledgment. There is a difference between penetrating a mystery and beholding and knowing it. In the richness of its full assurance the understanding collects all the elements that go to the conception of the Divine-human Person, and unites them in one supreme object of knowledge, certitude, assurance. 3. Yet this object contains all other objects. In this are hid "all the treasures," &c. To the riches of full assurance correspond the riches of the truths of which it is assured. All other intellectual treasures are of phenomena and time, and must pass away. If the vast fabric of things be destroyed or reconstructed, all extant physical science becomes obsolete. But the knowledge of Christ is always becoming richer. As the individual grows daily in it, so also does the Church behold more and more the development of "the manifold wisdom of God" in Christ.

III. WHAT IT EFFECTS. The apostle's reason for the prayer was his deep desire to defend the Colossians against "oppositions of science," &c. The full assurance of understanding in the mystery of Christ would be their effectual safeguard. The mind once raised to this region of cloudless certitude would not easily be seduced to descend into the region of scepticism, where doubt chases doubt in never-ceasing restlessness of caprice. Gnosticism under other names is still darkening the counsel of the hypostatic union. Hence the necessity of this prayer to-day. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*)

St. Paul's conflict.—As gardeners are not satisfied with sowing good seed, but also take care to eradicate weeds, so in spiritual husbandry it is not enough to cast the Word into souls; the soil must be cleansed of the pernicious weeds of error sown privily by an enemy's hand, or the Divine tillage will be marred. Hence St. Paul in chap. i, having established the truth, now defends it against heresy, and these verses are the entrance to the controversy.

I. THE CONFLICT. What the apostle affirmed at the close of chap. i. he here particularizes. He means—1. The solicitude which the consideration of the Churches drew upon him. For though their faith and constancy afforded him satisfaction, the temptations around them and their human weakness led to the apprehension that they might be drawn from piety. Love is never without this, but the apostle's was so great that he felt as though he had suffered their afflictions himself (2 Cor. xi. 29, cf. also verse 3).

2. But more, he comprises here all that he did to avert the danger. (1) He was perpetually in prayer for them (2 Thess. i. ii; Phil. i. 4; Col. i. 9). (2) To prayer he added action, and as he assails the enemy, he smartly appeals to the faithful, admonishing and encouraging them to needful firmness. (3) The combat, however, did not terminate here. He often came to blows, cheerfully suffering persecution. His very chain and prison were part of his conflict, and hence he told them (chap. i. 24) he suffered for them; because in effect it was for maintaining the liberty of the Gentiles that he was suffering.

3. Admire the zeal and love of

this holy man. He stood, as we may say, on the scaffold, yet their danger troubled him more than his own, and neither prison nor death was able to diminish his affection, or make him lay aside the least of his cares. 4. Observe his prudence. To dispose their hearts and gain authority for his remonstrances, he sets before them his solicitudes for their salvation. 5. The apostle's conflict is exemplary. Let ministers learn what they owe to their flocks. Without this strife we cannot avoid the censure of the Supreme Pastor. II. ITS DESIGN. Paul fought to secure to them a treasure and to prevent the enemy snatching it away. Therefore he shows that they were in danger of losing it. It consisted of—1. Comfort of heart which heresy necessarily disturbs, because it shakes the truth and certainty of the evangelical doctrine on which it is founded. This should make us jealous for the purity of the gospel. Food, however wholesome, will kill if mingled with poison. 2. Union in love. Their seducers troubled that by sowing the seeds of doctrinal division. This union is necessary to comfort, for what joy can there be in the trouble of division? 3. The abounding of a full assurance of understanding. The order here is to be noted. These three things are of such a nature that the first depends upon the second, and the second upon the third. (1) The knowledge of a Christian should be understanding, *i.e.*, he should see in the clearness of heavenly light the verities which God has revealed, not that we are bound to comprehend them, which would be impossible; but we are to know them as far as they are revealed. Here we see how far a blind faith is from the knowledge of a believer. Paul would have the faithful intelligent. (2) "All riches of understanding." Abundance of knowledge, so that we may be ignorant of none of the mysteries of Divine truth. If we do not, how shall we distinguish the voice of the shepherd from that of a stranger? (3) "Assurance." Though matters of faith are not laid open to the senses or reason, yet the truth of them is so evident, that as soon as the clouds of passion and prejudice are dispersed by the Spirit it shines into our hearts and makes itself to be believed. Thus must it be known with certainty and not with doubting (Eph. iv. 14). Whereby you see how false is the opinion of Rome, which makes the belief of Christianity to depend on the testimony of her prelates. 4. The apostle confines the Christian's understanding within the bounds of its true subject—the mystery of—(1) The Father, because He is the author of the gospel, and has manifested Himself through it. (2) Of Christ, for He has brought this doctrine from the bosom of the Father and set it in our view; and He is the principal subject of it, without whose teaching and merit we can have no true happiness. Conclusion: 1. Paul's desire teaches us our duty. 2. Urge not the vain excuse that you are not ministers, and therefore do not need extensive knowledge. The Colossians were no more ministers than you. We are all engaged in the same war, and privates need arms as much as officers. (*J. Daille.*) *Soul prosperity*:—I. ITS DESIGN. "That their hearts might be comforted." There may be pleasure in which mirth is frolicsome and laughter mad; a thrill of lone delight may sweep across the soul beneath some grand or peaceful scene. There may be brief and dangerous rapture in some wild moment; but no heart was ever comforted amidst scenes like these, either in possession or memory. The word has a hearty English sound about it, and embodies all the unutterable meanings that lie hidden in that word "home." The leading idea is that of quiet after tempests, a present of peace after a past of trouble. And so no heart can be comforted in Christ which has not agonized in penitence. The great calm comes to the soul after the storm raised by the convincing Spirit, when it finds the atonement sufficient and the Saviour willing. It must spring from faith. II. ITS CONSTITUENTS. 1. "Being knit together in love." (1) The word applies to the fitting of the parts of a house in harmony. Modern architecture delights in the symmetry of buildings, different parts are arranged to be mutually strengthening without external aid. (2) So the heart in love is to be knit together, the strongest and surest of bonds. It is the root of all other graces, the ground on which the temple is to rise; "rooted and grounded in love." It is the bracelet that clasps the other graces, at once a protection and decoration. "Above all put on charity." It is the mark of the Divine relationship, indwelling, image. (3) The necessity of this to comfort is obvious. Without it hope will be a transient emotion, labour an intolerable drudgery, God alienated, the Church rent. 2. "Unto all riches," &c. (1) The possession of an assured faith, the importance of an intellectual perception of the truth, and of a decisive grasp of its great principles, is often urged by Paul; and Christ prayed that Peter's faith might not fail amidst the siftings of Satan. Do not our own hearts witness to the necessity of this? There is comfort in trust,

but none in suspicion and misgiving. (2) Mark the wealthy repetition of the apostle's words. When Solomon speaks of understanding he can scarcely find imagery sufficiently brilliant to set its value forth. The apostle is not satisfied that that only shall be the believer's dowry; there is not only understanding, but "assurance"—knowledge deepening into conviction; "full," no doubt hungering upon the Spirit, the truth so thoroughly appreciated that the principle becomes enfolded with man's nature, a belonging of his, his riches which no panic can scatter and no thief steal. (3) The tendency of the present age is to leave old beliefs behind, and it is considered a proof of manliness to have outgrown the faith of our childhood, which yet was the faith upon which the sturdy manhood of our fathers grew. But surely it were a weary world if in this nineteenth century there is nothing settled. Life is all too short to be spent in dreams. Men die while we are battling with problems. And in all doubt there is discomfort, danger, and death. To the sincere and candid Christianity offers her evidences and all her "riches of the full assurance," &c. Press forward, you shall know if you follow on to know the Lord. 3. There must be testimony if the heart is "knit together in love," &c. (1) It is not to be kept within like a concealed treasure, but it is to be "acknowledged." The duty of confession is parallel with that of faith, and if faith be hid it will die. (2) The "mystery" is to be acknowledged. The greatest triumph of faith is when proud reason bows, the rebel will submits, and the awed senses fear as they enter into the cloud. This is the mystery of God in Christ. Do not let us do the Saviour the dishonour of denying Him either by the lie of speech or the lie of silence. Bold witness-bearing will be found to be a solid comfort to the soul. 4. In regard to this mystery the apostle's words are cumulative, and each has a distinct significance. (1) "Of God." How much of mystery is here! Yet what a comfort! How sad it would be to sit down in a world like ours without a God, with chance as our creator and circumstances our governor; or with gods like those of heathenism. But while the atheist cannot find a God, and the deist denies His existence, and the pantheist reduces Him to an abstraction, the Christian rejoices to believe that there is around him God, living, acting, personal. (2) "Of the Father," a greater mystery. He who is omnipotent, &c., maintains a relationship analogous to that of human fatherhood only, of infinite power and tenderness. What a comfort is this mystery! We live not under a despot's tyranny, but a Father's smile; this makes duty light, and sorrow bearable. (3) "Of Christ." The mystery deepens as we travel on. This makes God "Immanuel." God's own Son stoops to take on Himself a curse that none but Omnipotence could inflict, and none but Omnipotence bear. But vast as is the mystery the comfort is vaster. Heaven and earth reconciled; salvation for the most abandoned. (*W. M. Punshon, LL.D.*) **That their hearts might be comforted.**—*The triple fruit of evangelical doctrine:*—The apostle contends that they should persist in this. I. **THAT THEIR HEARTS MIGHT BE COMFORTED.** Perseverance in Christian doctrine brings true comfort. 1. Because salvation by Christ alone brings tranquillity to the troubled conscience. For as the modulations of harmony are applied to arouse the mind when sorrowful, so the promises of God in Christ bring peace to men's hearts (Rom. v. 1; 2 Thess. ii. 16; Phil. ii. 1). 2. Because the doctrine of innovators harassed men's minds with scruples and anxieties. To be exempt from these is a great part of spiritual consolation. II. **BEING KNIT TOGETHER IN LOVE** as carpenters fit together two pieces of wood, so that they adhere in indissoluble union. This concord of minds is—1. A fruit, because the intellect is the leader of the will (Acts iv. 32). Unity of faith is the firmest bond of unity of mind. Love is the fruit of unanimity of faith which so binds the minds of the godly, that though some light offences intervene, yet as the boughs of the same tree, driven asunder by the wind, immediately come together again because fixed in one root, so with the minds of the faithful, because still rooted in the same faith. 2. A condition without which spiritual comfort is not obtained. For comfort is not had out of Christ; if any one lives without love, he is without Christ, and *vice versâ*. III. **UNTO ALL RICHES OF THE FULL ASSURANCE OF UNDERSTANDING.** 1. The faith of Christians is augmented in richness when they who have learned only the principles and elements proceed to farther attainments. For as in other sciences the principles are few, but contain innumerable conclusions, so here some few necessary principles are presented to tender minds, and afterwards a rich treasury of sacred knowledge is collected for every purpose of salvation by meditation, hearing, and chiefly the internal operation and teaching of the Spirit. They therefore who persevere in the doctrine of the gospel thence obtain all riches. Hence—(1) The laity should not be content with an elementary

knowledge in religious matters (Heb. vi. 1). (2) When these riches are sought, the means necessary to their attainment should be sought. He who would have treasure must dig. 2. Full assurance denotes that firm and certain adherence to what is believed which springs from the internal operation of the Spirit illuminating the intellect, inclining the will, and firmly stamping the impress of the things believed on the mind itself. This is at length attained by those who remain firm in the doctrine of faith. For as trees newly planted are swayed by the wind, so the early faith of the godly wavers with many doubts; but the same trees in course of time fix their roots deeper, so faith shoots its roots deeper into the mind, and at length, by grace, acquires that steadiness which cannot be overthrown (Eph. iv. 14). Hence we learn—(1) That the faith of a Christian ought not to depend on others, but be settled by the efficacy of the Spirit, so that if ecclesiastics, or the whole world even, should depart from the faith, yet every one of the laity should hold to it (Gal. i. 9). (2) How Romanists err who think that the assurance of our faith lies in the breast of the Pope. That cannot give full assurance to my heart, but the operation of the Spirit can and does (1 John ii. 27). (3) That their complaint is unjust who aver that we cannot arrive at this assurance since there are so many sects and controversies. We attain truth not by disputing, but from Him who alone can both know and teach. 3. The understanding fully assured (Eph. i. 17; 1 Pet. ii. 9). Hence that is not a Divine, but animal faith, which has no comprehension of the things believed. Such a faith Staphylus extols in the collier who professed that he believed what the Church believed, and the Church believed what he held, whilst he was ignorant all the time what either the Church or himself held. 4. To the acknowledgment, &c. (1) Under the word "mystery" the apostle includes the whole doctrine of the gospel which is so called, because human reason of itself would never have found the way of salvation but for it. (*Bishop Davenant.*) **Knit together in love.**—*Christian unity*:—I. *ITS NATURE*. 1. There are two kinds of Christian unity. (1) Among all believers there exists a vital union. By our faith in Christ we are united to Him and to each other as members of our body connected with the living head. This union exists in spite of all diversities of character and creed. The uniting power is faith. Without that we are dead, and death means separation. (2) But the text speaks of another union, or it is a superfluity. The Colossians were already partakers of the union common to all Christians. Now the apostle prays that they may be knit together in love. This is not a doctrinal union; desirable as that may be, it is only a union of head. Nor is it an ecclesiastical union; desirable as that may be, it is yet mechanical and external. This is eternal, spiritual, vital. 2. The word is translated compacted (Eph. iv. 16), proving (Acts ix. 22), assuredly gathering (Acts xvi. 10), and means to make to come together. The Colossians were not so compacted as the apostle wished them to be. Seducers had disturbed their fraternal concord. So the apostle prays that their affections may intertwine and interlace; or that as a broken joint when reset knits itself to the other members of the body, so the members of the body of believers might be united to one another, love being the uniting power. 3. Each Church should be a confederated body, so consolidated into one as to be invincible in conflict with the powers of evil. 4. We can have this unity without dull uniformity. There is unity in the Godhead, yet not uniformity; unity among the angels, but they have degrees of power and dignity; diversity among the stars, yet they are all related to the central sun. This unity does not destroy our individuality or our right of private judgment. The Church's vesture may have divers colours, but it must be without seam. Individual members may resemble the rainbow which combines the seven prismatic colours into one glorious arch, or like the ocean in its unfettered flow, "distinct as the billows, but one as the sea." II. *ITS NECESSITY*. 1. Being destitute of this unity, no body of Christians can answer the end of its existence. It is only where brethren dwell together in unity that the Lord commands His blessing. 2. This unity is essential to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. It is only when believers are "built together" that they are a fit "habitation of God through the Spirit." Not before the temple was compacted did "the glory of the Lord fill the house." When "they were all of one accord in one place," there came the blessings of Pentecost. 3. It is only when united that a Church is powerful for good. Separate the particles of a ponderous hammer, and each atom will fall harmless as a snowflake; but welded into one, and wielded by the arm of the quarryman, it will split granite. Let the waters of Niagara be divided into separate drops, and they are no more than a Scotch mist. 4. Without it a Christian Church may any day be

scattered. It is but a heap of sand the separate particles of which may be separated by a gust of wind. 5. It is necessary to Christian comfort. We are so constituted as to be dependent on each other. To preserve a frigid isolation is to create misery.

III. THE POWER WHICH SECURES IT. Love, without which no real union is possible. The universe has no equal force to that of love. We may think alike on doctrines, polity, and methods of work, but unless our hearts are full of love to Christ and one another we are not united. This power is to be obtained at the Cross, the birthplace of Christian love. (*W. Williams.*) All riches of the full assurance

of understanding.—I. THE THINGS OF WHICH WE SHOULD BE ASSURED. 1. The things done by Christ (Luke i. 1). 2. The knowledge of our liberty in things indifferent. 3. The persuasion of the truth of their ministries to whom we subject our souls (2 Tim. iv. 5, 17). 4. The doctrine of the religion we profess. 5. The hope of a better life (Heb. vi. 12). 6. Faith in God's favour upon the warrant of God's Word and Spirit. II. THE SIGNS OF FULL ASSURANCE. 1. It will receive the Word in affliction with much joy (1 Thess. i. 6). 1. It will not be carried about by every wind of doctrine (Eph. iv. 14). 3. It is industrious in the duties of love to God's children (Heb. vi. 11, 12). 4. It is unrebukable, and full of integrity of life. It cannot stand with any presumptuous sin (Heb. x. 22). 5. It will give glory to God against all sense and reason (Rom. iv. 20). 6. It mortifies and extinguishes all headstrong affections (Isa. xi. 7, 9). 7. It is carried with full sails into holy duties, and is faithful in good works. 8. It is able to admonish (Rom. xv. 14). III. THE RICHES OF FULL ASSURANCE. 1. Our spiritual riches lie—(1) In the Word of Christ dwelling in us (chap. iii. 16). (2) In the Spirit of Christ (Tit. iii. 6). (3) In works of mercy and liberality (Eph. ii. 4; 2 Cor. viii. 1, ix. 11). (4) In sufferings and patience. (5) In prayer (Rom. x. 11). (6) In good works. (1 Tim. vi. 18). (7) In utterance and all holy knowledge (1 Cor. i. 5). (8) In our faith (James ii. 5). 2. Worthily is full assurance called riches, for it does all that riches can do to men. It comforts the heart and defends from dangers much better than outward riches. It gains the godly truer reputation than houses, lands, or money. It abounds more to mercy and well-doing with more sufficiency than outward riches, and buys for the soul all necessities. It settles the heart against all changes, makes a man stand against the rage of tyrants and death itself; yea, it prevails with God, and, knowing Him fully, does not fail to trust Him fully in spite of mysterious providences. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." It brings a man the certain pardon of all his offences, and settles his heart in his religion better than ten thousand arguments and volumes of controversies. Conclusion:

1. This full assurance may be had in this life (1 Thess. i. 5; Heb. vi. 11, x. 22; Rom. iv. 21). 2. Therefore we are bound to labour for it. (*N. Byfield.*) The full assurance of understanding:—I. THE KNOWLEDGE OR UNDERSTANDING TO WHICH ASSURANCE BELONGS. 1. Men have two kinds of knowledge respecting Divine things—the one of the intellect alone, which is the fruit of study, just as the natural sciences are; the other a higher knowledge built upon the former, or the former transfigured. It baptizes the understanding with feeling, and the feeling with Divine influences. It is the product of love and obedience more than of inquiry, and is rather the gift of God than the acquisition of man. 2. But although distinguished these are not to be separated. We can possess the lower without the higher, but not the higher without the lower. Intellectual knowledge of the things of God is right as far as it goes. Its objects are true and its apprehension of them is correct. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing implies an understanding of what is heard. This is the window which admits into the soul the light of heaven; and as the room is lighter if the window be large and clear, so also the spiritual knowledge is likely to be more vivid if the natural knowledge of God's things be abundant. The function of the one is to build the altar, arrange the wood, and plan the sacrifice; the function of the other is to bring the fire from heaven. 3. But this is insufficient, and the super-excellence of spiritual knowledge makes it appear pale and poor in comparison. It is superficial. It does not penetrate down to the heart and will, but lies on the surface of the mind; nor does it pierce beyond the outward aspect of God's truth, and is not in communion with its glory. 4. Look at the texts which explain the nature of the higher knowledge. (1) 1 Cor. viii. 1-3. Its fundamental element is love; love comprehending what the most cultured intellect without love cannot receive. The knowledge which is not grounded in love does not build up, but only puffs up. (2) Col. i. 9, 10. Its nature is spiritual because its source is supernatural, and concerns itself with the highest aspects of God's truth which are hid from the natural man.

It is a power which rules the whole man and results in a walk pleasing to God. The highest degree of it, therefore, constitutes the perfection of the religious life. (3) Philip. i. 9-11. Here again the chief element is love. II. **THE ASSURANCE BELONGING TO THIS KNOWLEDGE.** 1. The assurance is not a property added to the knowledge, but the cream of the knowledge itself, and the higher and more extensive the knowledge the stronger the assurance. 2. Some Christians have an assurance which to some extent is the result of study (Luke i. 4; 1 Pet. iii. 15). This is not possessed by all the saints. They are not able to impart this assured knowledge concerning things in which they have been but imperfectly instructed. But they have assurance of the greatest personal value. Reasons may be circulated, but not intuitions and experiences. My neighbour must see with his own eyes and feel with his own heart what I see and feel in order to partake of the same assurance. It is a revelation on the one side and an intuition on the other. (*J. Hughes, D.D.*) There is no wealth for man's soul like the spiritual consciousness of the glory of the truth of God. I. **BY IT EVERY PART OF OUR INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL NATURE IS ENRICHED.** 1. It gives light to the mind, such a light as only comes from the Sun of Righteousness, dissipating darkness, clearing away doubts, solving perplexities that nothing else can remove, so that the man illuminated by it becomes a child of light and of the day. 2. It gives peace to the conscience, even the peace passing all understanding which the world can neither give nor take away. 3. It sheds abroad in the heart that love which is its true life, the love of God and Christ to man. 4. It gives purity to the life and nobleness to the character, bringing it under the influence of heavenly motives and the Divine operation, so that the man is transformed into the image of God from glory to glory. 5. It gives glory to manhood, making it a partaker of the Divine nature, and enriching it with the prospect of the unfading crown and eternal blessedness. II. **THESE RICHES CAN NEVER PERISH.** Other riches may take to themselves wings and fly away, or otherwise disappoint, but the wealth which the gospel gives forms part of ourselves for evermore. Disease cannot affect it; death cannot invalidate its worth; the cares of time and the trials of life only tend to enhance its value and brighten its possession to the soul. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) **In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**—*The hidden treasures of wisdom in Christ*:—Wisdom does not consist in wide and varied knowledge. A student may be a walking encyclopædia, and yet be far from being a wise man. Wisdom is the practical application of knowledge, the attainment of the highest moral results by the best means. The cry of the human intellect in all ages is for wisdom. The greatest souls have toiled for it and failed. It is a Divine revelation. The world by wisdom knew not God. The wisdom which all need is found only in Christ. Observe—I. **THAT CHRIST IS THE INEXHAUSTIBLE SOURCE OF THE TRUEST WISDOM.** The false teachers at Colossæ, like certain pretentious philosophers of modern times, boasted of the vast range of their wisdom and knowledge. They discussed questions which are reproduced to-day—the wisdom of this world which comes to naught. But it is only in Christ that we find all the treasures which furnish and enrich the mind and guide in the way of salvation. If we classify the principal sources of human knowledge, only in Christ does each department find its fullest explication and derive its worth. 1. He is the loftiest ideal and purest inspiration of the poet. Poetry occupies an important place in human culture. It has been abused, but the true poet pants after the noblest expression of the beautiful and the good. Of this, Christ is the embodiment, and the poet exhausts all his resources in portraying the lineaments of His character. 2. He is the grandest hero of the historian. History would be an unsolvable enigma could the name of Christ be struck out. The story of redemption unites Christ with the destiny of man in all ages. 3. He is prominent among the sublimest themes of the philosopher. A philosophy that does not recognize the Divine plunges its votaries in labyrinthine darkness. Its legitimate office is to conduct to God. II. **THAT THE TREASURES OF DIVINE WISDOM ARE DISCOVERABLE BY THE SINCERE AND EARNEST SEEKER.** They are hid, but not so as to be beyond our reach. They are intended for discovery and appropriation. Their brilliancy sparkles even in their hiding-place. They are like a mine whose riches, though faintly indicated on the surface, are concealed in the depths. The more diligently the mine is worked the more precious and abundant the ore appears. Lessons—1. Man universally covets wisdom. 2. The highest wisdom is treasured up in Christ for man. 3. If man finds it not, it is his own fault. (*G. Barlow.*) *The boundless wealth of wisdom in Christ*:—"Where shall wisdom be found?" &c. (Job xxviii. 12-20). These sublime words have been echoed by the inquiring spirits

of every age; but the only true reply is in the text. There are modern forms of old Colossian error: those who say that there is no reliable truth but in the facts of nature; no religion but in science; no progress but in rejecting revelation. I. IN CHRIST ARE HID ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE. 1. They are deposited in Him as the God-man, the image of the invisible God, &c. 2. Knowledge is simply enlightenment, acquaintance with truth; wisdom is the use and result of that enlightenment, the application of the truth. Knowledge is the study, wisdom its fruit. 3. Treasures suggest great value and excellence. All the treasures are in Christ; not select truths, but all kinds of truth. As all things were made and consist by Christ, so all branches of knowledge for the human soul have a relation to Him and find their truest meaning in Him. 1. Jesus Christ is the key to human history. (1) The history of ancient nations cannot be considered thoroughly apart from the Jews, with whom they were brought into contact, and every one sees that the Hebrews had relations with Jesus, clear, manifold, and vital. Their ancient records, too, bear constant reference to One, the light of whose promised and expected advent flashed back on Egypt, Assyria, &c., making every page of this history instinct with living interest. (2) The same holds good in regard to modern nations. The unbeliever may reject Christ, still he has to account for the presence of His religion and to explain its influence as by far the mightiest moral impulse which men or nations have received. The pathway of Christ's name and influence is easily traced among the nations in the lines of light and liberty. 2. Christ is the ground of all true philosophy. (1) Nature is hung with all the insignia of Divine skill, power, and glory. Yet experience proves that the light of nature cannot make this impression an abiding principle of action. It is only when we see the material world as the theatre of redemption, and the work of creation the work of the Reconciler, that nature leads up to nature's God. (2) The philosophy of mind likewise finds its meaning in Christ. How is it possible to estimate the value of the soul without a knowledge of Him whose death was the price of its redemption? Philosophy teaches something of the prerogatives of reason, of the power of conscience, and of the relation of the animal to the spiritual nature: but what do we find? The harmony of this lofty nature disturbed, its liberty gone, the prerogative of reason overborne by the power of passion. Where is the light or wisdom that can secure the harmony between what man is and what he ought to be? Where is the knowledge or power that can bring beauty out of the chaos which religion discovers? It is in Christ alone: in Him are hid all the treasures of the only wisdom which expounds the lofty relations of man's mental being and the value and vigour of his spirit. (3) The philosophy of morals in the relation of man to man, and to society at large, is a perplexing study. We see virtue oppressed and vice triumphant, might supreme over right, &c. The solution is in the gospel. In the knowledge of Christ we see the rule of a "righteous Father"—the triumph of law and of love, the harmony of righteousness and peace, and the evidence that whatever anomalies may appear in society now, all will yet be explained and rectified, and issue in the glory of God and the good of man. 3. Christ is the substance of a true theology. (1) All saving knowledge of God and our relations to Him we find in Christ. (2) The peace with God which men have sought everywhere by sacrifice and prayer is secured by Him who is the propitiation for our sins. (3) The future, which has baffled all human inquiries, has been revealed by Him who has brought life and immortality to light. II. THE RELATION OF CHRIST GENERALLY TO ALL HUMAN STUDIES. 1. In Him the mind finds its truest stimulus and healthiest impulse. He is the fosterer and guide of all wise intellectual pursuits. It is in countries where He is known and worshipped that literature and science exercise their widest sway. He emancipates the mind from the bondage of corruption and fear, and as the wisdom of God hallows all wisdom. (1) If we investigate nature, does it make no difference whether we examine a world without God, or a world which God has made the object of His special interest? (2) If we study the human mind, will it make no difference whether we view it as a taper to be extinguished or the offspring of an infinite Father? (3) If we examine the human frame, will it make no difference whether we consider it as destined to rot in the grave, or as the tabernacle of the immortal spirit destined to be restored? Who does not see that the light which Christ brings enhances and elevates every branch of knowledge? 2. The word "hid" implies that wisdom and knowledge are stored up in Him in a hidden manner, suggesting—(1) Concealment. All these treasures are not seen at once by the bodily or spiritual eye. They are hid from the thoughtless and unbelieving world, from the vain and unassisted

intellect (1 Cor. ii. 8). God has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. Just as many with an uneducated eye traverse a country rich in mineral wealth, and have no idea of what lies under the surface, so the treasures that are hid in Christ are only seen by the eye of faith, and found by the devout and contrite soul taught by the Spirit of God. (2) But these treasures thus hid are intended for discovery and appropriation. They are gradually unfolded. The number of those enriched daily increases, yet the riches are still inexhaustible, and the oldest disciples are ever discovering some new vein of preciousness in their Lord. So it will ever be. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Earthly and heavenly riches*:—"This morning," says Mr. Fuller, "I have read another of Edwards' sermons, on 'God, the Christian's Portion,' from Psa. lxxiii. 25. The latter part comes very close, and I feel myself at a loss what to judge as to God's being my chief good. He asks, whether we had rather live in this world rich and without God, or poor and with Him? Perhaps I should not be so much at a loss to decide this question as another; namely, had I rather be rich in this world and enjoy but little of God, or poor and enjoy much of God? I am confident the practice of great numbers of professing Christians declares that they prefer the former; and in some instances I feel guilty of the same thing." *The treasures of Christ in relation to education*:—When the apostle spoke of the wisdom hid in Christ, he meant by "wisdom" just what his adversaries meant, that is, the knowledge of man in those sublime relations that connect him with God and God's universal plan. Now this is a sort of knowledge to which everything may be expected to contribute some remote and faint light; but the point here to be observed is, that the revelation of Christ Jesus, alone and unaided, flashes a beam of splendour upon it in which all others are lost and disappear. Nor this only, but as all knowledge is mainly valuable as it helps our efforts for this last and mightiest knowledge of ourselves and God, so when this is attained, through virtue of the Christian truth, it, in its turn, radiates back upon all the departments of knowledge a new and blessed light. And thus the revelation of Christ not merely teaches us in itself a series of truths of inexpressible importance, and without it wholly unattainable, but it also, as a great central discovery, harmonizes all our beliefs, sacred and secular, binds them together as its own servants, gives them a new interest, and position, and colouring, and dignifies the pursuit of them as a labour in the very cause of God Himself,—begun and prosecuted with a view to His glory—for to know the beauty of the temple is to know the glory of the architect. And hence, so far are we who advocate the revelation of Christ as the basis of education, from (as our slanderers have it) restricting or dreading the free search of natural knowledge, that, on the contrary, when once the corner-stone has been fixed in our foundation, we exult in a science and a philosophy that is subservient to the faith of Christ; we hail every bright discovery as a new tribute to the creating and redeeming God whom we adore. Let but the Sun of Righteousness reign in the centre of the soul, and we know that every element of inferior knowledge will dispose itself to revolve harmoniously around it! (*W. Archer Butler, M.A.*) **This I say lest any man should beguile you.**—As men love and desire only those things which have an appearance of good, so they believe only those which have a semblance of truth. This advantage which truth naturally has over falsehood compels its enemies to counterfeit its mask and wear its livery, as coiners give their copper or lead the colour of gold or silver in order to pass it as current coin; otherwise neither error nor base coin have a chance of acceptance. And as Christianity comprises the most important truths, so there never was a system which impostors have so laboured to corrupt; and so, therefore, ought we to strenuously endeavour to sever the falsehood which has been palmed off as the truth. This is one of the most important duties of our lives. It is loss to take bad money for good; it is hurtful to receive an error for truth in the simplest matters; but here the consequence of imposture is irreparable. So here and elsewhere the apostle warns the faithful against it (Rom. xvi. 17; 1 Thess. v. 21; Eph. iv. 14; Heb. v. 14).

I. THE DANGER OF THE COLOSSIANS OF BEING DECEIVED WITH ENTICING WORDS. There never was a servant of Christ who was not beset by such a temptation. As soon as Satan sees the truth of the gospel appear he raises up impostors to corrupt it, and to alienate its professors from its purity. 1. The term employed means to deceive by false and ensnaring ratiocination. These bad men, knowing that we are not induced to embrace anything without some reason, our nature demanding that the understanding should precede the will, begin there to effect our ruin. It is a sophism, a false arguing which by its vain appearance and fallacious blaze leads men into error,

as those fatuous fires which, rising at night, conduct those who follow them over precipices. Satan, the father of all sophisters, took this course first, attacking our first parents' understandings in the first place, and beguiling them that he might destroy them. All whom he has since employed have followed the same method. No heretic ever appeared who did not paint over his impostures with specious reasons. Some act maliciously, and in defiance of their own consciences; others through ignorance (Rom. x. 2), like most of those of the Roman communion. But we must take heed of both. As poison fails not to kill the man who takes it, though given in ignorance; so error, from whatever hand it come, has a bad effect. 2. The means which false teachers use are "enticing words" (Rom. xvi. 18; 1 Cor. ii. 4). Under this term are comprehended all that attractiveness of discourse which is apt to touch and win hearts. Eloquence too often makes things, as it were by enchantment, appear quite opposite—honey wormwood, black white, and *vice versa*. It can subvert a cause, however good; and establish it, however bad. It has frequently procured condemnation for the innocent, while the guilty have been acquitted with applause. But among all the busy people who use it none more perniciously employ it than corrupters of religion. Not that eloquence is to be decried. It has done good service to the gospel, and Paul, who here condemns it as a vehicle of error, does not reject it in the service of the truth. But as innocence is not always the best clothed, so truth frequently is not the most richly decked. II. THE MEANS OF GUARDING AGAINST IT. "This I say"—what? "In Him are hid all the treasures," &c. None of the wiles of error can stand before these. Whoever has this principle in his heart will receive nothing out of Christ, and so has his ears effectually closed against the seductions of error. (*J. Dailly*.) *The true safeguard against error*.—Paul fortifies the disciples by exalting the master and urging the inexhaustible significance of His Person and message. To learn the full meaning and preciousness of Christ is to be armed against error. The positive truth concerning Him, by pre-occupying mind and heart, guards beforehand against the most specious teachings. If you fill the coffer with gold, nobody will want, and there will be no room for pinchbeck. A living grasp of Christ will keep us from being swept away by the current of prevailing popular opinion, which is always much more likely to be wrong than right, and is sure to be exaggerated and onesided at the best. A personal consciousness of His power and sweetness will give an instinctive repugnance to teaching that would lower His dignity and debase His work. If He be the centre and anchorage of all our thoughts, we shall not be tempted to go elsewhere in search of the treasures of wisdom. He who has found the one pearl of great price needs no more to go seeking goodly pearls, but only day by day more completely to lose self, and give up all else, that he may win more and more of Christ his all. If we keep our hearts and minds in communion with our Lord, and have experience of His preciousness, that will preserve us from many a snare, will give us a wisdom beyond much logic, will solve for us many of the questions most hotly debated to-day, and will show us that many more are unimportant and uninteresting to us. And even if we should be led to wrong conclusions on some matters, "if we drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt" us. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Satan's method*.—"This is the devil's device, first to maze people, as birds are with a light and a bell in the night, and then to drive them into the net. If you would keep to wholesome doctrine, keep to a form of wholesome words, and do not place religion in conceited speaking." Would that this advice of Manton's were heeded. We have those about us who are for ever inventing some new thing, and using the old orthodox terms in an altogether novel sense. Their hearers are first dazzled with the clever candle light, and cannot make out what the novel brilliance means; and when they are thoroughly bewildered, a great noise and tinkling is made of pretended wisdom and deep thought, so that the poor souls are ready to fly anywhere and anyhow. Thus the fowler's business is effectually done, and by this means, if it were possible, they would ensnare the very elect. The safest way for simple souls is to keep to a definite and decided gospel ministry. (*C. H. Spurgeon*.) *Error is insidious*.—Error is insidious in its approaches. It flatters by liberality and betrays by sophism. We are not reconciled to it at once. There are disgusts to be allayed and fears to be vanquished. Little by little are we allured. The voyager enters a current which seems propitious, there is no apparent diversion from his course, his bark speeds well, his oar does not toil nor his sail strain. In his confidence all promises success. But while he examines, scarcely does it seem that he has advanced. Much again and again reminds him of what he has noticed just before. A strange familiarity im-

presses his sense. Still current flows into current, while onward and buoyant is his track. Soon he feels an unnatural vibration. Where he glided, he now whirls along. The truth seizes upon him. He is sweeping a whirlpool. Long since he has entered the verge of a maelstrom, and he is now the sport of its gyrations. No power is left his helm or mast; he is the trembling unresisting prey. He hears the roar; he is drawn into the suck of the vortex. Not only the circle lessens, the very surface slopes. The central funnel and abyss, darkheaving, smooth, vitreous, yawns. The mariner shrieks, the skiff is swallowed up, where the waters only separate to close, where the outermost attraction was but the minister to the famine of this devouring maw. (*Dr. R. W. Hamilton.*)

Ver. 5. **Though I be absent in the flesh.**—I. **THE MODE OF THE APOSTLE'S AFFECTION** towards the Colossians. 1. He shows that he was never so far away from them but in mind, care, and thought he was with them. This was necessary lest they should think he was ignorant of them and indifferent to them, never having visited them. It is the peculiarity of the lover not to be severed in mind from those whom he loves, although separated by space. 2. He rejoiced at what he beheld in them, and expressed himself thus, lest they should suppose he doubted their constancy since he so earnestly exhorted them to perseverance (*Phil. iv. 1*). 3. Hence we infer that—(1) A minister ought to be always present with his flock—if not in body, by care and thought and prayer. (2) A minister's true joy arises from the fact that his people continue and increase in spiritual blessings, not that he himself is enriched in temporals. (3) The state which occasions his joy should cause his solicitude; for Paul in consequence of his joy at their state, labours the more earnestly lest they be cast down by impostors. II. **THE CAUSE OF THE APOSTLE'S AFFECTION.** Note that his praise is most skilful and a strong inducement to perseverance in the thing praised. He who praises what you do declares—(1) That it is good, for otherwise it would not be fit to be praised. (2) That it is easy to you, because you have so long effected it. (3) That it would be disgraceful if you desist, because praise earned is never lost without shame. The apostle rejoiced because of—1. Their order, which denotes—(1) The settled manners of the individuals. Goodness of manners is constantly included in "order" in the scriptures, just as, on the contrary, they who are of bad manners are said to walk disorderly (*2 Thess. iii. 6*). (2) The well-appointed discipline of the Church; which teaches ministers to rule well, subjects to obey duly; and compels the negligent and refractory to perform their duty (*1 Cor. xiv. 40; 1 Tim. i. 3*). (3) Their agreement and concord. "Order" is a military term, and denotes a compact body of soldiers marshalled in due order. He intimates, therefore, that he regarded them as a well-arranged phalanx, cleaving together in the unity of the faith, and therefore invincible. 2. Their steadfastness of faith in Christ, which denotes—(1) That they suffered not the true doctrine to be wrested from them, but remained firm and unmoveable in it like soldiers at their post. (2) That they did not permit strange doctrines to mingle with it; but filled their minds with sacred truth, the inventions of men being excluded from the business of faith. For that is properly said to be solid which is full of itself alone. 3. Hence we learn—(1) when the mind wavers and vacillates between various opinions, that is not a steadfast faith, but an empty shadow of it. It is the will of God, therefore that our assent to the cause of religion be without hesitation. A faith suspended between conflicting opinions is reproved (*1 Kings xviii. 11*). (2) That faith also which together with the gospel admits the traditions and inventions of men is not steadfast but hollow. (*Bp. Davenant.*) **Phases of human nature.**—I. A POWER THAT IS COMMON TO MAN AS MAN. "Though I be absent . . . spirit." Here is a power of going forth from the body—visiting distant scenes and taking an interest in them. This power we are always using. Our minds are ever away somewhere—they move with lightning rapidity across oceans, continents, and even worlds; they span the ages in a moment. We thank God for this power. Brutes have it not; it makes us independent of time and space, and gives to life an eternal freshness and an infinite variety. II. A SPIRITUAL CONDITION PECULIAR TO SOME MEN. 1. Spiritual order—harmony with ourselves, the universe, God. 2. Stability. Steadfastness to Christ, settled in hope, confidence. What a blessed state! how devoutly to be desired! III. A SOCIAL DELIGHT EXPERIENCED BY CHRISTLY MEN. "Joying," &c. Though Paul's body was in Rome, his spirit was in Colossæ rejoicing in the happiness of the Christians there. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **The separation of friends.**—I. **THE CONDITION ANTICIPATED.**—"Though I be absent in the body." 1. Whatever may be

the number and importance of our relations to our fellows, we are unable to be personally in contact with them in every place. Mercifully we are not permitted to be ubiquitous, and are only suffered to be migratory for self-preservation. This restriction promotes the order, improvement, and happiness of society. 2. But is not it a hindrance to the discharge of our relationships to be absent from them? No, or it would not be made the rule for us by an all-wise God. Observe how it is made the law of Providence in regard to our nearest relations: "A man shall leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife." In how many business necessities absence in the flesh. 3. God would teach us by this law—(1) The temporary nature of existing relations in the flesh, so that we are warned not to regard such as our highest ties. Father and mother, husband and wife, are sweet bonds; but the fact that so many circumstances cause absence, and that death will soon close such relations, ought to lead us to seek other and more enduring relations in the spirit. "Who is my mother," said Jesus. "He that doeth the will of God," &c. (2) The duty of improving our relationships while yet present. Did we realize the law of absence would not a greater spirit of kindness, forbearance, and service be excited? (3) Not to look to the arm of flesh, but to God. The tendency to make much of the human instrument because he is present is natural to man. Christ declared His absence in the flesh to be expedient for His disciples. Who can doubt that one design of Christ in the changes of spheres appointed to His ministers, *e.g.*, is to elevate His Church's faith and to excite them to rely on His Spirit. (4) The cultivation of Christian love in its highest exercise. The love exercised when present has to be purified from inferior motives by absence. Absence from his country purifies the fires of a patriot's love. So instead of loving the Colossians less, Paul loved them the more. II. THE COMMUNION MAINTAINED. Happily we are so constituted that the law which compels our fleshly separations is abundantly compensated by the liberty of the spirit. Paul was with the Colossians in spirit, praying for them wherever he might be, and meeting them around a common mercy seat. (*G. R. Birch.*) *Apostolic praise of order and stability* :—The apostle commended—I. THE EXTERNAL ORDER OF THE CHURCH—"Beholding your order." This is mentioned first because it first meets the eye, though all external discipline must spring from faith. II. THE APOSTLE OVERLOOKED A DEEP, PERSONAL INTEREST IN THEIR WELFARE. 1. In spirit He was present with them. 2. While the Church preserves its order and stability it is invulnerable. 3. It is cause of rejoicing when the Church faithfully maintains the conquests already won. (*G. Barlow.*) *Order and steadfastness* :—The apostle looked forth from Rome with that spiritual second sight to which distance is as nothing. He surveyed churches remote in space, the Colossian among the rest. In praising its condition, he uses an image derived from the order and solidity of the soldiers of the Prætorian guard, whom he saw so constantly during his captivity (Philip. i. 13; Eph. vi. 11; Philip. iv. 7). "Order" properly consists in the due disposition of parts in reference to the whole; steadfastness" lit. "what is made firm;" hence sometimes the solidified body, the solid strength of an army (1 Maccabees ix. 143; x. 50). The first is the orderly organization, without which strength evaporates; the second solid strength, without which order is a hollow parade. The Church's proper organic form and solid definite conviction of the unalterable elements of the Christian creed are closely connected in the apostle's mind as they have been in the history of the Church. The Colossian Church presents itself to him as an army—as to the Church's form, in serried order; as to the Church's creed, solid at the core. (*Ep. Alexander.*) *A lofty Church ideal*. I. OUTWARDLY, AN ORDERLY DISCIPLINED ARMY. 1. Paul was no martinet, anxious about the pedantry of the parade ground, but he knew the need of organization and drill—a place for every man and every man in his place. Order does not merely mean obedience to authority. There may be equal order under widely different forms of polity. The legionaries were drawn up in close ranks, the light-armed skirmishers more loosely. In the one case the phalanx was more, and the individual less; in the other, more play was given to the single man; but the difference between them was not that of order and disorder, but that of two systems, each organized but on different principles, and for different purposes. 2. Some Churches give more weight to the principle of authority; others to that of individuality; but the former has no right to reproach the other as necessarily defective in order. Some Churches are all drill; the Churches of looser organization are in danger of making too little of organization. But both need that all their members should be more penetrated with the sense of unity, and should fill each his place in the work of the body. The proportion of idlers in all Churches is a scandal and

a weakness. However officered a Church may be, no joy would fill an apostle's heart in beholding it, if the mass of its members had no share in its activities. Every society of professed Christians should be like a man-of-war's crew, each of whom knows the exact inch where he has to stand when the whistle sounds, and the precise thing he has to do in gun drill. II. INWARDLY, A STEADFAST FAITH. 1. Perfection of discipline is not enough. That may stiffen into routine if there be not something deeper. We want life even more than order. The soldiers who set David on the throne were "men that could keep rank, they were not of a double heart"—discipline and whole-hearted enthusiasm. Both are needed. If there be not courage and devotion, there is nothing worth disciplining. The Church that has the most complete order and not also steadfastness of faith will be like the German armies, all pipe-clay and drill, which ran like hares before the ragged levies which the French revolution flung across the border. 2. If the rendering "steadfastness" be adopted, the phrase will mean "firmness which characterizes your faith." But some propose "foundation," that which is made steadfast, in which case the meaning will either be "the firm foundation (for your lives) which consists of your faith," or, "the firm foundation which your faith has." Paul rejoices, seeing that their faith towards Christ has a basis unshaken by assaults. 3. Such a rock foundation and consequent steadfastness must faith have, if it is to be worthy of the name, and to manifest its true power. A tremulous faith may be a true faith, but the very idea of faith implies solid assurance and fixed confidence. It should not be like a card castle that the light breath of a scornful laugh will throw down, but "a tower of strength that stands foursquare to all the winds that blow." We should seek to make it so, nor let the fluctuations of our hearts cause it to fluctuate. And that we may do so we must keep up a true and close communion with Jesus Christ. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The faith and order of the gospel recommended.* I. THE ORDER OF A GOSPEL CHURCH. It was the constant custom of the apostles to organize their converts into Churches (Acts xv. 36, 41). The order may be considered in relation to the whole Church as a body (1 Cor. xiv. 40; Titus i. 5), and to its members in their personal behaviour (2 Thess. iii. 6, 11). Both of these will be taken in if we consider the order of a Church of Christ. 1. With respect to its constitution. (1) New Testament Churches consist of such Christians as meet together in a given place for religious worship and discipline. The word Church signifies (a) the catholic invisible Church which consists of all the elect united to Christ their head (Eph. i. 22; v. 25): (b) the universal visible Church or kingdom of Christ; (c) a Christian family all of which are professed believers joining together in the worship of God (Col. iv. 15; Rom. xvi. 3, 5, 10, 15). (d) But the most common sense is that of particular Churches founded for the celebration of sacred ordinances. Hence we read of the Church at Corinth, at Rome, &c. (2) These Churches consist of professing believers who, in the judgment of charity, are real saints (Col. i. 2; Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 2, &c.) (3) These professing believers are formed into a Church state, by mutual agreement, for walking together in all the ordinances of Christ according to the will of God (Matt. xviii. 15-20; 2 Cor. viii. 5; Acts ii. 41, 42, 46; 2 Cor. ix. 13). 2. With respect to its officers. It cannot be completed without these who are necessary for the regular administration. These are—1. Bishops or Elders (Phil. i. 1; Acts xx. 28), whose office is to feed the flock (Acts xx. 17; Jer. iii. 15), to rule well and labour in word and doctrine (1 Tim. v. 17). (2) Deacons, who have care of the secular affairs of the Church (Acts vi.) 3. With respect to its worship. A particular Church is the seat of all ordinances, and when it is furnished with proper officers it is in due order for the celebration of them. Churches ought to join in the ordinances of general communion, whether they have a pastor or not (Acts xii. 5; Matt. xviii. 19-20). But preaching, blessing in the name of the Lord, and the administration of the sacraments are a proper province of the pastor, with the agreement of the Church as to time and place. As ministers are not to be lords over God's heritage (1 Pet. v. 3; 2 Cor. i. 24), so neither they nor the people are to call any man master (Matt. xxiii. 8-10). 4. As to its discipline (Matt. xviii. 17; 2 Cor. ii. 6-8). As any society has the right of including and excluding members, so has the Church. And as for government, Acts xv. shows that even when apostles were presiding the Church had a right of being consulted. 5. With respect to the purity of its manners, and the behaviour of its members towards one another and their pastor. They are saints and should be holy; they are brethren and should be kind and helpful; they are under their pastors (Heb. xiii. 17) and should encourage, strengthen, and submit to them. II. THE STEADFASTNESS OF THEIR FAITH IN CHRIST.

1. Christ is the object of their faith. 2. Faith is the doctrine (Gal. i. 23; Phil. i. 27; Jude 3) and the grace of faith. Both are probably meant here (see vers. 7, 8, and ver. 6). 3. Steadfastness signifies—(1) The substantial solidity of their faith in opposition to flashy notions and corrupt mixtures (1 Cor. ii. 5, and vers. 4, 7, 8). (2) Its strength in opposition to weakness (Rom. iv. 18, 21). (3) Its constancy in opposition to wavering (Heb. vi. 19; Eph. iv. 14, 15; Col. i. 23; Heb. x. 39). (4) A holy resolution or courage, in opposition to shyness or cowardice in their profession of it (Col. i. 4; Rom. i. 8; 1 Thess. i. 8; Heb. x. 23). III. THE JOY THAT ATTENDS THE BEHOLDING OF THESE. 1. On the part of pastor, people, and other Churches. 2. Because thereby Christ is honoured, the Church edified, religion recommended, the faith confirmed, and other believers encouraged. (*J. Guyse, D.D.*) *The value of steadfast faith:*—Faith is the standard-bearer in every spiritual conflict; and if the standard-bearer fall, then it is an evil day. If faith fails, everything fails: courage fails, patience fails, hope fails, love fails, joy fails. Faith is the root-grace; and if this be not in order, then the leafage of the soul, which shows itself in the form of other graces, will soon begin to wither. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 6, 7. *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk ye in Him.*—*Christian activity the safeguard of the Church:*—This letter was written under opposite feelings—feelings that never seem absent from the apostle—the most intense faith in the gospel and the most intense fear for it. No shadow of doubt crossed his mind that it was God's gospel, and that the whole power of God went with it; and yet he was filled with fear for it and its success in the world. This seems a strange contradiction, but it was no difficulty of St. Paul's day, it is the difficulty of all times. We believe in the gospel, and yet we are constantly seeking to preserve it. Why? We are afraid for the gospel not because it is not Divine, but because it is. The world may be trusted to provide for its own. Its products grow naturally, as weeds grow. But the Divine gift comes from another clime, and because it will not thrive without care and culture we fear. It is because it is the ark of God we carry that we tremble as we put our hands to it. The ark will never perish, but the hands that bear it may falter, and for a time let it fall into the hands of its enemies. The Church shall never perish, but there is no promise that the living branch shall not be scathed by unbelief or godlessness. Because of the preciousness of the treasure we hold in earthen vessels, we rejoice and tremble as we receive it in trust from God. As we send out new missionaries, and as the faith of Christ passes into new receptacles, we think of how the faith shall be preserved. We know of the Divine Word which is a light to our path, and the creeds and sacraments; but our text speaks of another safeguard. If the Colossians were to be rooted and built up and preserved from the corruptions of the world, philosophy, and vain deceits, it was not to be by the possession of the Word, creeds, and sacraments, but in addition by walking in Christ as they had received Him. Activity in Christian life and work serves to defend and preserve the faith. I. Because IT IS PERPETUALLY PROVING IT. Christianity is a science, the knowledge of God; but it is an applied science, and the application of the science of the knowledge of God is walking with God. Astronomy is a science; navigation is astronomy applied to practice. Every time the sailor unfolds his map at sea, and is enabled to mark the very spot where his ship is, he has a fresh proof that astronomy is true. There is many a captain who carries his vessel into port who is quite sure that his nautical tables are true, who cannot astronomically prove them; but he has practical proofs, and the oftener he avails himself of that, the surer he is. 1. So it is with our faith. The Trinity, Incarnation, Atonement, are mysterious things; but we prove them as we find this to be true, that the faith which makes us know Him makes us know ourselves, and brings us into a nearer, living, and deeper communion with Him. 2. Prayer is a mystery. Who can prove to us how and why it is answered? But who knows that prayer is answered? He who has gone down upon his knees and has risen with new light and strength. So walk in Christ, so carry and work the mysteries of faith into your life, and then you will have continued proofs of the truth of your faith. II. Because USE IS A MEANS OF SAFETY. That which we possess, however precious, we are more likely to lose if we lock it up than if we use it daily. It may be stolen long before we get to know it. But what we constantly use we miss directly it is gone. So with the Christian faith. It is those portions that we live by and in, that as we daily use them it becomes impossible to lose. But let there be any part of your creed that is not

woven into daily life, and the adversary may be stealing it before you wist. III. **BECAUSE IT TENDS TO THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE SOUL.** If the mystery of the faith is to be held in a pure conscience, then as the conscience grows purer will be the surer grasp of the mystery of faith. It is in the light of the single eye that God's truth reveals itself. If the treasure be held in earthen vessels, then it depends upon the purity of the vessel whether its contents be preserved in sweetness. And among purifying methods activity is one of the most effective. An article in constant use often keeps itself clean. (*Bishop Magee.*) *The Christian life*:—I. **THE GREAT BLESSING.** "Ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord." 1. Acceptance of Christ. A voluntary act. 2. Possession of Christ. Having received Him He is ours, and we share all His acts. (1) Christ died: we die with Him (Gal. ii. 20), and so are free from the penalty of sin in the eyes of the law. (2) Christ was buried (ver. 12) and we with Him, and so became dead to our former life (Rom. vi. 4). (3) Christ rose, and we rise with Him into newness of life (ver. 13). (4) Christ is at the right hand of God, and we ascend with Him into the honours and safety of the heavenly life (chap. iii. 1-3). II. **THE URGENT DUTY.** 1. Walk, implying—(1) Progress, not only motion. There may be motion in the sap of a plant, but the plant is fixed; and in a ball struck by a bat, but that is forced, not voluntary; but a walk implies personal activity. So in the Christian walk. (a) We must not stay at the starting-point. (b) We must not loiter, "Forgetting the things behind." (c) We must not walk as in a circle, "laying again the foundation of repentance," &c. (2) Change of scene. In a walk our eyes are ever dwelling on something fresh. So we must ever be finding something new in Christ. (3) Our walk is to be "in Him." He is to be seen in us. Others are to know our Master by our life. 2. Rooted in Him. (1) The root gives stability to the tree. Those trees are most stable whose roots take the largest and deepest hold. (2) The life of a tree depends upon its rootedness; uproot it and you destroy it. So we die if not rooted in Christ our Life. 3. Built up in Him. (1) Constant additions. (2) Growing solidity. (3) Ultimate perfection. (4) Exhibition of the Architect's skill, patience, and power. 4. Established in the faith. We must have Christ in us or we shall be overthrown. We are not to be a vane turning at every breath of wind, nor a plant taking such slight hold that some stronger blast will overthrow; but like an oak or a house on a rock, so established that no power can move. This is necessary in view of the various influences to which Christian life is exposed. III. **THE STRONG MOTIVE.** 1. The obligation—"As." Having received Christ we are bound to walk in Him. 2. The appeal—"Ye." Think of what you were and what Christ has made you. Show your gratitude by walking in Him. (*J. Gill.*) *Suggestive features of the Christian life*:—I. **THE CHRISTIAN LIFE BEGINS IN A PERSONAL RECEPTION OF CHRIST.** "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord." Religion is the receiving of a Divine gift. It is the growth and development of the supernatural in man. Christ is received—1. As the Christ. The Colossian heresy aimed at subverting the true idea of the Anointed One, commissioned by the Father to effect the reconciliation of the world to Himself; it interposed a series of angelic mediators. To receive the Son of God effectually is to receive Him in all that He claimed to be, and to do, as the Divine, specially-anointed Son, who is the only mediator between man and God. It is of unspeakable importance to catch the true idea of the character and office of Christ at the beginning of the Christian life. 2. As Jesus the Lord. Our reception of Christ does not place us beyond the reach of law, but creates in us the capacity for rendering an intelligent and cheerful obedience. 3. By an act of faith. To receive Christ is to believe in Him. II. **THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS GOVERNED BY THE LAW OF CHRIST.** To walk in Christ implies—1. A recognition of Him in all things. In everything that constitutes our daily life—business, home, society, friendships, pleasures, cares, &c., we may trace the presence of Christ and recognize His rule. 2. A complete consecration to Him. 3. A continual approximation to the highest life in Him. III. **THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS SUPPORTED AND ESTABLISHED BY FAITH IN FULLY DECLARED TRUTH.** IV. **THE CHRISTIAN LIFE HAS ITS MOST APPROPRIATE OUTFLOW IN THANKSGIVING.** This is the end of all human conduct. Thanksgiving should be expressed in every word and appear in every action. (*G. Barlow.*) *The threefold growth*:—I. **THE CHRISTIAN'S DOWNWARD GROWTH.** "Rooted in Him." All of strength and fruitfulness there is in us depends on the depth with which we strike down into the life and love of God. Measuring and grasping the love of God, Paul begins downward. "Rooted and grounded." We can only reach loftily upward, and broadly outward, as we strike deeply downward. For as

the height of a tree is generally in proportion to its depth, the outreaching of its branches according to the down-striking of its roots, so a Christian cannot fail of attaining to a lofty life, if only he can first attain to a lowly life. We can see at a glance how much depends on this being rooted in Christ. 1. Our fruitfulness. A fruitfulness that continues in spite of surrounding drought, and barrenness, and death—how shall it be maintained? I recently witnessed the effects of long continued drought. The growing corn stood parched and earless. The reason is not simply the long absence of rain in summer, but also the superabundance of rain in spring—that on this account the roots of the corn and wheat ran along on the surface without striking down into the bottom soil. The plants had such prosperous rains in spring that they made no provision for a dry time by going down into the rich depths. 2. Our strength. You have seen the oak smitten by the whirlwind, and how with its giant arms it has caught the tempest in its embrace, and hurled it back, defeated, while itself stood firm and unmoved in its rooted strength. It is pitiful to see a godless man trying to be steadfast in affliction. He has no hidden hold on God by faith and prayer; he has not been sinking his faith deeper and deeper into the heart of Christ as the years rolled on. And now, when the shock comes, he has nothing to hold him. His friends try to prop him up with prudential maxims. But props can never take the place of roots. 3. Purity. "Consider the lily how it grows." It is in the stream, but not of it. Down deep into the rich and nourishing earth it strikes its roots, and so grows on the nutriment of the hidden soil. If you can reach down into God, and feed altogether on Him, you may present the beautiful spectacle. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S UPWARD GROWTH. "Rooted and built up in Him." 1. Not built up as the house is built, with materials gathered here and there, and wrought together from without. The tree builds itself from the heart, and so does the Christian. Morality seeks to overlay men with good works. Its office is to get them to take on goodness in successive layers, by contact with good men and good books. Here is organic growth as against mechanical, vital increase as against artificial. 2. The duty of habitual aspiration after the highest attainments in grace is here urged. It has been said that no man can gaze on the marble statue of the Apollo Belvidere without standing more erect, and dilating his form in unconscious imitation. If the perfect physical form produces such impression, how much more the man who is perfect in spiritual stature and in moral greatness—the man Christ Jesus? III. THE CHRISTIAN'S OUTWARD GROWTH. "Abounding therein with thanksgiving." This is the branching out into all service, and fruitfulness, and praise. 1. The one significant fact concerning the gifts of God to us is their exceeding abundance. The grace of God which bringeth salvation "was exceeding abundant." The mercy of God is "abundant mercy." "The Holy Ghost is shed forth abundantly." It is "our God who will abundantly pardon." "An entrance be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of God." And as though to sum up all, the apostle writes of Him who is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." 2. What is the abundance bestowed for except that it may flow out in abounding blessings to others? (A. J. Gordon, D.D.) *Retrospection the basis of progress*:—I. CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS IN ITS APPREHENSION OF CHRIST. "Ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord." 1. There are two opposing theories as to the Person of Christ—the rationalistic, which rules out His Godhead; the revealed, which is the basis of the catholic faith. The one holds to Him as the perfection of humanity, the other as the incarnation of Deity. 2. Two systems of theology widely distinct are dependent on these theories. The one puts man at the centre, and is wholly human; the other enthrones God, and is essentially Divine. Two of the widest extremes of religious life flow from these systems. The first is a religion of self-development, and depends on personal culture. In the second, regeneration is a supernatural birth superinduced by a power coming directly from God. The one has its type in education, the other in faith. 3. There is only one Christ. He is not a variable or divisible quantity. His personality is definite, His claims absolute, His work specific. 4. It is within the one or the other of these systems that we must posit our decisions. We cannot accept of both. If the one is true the other is false. We must be for Christ or against Him. II. CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS IN ITS RECEPTION OF CHRIST. "Ye have received." 1. There is agreement with some shades of difference in the terms receiving, believing, trusting, Christ. He who intelligently believes the testimony, trusts in the promise and receives the gift. "To as many as received Him," &c. Here are two things implied. (1) Faith receives the whole

Christ. All that we see of the incarnate Word in His acts, teaching, death, &c., Christian faith accepts. And then a supernatural person necessitates a supernatural mission; and also the system being given, we should expect to find what we do find, a supernatural person its central figure. Christ and His system are co-ordinate and identical. Accept of Christ, and you must receive His truth. Receive the record, and you must accept His person. Faith thus makes all the truth a welcome guest to the Christian heart. (2) On the side of faith Christ asks and gets the whole of man. The full integrity of the mental and moral life goes over in this act of faith to Christ. Thus there is a virtual exchange of two individual persons, a mutual transfer of relations and interests, out of which comes the sublime unity of a new and indivisible life. "I am crucified with Christ," &c. 2. The life of faith, as embodied in the moralities of Christian living, is thus provided for, and follows this consecrating act. "Rooted and built up and established." (1) Life has its genesis in a root—faith in Christ. All life is a feeding thing. From the flower in the wall up to the brain and soul all things live by what they feed upon. In all life there is that into which life strikes its root. (2) Growth is a result of manifold processes. It is not a mechanical product. You can fabricate material structures: growth is an organic creation. To make an atom or a world or to destroy them may require no more than the instant volition of God. To grow a grain of wheat He employs the grandest forces in the universe; and these are yoked by a thousand subtle laws kept at work by His personal will. How much more grand are the agencies with which He originates, feeds, and glorifies life in the soul of man is seen in this, that in the one service He harnesses law, and in the other He incarnates Himself. "He is our life." (3) In the fervid enunciation of figures the apostle appears for a moment to get into a complication of incongruous similitudes—"walking" implying action, "rooted" demanding rest; and yet there is consistency. Progress upward in the corn, *e.g.*, comes out of fixedness of root. Unroot it, and you kill its growth. So we "grow up in all things into Christ" only as we rest in the fixedness of faith.

III. CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS IN ITS SUBJECTION TO CHRIST. 1. The emphasis is on the word "Lord." What is this sovereign headship of Christ? (1) In the Church mediatorially, "He is the head of the body"; administratively, "He is Lord of all"; virtually, and in fact, "He is our life." (2) Higher up in the ranges of spiritual life "in all things He has the pre-eminence." God has highly exalted Him. All the angels of God worship Him. (3) In the material worlds "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." They are what He makes them and where He places them. They get their use and glory as He employs them. All agencies, influences, events, ages, are tributary to Christ. (4) So in the future of the world's history "He must reign." Man's proud intellect, his enterprise, wealth, art, science, &c., are coming, and must finally come, to serve Him. 2. But there is a more close and vital relation in the faith that gives to Christ the lordship over His people. What, then, is the dominion under which we voluntarily place ourselves in our surrender to Christ? (1) Its sphere is specific. "The kingdom of God is within you"—where the personality of the man is. (2) Its claim is absolute. "Ye are not your own." Christ claims to be monarch absolute over mind, body, &c., because all has been "bought with a price." (3) And the mind is free and unconstrained in its surrender. Man's will is free; and yet how man may exert that freedom, on what objects, for what ends, and with what results, is to be determined by the authority of the Lord Christ. "One is your Master." (*J. Burton.*) *Faith is receiving Christ:*—Suppose that you should go to a baker's window, and stand there for an hour, and stare at the bread, I do not think that the sight would fill you much. No, you must eat, or else there might be tons of bread within reach, and yet you would die of famine. You might be buried in a grave of bread, and it would be of no use to you. Even manna would not nourish you unless you ate it. You must receive food into yourself, or it is not food to you. The Saviour Himself, if you do not receive Him by faith, will be no Saviour to you. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *As and So:*—There is great safety in going back to first principles. To make sure of being in the right way, it is good to look back at the entrance. Well begun is half done. The Colossians have commenced well; let them go on as they have begun. I. THE FACT STATED. Sincere believers have "received" Christ. This is the old gospel word. Here is no evolution from within, but a gift from without heartily accepted by the soul. This is free grace language; "received," not earned or purchased. Not received Christ's words—though that is true, for we

prize every precept and doctrine—but received Christ. Observe—1. The personality of Him whom they received. "Christ Jesus the Lord," His person, Godhead, humanity, Himself into their (1) knowledge; (2) understanding; (3) affections; (4) trust; (5) as their life at their new birth, for when they received Him He gave them power to become the sons of God. 2. The threefold character in which they received Him. (1) As Christ anointed and commissioned of God; (2) as Jesus, the Saviour to redeem and sanctify them; (3) as the Lord to reign and rule over them with undivided sway. 3. The looking away from self in this saving act of reception. It is not said, as ye have fought for Jesus and won Him; or, studied the truth and discovered Christ Jesus; but, as ye have "received" Him. This strips us of everything like boasting, for all we do is to receive. 4. The blessed certainty of the experience of those to whom Paul wrote: "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord." They had really received Jesus; they had found the blessing to be real: no doubt remained as to their possession of it. II. THE COUNSEL GIVEN: "So walk ye in Him." There are four things suggested by "walk." 1. Life. 2. Continuance. 3. Activity. 4. Progress. III. THE MODEL WHICH IS PRESENTED TO US. We are to walk in Christ Jesus the Lord "as we received Him." And how was that? We received Him—1. Gratefully. 2. Humbly. 3. Joyfully. 4. Effectually. 5. Unreservedly. Thus we should continue to walk in Him, evermore in our daily life excelling in all these points. Alas, some have never received Jesus! Our closing words must be addressed to such. (*Ibid.*) *Receiving Christ and walking in Him*:—It was quite in accordance with Paul's logical mind that he should often place what he is teaching in a proposition: "As ye have received, so walk." All true religion lies in that analogy. I. THE RECEPTION. 1. As what? (1) As Christ, the anointed of God; (2) as Jesus, your Divine Saviour; (3) as Lord, the King of your heart. 2. How? By an act of faith. Faith was the hand that took the inestimable gift. 3. Whither? Into your hearts. 4. With what consequence? He became united to your very being, and is now your own. II. THE WALK. 1. As the reception was an act of faith, so the walk must be a walk of faith. 2. As we received pardon for sin, so we must walk in liberty, free from the bondage of sin and fear. 3. As we received Christ Jesus as Lord, so we must walk in the path of His commandments. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The life and walk of faith*:—We shall deal with the text—I. BY WAY OF EXPOSITION. 1. The life of faith is represented as (1) receiving. This implies (a) the opposite of anything like merit. (b) A sense of realization making the matter a reality. One cannot receive a shadow or a phantom, but only something substantial. While we are without faith Christ is a name or a history merely. By the act of faith Christ becomes a real person in our consciousness. (c) Grasping it. What I receive becomes my own, so by faith Christ becomes my Christ. Look at some of the senses in which the word is used in Scripture, such as—(d) Taking—we take Christ into us as the empty vessel takes in water. (e) Holding—what we take in. A sieve does not receive water. The life of faith consists in holding Christ within us the hope of glory. Believing. "He came to His own, and His own received Him not." (f) Entertaining. Thus the barbarous people at Melita received Paul. After we have found Christ we entreat Him to come in and sup with us. (g) Enjoying. We read of receiving the crown of life, which means enjoying heaven and being satisfied with its bliss; and so when we receive Christ we enjoy Him. (2) Receiving Christ. Salvation may be described as the blind receiving sight, the dead life, &c.; but we have not only received these things, we have received Christ, both as Saviour and Lord, in His Divinity and humanity. (3) This is a matter of certainty; and the apostle goes on to argue from it. It is not a supposition or a hope, or a trust, but a fact. "Ye have." 2. The walk of faith. (1) Walk implies (a) action. The reception of Christ is not to be made a mere thing of thought for the chamber. We must not sit down in indolence, but carry into practical effect what we believe. (b) Perseverance; not only being in Christ to-day, but all our life. (c) Habit. A man's walk is the constant tenor of his life. (d) Continuance. It is not to be suspended. How many people think that in the morning and evening they ought to come into the company of Christ, and then they may be in the world all day. (2) Christ is to be the element in which we are to walk. If a man has to cross a river, he fords it quickly, but just as we walk in the air are we to walk in Christ. (a) As Christ was when we received Him the only ground of our faith, so long as we live we are to stand to the same point. (b) We received Christ as the substance of our faith, and just as

you then no more doubted the reality of Christ than your own existence, so walk ye in Him. (c) Then Christ was the joy of your souls; let Him always be so. (d) He was then the object of your love, and must be for ever. II. BY WAY OF ADVOCACY. Suppose that having been so far saved by Christ we should begin to walk in some one else, what then? 1. What a dishonour to our Lord. 2. What reason is there for the change? (1) Has Christ proved Himself insufficient? (2) Can philosophy and vain deceit offer you a wisdom such as His? (3) Do ceremonies tempt you? You have all that you can require in Christ. 3. What can your heart desire beyond God? Having Christ, you have God, and having God, you have everything. III. BY WAY OF APPLICATION. 1. To those who complain of a want of communion. If it were worth your while to come to Him at first, it is worth while for you always to keep to Him. 2. To those who complain of a want of comfort. No wonder, if you do not live near the source of consolation. 3. To the inconsistent. When a man walks in Christ, he acts as Christ would act. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Christly character*:—In this statement of fact Paul's argument culminates. He appeals to their experience. They had received the doctrine of Christ from Epaphras, and He Himself had entered their hearts. I. The origin of the Christly character. "Received Christ," which means to accept Him—1. As the supreme object of the soul's love. 2. As the imperial guide of the soul's activities. 3. As the only Physician of the soul's diseases. This is the reception—not merely the reception of His doctrines into the intellect, but Himself into the heart as its moral monarch. II. Its progress. "Walk in Him." This implies—1. A most vital connection with Him. "In Him." In His ideas, spirit, aims, character. 2. A possibility of walking out of Him. Peter did so. Man's liberty as a responsible being and the Word of God show this. 3. A real personal exertion. No one can walk for us. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christ is the believer's foundation*:—The lighthouse tower, that stands among the tumbling waves, seems to have nothing but them to rest on, yet there, stately and stable, it stands, beautiful in the calm, and calm in the wintry tempest, guiding the sailor on to his desired haven, past the rolling reef, through the gloom of the darkest night, and the waters of the gloomiest sea. Why is it stable? You see nothing but the waves, but beneath the waves, down below the rolling, tumbling billows, its foundation is the solid rock. And what that tower is to the house on yon sand-bank Christ's righteousness is to mine, Christ's works to my best ones. (*T. Guthrie.*) *Progress is gradual*:—Gradual ascent is as necessary to the mind in order to its reaching a great idea, as it is to the body in order to its reaching a great height. We cannot ascend to the pinnacle of a cathedral, which towers aloft in air, without either steps or an inclined plane. We cannot reach the summit of a mountain without first toiling up its base, then traversing its breast, and then successively crossing the limits where verdure passes into crag, and crag into a wilderness of snow. Even when we have gained the highest point, we are still, it is true, at an infinite distance from the blue vault of the firmament which stretches above our heads. Still we have a better and more exalted view of what that firmament is: we have at least risen above the fogs and mists which obscure its glory; and the air which encompasses us is transparent to the eye, and invigorating to the frame. Now, the law of man's bodily progress is also the law of his mental progress. Both must be gradual. No grand idea can be realized except by successive steps and stages, which the mind must use as landing-places in its ascent. (*Dr. Goulburn.*)

Ver. 8. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit.—*The spoiler and his implement*:—See to it, says Paul, lest there be some one—I do not say more, you can guess my meaning—to carry you off as his spoil (not take spoil from you). The expression grasps powerfully the essence of the proselytizing spirit; the proselytizing spoil is the person proselytized. He aims at doing this through that which is at once in its arrogant claims a high philosophy, and in its miserable reality an empty deceit; a philosophy, artful, moulded in accordance with an esoteric system, pervaded by five fatal deficiencies. I. It is merely TRADITIONAL, and, therefore, of precarious truth. II. It is HUMAN, and, therefore, deficient in authority. III. It is ELEMENTARY, belonging to the "outworn creed," to the rudiments of religion, and, therefore, unfitted for Christian manhood. IV. It is MATERIAL, not connected with the soul's true home and centre, but with the palpable and external, and is, therefore, deficient in spirituality. V. And being all this, assuredly, and as matter of fact, it is NOT AFTER CHRIST. (*Bp. Alexander.*) The false teachers aimed at making the Colossians their prey, carrying them off body and

soul. They had been rescued from the bondage of darkness ; they had been transferred to the kingdom of light ; they had been settled there as free citizens (chap. i. 12, 13) ; and now there was a danger that they should fall into a state worse than their former slavery, that they should be carried off as so much booty (Comp. 2 Tim. iii. 6). (*Bp. Lightfoot.*) *Philosophy discriminated* :—Philosophy, taken in its simplest acceptation, is only a higher degree of good sense, which, not pretending to know all things, desires to have a thorough knowledge of those objects, the knowledge of which has been placed within our reach. It sets no value on names and appearances ; prejudice is not the basis of any of its judgments ; neither number nor time has the effect of transforming error into truth. It believes not, denies not, affirms not, at hazard, or on slight grounds. Not trusting to a first look, it searches for differences under resemblances, and resemblances under differences ; alternately uniting what the vulgar separate, and separating what they unite. While all facts are isolated to the inattentive eye, they are connected and linked together by the eye of philosophy, which does what it can to trace the chain which unites them. In every case fixing on what is essential, and throwing aside what is merely accidental, it comes at last to recognize a common nature, a common principle, a common origin, in objects which seemed at first to have nothing in common. It thus reduces the innumerable facts of the moral and physical world to a small number of ideas, and these to a smaller number still, always gravitating towards the unity which it will never reach, but to which a mysterious power constrains it always to aspire. To say all in one word, philosophy differs from vulgar reason, in applying itself to penetrate from the exterior of things or their envelope, to their principle, or at least to the idea which explains the greatest number of possible facts, and before which it is constrained to stop as if out of breath. When shall it stop ? What is its legitimate sphere ? This question is of more importance than any other. Philosophy does not gain more honour by extending its search, than by recognizing its limits. It reigns in this apparent dethronement. It is its glory to know how to restrict itself, just as in the domain of morality it is the glory of the will to stop in proper time and make an effort upon itself. But in order to know what it is able and what unable to do, it takes account of its processes and instruments, compares its means with its end, and not being able to place all its greatness in knowledge finds part of it in confessing its ignorance, and so to speak, in knowing certainly that it does not know. St. Paul did not repudiate this philosophy, and could have no intention to repudiate it. He knew as well as we, that in matters of religion, and even of revealed religion, there may be either a good or a bad philosophy, but that at all events there is philosophy. We cannot condemn philosophy without condemning ourselves to silence on the subject of religion which presupposes it, and guides it, and would create it if it did not previously exist. Accordingly St. Paul has not condemned it ; and when he warns his disciples against a science “falsely so called,” his words imply the existence of a science that is true. Now philosophy is a part of science, or rather is itself the science of science. Nor, moreover, could he have condemned it, without condemning himself who has made such happy and frequent use of it. It were vain to deny that the writings of St. Paul and of St. John are full of the highest philosophy. Let us be understood. We do not say full of sublime truth, but of that philosophy which we have endeavoured to characterize, which rises from appearances to reality, from accident to essence, from the particular to the general, from variable facts to immutable principles. (*A. Vinet, D.D.*) *St. Paul's attitude towards philosophy* :—The apostle does not condemn “philosophy” absolutely : the philosophy and vain deceit of this passage corresponds to what he says in 1 Tim. vi. 20. But though it is not condemned it is disparaged by the connection in which it is placed. The term was doubtless used by the false teachers to describe their system. Though essentially Greek as a name and an idea it had found its way into Jewish circles. Philo used it in speaking of the Hebrew religion and Mosaic law, and also of Essenism, which was probably the progenitor of the Colossian heresy. So, too, Josephus speaks of three Jewish sects as philosophies. It should be remembered also, that in this later age, owing to Roman influence, the term was used to describe practical not less than speculative systems, so that it would cover the ascetic life as well as the mystic theosophy of the Colossian heretics. Hence the apostle is here flinging back at these false teachers a favourite term of their own—“their vaunted philosophy, which is hollow and misleading.” The word, indeed, could claim a truly noble origin ; for it is said to have arisen out of the humility of Pythagoras who called himself “a lover of wisdom.” In such a sense the term would entirely accord with the spirit

and teaching of St. Paul; for it bore testimony to the insufficiency of the human intellect and the need of a revelation. But in his age it had come to be associated generally with the idea of subtle dialectics and profitless speculation; while in this particular instance it was combined with a mystic cosmogony and angelology which contributed a fresh element of danger. As contrasted with the power and fulness and certainty of revelation, all such philosophy was foolishness (1 Cor. i. 20). It is worth observing that this word, which to the Greeks denoted the highest effort of the intellect, occurs here alone in St. Paul, just as he uses "virtue," which was their term to express the highest moral excellence, in a single passage only (Phil. iv. 8). The reason is much the same in both cases. The gospel had deposed the terms as inadequate to the higher standard, whether of knowledge or of practice, which it had introduced. The attitude of the fathers towards philosophy while it was a living thing was various. Clement, who was followed in the main by the earlier Alexandines, regards Greek philosophy not only as a preliminary training for the gospel, but even as in some sense a covenant given by God to the Greeks. Others, who were the great majority, and of whom Tertullian may be taken as an extreme type, set their forces directly against it, seeing in it only the parent of all heretical teaching. St. Paul's speech at Athens, on the only occasion when he is known to have been brought into direct personal contact with Greek philosophers (Acts xvii. 18), shows that his sympathies would have been at least as much with Clement's representations as with Tertullian's. (*Bp. Lightfoot.*) *Philosophy true and false*.—I. TRUE PHILOSOPHY IS NOT CONDEMNED BY ST. PAUL. We cannot understand this concerning any branch or the whole body, lest God be called into judgment. For philosophy is the offspring of right reason; and this light of reason is infused into the mind by God. We, therefore, judge not the discipline of the Platonists, &c., to be true philosophy, but the principles of every one which agree with truth and morals. The errors of theologians do not pertain to theology, nor do those of philosophers and philosophy. These we are free to condemn, but not truth discovered by natural reason. II. WHAT KIND OF PHILOSOPHY IS EXCLUDED BY THE APOSTLE. That which is vain and deceitful, viz., the product of reason carried beyond its bounds. Philosophy is to be listened to when it pronounces about things subject to itself, but when it would determine concerning the worship of God and salvation, &c., which are beyond the grasp of reason and depend wholly on revelation, it brings nothing solid or true. St. Paul alleges the cause of this in 1 Cor. ii. 14. As animals can judge very well concerning things which relate to sense, yet cannot judge of human affairs, neither can men pronounce by natural light respecting heavenly doctrine, although they may determine by it what is good and right in human concerns. This was the error of the false teachers who, in speculating about the method of approach to God and of redemption, went beyond the declarations which God had made on these matters. III. THE ABUSE AND USE OF PHILOSOPHY. 1. Its abuse. (1) When it attempts to deduce the fundamentals of religion from its own principles. These principles may be true, but there cannot be elicited from them what is to be determined respecting the Trinity, *e.g.*, which is to be deduced from higher principles, viz., the will of God revealed in His Word. (2) When it opposes its own principles which are true in the order of nature to theological principles which are above the order of nature. Thus it is true that out of nothing, nothing can be made; but philosophers err when they think they can hence conclude against creation which the Scriptures teach as done not by virtue of natural causes, but by the power of God. (3) When it obtrudes for legitimate conclusions its errors drawn sometimes by false consequences from true premises. 2. Its uses. (1) For the clear understanding of many passages of Scripture. Although the principles of our religion are derived from God, yet there are many examples and illustrations which cannot be understood without the aid of human literature. Its references to the heavenly bodies require the knowledge of astronomy; to animals, of natural history, &c. (2) For discriminating between and treating religious controversies; for appreciating the coherence and mutual establishment of heavenly doctrine, and for determining what is consistent and inconsistent with them. Our faith ascends above reason, but not irrationally. I believe the resurrection, because reason proves the doctrine to be delivered in the Bible. I do not believe in purgatory because reason can collect it from no part of Scripture according to the rules of sound logic. This use of reason in sacred things God approves and requires (Eph. v. 17, iv. 14; 1 Thess. v. 21; Acts xvii. 11). (3) For the instruction of those who have not yet embraced Christ, and for resistance if they should oppose religion. He who has lived in darkness is not to be drawn

directly into the sunlight lest he should be overpowered rather than enlightened; so they, who have been educated in paganism are first to be awakened by reasons drawn from natural light (Acts xvii. 24). And then it is to be employed as a rampart and weapon against opponents. Julian the apostate said "We are caught by our own wings" when he saw the philosophers routed by the Christians through the advantages of philosophy. (4) For Christian education, since the mind is prepared and rendered more acute by philosophical studies, and our discourses on sacred things are much enriched by the good sayings of philosophers. (5) For the delight of hearers. As Clemens says, "The truth which is sought from Scripture is as necessary to the life as bread; but that which is sought from other instruction is as sauce and sweetmeats." (*Bp. Davenant.*) *Philosophy and its counterfeit*.—I. THE COUNTERFEIT OF A GOOD THING. 1. The good thing—"philosophy." Etymologically it means love of wisdom, but in modern use it stands for a system of knowledge. When applied to any particular department of knowledge, it stands for the collection of general laws or principles under which all the subordinate phenomena of facts relating to that subject are comprehended. It is a good thing because—(1) Christ's spirit is good. Christ's spirit is a love of truth, a desire to find out the first principles or reason of things; a desire to penetrate all phenomena and to enter in and study that invisible region where all the hidden forces of the universe are at work. (2) Its process is good—observation, comparison, generalization. Such a process is soul-quickenning, invigorating, and ennobling. (3) Its results are good. All the arts that bless and adorn the civilized world are but ideas reached by philosophy. 2. The counterfeit. There is a false philosophy, a miserable imitation of the true. (1) It is deceptive, "vain deceit." It is mere fiction, guesses, castles in the air. Its light, such as it is, is a mere *ignis fatuus* rising out of the muddy marshes of a vain imagination. (2) It is ill founded—"After the tradition," &c. It has its origin in mere human guesses, and the rough undigested elements of a mere worldly knowledge. It is built on crudities. (3) It is anti-Christian—"not after Christ." Not after the subject, style, and spirit of His teaching. II. THE COUNTERFEIT OF A GOOD THING IS DANGEROUS. What thousands in all ages have been made a prey of by counterfeit philosophy! They have been plundered and borne away into confusion and ruin by wrong ideas of God, the universe, and man and his nature, obligations, and destiny. "Beware" of it. 1. It has many forms. It appears—(1) In natural sciences. (2) In ontological theories. (3) In theological creeds. (4) In ethical enactments. 2. It has fascinating aspects. It often comes in the stateliness of the scholar, in the force of the reasoner, in the grandeur of the rhetorician, in the sublimity of the poet. 3. It works insidiously. It instils its errors quietly; and silently as the laws of nature they often work out their own ends. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The marks of a false philosophy*.—It is known—I. BY ITS PROFITLESS SPECULATIONS. II. BY ITS PURELY HUMAN ORIGIN. "After the tradition of men." 1. The human mind is limited. 2. All human knowledge is imperfect. "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." III. BY ITS UNDUE EXALTATION OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES. "After the rudiments of the world." A true philosophy, while starting necessarily with elementary principles, conducts to increasing knowledge and spiritual exaltation and liberty. A false philosophy fetters the mind by exaggerating the importance of first principles and insisting on their eternal obligation. IV. BY ITS CHRISTLESSNESS. "And not after Christ." V. BY ITS DESTRUCTIVE INFLUENCE. "Spoil you"—not strip off, but carry away as spoil (*Gen. xiv. 12-16*). Man is never so grievously despoiled as when his soul is robbed by error. "The thief cometh not," &c. (*John x. 10*). VI. AGAINST A FALSE PHILOSOPHY THE CHURCH MUST BE FAITHFULLY WARNED. 1. Because it is seductive in its pretensions. 2. Because it is baneful in its effect. (*G. Barlow.*) *The bane and the antidote*.—I. THE POISON. "Take heed" implies a real, not an hypothetical danger. Paul is not crying "wolf." "Any one," i.e., somebody; as if he had said, "I name no names—it is not the persons, but the principles I fight against—but you know whom I mean." "Maketh spoil of you." He sees the converts taken prisoners, and led away with a cord round their necks, like the strings of captives on the Assyrian monuments. He had spoken in chap. i. 13 of the conqueror who had translated them; now he fears lest a robber horde, making a raid upon the peaceful colonists in their happy new homes, may sweep them again into bondage. The cord whose fatal noose will be tightened round them if they do not take care is "philosophy and vain deceit." If Paul had been writing in English he would have put philosophy in inverted commas, to show that he was quoting

the heretical teachers' own name for their system. For true love of wisdom neither Paul nor Paul's Master have anything but praise. The thing spoken of here has no resemblance, except in name, to what the Greeks in their better days called philosophy, and nothing warrants the representation that Christianity is antagonistic to it. 1. "Empty deceit" describes this system. It is like a bladder full of wind. Its lofty pretension is that it is a love of wisdom, but if we look at it closely it is a fraud. 2. It is "after the traditions of men." (1) It is significant that the expression is a word of Christ's (Mark vii. 8). The portentous and smothering undergrowth of such traditions is preserved in the Talmud, where for thousands of pages we get nothing but Rabbi So-and-so said this, but Rabbi So-and-so said that, until we feel stifled, and long for one Divine word to still all the babble. The oriental element in the heresy, on the other hand, prided itself on a hidden teaching too sacred to be entrusted to books, and was passed from lip to lip in some close conclave. The fact that all this had no higher source than man's imaginings, seems to Paul the condemnation of the whole system. His theory is that in Christ every man has the full truth. What an absurd descent then to "turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven" to human voices and thoughts. (2) These special forms of tradition trouble no man now. But the tendency to give heed to human teachers, and to suffer them to come between us and Christ is deep in us all. There is at one extreme the man who believes in no revelation, but pays his teacher a deference as absolute as that which he regards superstition when rendered to Christ. At the other are the Christians who will not let Christ and the Scripture speak unless the Church be present at the interview, like a jailer, with a bunch of man-made creeds jingling at its belt. 3. It is "after the rudiments of the world." (1) Rudiments means the letters of the alphabet, and hence "elements," "first principles," the A, B, C, of a science. They boasted of mysterious doctrines for the initiated, of which the plain truths Paul preached were but "milk for babes." Paul retorts that the true mystery is the Word he preached, and that the poverty-stricken elements were in that swelling inanity which called itself wisdom and was not. He brands it as rudiments of "the world," which is worse, as belonging to the outward and material, and not to the higher region of the spiritual, where Christian thought ought to dwell. Its use in Gal. iv. 3, points to a similar meaning here. He regards it as a retrogression to childish things, and as a pitiable descent to a lower sphere. (2) The forms which were urged on the Colossians are long since antiquated, but the tendency to turn Christianity into ceremonial is running with a powerful current to-day. But enlisting the senses as allies of the spirit in worship is risky work. The theory that such aids make a ladder, by which the soul may ascend to God, is perilously apt to be confuted by experience, which finds that the soul is quite as likely to go down the ladder as up. Stained windows are lovely, and white windows are "barnlike"; but perhaps if the object is to get light these solemn purples and glowing yellows are rather in the way. A lesson for the day is Paul's principle here, that a Christianity making much of ceremonies is a retrogression. 4. Paul sums up his indictment in one damning clause—"not after Christ." He is neither its origin, substance, rule, nor standard. II. THE ANTIMOTE (vers. 9-10). 1. These words may be a reason for the warning, "take heed for," or they may be a reason for the exclusion of Christless teaching. Anything not after Christ is *ipso facto* wrong. "In Him" is placed with emphasis at the beginning, and implies "nowhere else." "Dwelleth," i.e., has its permanent abode. "All the fulness of the Godhead, i.e., the whole unbounded attributes of Deity. "Bodily" points to the incarnation, and is an advance on chap. i. 19. So we are pointed to the glorified humanity of Christ as the abode now and for ever of all the fulness of the Divine nature which is thereby brought very near to us. This truth shivers all the dreams about angel-mediators, and brands as folly every attempt to learn God anywhere but in Him. 2. If He be the sole temple of Deity why go anywhere else to see or possess God? "In Him ye are full," which sets forth their living incorporation in Christ, and consequent participation in His fullness. Every one may enter into that union by continuous faith. All the fulness of God is in Him, that from Him it may pass to us. According to our need it will vary itself, being to each what the moment most requires—wisdom, or strength, or beauty, or patience. 3. The process of receiving all the Divine fulness is a continuous one. We can but be approximating to the possession of the infinite treasure, and since the treasure is infinite, and we can indefinitely grow in capacity of receiving God, there must be an eternal continuance of the filling, and an eternal increase of the measure of what fills us. The indwelling Christ will "enlarge the place of His

habitation," as the walls stretch and the roof soars. He will fill the greater house with the light of His presence and the fragrance of His name. 4. From such thoughts Paul would have us draw the conclusion—how foolish it must be to go to any other source for the supply of our needs. Christ is "the Head of all principality," &c. Why then go to the ministers when we have access to the King? Why leave the fountain of living water for the broken cisterns? (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The gospel to be preached in its purity*:—Astronomers tell us that the light of the sun is pure white light, but when it comes in contact with the atmosphere of our earth it becomes discoloured, simply because the medium through which it passes is impure. So it is with the light of heaven when it passes through the traditions of men. (*S. H. Leary, D.C.L.*) The pure milk of God's Word is not to be adulterated with the chalk of human opinions. (*Ibid.*) *The gospel to be preached simply*:—Of the works of a famous alchemist of the thirteenth century, it is said that, "whoever would read his book to find out the secret would employ all his labour in vain." All the gold makers who have written upon their favourite mystery are in the like predicament, no one can comprehend what the secret is which they pretend to divulge. May we not shrewdly guess that if they had any secret to tell they would put it in intelligible language, and that their pompous and involved sentences are only a screen for their utter ignorance of the matter? When we hear preachers talking of Divine things in a style savouring more of metaphysical subtlety than of gospel plainness; when the seeking sinner cannot find out the way of salvation because of their philosophical jargon, may we not with justice suspect that the preacher does not know the gospel, and conceals his culpable ignorance behind the veil of rhetorical magniloquence? Surely if the man understood a matter so important to all his hearers as the way of salvation, he would feel constrained to tell it out in words which all might comprehend. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 9. **In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.**—I. THE HOUSE, or place of residence—"in Him." In the man Christ Jesus, or in that human nature in which He carried on the business of our salvation; as despicable and abject as it was in the eyes of men, yet it was the temple and seat of the Godhead. II. THE INHABITANT—"the fulness of the Godhead;" not a portion of God only, or His gifts and graces (as we are made partakers of the Divine nature, 1 Pet. i. 4.), but the whole Godhead. III. THE MANNER—"bodily." The word may relate—1. To the shadows and figures of the law, and so it signifieth essentially, substantially. God dwelt in the tabernacle, temple, or ark of the covenant, *συνβολικῶς*, because of the figures of His presence. In Christ, *σωματικῶς*, as His human nature was the true tabernacle or temple in which He resideth. Christ calls His human nature a temple (John ii. 19), or else—2. With respect to the intimacy and closeness of the union. So *σωματικῶς*, may be rendered personally; for body is often put for a person. The two natures were so united in Him, that He is one Christ. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The fulness of Christ*:—Ships have been wrecked by mistaking one light for another. Men in life's voyage often make the same terrible blunder. Signals of danger, however, are set up by God to save us from so tragic an end. False teachers were proclaiming fantastic doctrines, but of such death-luring lights the apostle bids the Colossians beware. We need the same warning. Error confronts us in magazines, newspapers, and pulpits. Paul would have us know that all doctrine is false which does not radiate from Christ. Note—I. MAN'S CONDITION IS A NECESSITOUS ONE. 1. He has Divinely implanted longings for whose satisfaction he has to go out of himself. He has (1) Social cravings. He was not designed for loneliness but for companionship. (2) Mental cravings, which sometimes show themselves in the form of curiosity; but the more cultured a man becomes, his mental longings assume a higher form. The journeys taken, libraries collected, the efforts made to ransack past and present witness to these. (3) Moral and spiritual cravings. What efforts he has made to know God and be at peace with Him. 2. These longings distinguish man from the animal creation, and witness to the grandeur of His soul. 3. Their existence implies that there is somewhere that by which they may be satisfied. II. Man's necessitous condition is COMPLETELY MET BY THE DIVINE FULNESS. This fulness is—1. The plenitude of the Godhead. Who can describe this? It is a fathomless ocean and a limitless sky. All we can say is that it is a fulness out of which all our need may be supplied. But we may know of boundless wealth, and yet remain destitute because not able or permitted to approach it. Is this so here? No. As the beams flow from the sun's fulness

within the reach and for the use of every tree and hedgerow, so the Divine fulness has come down to us all. 2. In the person of Christ, not typically but really. (1) He meets our social cravings. He has become one with us in sharing our common life, with its sorrows and joys. No one need now be lonely, since here is One who has everything for which we yearn. (2) He meets our mental cravings. He is the Truth, the Light of the world, the Wisdom of God. (3) He meets our moral cravings in His revelation of the Father, and in His atonement for sin. Why, then, go to philosophy or sacraments which can only disappoint. 3. Present and unchanging. The Colossian heretics held a temporary fulness; Paul affirms the Divine fulness "dwells" in Him now and for ever. Earthly things filter away with pitiless haste, but He is "the same to-day," &c. Then while we should avoid going elsewhere we should flee to Him at once. His willingness is equal to His ability to distribute. (*E. H. Palmer.*) *The fulness of God dwelling in Christ:*—**I. THE IMPORT OF THE TEXT.** 1. All the fulness of the Godhead. The original signifies that by which a thing is filled, completed, or made perfect. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," *i.e.*, all it contains. So the text means all the natural and moral attributes, everything which renders the Divine nature complete. It cannot mean anything less, for if one perfection were taken away there would be something wanting to, and therefore destructive of the fulness of the Godhead. 2. All this fulness dwells in Christ. The word is not that used in John i. 14, to dwell in a tabernacle—a temporary residence, but one which signifies to live in a house, a permanent habitation. So then all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ abidingly. 3. Bodily means real and substantial as against shadowy and figurative. The Mosaic law was a shadow, Christ was the body. **II. THIS IMPORT CORRESPONDS WITH OTHER SCRIPTURES.** 1. We are taught in many places that the Father and the Spirit dwelt in Christ. Our Lord often declared that the Father dwelt in Him, and added "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He is also represented as having the Spirit without measure. Now the whole Godhead is included in Father, Son, and Spirit. Wherever these dwell there is the Divine fulness. They dwell in Christ. 2. Christ is represented as possessing all the perfections of Deity—omnipotence in creation and Providence; omniscience in His knowledge of the Father, and of the heart of man; omnipresence in being with His disciples alway. In fact, He is all in all, and therefore has the fulness of the Godhead bodily. **III. INFERENCES.** If all the fulness of the Godhead is in Christ, then—1. In Him alone can God be found. Men have forsaken God; but they must find Him again or be lost for ever. It is His will that men should seek after Him if haply they may find Him. Now if we wish to find any one we must go to His residence. So since the whole Godhead resides in Jesus as in a permanent habitation, we must repair to Him to find God. "I am the Way, the Truth," &c. "No man knoweth the Father but the Son," &c. Men may seek Him in the works of creation, in providence, in His Word; but they will never find Him till they come to Christ, for even the Scriptures can only make us wise unto salvation through Him. But if we come to Him, God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness will give us the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. 2. No man can obtain a portion of that fulness except by applying to Christ. Did all the light of the universe dwell in the sun; none could obtain light except from the sun. Were all the water that exists collected into one reservoir none could obtain water but by applying to that reservoir. Now, unless we obtain some of this fulness, we must pine in eternal want. The mercy which pardons sin, the light which illumines the mind, the grace which purifies the heart, the strength which resists and overcomes, the consolation which supports, bright hope and everlasting joy flow from this, and no man can partake of them without partaking of it. Infinitely better to be destitute of everything else than to want this. For it the Saviour invites us to apply to Him. 3. The necessity and worth of faith in Him. Look first at Him and see in Him an inexhaustible fulness of blessing; look next at mankind wanting everything and therefore wretched. Now what is wanted is a channel of communication through which this fulness may flow, so as to be filled with it. Such a channel is faith. Hence John says of believers, and of those only, "Of His fulness we have received." (*F. Payson, D.D.*)

Ver. 10. Ye are complete in Him. The false teachers at Colossæ were Jews, but not Judaizers. They were philosophers. They designed to substitute philosophy for Christianity, not by denying the latter, but by explaining it. They

distinguished between faith and knowledge. Faith was for the people, knowledge for the educated few. The objects of faith were the historical and doctrinal statements of the Bible. The objects of knowledge were the speculative truths underlying those statements, and into which they were to be sublimated. Paul's object is to prove—I. THAT PHILOSOPHY WAS AN UTTER FAILURE. He pronounces it—1. Vain, i.e., void (1) of truth; (2) of reality; (3) of worth and power. 2. Deceit. It disappointed expectation, and betrayed those who trusted to its guidance. This was no slight matter, and so he warned his readers lest any man in this way should make a prey of them to their utter destruction. II. THAT ALL THE OBJECTS WHICH PHILOSOPHY VAINLY ATTEMPTED WERE EFFECTUALLY ACCOMPLISHED IN CHRIST. 1. What does Paul mean by philosophy? Some say heathen as opposed to Christian philosophy; others that particular system that prevailed at Colossæ—the Gnostic. Every one would say false and not true, yours and not mine. There must be some way of deciding this question. The apostle decides for us. (1) By what he says of the system he opposes. By philosophy he means systems of that nature. This system undertook to determine *a priori* and from the principles of reason. (a) The nature of God, or of absolute Being. (b) His relation to the world, or what the world was in relation to Him. (c) What the origin, nature, and destiny of man. (d) What Christ is, and how he effects the restoration of man. (2) By the arguments he uses against it. He includes in philosophy every system against which those arguments legitimately bear. (a) He argues that these are matters about which, from the nature of the case, we can know nothing. They are matters of revelation (1 Cor. ii. 9–11; John i. 18). (b) He shows that God in the Scriptures has declared the wisdom of this world to be folly (1 Cor. i. 20). (c) Experience has proved that the world by wisdom knows not God. (d) God has determined to save man not by philosophy, but by the gospel. 2. Paul does not depreciate reason. The senses have their sphere; so has reason. But there is a supernatural or spiritual sphere into which reason cannot enter. We might as well judge of a syllogism by the tongue. This conclusion is sustained by consciousness. What do you know? There lies the grave! Where does it lead to? 3. We see, therefore, that Paul by philosophy does not mean—(1) Exclusively the Oriental philosophy; for what he says here he says to the Corinthians. (2) Not natural, mental, or moral philosophy. (3) But any attempt to solve the great problems above mentioned *a priori*. III. ALL THAT PHILOSOPHY VAINLY PRETENDS TO DO IS DONE IN CHRIST. 1. As to knowledge. That is necessary, even of these supreme problems. In Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and He is the only source of knowledge. The knowledge He gives is sure, satisfying, sanctifying. 2. Redemption. (1) It is objective—pardon, reconciliation. This is accomplished by Christ's atoning work. (2) It is subjective—delivery from inward sin and restoration of Divine life. This Christ does because in Him dwells the fulness of the Godhead, &c. We are filled with God in Him. 3. Restoration to our former status, to the kingdom of light: it is exaltation. This is done by being made partakers of the glory of Christ. 4. All this depends on our union with Him, which is—(1) Representative. (2) Spiritual. (3) Voluntary, by faith. Lessons: 1. We must not trust to our own reason or to that of others for instruction in these great points. 2. We have sure knowledge in the gospel, and to reject it is certain perdition. (C. Hodge, D.D.) *Ye are complete in Him*:—1. Christ is the one infallible Teacher of the Church. Elsewhere you tread on the deceptive sand or treacherous marsh which by an appearance of solidity lures you to proceed and then sinks under your weight. His teaching alone places you on the rock. Ancient mariners sailed by the light of the stars, but when clouds intervened they were beset with dangers. Taking the words of Jesus you shall cross the sea of life with safety, but if you allow human philosophy, tradition, priesthoods, &c., to intervene, your course must be perilous. 2. He is the Head of the Church, and alone has a right to command in spiritual things. We honour the Fathers, love the names of saints and reformers, but we must not make them lords. "One is your Master." (1) The constitution of His Person qualifies Him for this spiritual throne. Divine knowledge, wisdom, power, dwell in Him, united to tenderest human sympathies. (2) Moreover He purchased us with His own blood, and His people are made willing subjects by the power of His Spirit. 3. The spiritual increase of the Church is derived from Him. Religious progress is a growing up into Him in all things. Christ is our life. Reject Him, and you are cast forth as a severed branch and burned; but united to Him a Divine virtue shall pass into your soul, and you shall be made "perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

4. These things being so, the teaching that has a tendency to draw us away from Christ is to be rejected. The apostle warns the Colossians against errors which would have this effect. The things he names are still in the world under different forms, and his advice is as needful as ever. They were in danger from—I.

PHILOSOPHY. 1. St. Paul does not speak against love of knowledge, for this is as natural as the desire for food. Nor did he suppose that the gospel had anything to fear from it. False religions may thrive in ignorance as bats in the dark, but pure Christianity, like the eagle, delights to look the sun in the face. Be philosophers if you will, explore the wonders of nature, and the gospel will no more suffer than the finding of new planets will extinguish the sun. 2. But the Colossian philosophy was the vain and bewildering theories of men. Speculations concerning God are of little value, for He is found not by our searching, but by his revealing, and that in Him in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead. Extinguish this light and hold in your hand the torch of philosophy, and what do you make of the black expanse before you—the many gods of the heathen, the no-God of the atheist, the blind necessity of the fatalist, or nothing but matter with the materialist, or nothing but God with the pantheist? 3. Three things are certain. (1) Man must have a religion. (2) He cannot discover a satisfying one by himself. (3) He should receive thankfully that provided by Christ, who is our life and in whom we are complete. II. **THE TRADITIONS OF MEN.** 1. By tradition we mean doctrine, precept, custom not named in the Word of God. Jewish traditions, embodied in the Talmud, were mingled at Colossæ with mental philosophy and the truths of the gospel. This Paul regarded as injurious to spiritual life. 2. The belief in tradition is not extinct. The Greek and Roman Churches receive it as a rule of faith co-ordinate with the Bible. And other Churches, more pure and enlightened, are not entirely free. (1) There are traditional systems of spiritual truth. Men of other days melted the Divine doctrines and cast them in human moulds. The gospel bears the same relation to these forms as a painting to its frame. We may change the frame, but must not efface a single feature of the picture. (2) There is a traditional mode of speech with which you must clothe the truth or be suspected of heresy. 3. Tradition is at best an uncertain guide. It may be a pillar of fire, or an *ignis fatuus*. But we have the words of Jesus, the glorious and everlasting gospel; and our faith should rest in that, and not in fairy tales of Jewish, Roman, or Protestant tradition. “Ye are complete in Him.” III. **THE SACRED RITES AND SEASONS OF A FORMER DISPENSATION** (ver. 16). Many are still Jewish in their feelings. 1. To many the Lord’s day is still the Jewish Sabbath. Yet its very name shows it to be a different day, and can we fear for its sanctity while we regard it as commemorative of the resurrection. Moreover, it is necessary for rest and devotion. Keep it, then, as given, not by Moses, but by Christ. 2. Baptism as set forth in the New Testament is beautiful and instructive. It acknowledges our sinfulness, symbolizes the purification of the Spirit, and puts a seal on the baptized that he belongs to Christ. But when it is regarded as regenerative, and as creating a relation which it only recognizes, the sign is mistaken for the thing signified, and a simple ordinance converted into a fruitful error. 3. The Lord’s Supper, in its simplicity, is an impressive representation of Christ’s sufferings, a vivid expression of His love, an historical evidence for the gospel. Men have built monuments to keep their names in human memory, but time has blotted them out. Therefore our Saviour ordained for His memorials productions of nature that will last as long as the world. Penetrate their meaning, and you will understand what Christ is to you. But when the idea of spiritual magic is introduced, instead of being helpful to piety, it becomes a stumbling-block and an offence. IV. **THE WORSHIP OF ANGELS** (ver. 18). This old error still lives. The honour paid by Rome to angels exceeds that paid to Christ. It was an error to think that we in England had done with her for ever. She is very busy in this land, and wherever her teaching is received angels are worshipped. We should avoid her and repudiate her claims. Begone, spirit of error; that we may behold God in Jesus Christ. We are “complete in Him.” (T. Jones, D.D.) *Complete in Christ*:—“Complete” is carried on from ver. 9. “The fulness of the Godhead,” “and ye are full (same word) in Him.” I. **FULNESS IN CHRIST.** If you had heard Christ speak you would have said nothing can be taken away or added to those words without diminishing their force or beauty. If you had seen Christ act you would have felt that His action came up to the fulness of which that action was capable. His heart was nothing but love; and His work, although confined to a few years, fulfilled the infinite counsel of the Trinity. The Father looked down and saw no flaw and was satisfied. II. **THIS FULNESS**

WAR TO BE THE ONE TREASURE-HOUSE OF THE CHURCH FOR EVER (John i. 16; Eph. iv. 7). And every believer being separately endowed, the whole Church is made His body, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." So we are filled, complete; and the Church is the complement of Jesus. III. THE PROCESS BY WHICH THE COMPLETENESS IS EFFECTED IS UNION WITH CHRIST. 1. The union is a simple, positive fact once for all. The Holy Spirit enters a man's mind and unites his thoughts, feelings, desires, &c., with those of Christ, and that Spirit in both is itself. 2. If there be union the completeness will follow, just as a vessel must fill itself from the fountain with which it is connected. IV. WE NATURALLY YEARN AND STRIVE FOR COMPLETENESS, BUT FAIL EVERYWHERE. 1. No man ever yet came up to the point of which he knew his powers were capable. 2. None of those sources of gratification with which God has furnished us ever gave entire satisfaction. 3. There is not a man who has not his weak points; but above all men the Christian feels his incompleteness. The better he prays the more he feels his prayer deficient. The higher his attainments the farther off he seems from what he wants. And no Christian friend, no Church, no ordinance, no grace, is all he once expected they would be. 4. Life is one vast incompleteness. V. WE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM. 1. From His cross our Lord said "It is finished." From the time of creation down to that hour those words could not have been spoken about any human undertaking. But He said it, and mark the consequence. You have to do with a salvation which is perfectly complete. If you think you are to do anything you detract from the completeness of Christ. 2. We have a twofold completeness. (1) That which we draw from Christ. The whole disposal of God's gifts is delegated to Christ. In Him all things are treasured up for our sakes. Hence He will supply (a) our temporal needs. The Christian, therefore, must not be anxious about them. (b) Strength and wisdom for every work we have to do. The Christian, then, must not despair about his weakness and ignorance. (c) Grace for Christian growth and comfort. The Christian must not despond when deprived of outward means and help. (2) That in which we stand in Christ. God sees all who believe in Christ, and accepts Christ for them. Hence everything we do in faith loses itself in some corresponding thing that Christ has done. Our prayer, *e.g.*, mingles with Christ's intercession. What is wanting He supplies, what is redundant He deducts. His perfume gives it sweetness, and so it goes to the throne, how different from when it left us, "complete." He is "made unto us wisdom and righteousness," &c. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Complete in Christ*:—1. Every valuable mechanism represents a principle peculiar to itself. It may have many important adjuncts, but there must be one principle which imparts its force to all the rest. 2. In the same manner men are of large or small account as they recognize their individuality. Each stone is hewed for its special place, and to fail to appreciate our purpose is to degrade our manhood and to insult the prescience of the Divine Architect. 3. The claim of Christianity to be is that it, in like manner, embodies one distinctive fact. Ethically considered it has much in common with other systems; but its central feature or force is, as its name indicates, the Christ element. The degree in which Christ is present in the heart marks the purity of the Christianity. 4. The declaration, "Ye are complete in Him," goes much further than the recognition of Christ as an historic character as we associate Mahomet with Islam, &c. It is Christ interpenetrating; Christianity at every point. The Scriptures assert for Christ comprehensive, all-filling character and capacities. "I am the Way," &c. "Without Me ye can do nothing." "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead," &c. Observe—I. THIS COMPLETENESS IN CHRIST IN CONTRAST WITH ALL OTHERS. 1. No life is or can be in itself alone. We sustain a multitude of important relations, family, civil, &c., but it would not be possible to apply the language of the text to them. Of no relation, even the most valuable, can it be said, "This is essential." It seems to be the destiny of man to grow out of existing states, and use them only as the oar employs the water that it dips as a leverage for progress. And we may thank God that in a world where death spares nothing that there is no person or condition wherein our completeness lies. The king, hero, father dies; the nation, community, family mourns as if nature had stopped in its courses; but to-morrow the world moves on unchanged save that one grave more has furrowed its surface. That any of us is essential to the place he occupies is but a fiction of his own weakness or a flattering adulation of his admirers. Only in God all things consist. 2. The reason of this, and as marking the essential difference between our relations to any other and to Christ, is that the former are in a sense conventional.

We found them, we have become habituated to them, nevertheless they are not essential. Of one only can this be said. That we are complete in Christ renders necessary the preceding declaration which shows that what God can do for us Christ can do. II. THAT WE ARE COMPLETE IN CHRIST NECESSARILY IMPLIES THAT APART FROM HIM WE HAVE NO MORAL STANDING PLACE. 1. I care not to argue the question of degrees. Incompleteness where perfection is demanded, where the judgment is by an infinitely holy standard, is as condemnatory and destructive of our moral basis as any degree of sin. Some years ago a large object glass was prepared for a telescope. With all the care employed, a single defective spot was found upon the otherwise perfect lens. It was not broken, there was no flaw, but it was condemned. Its purpose was to be a clear undeviating eye turned towards the heavens accurately to determine localities, &c. That single imperfection was its entire condemnation. This is the idea of human depravity. The defect in the web of the cloth renders the whole piece unmarketable. Slight incompleteness is still incompleteness, and when the judgment is upon righteousness the ground is taken from our feet. 2. It would be curious to investigate by what process so many ooly conclude to risk the great ordeal upon their personal moral standing, which even their fellow-men pronounce defective. A principle that may well command this easy-going complacency to halt is that the nature of sincere virtue is ever discontent with attainments. As eminence with the pencil or chisel leads to the detection of manifold deficiencies and desire for a higher ideal, so the advance towards holiness, instead of satisfying, always reveals a disheartening lack, and as invariably leads to a search for some other mode of satisfying the requirement of conscience. 3. May it not be that this failure to perceive our own incompleteness, and the necessity of a better justifying righteousness, is rather to be ascribed to moral blindness than accepted as an evidence of superior virtue? For if once our incompleteness out of Christ be admitted, then the neglect to obey the gospel is reduced to a childish trifling with our eternal interest. 4. Yet how can one more fully commend the completeness there is in Christ than to point to that spotless life consummated by the sacrificial death of the cross? For all the way through—where the suffering by innocence must either mean injustice on the part of God, or justice receiving satisfaction for us—there is not a step or act which is not eloquent with the perfection of that sacrifice. You are asked to trust a Saviour of whom it is asked, "Who is he that condemneth," &c. Here is your completeness. It pleads no weak abandonment by God of His holiness. Redemption in Christ is the crown of that holiness as it is the expression of God's love. III. THIS COMPLETENESS GATHERS IN THE CIRCLE OF ITS EMBRACE EVERY CONSCIOUS WANT. It keeps as well as saves. Christ's intercessory prayer is not a supplication such as we offer, but a claim and recapitulation of what had been secured by His expiation. And in virtue of that Christ will bring with Him His saints, and stand at heaven's gates claiming for them admission by His victory over the grave. Christ's completeness must be one which does not exhaust itself on a past forgiveness. It must not only cleanse, but keep me clean. 2. The independence of God of every human condition, for the success of Christ's kingdom, and the completeness for all its requirements, is found in Christ. Men have come and gone; some have seemed so important that hope almost expired in their departure, as Melancthon felt when Luther died. Yet how local are all such influences. God uses men, and so do we; but even with us how inconsiderable is a man. How quickly is the gap filled. God's Church is not complete in man, but in Christ. (*E. P. Terhune, D.D.*) *Christians complete in Christ*:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY CHRISTIANS BEING COMPLETE? 1. The word means "full, wanting nothing"; and as applied to Christians, it means that they have everything necessary for life and godliness, happiness and immortality. 2. The things needed in order to being complete. (1) Wisdom and knowledge—meeting natural ignorance of, and conflicting theories about, God and the way of salvation. (2) Pardon and righteousness. As sinners men cannot stand before God in judgment. They are unclean in His sight, and without forgiveness and acceptance they must perish. (3) Holiness and purity. The heart is naturally evil, and by habit and indulgence acquires strength for evil. Unless this is cleansed there can be no meetness for heaven. (4) Consolation and peace. Forgiveness is not enough, there must be a consciousness of it, so that the sense of shame, the deepest of our discomforts, may be banished, and the sense of reconciliation with God take its place. (5) Support and strength in view of trials, labours, enemies. (6) Deliverance from the power of death and the grave. II. HOW CHRISTIANS BECOME COMPLETE. "In Christ." Because being God and

man all fulness dwells in Him, and out of this fulness all our need is supplied. 1. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." By His Word He instructs, by His providence He guides, and by His Spirit He opens the mind to instruct both. 2. "He is the propitiation for our sins," and has thus brought in an everlasting righteousness, by means of which believers are accepted. 3. His grace creates the heart anew, subdues sin, and develops in holiness. 4. He brings peace to the troubled conscience and consolation to the broken heart. 5. He is the strength, defence, and support of His people. 6. He hath abolished death. (*E. Cooper, M.A.*) *Believers complete in Christ:*—I. ON EARTH. 1. In their union to Christ. 2. In their justification. 3. In Christ's fulness. 4. In their title to heaven. II. IN HEAVEN. 1. As regards their persons—the union of body and soul with the perfection of nature and grace. 2. As regards their mental faculties—in receptivity and memory. 3. As regards the graces of the Spirit—faith lost to sight, hope in fruition, love in God. 4. As regards their fellowship—undivided, uninterrupted, with our predecessors, contemporaries, followers, God. 5. As regards their happiness—perfect enjoyment, perfect service. (*A. Fletcher, D.D.*) *Completed life:*—We are to look to Christ alone. I. FOR THE FREEDOM OF OUR SPIRIT FROM ALL EVIL. But how shall this great purification and perfecting be attained? The appeal is to Omnipotent Grace. And God's response is made known in Jesus Christ: "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" of pardoning and cleansing grace. In Him "who is the head of all principality and power" are we to look for the sin-expelling force—the force to correct, to purify our deepest life. 1. And we must not call in any foreign aid; we are "complete in Him." These Colossians were tempted by Gentile philosophy on one side, and Jewish ecclesiasticism on the other, but the apostle reminds them that everything they wanted was in Christ, and they were to confine themselves severely to His fellowship. 2. And Christ can save us completely. "Whiter than snow." Let us remember that Christ aims at our "completeness," and let us not rest short of that ideal. It is a present blessing. II. FOR THE PERFECTING OF OUR NATURE IN ALL ITS POWERS. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." In Christ we behold the fulness of "the Godhead bodily," and also the fulness of humanity. 1. We need not travel beyond Christ—He is the ideal and the perfecter of the race. All colours are in the sun, and all the infinite differentiations of colour found on the landscapes of nature, in the vapours of the firmament, in the play of the sea—all are in the light. And in Jesus we have the full-orbed humanity, all the graces by which man can be adorned. When we study the character of ordinary men it is like entering an ordinary garden, in which are a few fair flowers with an unfortunate admixture of weeds; when we study the moral character of extraordinary men it is like entering the grounds of some great rose-grower or orchid connoisseur—many delightful things greeting our eyes. But on beholding Christ, it is like being set down in Kew Gardens, where the vegetation of the whole earth blooms. In these days certain critics are very anxious to send us to the sacred writings of China, India, Arabia, Persia. Very valuable indeed are those writings from certain points of view, but they have nothing to add to the ideal of humanity given in Christ. 2. In Christ we are to attain the perfection of our nature. We have not only completeness in Him, but we are to become complete in Him. Men talk about the narrowness of Christianity, its commandments and prohibitions; they want a system of religion, wider, freer. Now, the tree on the heath or in the street may rebel against the iron bars which girdle it. Says the grumbling sapling, "I don't like this iron cage; I want liberty, I want room." Room! it has plenty of room at the top. It has room for its branches to stir with every wind of heaven, to catch all the dew of the morning, all the light of the sun, all the wealth of the shower; room for the singing birds, room to leaf, to blossom, to fruit. Room! The iron bars protect you from beneath, but a whole sky is waiting for you up above. So, whilst the New Testament rings us round with protective prohibitions, Jesus Christ stands over us like a sky, pouring down upon us richest influence, and drawing forth all the powers of our nature to their fullest perfection. There is room for our whole personality, our bodily instincts, mental faculties, imagination, wit, judgment, logic, speculation; for our social instincts, all the sensibilities of kinship, friendship, patriotism; for our ethical sense, for our heart with all its wealth of affection. Christianity is not wide enough for a theatre at one end and a prize ring at the other, but wide enough for whatever is true and pure in knowledge, science, art, pleasure, patriotism, business, love. We are not straitened in Christ; let us not be straitened in ourselves, but so

live in the faith of the Lord Jesus that all the riches of our nature may be realized, that we may "come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." III. FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF OUR LIFE IN ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. In Christ we attain completeness alike in spiritual and in practical virtue. Holiness is that side of goodness which looks towards God; morality is that side which looks towards society. And in both Christ perfects us—filling us with reverence, admiration, love toward God, and strengthening us to fulfil all practical virtue. 2. In Christ we attain completeness in universal virtue. If we have the Spirit of Christ, it will display itself in every possible virtue—that Spirit being the essence of universal virtue. Just as in the doctrine of the convertibility of force, we are taught that heat may become light, and light electricity, and electricity magnetism, and magnetism chemical affinity, and chemical affinity be changed into motion—one force with many manifestations—so the Spirit of Christ displays itself, now as meekness, now as courage, now as temperance, now as purity, just as circumstances require, but yet is all the time the one same Divine force. It makes of one a good master, another a good servant; one a good prince, another a good subject; one a good husband, another a good wife; one a good parent, another a good child. The Spirit of Christ fits men for every rank, adorns them with every grace. Ye "are complete in Him." Conclusion: We must feel condemned for our incompleteness; and yet from time to time how near we come to a life altogether full, rich, glorious! One of our magazines had a striking paragraph, entitled, "I have touched the gold," and it went on to relate how a diver uttered these words on coming up from a sunken gold ship, and the writer proceeded to show how in religion we often touch the gold and yet never quite realize it. Oh! how often have we touched the gold—the strength that more than overcomes, the perfect peace, the faith which asks and receives, the love that many waters cannot quench, the purity that keeps itself pure, the joy that is unspeakable, the hope full of glory—we touch the gold, we always know when we touch gold it is such a pleasant feeling, and yet fail to possess it. Let us trust in Christ with all our heart; let us do it now, so shall every man be presented perfect in Him. (*W. L. Watkinson.*)

The completing of the soul:—If we are only to be complete in Christ, then we must be incomplete without Him. It follows then that a soul after being made is still to be completed. It may be a germ to be developed, or a blasted germ to be restored. Here then is the true work of Christ's salvation, the completing of the soul. I. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE COMPLETING OF THE SOUL? 1. We constantly assume the necessity of a great afterwork to be done on the soul of our child to make it the complete man or woman we desire it to be. What we call education is only our attempt to bring it to completeness. The result is a being in higher quantity and finer quality, and of enlarged capacity for action and enjoyment. 2. But it is not to be assumed that we are right in all our conceptions of what takes place in the training of minds. (1) They will not be complete if only fully educated intellectually. Sometimes they will be hampered by scholarly attainments, drugged by great authorities, and incapacitated by the overload they have taken. Perhaps one hour with God would have done more in the widening of consciousness and the kindling of divinist fires than whole years of school drill. (2) Sometimes we think our child is only going to be complete when educated away from certain ranges of employment. If he can only be a blacksmith, or a school teacher even, we think that we have not made enough of him. Were he a qualified commander, physician, lawyer, &c., we should think him more nearly up to the measure of his possibilities. But God does not grade our completeness by any such law. He may have rated Bezaleel the brazier far above Aaron the priest. Whoever came nearer to being mated with Shakespeare than the tinker Bunyan? A great soul can be fashioned anywhere if only God is with him. God nowhere allows that souls are kept back from completeness by their employments. 3. No mere schooling, to whatever grade of life or social estimation it may lead, is any but the faintest approximation to the completion of the soul. II. HOW DOES IT APPEAR TO NEED ANY SUCH COMPLETION? If this were a question relating to Adam in his innocence, we should say that he was a full-grown, beautiful child, but yet a child; that his perceptions are all to be gotten, his will trained, habits formed, &c. Until then he is so incomplete that he will not stand fast in good, but plunge into wrong. Our first man, commonly thought so grandly perfect, is put on probation only that he may get his nature so matured in good that he will come out able to stand. Our question after this relates to him under the conditions of moral disaster into which he has fallen. 1. The soul scarcely at all answers its true end.

There is a feeling everywhere that souls are going wide of the mark. A watch is complete when it keeps time, not when it quarrels with the notations of suns and dials and almanacks. A vintage process is complete when it makes wine, not when it makes vinegar. Souls in like manner are complete when they make the good they were made for. 2. Their enjoyment is not full, but confessedly a great way short of it. Their instincts are unfulfilled, their wants unsupplied, their objects not found. They are tormented with a general unrest. It would not be so if they were complete. They would be exactly full of enjoyment, just as by their inborn necessity they crave to be. No bee misses the shape of its cells, no bird the direction of its flight, no plant the colour and kind of its flower. No more will a soul its enjoyment unless incomplete, sweltering in some torment of inbred disorder. 3. Souls do not fulfil the standards of beauty, truth, and right. These are standards we all admit, just as all flowers and fruits have standard colours and figures of their kind. An apple is not complete when it comes out a gourd; nor a rose when it comes forth blue. When a soul, then, misses its kind, and puts forth itself in deformity, falsity, and wrong, it is a witness to its incompleteness. 4. Take a more surface view, and let the question settle itself under mere first impressions. How then is it that there is so much meanness, passion, want of self-government in individuals; and so many quarrels, acts of injustice, and bloodshed in society? Who can imagine mere creatures complete in their order? Suppose all the grains in a bushel of wheat were to act on themselves and towards one another thus! And the reason why they do not do so is because they are complete creatures, resting in their own perfect mould, and in harmony with each other—they that are at the top lying just as heavily, and those at the bottom supporting the weight just as bravely as they must. Souls completed in their order would do the same, just as all God's finished worlds and societies in glory do, without one rasping of a bad thought, or pang of mutual accusation. 5. We have a way of saying concerning a man that he is ruined or blasted by his vices: in which we refer mentally to the incomplete state of the flower which we say is blasted when it does not come to fruit. And the figure is rightly chosen. Such men are incomplete. 6. It is a very curious distinction of souls that, being finite, they have yet infinite wants and aspirations; their very longing is to be completed in the outspreading of some infinite possession. What a falling short, therefore, is it when they fall short of God. III. HOW IN CHRIST THEY CAN BE MADE COMPLETE. Here we discover three great agencies provided for the purpose. 1. Inspirations. (1) Separated from God man is nothing. Existing in mere self-hood he cannot push himself out in any way so as to be complete as from himself. A sponge might as well complete itself in dry air; it must let in and possess the sea. Just so a soul must have God's properties flowing in and through—liberty and life in His life, power in His power; it must be true in His truth, righteous in His righteousness. (2) Now, it is in this inspiration force that Christ arranges for in His gift of the Spirit. He enters the soul to fill out every lack, configuring it inwardly to all that is most perfect in Himself, turning its very liberty towards all it wants and needs to receive. 2. We have ideals in Christ, who lives God in human figure and relation, so that we have in Him all that requires to be completed in us. Christ is the mirror that glasses God's image before us, and the Spirit is the plastic force within that transfers and photographs that image, so that "beholding as in an image," &c. (2 Cor. iv. 6). 3. To make the provision perfect, we are set in a various scheme of relations that we may have a training in duties and qualities, and be perfected by means of them. And we have as our remarkable advantage Christ the Divine man with us in these relations, so that trying to do the exact Christly thing in them all we are to get benefit in so many forms and degrees, and be brought when all is done and suffered to a completeness in the will of God. In this wondrous mill every blemish is to be removed, till at last there will be no spot or wrinkle or any such thing. IV. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS THE ONLY POWER ABLE TO BRING MEN THUS FORWARD. 1. We try education, getting much from it, but never anything which approaches a standard of completeness. 2. What we call self-improvement is a poor desultory affair, polishing one thing, while another goes rough by neglect, and all issuing in a great self-consciousness painful to behold, and in itself how dry. 3. We try self-government under the standards of morality, but the most we obtain is to pile up what we think good acts on one another, as a man piles his day's wages, but then they will be as dry and with a little continuity. 4. There is another way greatly praised—philosophy. But its ideals are for ever out-running its possible attainments, and the fine philosophic

consciousness will be only a kind of equilibrium under dryness and felt limitation. And the wars of the mind are perhaps kenneled by it but not composed. 5. There is nothing, in short, but religion that can be looked to for the completing of the soul; because as nothing else does—(1) It takes hold of the soul's eternity and its sin, to raise up, harmonize, purify, and settle it in a rest of everlasting equilibrium in God. (2) It takes hold of all possible conditions, completing as truly the menial as the employer, the unlettered as the scholar. (3) It completes one degree of capacity as certainly as another, preparing the feeblest to fill out his measure as roundly and blissfully as the highest. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *Every need of man supplied in Christ:—*

I. THE ERRORS PAUL DESIRES TO COUNTERACT. These were the current "philosophy" of the day. There were many forms of thought which preceded Christianity. For hundreds of years men had been indulging in speculation, groping after light, and weaving systems; and the Colossian philosophy seems to have been an amalgamation of the four principal. 1. The philosophy of Plato, with its mystic doctrine of everything having an archetypal model. 2. Jewish fables and endless genealogies picked up by the exiles in Babylon. 3. Ceremonialism and the observing of days, &c. 4. Gnosticism, the affectation of superior knowledge.

II. THE DOCTRINE WITH WHICH HE WOULD COUNTERACT THESE ERRORS. "Ye are complete in Him." 1. Note who and what Christ is. The glory of Christ is set over against these speculations. (1) He possesses the loftiest ideal—"All the fulness of the Godhead," not one of His emanations, and that fulness "bodily," brought within the comprehension of man. 2. He has done a great work (chap. i. 20). It is not matter that is sinful, but man, and from this Christ redeems him. (3) He sustains a glorious relation to the universe (chap. i. 15, 18; ii. 19). He is not one of an illustrious order, but Creator and Head of all. 4. He maintains a close union to the man who accepts Him (chap. i. 27). 2. If Christ is all this to a man, then that man is complete in Him. (1) If a man be striving after the knowledge of God, he is complete in Christ. This has been the problem of philosophy from Thales till now. What is the first principle? Water, air, fire, mind, love, have each in turn been the answer. And now a "philosophy" is confessing the problem insoluble, calling God by a name more hopeless than that on the Athenian altar—the Unknowable. But who that knows Christ can ever be thus in the dark (John xiv. 9). (2) If a man would approach God he is complete in Christ. Afar from God man cannot rest, but sin keeps him away. But through Christ we have access (John xiv. 6; Heb. x. 19) and close fellowship. (3) If a man is anxious about his standing before God he is complete in Christ. Through Him we may have a better and firmer one than Adam's. In Christ a man stands accepted and welcomed with nought wanting to the fulness of his redemption. (4) If a man wants to lead a holy life he is complete in Christ. This was the aim of the Gnostics; not holiness indeed, but freedom from the impurities of matter. Hence they tried asceticism. But sin is not to be purged by scourging the body. Christ however can kill it by the power of a new life which His Spirit implants. (5) If a man is longing for light on the great questions of destiny he is complete in Christ, who has brought life and immortality to light. (6) Do we ask for a bond of brotherhood in the human race? We are complete in Christ in whom there is neither Jew nor Greek, &c. (7) Do we ask for a redemption that shall perfect body, as well as soul and spirit? We are complete in Him who is "the Saviour of the body" and "the resurrection and the life." **III. THE SUITABILITY OF THIS DOCTRINE FOR COUNTERACTING MODERN ERRORS.** The true method of meeting false doctrine is to show that all our nature craves is to be found in Christ. But since Christ is enough in Himself He must be accepted as being so, and not as the mere complement of some other system. 1. Are you in peril of Rationalism? Learn what Jesus is, and you will find reason and conscience to say, "Here is one at whose feet we can sit to be their enlightener and lord." 2. Are you attracted by Positivism? Here in Christ is all that is attractive in its assertions, and nought of its dismal negations. They worship they know not what in worshipping "Humanity." But no one who has ever caught a glimpse of Christ can ever barter a living Saviour for that. One in the race and yet over it. Over it, that He might redeem, educate, and glorify it; and yet who can give to each member eternal life. 3. Do the claims of a so-called priesthood attract you? If you knew what Christ is you would let no one have the impertinence to come between you and Him. We need a mediator between God and man; but none between us and Jesus. Conclusion: This doctrine is grand enough for the philosopher, yet simple enough for us all. We are complete in Christ for living or dying; for time or eternity. (C.)

Clemance, D.D.) Completely furnished:—Manton says "He that is in a journey to heaven must be provided for all weathers: for though it be sunshine when he first sets forth, a storm will overtake him before he cometh to his journey's end." Have faith in Christ and you are ready for anything, thankful for everything, afraid of nothing. "Ye are complete in him." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) Which is the head of all principality and power.—*Angels*:—I. IN THEMSELVES. For their excellency of nature, as they are here called principalities, so elsewhere they are called "stars of the morning," "sons of God," yea, "Gods." II. IN RELATION TO CHRIST so they are implied to be of the body, and Christ to be their Head. Now we may not marvel at it, that Christ should be the head of angels, for there be divers distinct benefits, which angels from thence do receive, which by natural creation they had not. 1. They are vouchsafed a place in the mystical body under Christ, that they might be received, as it were into the new order in Christ. 2. A peace is made between them and man in Christ. 3. The room of angels fallen is supplied by the elect, the society of angels being much maimed by their fall. 4. They are refreshed with singular joy for the conversion of the elect; besides the enlarging of their knowledge, that they are vouchsafed the understanding of the secrets of the gospel. 5. They receive from Christ confirming grace, and so assurance that they shall never fall: which is their chief benefit. 6. Their obedience in its own nature is imperfect, though not sinful, and therefore may need to be covered by Christ's perfections. III. IN RELATION TO THE BODY OF CHRIST. 1. They are like masters and tutors, to whom the great King of heaven sends out His children to nurse. God doth adopt children, and after commit them to be kept by those most noble citizens of heaven. 2. They execute judgment upon the enemies of the Church. They attend us at the hour of death, and carry our souls to heaven. They shall gather our bodies together at the last day. 3. For the accomplishment of all designments for our good, they stand always looking on the face of God to receive commandments. Conclusion: Inasmuch as Christ is the head of all principalities and powers, we may comfort ourselves divers ways. 1. If Christ fill the angels, how much more can He out of His fulness fill us in the supply of all our wants. 2. Shall we not rejoice in the grace here is done to us, in that we are united into communion with angels under our Head? yea, and that such glorious creatures, are appointed to be our attendants, why should we fear when Christ and His angels will be so ready about us. 3. This may also instruct us, we need not be ashamed of Christ's service, seeing the very angels follow Him and depend upon Him. A prince that kept great princes to be his domestic servants, were like to be much sought to for preferment of such as would follow him. Oh! how should we long after Christ who is Head over such glorious creatures as the angels are! (*N. Byfield.*)

Vers. 11-12. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.—*Christian circumcision*:—I. IS INWARD AND SPIRITUAL. II. IS COMPLETE. Manual circumcision was the cutting away of only a small part of the flesh. But the spiritual circumcision consists in putting off the whole body of our corrupt nature—the entire fleshly principle. III. IS DIVINE. "By the circumcision of Christ." It is wrought, without hands, by the inward power of the Divine Spirit of Christ. IV. IS REALIZED BY THE THOROUGH IDENTIFICATION OF THE BELIEVER WITH CHRIST IN HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION. V. IS WROUGHT IN THE SOUL BY A SPIRITUAL BAPTISM. "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him." VI. IS RECEIVED BY FAITH. "Through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." Faith is not a natural product of the human heart. It is a Divine gift, bestowed on man by a Divine operation. (*G. Barlow.*) *The circumcision of Christ*:—I. EVERY REAL CHRISTIAN HAS EXPERIENCED THE TRUE CIRCUMCISION. The argument is that circumcision was unnecessary, since the Colossians had undergone the new birth which it signified. 1. It is spiritual, and plainly distinguished from that which was made with hands. The idea was not a novel one (*Deut. x. 16, xxx. 6; Jer. ix. 26; Ezek. xlv. 7; Acts vii. 51; Rom. ii. 28-29*). 2. The true character of the operation is the putting off of the body of the flesh, "the old man," corrupt human nature, with all its carnal instincts and tendencies. Manual circumcision cut off only a small part of the flesh, the spiritual is an entire transformation of the whole man. Old habits are abandoned, evil associations forsaken, and the soul is ushered into a new life, with new thoughts, affections, &c. It is a putting on of the new man. 3. It is Divine, "the circumcision of Christ," ordained and communicated by Him, with Him for its author and model. II. THIS TRUE CIRCUMCISION IS REALIZED ONLY IN UNION WITH CHRIST IN

HIS DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION. 1. The Saviour died for us, and when the anxious sinner trusts Christ he is regarded as having died with Him. 2. The reality of death is evinced by burial, and the death of the believer with Christ is the casting off of the body of the flesh. The old man is sepulchred. 3. The soul in regeneration arises with Christ to a new and holy life. **III. THIS UNION IS REALIZED IN THE BAPTISM.** It is generally assumed that the allusion here is to immersion. 1. But it is difficult to see any resemblance between this and the depositing of Christ's body in a rock-hewn sepulchre. The reference is to the baptism of the Spirit—the washing of regeneration (1 Cor. xii. 13, cf. 1 Cor. i. 14). The theory of immersion is that it is the profession of a regeneration which has already taken place; but with St. Paul the burial and resurrection are coincident with the baptism. It is quite possible to die and rise with Christ without water baptism, but not without the baptism of the Spirit. 2. Why does Paul speak disparagingly of “hand-wrought” circumcision, and proclaim its needlessness, if he is to pass immediately to speak of the efficacy of “hand-wrought” baptism? To introduce that would be to introduce the very element of ceremonialism which he is denouncing. **IV. THE PRINCIPLE THROUGH WHICH THIS SPIRITUAL BAPTISM IS RECEIVED**—“through faith.” 1. It is surprising that so many should regard the baptism in which the disciple is said to rise with Christ as that of water. No one is raised out of water by faith, but by the arms which immersed him. The baptism of the Spirit is received by faith: an unbeliever cannot receive it. 2. “In the operation of God” does not mean that that is the origin but the object of faith. If I believe in the power that raised Christ, I believe in the power which has accepted His suretyship for me. This faith regards Christ's resurrection as the keystone of Christianity, the centre of confidence, the only basis of hope. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The true circumcision*:—There are two tendencies ever at work to corrupt religion. One is of the intellect, the temptation of the cultured few, which turns religion into theological speculation; the other of the senses, that of the vulgar many, which turns religion into a theatrical spectacle. But opposite as these are they were united at Colossæ. To the teaching of the necessity of circumcision—I. The apostle opposes the position that **ALL CHRISTIAN MEN BY VIRTUE OF THEIR UNION WITH CHRIST HAVE RECEIVED THE TRUE CIRCUMCISION**, of which the outward rite was the shadow, and therefore now obsolete. 1. The language points to a definite past time. When they became Christians a change passed over them parabled by circumcision. (1) It is not made with hands, i.e., it is not a rite but a reality, not transacted in the flesh but in the spirit, not a removal of ceremonial impurity, but a cleansing of the heart (Deut. xxx. 6). (2) It consists in the putting off of the body of the flesh—“the sins of” is an interpolation—a complete stripping off from oneself, as of clothes, in contrast with a removal of a small part of the body. It is true that Christian men, alas! realize this by slow degrees; but on the Divine side it is complete. Christ gives perfect emancipation, and if it is only partial it is because we have not taken the things that are freely given. The foe may keep up a guerilla warfare after he is substantially defeated, but his entire subjugation is certain if we keep hold of the strength of Christ. (3) It is of Christ; not that He submitted to it, but instituted it. 2. What is the bearing of this statement on the apostle's purpose? That circumcision is an anachronism, “as if a flower should shut, and be a bud again.” (1) The true centre of gravity, of Christianity, then, is in moral transformation. Surely Christ who gives men a new life by union with Himself by faith has delivered man from the “yoke of bondage,” if He has done anything at all. How far away from Paul's conception, then, are those which busy themselves with punctilios of observance! But the hatred of forms may be as completely a form as the most elaborate ritual. We need to have our eyes turned away to the far higher thing, the service of the transformed nature. (2) The conquest of the animal nature is the certain outcome of union with Christ and that alone. Paul did not regard matter as evil, as the Colossian teachers did, nor the body as the source of all sin. But he knew that the fiercest temptations came from it, and that the foulest stains upon the conscience were splashed from the mud which it threw. It is a matter of life and death to find some means of taming the animal that is in us all. We all know of wrecked lives which have been driven on the rocks by the wild passions of the flesh; and when we come to add its weaknesses, limitations, and needs, and remember how high purposes are frustrated by its shrinking from toil, and how often mists born from its undrained swamps darken the vision of truth and God, we do not need to be Gnostics to believe that goodness requires the flesh to be subdued. But no asceticisms or resolves will do what we want.

Much repression may be effected by force of will, but it is like a man holding a wolf by the jaws. The arms begin to ache and the grip to grow slack, and he feels his strength ebbing, and knows that as soon as he lets go the brute will be at his throat. Nothing tames the wild beast in us but Christ. He binds it in a silken lash, and that gentle constraint is strong because the fierceness is gone. Christianity would be easy were it a round of observances. Anybody can fast or wear a hair shirt, but the putting off of the body of the flesh is a harder thing. Emotion, theology, ceremonial, may have their value, but a religion that includes them all and leaves out the subjugation of the flesh is worthless. If we are in Christ we shall not live in the flesh. II. Paul meets the false teaching by a reference to CHRISTIAN BAPTISM AS BEING THE CHRISTIAN SIGN OF THE INWARD CHANGE. 1. The form of expression in the Greek implies that the circumcision and burial with Christ in baptism are contemporaneous. You have been baptized—does not that express all that circumcision meant and more? (1) This reference is quite consistent with the subordinate importance of ritual. Some forms are necessary to a visible Church, and Christ has given us two: one symbolizing the initial spiritual act of Christian life, and the other the constantly repeated process of Christian nourishment. (2) The form here presupposed is immersion. (3) There are but two theories: the one is that baptism effects the change, and elevates it into more than the importance of which Paul sought to deprive circumcision, confuses the distinction between the Church and the world, lulls men into a false security, obscures the central truth of Christianity that faith makes a Christian, gives the basis for a portentous sacerdotalism, and is shivered to pieces against the plain facts of daily life. But it is conclusively disposed of by the words, "through faith in the operation," &c. What remains, then, but that baptism is associated with the change, because in the Divine order it is meant to be its outward symbol? 2. Note the thoroughness of the change. It is more than a circumcision; it is burial and resurrection. (1) We partake of Christ's death inasmuch as—(a) we ally ourselves to it by our faith as the sacrifice for our sins; (b) by the power of His Cross we are drawn to slay our old nature, dying to the habits, desires, &c., in which we lived. (2) If we are thus made conformable to His death, we shall know the power of His resurrection. (a) It will be a guarantee of our own. (b) The seal of His perfect work on the Cross, and shall know it as a token of God's acceptance; (c) the type of our spiritual resurrection now. (A. Maclaren, D.D.) Buried with Him.—*The believer's identification with Christ*:—It was with St. Paul a principle that the whole Christian life is a following of the blessed steps of one holy life, an imitation of Christ. We are in Him—I. CONCEIVED AND BORN (Gal. iv. 19). II. CRUCIFIED (Gal. ii. 20; Rom. vi. 5). III. DEAD (Rom. vi. 3, vii. 4; cf. 1 Pet. iv. 1). IV. BURIED (Rom. vi. 4). V. RISEN (Rom. vi. 5; Col. iii. 1). VI. ASCENDED AND REIGNING (Eph. ii. 4-6). What is done or suffered by Him historically is done in us analogously and mystically now, and will be completed historically and actually hereafter. This is the underlying principle of the order of the Christian year. (Bishop Alexander.)

Vers. 13, 14. **And you being dead in your sins.**—*Spiritual death*:—I. TO WHAT EXTENT AND TO WHAT PERSONS THIS CONDITION APPLIES. 1. The terms of the text include Jews and Gentiles. The Jews were spiritually dead notwithstanding the ordinance of circumcision; the Gentiles in their uncircumcision. The great error of Judaism as the rabbis made it was to mistake religious ordinances for religion; equally fatal is the same error in its pseudo-Christian shape. 2. It is clear that this state is not predicated of heathen and profligates only; it is the normal condition in which men are born, and in which they live and die without grace. This is clear from chap. i. 13; Matt. 21, 22; John vi. 53-63; 1 John iii. 14. 3. Whatever privileges of pious parentage, godly training, gospel ministrations, &c., we may have been favoured, over and above these we "must be born again." II. SOME OF THE PARTICULARS INVOLVED IN THIS CONDITION. In death is implied—1. Deprivation—there is something lost. We do not say that a stone is dead, it never lived. Hence the view of a stone on the highway excites no emotion or sympathy; but how different with regard to a dead bird, much more a dead man or a dead friend. Once there was spiritual life in man. He was made a living soul; now he is dead in trespasses and sins, having lost it. And yet how strange that the spectacle of this most terrible of deaths scarcely moves us. 2. Corruption. Life has its degrees: vegetable, animal, rational, but in death there are no degrees; all the dead are equally corrupt. There are differences in the sight of man, comparing

man with man; there are some better characters than others, of more natural virtue, and society owes them reverence; but society was not our maker and is not our judge. This reflection should humble us. "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" 3. Helplessness. "A living dog is better than a dead lion," who is as incapable as his own shadow. The dead soul is equally helpless; without foreign aid it must lie like the tree where it has fallen. Spiritual life must be communicated before the soul can move. 4. Resurrection. The decayed vegetable dies, but to be reproduced in another form. Every falling leaf that strews the earth in autumn with the silent evidences of the fall of man, seems to catch a whisper from the breeze, "Thou shalt rise again." So when man dies the principle of his existence is not destroyed but withdrawn. But, alas for the soul that has lain in the death of sin before the body has reached the grave; that shall indeed rise again, but "to shame and everlasting contempt." (*J. B. Owen, M.A.*) *The dead soul*:—The dead, as insusceptible as their kindred dust, cannot be won back to the activities of life. No voice reaches them, no spectacle arouses them, no terror seizes them. The analogies of death in souls spiritually dead are full of painful truth. They are insensible to the attractions and momentousness of Divine and eternal realities. They are not touched by that which is tender in Divine love nor awed by that which is terrible in Divine law. Alienation from God ever produces spiritual callousness. With an eye to discern sensible beauty in the marvels of creation and the triumphs of art, there is no perception of the grander beauties of holiness, no apprehension of the character and glory of the Almighty. With an ear to hear and a taste to appreciate the rich harmonies of sound, and the eloquence of human tongues, there is no ear to hear the voice of God or the whisperings of His gracious Spirit, the only true and saving Teacher of men. With a heart that can feel for the woes and miseries of our fellow-creatures, and that can cherish kindness towards them, there is no conscious love to God, and no cheerful response to His claims. The mind may be acute, the disposition amiable, the character virtuous, and yet the soul be dead, alien from God, and blind to its own greatest needs. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The transition from death to life*:—The physical order is a descent from life to death; the spiritual order an ascent from death to life. I. THE NATURAL CONDITION OF HUMANITY IS ONE OF SPIRITUAL DEATH. Man is in a condition of—1. Spiritual insensibility. The dead know nothing, appreciate nothing; nor does the sinner of the things of God. 2. Moral corruption. "And the uncircumcision of your flesh." Death unbinds the forces that brace up the body in life, and leaves it a prey to the power of corruption. 3. Condemnation. (1) The Divine ordinances record an indictment against the transgressor. (a) Handwriting. The primary reference is to the Jews, who might be said to have signed the contract when they bound themselves, by a curse, to observe all the enactments of the law (*Deut. xxvii. 14-26*). (b) Ordinances, though referring primarily to the Mosaic ordinances, include all forms of positive decrees in which moral or social principles are embodied or religious duties defined. Man everywhere is under law, written or unwritten; and he is morally obligated to obey it. (2) The Divine ordinances are hostile towards the transgressor. "Which was contrary to us." We are often painfully reminded of our broken bond, as the debtor is often reminded of his undischarged obligation. II. THE BELIEVER IS RAISED INTO A CONDITION OF SPIRITUAL LIFE. 1. This life begins in the consciousness of liberty. "Having forgiven you all trespasses." 2. It implies a freedom from all condemnation. III. THE TRANSITION OF THE SOUL FROM DEATH TO LIFE IS A DIVINE WORK. 1. God only can raise the dead. 2. He does so by a blessed union with Christ. 3. Which issues in immortal life. (*G. Barlow.*) *Quickened—Characteristics of the new life*:—I. SPONTANEITY. Life is neither mechanical nor forced, but proceeds from the principle of vitality within. When man by grace begins to live anew, what was formerly a burden, if it received any attention at all, becomes a pleasure. Commandments which were grievous are now joyous, and the newborn energy finds its spontaneous manifestation in loving loyalty to God's will. II. ASSIMILATION. Life is nourished by that which may seem foreign to its nature. The rose can draw beauty and fragrance from pestilent manure, juices of the soil, radiance of sunshine and showers from heaven. So the new life derives strength even from trial and the bread of sorrow. All things work together for its good, not excepting the entanglements of the flesh and the cares of the world. III. GROWTH. All life grows, and the Christian who does not has an unhealthy life. His privilege is to be like a tree (*Psa. i. 3*). IV. ASPIRATION. Life everywhere seeks to reach the perfection of its nature. Spiritual life comes from above and seeks to rise to the level of its source. It cannot rest satisfied with the world, but puts forth its tendrils

Godwards. **V. INDIVIDUALITY.** No two plants, blades of grass, animals, men, are exactly alike. God loves variety in grace as well as nature. So some Christians are intellectual, some emotional, some practical; yet all are one in Christ. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The great deliverance*:—I. **THE MISERABLE CONDITION OF OUR NATURE.** 1. All the children of Adam are reckoned as dead. (1) Because Divine grace, the soul, as it were, of the soul, being withdrawn, a polluting mass of deadly vices succeeded in their room. (2) Because they lie under the sentence of eternal death (Eph. ii. 3). 2. The causes of this death are—(1) Actual transgressions of the Divine law—"The wages of sin is death," "The soul that sinneth it shall die." (a) This is the death of grace inasmuch as sin by its impurity dissolves the gracious union of the soul to God in which our life consists (Isa. lix. 2). (b) The death of hell (Rom. ii. 9). (2) The uncircumcision of your flesh, *i.e.*, original sin, which is derived by carnal propagation and renders the very soul, as it were, carnal (Deut. x. 16; Jer. ix. 25). Every natural man is dead in this his native corruption. (a) The understanding, which is the eye of the soul, is darkened and blinded as to spiritual things (1 Cor. ii. 14), and rushes into errors and deceivings (Gal. v. 20). (b) The will is depraved, its good desires weak, its unlawful desires strong (Gen. vi. 5; Rom. iii.). (c) The inferior powers of the soul are disordered, so that they refuse to obey the law of the mind (Rom. vii. 23). Hence the affections control, and are not controlled by reason. 3. Lessons: (1) Since every man in a state of nature is dead, it is not in the power of free will, by its own strength, to prepare for conversion, even as a dead man cannot dispose himself for his resurrection (Lam. v. 21). (2) No man can dispose himself to any motion to quicken himself unless his mind be formed to the life of grace by God. For as every natural operation supposes a natural power, so every spiritual motion a spiritual power (Ezek. xi. 19). (3) Since the cause of death is sin, the madness of men is discovered who administer that deadly poison to the soul and are guilty of its murder. II. **THE DELIVERER; GOD IN CHRIST, BY CHRIST, AND WITH CHRIST.** God alone could impart animal life to this earth; He alone, therefore, can impart spiritual life to carnal men, which is a greater work than creation (Eph. ii. 10). Hence we may learn—1. The eternal love of God the Father. We shudder to touch the dead bodies of our friends; but God is not only ready to touch but to embrace and restore our dead souls. This should inflame us with love to Him. 2. The infinite guilt of sin which could not be acquitted, and we justified but by the death and resurrection of Christ. This should excite our hatred and avoidance of sin. III. **THE DELIVERANCE.** 1. The forgiveness of our trespasses. In this it is to be noticed that it is—(1) Gratuitous, *χαρισμαμενος*, being derived from grace itself. It is gratuitous on our part, for we are absolved without any price paid by ourselves; but on the part of Christ we are redeemed with the price of His precious blood (Rom. iii. 24), and indeed either a gratuitous remission or none at all must be admitted. As to ourselves, we are not able to pay, since the debt is infinite; nor can we blot out our sins by suffering, because no suffering of the guilty is deletive of sin. (2) Universal—"All trespasses." For it does not accord with Divine majesty and goodness to remit some of our debts and require the rest from us. Because—(a) The blood of Christ being received as a ransom, it would be unjust not to remit all, since that outweighs all. (b) To forgive is an act of paternal love and cannot dwell with enmity; but enmity remains with unremitted sin, and those who admit a partial remission make God at once reconciled and hostile. (c) Unless we reckon on full remission, remission is vain; for its end is life eternal, which a partial remission cannot yield the hope of, because death is the wages of even one sin (Jer. xxxiii. 8; Micah vii. 19; 1 John i. 9). 2. Hence we derive these corollaries—(1) To forgive sins is the property of God alone; for who can forgive another his debt while the will of the creditor is not yet understood (Isa. xliii. 25). (2) As universal remission is granted on God's part there ought to be a universal detestation of it on ours. (3) Troubled consciences may be sustained, for though sin be not destroyed upon faith it is forgiven. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *The Holy Spirit is the quickener*:—The same shower blesses various lands in different degrees, according to their respective susceptibilities. It makes the grass to spring up in the mead, the grain to vegetate in the field, the shrub to grow on the plain, and the flowers to blossom in the garden; and these are garnished with every hue of loveliness—the lily and the violet, the rose and the daisy: all these worketh the same Spirit that renews the face of the earth. The influences of the Holy Spirit, descending on the moral soil, produce "blessing in variety"—convictions in the guilty, illumination in the ignorant, holiness in the defiled, strength in the feeble, and comfort in the distressed.

As the Spirit of holiness, He imparts a pure taste; as the Spirit of glory, He throws a radiance over the character; as the Spirit of life, He revives religion; as the Spirit of truth, He gives transparency to the conduct; as the Spirit of prayer, He melts the soul into devotion; and, as the Spirit of grace, He imbues with benevolence, and covers the face of the earth with the works of faith and labours of love. (*T. W. Jenkyn, D.D.*)

Ver. 14. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances.—**I. THE HANDWRITING.** 1. It is often the practice of Scripture to liken a sin to a debt; whence remitting it is equivalent to pardoning it (*Matt. vi. 12; cf. Luke xi. 4*). Indeed the Chaldees and Syrians used the words sinner and debtor interchangeably. The reason is that there is a resemblance between the two. As the one obliges the debtor to payment, the other obliges the sinner to punishment. As a debt gives the creditor power over his debtor, so sin consigns the offender to God. 2. The word "handwriting" signifies an acknowledgement signed by us that we owe a certain sum and bind ourselves to pay. It is an authentic testimony of our debt, and makes our body and goods liable. The handwriting of the text is the instrument of our condemnation, and subjects us to the justice of God. 3. This handwriting was the old law, as the word "ordinances," the following context, and the purpose of the apostle to show that Judaism was not binding on the Colossians, prove. 4. This handwriting in itself is good and profitable, but it became "contrary" through sin. (1) It serves to convict us, as an obligation produced in judgment stops the mouth of an unfaithful debtor. (2) It is against our inclinations, which are lawless. (3) It threatens punishment, which we feel to be deserved and which we cannot evade. **II. WHAT IS DONE WITH IT?** It is made void by the Cross. 1. It is blotted out, as it is usual with men when a debt is paid to efface the name of the creditor and the amount he owed. So God has erased the handwriting of this debt which was written in His law for our consciences. 2. The means employed is some fluid, as ink, which is drawn over the page; so our obligation is made void by the effusion of Christ's blood. 3. Men who are exact not only efface their debtors' writings but tear them up, that no sign of the debt may remain. So God has so effaced the handwriting against us that not even the erasures appear; it is rent by the nails of the cross. Conclusion: 1. This furnishes us with a clear proof of Christ's satisfaction. If Christ's death is merely an example the law could sustain no injury, and if these words can be applied to Him they can be applied to other martyrs; but who would dare to do that? 2. This shows us the error of the doctrine of human merit: for God can exact nothing now that Christ has paid all. 3. The enjoyment of this privilege wrought on the cross is conditional upon faith. (*J. Dailé.*) **The handwriting blotted out:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY HANDWRITING?** 1. Opinions are various; yet all agree in this that something is intended which by force of testimony may prove us guilty before God. Some assert it to be—(1) The covenant of God with Adam (*Gen. ii. 17*), for this being violated, Adam and his posterity were held guilty of death as by a bond. (2) The stipulation of the Jews (*Exod. xix. 7, 8*), by which they bound themselves to perfect obedience, by the non-performance of which they might be justly condemned by their own hand. (3) The remembrance of our sins in the Divine mind and in our own conscience (*Isa. xliv. 25*), by which we are convicted, as by a bond. The Divine law says, "Thou shalt love the Lord," &c. Conscience suggests, "I have not done so, and am, therefore, cursed." (4) Ceremonial rites which testified to guilt, circumcision to depravity, purifications to the filthiness of sin, sacrifices to the heinousness of guilt. 2. I explain it to mean the moral law binding to perfect obedience and condemning defect, laden with rites as appendages. **II. HOW IS IT AGAINST US?** 1. As to the moral law, it is holy, just, and good; nevertheless it has become deadly to us through sin (*Rom. vii. 12, 13*), because—(1) It propounds decrees contrary to human nature (*Rom. vii. 12, 13*). (2) It arraigns, convicts, and brings us in guilty of sin (*Rom. iii. 20*). (3) It denounces against us the sentence of condemnation (*Gal. iii. 10*). 2. As to ordinances, they were contrary, because—(1) They were almost infinite as to number, and most burdensome as to observance. Hence the appeal, *Gal. v. 1*. (2) By their signification and testimony. For although they seemed to promise the destruction of sin, yet there entered into them a confession rather than expiation thereof. **III. HOW IT IS MADE VOID.** 1. Universally and sufficiently as it respects God; because by the blood of Christ such satisfaction is made to God that according to His own justice He is engaged to acquit those debtors who flee by faith to the Deliverer. 2. Particularly and efficaciously when it is blotted out from the conscience of those who lay hold of God by faith (*Rom. v.*

1). There is no peace to a man who sees himself overwhelmed in debt and entangled by a bond; but when Christ's deliverance is accepted the soul enters into peace. 3. Notice the beautiful gradation. Not content with telling us we are forgiven, Paul subjoins that the handwriting is blotted out; but lest any should think that it is not so, but that a new charge may be raised, he adds it is "taken out of the way"; and lest it should be thought to be preserved somewhere, and may yet be preferred, he says it is nailed to the Cross, rent in pieces. Conclusion: We learn—1. From the handwriting. (1) Since every man through it is guilty of death, how dreadful is the condition of those who trample on the blood by which alone the handwriting can be blotted out. God will require from them the uttermost farthing. (2) We see the insane pride of those who think they can satisfy God, yea, pay Him more than is due by works of supererogation. But what need then of blotting out the handwriting by the Cross? 2. From its contrariety. (1) The depravity and corruption of our nature; for at its institution it was friendly and wholesome. (2) The error of those who would restore ceremonies and rob us of our liberty in Christ. 3. From the abolition. (1) Since it is deprived of its condemning force we infer that it still retains its directing force, and so we have not a licence to sin but a motive to obey (Luke i. 74, 75). (2) Since the comfort of a troubled conscience consists in its being blotted out, we must labour to maintain by faith not only that Christ has procured that but that it is blotted out as respects ourselves. A debtor does not consider himself safe until he has seen with his own eyes that his bond is cancelled. (*Ep. Davenant.*) *Our indictment cancelled by the Cross*:—Liberty is the way to true life for man. A slave has nothing to live for: but proclaim his freedom, and he becomes another being. So with the man whom God sets free. Quickening from God comes in forgiveness of sins. I. THE INDICTMENT AGAINST US—the law of God as expressed in the ten commandments and written in the heart (Rom. ii. 14). 1. Here we have man's moral obligation, of which men everywhere have been more or less conscious. Moral sense of the two great duties of love to God and our neighbour is everywhere diffused. The handwriting is so on every man's soul that he knows and feels that some things ought to be done while others are forbidden as wrong. Many attempt to efface the handwriting, as well as to defy it, but that only confirms the fact that it exists in all the fulness of its claim. 2. This handwriting is "against us" because we have broken it. The law is for the lawless, and its verdict is only against the sinful. It commands our supreme love to God, and we have not loved Him. This is the debt we owe to God as our Creator and Father; we have not paid it and now cannot. 3. It is also "contrary to us." The terms are not exactly equivalent. The one expresses silent condemnation, the other a positive hostility. A man may owe a debt he cannot pay, and this fact is an obligation against him, even though there be no positive demand for payment. But if by the process of "dunning" the debt is often brought before him, and he is unpleasantly reminded of it, then the obligation is not only against him, it is contrary to him: it disturbs his peace and fills him with dread. So the Divine law acting on the law of our mind is constantly reminding us of our obligation, and is hostile to our peace. Its spirituality is against us, for we are carnal; its purity, for we are unholy; its justice, for we have kept back God's due. Such is the indictment, "that every mouth may be stopped" (Rom. iii. 19). II. THE INDICTMENT CANCELLED. The verdict against sinful men is erased or wiped out. This idea often recurs in Scripture in reference to sin—"blot out all my iniquities." 2. It is taken out of the way; not that the law and moral obligation are abolished, but the verdict is removed so that it cannot be adduced for our condemnation. Literally it is "taken out of the midst," as if the handwriting had lain between God and His people—a barrier to their approach to Him, and to their peace with Him. 3. The means. Nailing to the cross and so destruction. Its condemning force was exhausted on Christ, so that it is powerless against all who are in Him. This is our discharge: the law has been fulfilled, and its finding against us for ever taken away. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The Cross the death of law*:—I. THE HANDWRITING ON BOND. 1. "Law" means primarily the ceremonial law which was being pressed on the Colossians. The early controversies on this matter are difficult for us to understand. It is harder to change customs than creeds, and religious observances live on, as every Maypole on a village green tells us, long after the beliefs which animated them are forgotten. So there was a party who refused the admittance of Gentile converts to the Church except through the old doorway of circumcision. This was the point at issue between Paul and these teachers. 2. But the modern distinction between moral and ceremonial had no existence in Paul's mind, nor in

the Old Testament, where we find the highest morality and the merest ritual interstratified. The law was a homogeneous whole. 3. And the principles laid down are true about all law. Law, as such, is dealt with by Christianity in the same way as the God-given code. 4. Law, Paul tells us, is antagonistic. It stands opposite, frowning at us and barring our road. (1) Is it then become our enemy because it tells us the truth? This conception is a strange contrast to the rapturous delight of Psalmists in it. Surely God's greatest gift to man is the knowledge of His will, and law is beneficent, a light, and a guide, and even its strokes are merciful. (2) Nevertheless the antagonism is very real. As with God, so with law—if we be against Him, He cannot but be against us. We make Him our dearest friend or our foe. The revelation of duty to which we are not inclined is ever unwelcome. Law is against us because—(a) It comes like a taskmaster bidding us do, but neither putting the inclination into our hearts nor the power into our hands. (b) The revelation of unfulfilled duty is the accusation of the defaulter. (c) It comes with threatenings and foretastes of penalty. Thus, as standard, accuser, and avenger, it is against us. (3) We all know this. Each of us has seen that apparition like the sword-bearing angel that Balaam saw, blocking our path when we wanted to “go forwardly in the way of our heart.” The law of the Lord should be “sweeter than honey,” &c., but the corruption of the best is the worst, and we can make it poison. Obeyed, it is as the chariot of fire to bear us heavenward; disobeyed, it is an iron car crushing all who set themselves against it. II. ITS DESTRUCTION IN THE CROSS. 1. The Cross ends the law's power of punishment. Paul believed that the burden and penalty of sin had been laid on Christ, and trusting ourselves to the power of that great sacrifice, the dread of punishment will fade from our hearts, and the law will have to draw the bolts of the prison and let the captive go free. 2. The Cross is the end of the law as ceremonial. The Jewish ritual had the prediction of the Great Sacrifice for its highest purpose. When the fruit has set there is no more need for petals. We have the reality and do not need the shadow. 3. The Cross is the end of the law as moral rule. Of course it is not meant that Christian men are freed from the obligations of morality, but that we are not bound to do “the things contained in the law” because they are there. Duty is duty now because we see the pattern of conduct and character in Christ. The weakness of law is that it has no power to get its commandments obeyed; but Christ puts His love in our hearts, and so we pass from the dominion of an external commandment into the liberty of an inward spirit. The long schism between duty and inclination is at an end. So a higher morality ought to characterize the partakers of the life of Christ. Law died with Christ on the cross that it might rise and reign in our inmost hearts. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Cancelled and nailed up.*—There is a beautiful oriental custom which illustrates the Atonement. When a debt had to be settled either by payment or forgiveness, the creditor took the cancelled bond and nailed it over the door of him who had owed it, that all passers by might see that it was paid. So there is the Cross, the door of grace, behind which a bankrupt world lies in hopeless debt to the law. See Jesus our bondman and brother, coming forth with a long list of our indebtedness in His hand. He lifts it up where God and angels and men may see it, and there as the nail goes through His hand it goes through the bond of our transgressions to cancel it for ever. Come to that Cross! Not in order that you may wash away your sins by your tears or atone for them by your good works, or efface them by your sophistries and self-deceptions. But come rather that you may read the long black list that is against you, and be pierced to your heart by sorrow that you have offended such a Being; and then that lifting up your eyes you may see God turning His eyes at that same cross at which you are looking, and saying, “I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions,” &c. (*New Testament Anecdotes.*) *The law is against sinners.*—There are stronger things in the world than force. There are powers more difficult to overcome than strong or brazen gates. Suppose we found a prisoner condemned to die, and locked up in his cell, and we were to ask ourselves how he could be saved from execution. There would appear great difficulty in getting him out of prison. That iron door, with its great bolt; that high window, with its guard of strong bars; those thick, strong walls; those heavy gates outside; that watchful jailer,—how impossible it seems to overcome them all! Yet these are not the only difficulties, nor the greatest. There is another thing, stronger than all these, holding the poor prisoner to death: there is the sentence of the law. For, unless he would himself become a criminal, no man dares to help the condemned one out. Get the sentence repealed, and the other difficulties are removed. (*J. Edmond, D.D.*)

Ver. 15. **Having spoiled principalities and powers**, or, having stripped off and put away the powers of evil. Christ took upon Himself our human nature with all its temptations (Heb. iv. 15). The powers of evil gathered about Him. Again and again they assailed Him, but each fresh assault ended in a new defeat. In the wilderness He was tempted by Satan; but Satan retired for a time baffled and defeated (Luke iv. 13). Through the voice of His chief disciple the temptation was renewed, and He was entreated to decline His appointed sufferings and death. Satan was again driven off (Matt. xvi. 23; comp. viii. 31). Then the last hour came. This was the great crisis of all, when the power of darkness made itself felt (Luke xxii. 53), when the prince of this world asserted his tyranny (John xii. 31). The final act in the conflict began with the agony in Gethsemane, and ended with the cross of Calvary. The victory was complete. The enemy of man was defeated. The powers of evil, which had clung like a Nessus robe about His humanity, were torn off and cast aside for ever. And the victory of man is involved in the victory of Christ. In His death we too are divested of the poisonous clinging garments of temptation, and sin, and death. For this image of the garments see Isa. lxiv. 6, but especially Zechariah iii. In this prophetic passage the image is used of His type and namesake, the Jesus of the Restoration, not in His own person, but as the High Priest and representative of a guilty, but cleansed and forgiven people, with whom He is identified. The "powers" specially meant are those of Eph. vi. 12. "Displayed" as a victor displays his captives or trophies in a triumphal procession. Nowhere does the word convey the idea of making an example, but signifies to display, publish, proclaim. "Boldly," not publicly, although the latter idea may be sometimes connected with the word as a secondary notion (John vii. 4). "Leading them in triumph," the same metaphor as in 2 Cor. ii. 14. Here, however, it is the defeated powers of evil; there the subjugated persons of men who are led in public, chained to the triumphal car of Christ. "In the Cross." The violence of the metaphor is its justification. The paradox of the crucifixion is thus placed in its strongest light—triumph in helplessness, glory in shame. The convict's gibbet is the victor's car. (*Bp. Lightfoot.*) *Christ triumphant*:—To the eye of reason the Cross is the centre of sorrow, the lowest depth of shame; to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness. How different, however, to the eye of faith—a token of glory, a field of triumph, the chariot in which Christ rode when He led captivity captive. I. **CHRIST MAKING A SPOIL OF PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS.** 1. The contest. Satan, leagued with sin and death, had made this world the home of woe. He found our first parents in Eden; they became his slaves. Yet the voice of mercy was heard even while the fetters were being rivetted—"Ye shall be free." The earth groaned and travailed in its bondage. In the fulness of time, the Deliverer came forth born of a woman. Then came the Temptation; eventually the Passion; at last the Cross. Hark how the Conqueror cries, "It is finished." Where are now His enemies? All defeated. 2. The division of the spoil. (1) He disarmed His enemies. Satan had in his hand a sharp sword called the Law. This was wrested from his hand. Death was deprived of his darts, which were broken in two, and the feather end returned that he might never destroy the ransomed. Sin, Satan's armour bearer, was despoiled of his shield. (2) Victors carry away all the treasures belonging to the vanquished. Satan had taken away all our possessions—Paradise with all its joy and peace—not that he could enjoy them—but Christ has gotten them all back. (3) Victors take away all the ornaments from the enemy, the crown and jewels. Satan's crown is taken away, his sovereignty is gone. He may tempt, but he cannot compel, threaten but not subdue. 3. What says this to us? If Christ has spoiled Satan, let us not be afraid to encounter him. (1) If he accuse you, reply, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (2) If he condemn you, ask, "Who is he that condemneth?" (3) If he threaten to divide you, shout, "I am persuaded," &c. (4) If he let loose your sins upon you, dash the hell dogs aside with this, "If any man sin," &c. (5) If death should threaten you, exclaim, "Oh death, where is thy sting?" &c. Your battles shall turn to your advantage. The more numerous they are the greater the spoil. Your tribulation shall work patience, &c. II. **THE TRIUMPH.** 1. Most of the old commentators refer this to the resurrection and the ascension; Paul refers it to the Cross, but the Cross as the ground of the ultimate triumph when Christ shall enter on His reign over an undisputed universe. 2. Picture this triumph. The pearly gates open, angels crowd on the battlements. (1) The vanguard of the redeemed approach the city. Abel comes in alone, and then follow the patriarchs, prophets,

heroes, of four thousand years. (2) The Prince of the House of David, with Satan, sin, and death in eternal captivity. (3) Then the great mass of His people—fathers, reformers, &c. (4) I might describe the mighty pictures at the end of the procession, for in the old Roman triumphs the deeds of the conqueror were depicted in paintings, the towns he had taken, the battles he had fought. I might present hell destroyed; heaven's gates opened by the golden lever of Christ's atonement; the grave despoiled. Conclusion: Where will you be? Among the captives or in the Conqueror's train? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The triumph of the Cross*:—I. WAS OVER THE POWERS OF EVIL. 1. The existence of evil is a painful fact, we meet with it everywhere. 2. Evil is embodied in invisible and potent personalities, called—(1) Principalities, because of their excellency, knowledge, and station. (2) Powers, because of the mighty influence they wield and the terrible havoc they work. They exist in vast numbers (2 Pet. iv. 2; Jude 6), and are the bitter foes of man (Eph. vi. 12). II. WAS ACHIEVED AFTER SEVERE CONFLICT. The conflict was—1. Continuous from the Fall to the Cross. 2. Fierce. 3. Deadly (Luke xxii. 53; John xii. 30). III. WAS SIGNAL AND COMPLETE. Lessons: 1. Christ has conquered the powers of evil. 2. To the believer ultimate victory is certain. 3. Keep up a brave heart in the fiercest conflict. (*G. Barlow.*) *Christ's victory*:—The shock that buried Lisbon in 1755 never ceased to vibrate till it reached the wilds of Scotland and the vineyards of Madeira. It was felt among the islands of the Grecian Archipelago, and it changed the level of the solitary lakes that sleep beneath the shadows of the North Alps. Even so the shock that Satan's kingdom sustained when Christianity was established will not cease to vibrate till it move the whole world. (*Christ and other Masters.*) *Believers share the triumph of Christ*:—"I belong to death's Master," was the expression of a Christian woman lately, who at length died of internal cancer. She was attended by a Roman Catholic nurse, who was very much astonished at the calm patience and peace of the poor sufferer. A lady called to see her one day. The door was opened by the nurse. "How is Mrs. Bristow to-day?" inquired the visitor. "She is very ill, sir," was the reply. The nurse then gave the following details:—"Last night she was seized with violent pain, and I thought she was dying. I said to her, 'You are dying; shall I send for a clergyman to prepare you for death?' 'Oh, no,' she said, 'I want no minister, for I am ready to die at any moment.' 'But,' I said, 'are you not afraid to die?' 'No, indeed, not a bit,' she replied. 'Tell me why you are not afraid to die, when you have not been prepared by your clergyman, nor received the rites of your Church?' I said. 'Because,' she replied, joyously, 'I belong to death's Master. I am a poor sinner saved by grace, and His blood has washed away my sin, and secured me a title to glory.'" *The triumph of Christ*:—I do not admire Napoleon, except in the matter of his cool courage, but for that he was noteworthy. They always represent him in the midst of the battle with folded arms. His eagle eye is on the conflict, but he is motionless as a statue. Every soldier in the imperial army felt that victory was sure, for the captain was so self-possessed. If he had been hurrying too and fro, rushing here, there, and everywhere, and making a great fuss about everything, they would have inferred that defeat was impending. But see him yonder! All is well. He knows what he is at. It is all right, for he does not strive, nor cry, nor cause his voice to be heard; he is calm, for he can see that all is well. There stands the Crucified this day, upon the vantage ground, at the right hand of God, and He surveys the battle-field in calm expectancy until His enemies are made His footstool. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 16-17. *Let no man therefore judge you.—Christian liberty*:—I. THE POINTS IN WHICH THAT LIBERTY IS TO BE EXERCISED. 1. Those which, in addition to circumcision, were principally in question were—(1) Meat and drink, which refers to unclean things, things offered to idols, and perhaps the Nazarite vow. As there were few Jewish regulations as to drink, probably other ascetic practices were in question. (2) Sacred seasons—annual festivals, the monthly feast of the new moon, and the weekly Sabbath. 2. The relation of the Gentile converts to these was really the question whether Christianity was to be more than a Jewish sect, and the main force which, under God, settled the contest was the vehemence and logic of Paul. 3. He lays down the ground on which the whole matter was to be settled. They are a "shadow," &c. "Coming events cast their shadows before." The great work of Christ whose "goings forth have been from everlasting," may be thought of as having set out from the Throne as soon as time

was, like the beams of some far-off star that have not yet reached a dark world. The light from the Throne is behind Him as He advances across the centuries, and the shadow is thrown far in front. II. This involves THE PURELY PROPHETIC AND SYMBOLIC CHARACTER OF THE OLD TESTAMENT ORDER. 1. Sacrifice, altar, priest, temple, spoke of Christ. (1) The distinctions of meats were meant to familiarize men with the conceptions of purity and impurity, and so, by stimulating conscience to work the need of a Purifier. (2) The yearly feasts set forth various aspects of Christ's work, and the Sabbath showed in outward form the rest into which He leads His people who cease from their own works and wear His yoke. And all are like outriders who precede a prince on his progress, and as they gallop through sleeping villages rouse them with the cry, "the king is coming." 2. And when the king has come where are the heralds? When the reality, who wants the shadows? And if that which threw the shadow forward has arrived, how shall the shadow be visible too? III. Therefore THE CESSATION OF ALL THESE OBSERVANCES IS INVOLVED IN THEIR PROPHETIC CHARACTER. 1. The practical conclusion is not, "let no man observe these any more," but "let no man judge you" about them. He does not quarrel with the rites, but with men insisting on them. 2. His own practice is the best commentary on his meaning. When they said to him, "You must circumcise Titus," he said, "Then I will not." When nobody tried to compel him he circumcised Timothy to avoid scandals. 3. In times of transition, wise supporters of the new will not be in a hurry to break with the old. The brown sheaths remain on the twigs after the tender green leaf has burst from within them, but there is no need to pull them off, for they will drop presently. 4. The bearing of Paul's principles on the religious observance of Sunday. (1) The obligation of the Jewish Sabbath has passed away, but the institution of a weekly day of rest is put in Scripture independently and prior to the Mosaic institution. That is the natural conclusion from the narrative in Genesis, the fact that Sabbath was made for man, *i.e.*, for the race, and the traces of a pre-Mosaic Sabbath, *e.g.*, in Assyria. It is a physical and moral necessity, and that is a mistaken benevolence which on the plea of culture or amusement for the many, compels the labour of the few. (2) The gradual growing up of the practice of observing "the Lord's day" is in accordance with the whole spirit of the New Covenant, which has next to nothing to say about externals, but leaves the new life to shape itself. The necessity of a day of rest is not less now than at the first. I distrust the spirituality which professes that all life is a Sabbath, and therefore holds itself absolved from special seasons of worship; but it is better to think of the day as a great gift for the highest purposes, than to keep it as a mere commandment. (*A. MacLaren, D.D.*) *The ceremonial and the real in religion*:—Ceremonial in religion—I. CAN FORM NO JUST BASIS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONDEMNATION. "Let no man judge you." The essence of religion does not consist in the outward form, but the inward spirit. II. IS TYPICAL OF THE REAL. Rites have their place in the culture of the race, and in their proper sphere are important. They sketch the outlines of truths, and are valuable only as they conduct to the realities they predict and typify. III. IS ABOLISHED AND RENDERED NULL AND VOID BY THE REAL. It is a dangerous infatuation to snatch at the shadow when we may embrace the substance. Lessons: 1. Learn to exercise forbearance in externals. 2. Christ alone can satisfy the deepest craving of the soul. (*G. Barlow.*) *The shadow and the substance*:—"Therefore" marks the connection. The handwriting is destroyed, Christians are free; why then go back to the elements of bondage. I. THE ADMONITION. 1. Eating and drinking have reference to the dietetic injunctions of Mosaicism. These had a strong hold of the Jewish mind (Acts x. 9-16). The distinctions of days point collectively to the periodical feasts and sacred seasons. And the idea was that all this was essential to salvation, and so obligatory on Gentile Christians. 2. Against this notion Paul asserts the great principle of Christian liberty. Such things ought never to be a criterion of piety. Yet how strong is the tendency to-day to forbid certain kinds of food at certain seasons, and to insist on saints' days. The doctrine here is that one kind of food is as lawful, and one day as sacred, as another. All these distinctions have passed away, and are no longer binding. That we are at liberty to observe certain days, such as those on which we commemorate the great redemptive facts, *e.g.*, Christmas, Easter, &c., there can be no doubt, but they are not obligatory (Rom. xiv. 6). 3. The great practical question is that which relates to the Sabbath. The seventh day was long kept along with the first; but this was condemned as Judaizing by the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 364). The apostle declares that a Christian's true piety is not to be judged by his regard of the

Jewish Sabbath any more than to the other festivals. That was a shadow of the Lord's day. That a seventh portion of our time should be specially given to God is based on considerations as old as creation; but the foundation and character of the Lord's day are altogether changed from those of the Jewish Sabbath. Its true principle is allegiance to a living Saviour whose resurrection on that day it commemorates, as laying the foundation of a new spiritual creation. The Saviour's appearances on that day subsequent to His resurrection, and the usage of the apostles, hallow the first day of the week, and make it with a Divine fitness and beauty the Christian's day of rest. II. THE ARGUMENT. The coming Saviour as the Sun of Righteousness, in the establishment of the Jewish economy, shung a shadow of His approaching advent and dispensation down on the descendants of Abraham, that they might walk in it, and conserve the worship and truth of God. As a shadow it was—1. Predicted and foretold that something grander was coming. 2. It was prefigurative. A shadow is a likeness, however faint, and the truths embodied in Christ were dimly typified in Judaism. 3. But as a shadow is evanescent, it was made to vanish away when that which was perfect had come. Then it answered its purpose and disappeared. The reality was reached in the Son of God. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Religion, freedom, and joy*:—Religion is not like the prophet's roll, sweet as honey when it was in his mouth, but as bitter as gall in his belly. Religion is no sullen stoicism, no sour Pharisaism: it does not consist in a few melancholy passions, in some dejected looks or depressions of mind; but it consists in freedom, love, peace, life, and power; the more it comes to be digested into our lives, the more sweet and lovely we shall find it to be. Those spots and wrinkles which corrupt minds think they see in the face of religion are, indeed, nowhere else but in their own deformed and misshapen apprehensions. It is no wonder, when a defiled fancy comes to be the glass, if you have an unlovely reflection. (*John Smith.*)

Vers. 18-19. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility. —It is evident that "humility" here is degraded and discoloured by the tinge which is given it by its close connection with the words "in a voluntary." This is a rendering in the LXX. of a Hebrew word signifying "taking a delight in, having one's own inclination gratified in." *θέλω* is used of that which a man does of his own notion, and passes over into the notion of sheer self-will and arbitrariness. Thus we learn the important lesson that virtues and graces are too delicate for the rough admeasurement of mere hard and fast moral lines. Their beauty and acceptability depart, and may even turn into their opposites. Wilful self-complacency in humility is censured by St. Paul as inconsistent with the sweet unconsciousness of true humility. It becomes the worst pride, or the most abject meanness—the pride or the meanness which apes humility. The word "will worship" in ver. 23 shows that a strong sense of *θέλω*, as intense self-will, was present to St. Paul's mind. There as here, self-will imparts a contamination to the virtue with which it is associated. Humility and worship themselves become pride and superstition. Hence in Luke i. 48 the word should be rendered "low estate," not humility. One who says, "I am humble," is not humble. Mary does not profess humility, she practices it. (*Bp. Alexander.*) *Speculative and practical error*:—I. THE SPECULATIVE SIDE OF THE COLOSSIAN HERESY. In the Authorized Version the apostle is made to bring a charge of presumption against the false teachers "intruding into the things which he hath not seen." But this is a strange argument for one whose whole walk was by faith and not by sight, and who would hardly count it an answer to a professed revelation to say "you are intruding into that which you have not seen, and therefore you cannot know" with modern materialists. But this difficulty is removed in the Revised Version, which, on high authority, omits the "not," and inverts the argument. Again, the Greek word "intruding into" means "dwelling in" or "taking his stand upon," and the charge now becomes that of self-complacent self-conceit. 1. This man has "seen things," the exact equivalent of our "a man has views," a phrase of which obscure thinkers are very fond. The Colossian speculator may have professed to see visions and revelations of the Lord, and to have come back from the third heaven to reveal them; or, if not this, to have seen things in the tone of an arrogant thinker, who gives his notions the style of certainties, verified with the eye of the mind, "dwelling in" them with complacent satisfaction as the whole of truth. 2. Or we may take the marginal reading, "taking his stand upon" his views; regarding them as land which he has won with his intellectual bow and

spear, and from which he can go on to move or conquer the universe. 3. These new thinkers spoke much of the mind, made knowledge the bait of their enticements, endeavoured to establish an aristocracy of intellect within that Christian society which was free to all comers, and in which the wise and prudent are set side by side with babes. How striking is St. Paul's language, "idly inflated with the mind of his flesh." So far from being edified into the spiritual realm it was merely puffed up, and had its moving power in the repudiated sphere of matter. That Paul would so describe all so-called modern thought which sets aside Christ is certain. II. We pass on to verse 23 to the PRACTICAL SIDE OF THE NEW HERESY. 1. Here we have its treatment of matter, how its teachers sought by ceremonial prohibitions (ver. 21) to counteract the deadly influence of sense in spirit, and to mortify the body as an enemy of the spiritual life. It was a plausible, and perhaps, in its origin, a well-intentioned effort. It was nobler than that which treats matter as of no moment. But the two perversions have one root. Asceticism and licence both rob the body of its dignity as the servant of the spirit. 2. St. Paul admits that the ascetic rules have a show of wisdom; they speak plausibly, and promise largely by their will worship, *i.e.*, their religion of self-imposed observances; by their humility, *i.e.*, their obsequiousness; and by their severity to the body, *i.e.*, their mortifying restrictions. 3. Thus far both versions agree. But now the Authorized Version says, "not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh." This leaves out a particle which demands a contrast. But without this is it in accordance with St. Paul's teaching to blame a system for not satisfying the flesh? Indeed, the Greek word is "indulgence." But the Revised Version has inserted the particle of antithesis, and reads, "but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh." The language is borrowed from the medical profession. What is good for it? What is a valuable remedy for such and such a disease? Indulgence of the flesh is the disease; can asceticism cure it? St. Paul says no! It sounds well, professes loudly, but has no real value. 4. Rules of abstinence, regulations as to food or drink—lawful, indeed, but from which it is an act of religion to abstain—have a show of wisdom; they point to a terrible evil and profess to cure it; they are well sounding words, "temperance" and the like; they talk of the value of humility in bending the neck to discipline. St. Paul does not deny that the conquest of the body is good, and that the means have something to say for themselves; but he declares as a man of large experience who has tried all means, and who is taught of God that all such regulations will fail. III. THE TRUE PRINCIPLE OF CHRISTIAN THINKING AND LIVING. 1. In Christ Jesus are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. They who do not hold fast the Head therefore, whatever they may think or see or dream, cannot but be puffed up and not edified. 2. In Christ with whom our life is hid in God (chap. iii. 1) can alone be found the secret of the victory over the flesh which is the professed object of every system of ethics. If ye are dead what need of "touch not," &c.? If ye are risen the chains of flesh shall fall off by the influence of the spiritual life. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The angels and the Head*:—I. THE WARNING. 1. "Let no man rob you of your prize." The metaphor is that of the race or wrestling ground; the judge is Christ, the reward is the crown, not of fading bay leaves, but of sprays from the "tree of life" which dower with blessedness the brows round which they are wreathed. The tendency of the heresy is to rob them of this. No names were mentioned, but the portrait of the robber is drawn with four rapid but accurate strokes of the pencil. (1) "Delighting in humility and the worshipping of angels"—(a) The humility has not a genuine ring about it. Self-conscious humility in which a man takes delight is not the real thing. A man who knows that he is humble and is self-complacent about it, glancing out of the corners of his downcast eyes at any mirror where he can see himself, is not humble at all. "The devil's darling vice is the pride that apes humility." (b) So very humble were these people that they would not venture to pray to God. The utmost they could do was to lay hold of the lowest link of a long chain of angel mediators in hope that the vibration might run upwards through all the links, and perhaps reach the throne at last. Such fantastic abasement which would not take God at His word, nor draw near to Him through Christ, was the very height of pride. (2) "Dwelling in the things he hath seen," *i.e.*, by visions, &c. The charge against the false teachers was of "walking in a vain show" of unreal imaginations. (3) "Vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." The self-conscious humility was only skin deep, and covered the utmost intellectual arrogance. The false teacher was like a blown bladder, dropsical from conceit of "intellectual ability" which was after all only the instrument of the flesh, the

sinful self. Of course, such could have no grip of Christ, from whom such tempers were sure to detach. (4) Therefore, the damning indictment closes with "not holding the head." 2. The special forms of these errors are gone; but the tendencies which underlay them are as rampant as ever. (1) The worship of angels is dead, but we are often tempted to think that we are too sinful to claim our portion of the promises. The spurious humility is by no means out of date, which knows better than God whether He can forgive, and grasps at others as well as Christ, the one Mediator. (2) We do not see visions and dream dreams, except that here and there some one is led astray by "spiritualism," but plenty of us attach more importance to our speculations than to the clear revelation of God in Christ. The "unseen world" has for many an unwholesome attraction. The Gnostic spirit is still among us which despises the foundation truths of the gospel as milk for babes, and values its baseless artificial speculations about subordinate matters which are unrevealed because they are subordinate, and fascinating to some minds because unrevealed, far above the truths which are clear because they are vital, and inspired because clear. (3) And a swollen self-conceit is, of all things, the most certain to keep a man away from Christ. We must feel our utter helplessness and need before we shall lay hold of Him; and whatever slackens our hold of Christ tends to deprive us of the final prize. "Hold fast that thou hast; let no man take thy crown." II. THE SOURCE AND MANNER OF ALL TRUE GROWTH is set forth in order to enforce the warning and to emphasize the need of holding the head. 1. Christ is not merely represented as supreme and sovereign, but as the source of spiritual life. 2. That life which flows through the head is diffused through the whole body by the various and harmonious action of all the parts. The body is "supplied and knit together," i.e., the functions of nutrition and compaction into a whole are performed by the "joints and bands," in which last word are included muscles, nerves, tendons. Their action is the condition of growth, but the Head is the source of all. Churches have been bound together by other bonds, such as creeds, polity, nationality; but an external bond is only like a rope round a bundle of faggots. 3. The blessed results of supply and unity are effected through the action of the various parts. If each organ is in healthy action the body grows. There is diversity in offices; the same life is light in the eyes, beauty in the cheek, strength in the hand, thought in the brain. The effect of Christianity is to heighten individuality, and to give to each man his own proper "gift from God." The perfect light is the blending of all colours. 4. A community where each member thus holds firmly by the Head will increase with the increase of God. There is an increase not of God. These heretical teachers were swollen with dropsical self-conceit. The individual may increase in apparent knowledge, in volubility, in visions and speculations, in so-called Christian work; the Church may increase in members, wealth, influence, &c., and it may not be sound growth, but proud flesh that needs the knife. (*A. McLaren, D.D.*) *The seductive peril of a false philosophy*:—A false philosophy—I. THREATENS TO ROB THE BELIEVER OF HIS REWARD. Many erroneous opinions may be held without invalidating salvation; but any error that depreciates our estimate of Christ, and interrupts the advance of our Christian life, is a robbery. II. ADVOCATES THE MOST PRESUMPTUOUS AND PERILOUS SPECULATIONS. 1. It affects a spurious humility. God is unknowable to the limited powers of man, so it reasons. But this humility was voluntary, self-induced, and was in reality another form of spiritual pride. 2. It invents a dangerous system of angelolatry. 3. It pretends to a knowledge of the mysterious. Locke says a work in the drawer of a cabinet might as well pretend to guess at the construction of the universe, as man venture to speculate about the unseen world. III. IGNORES THE DIVINE SOURCE OF ALL SPIRITUAL INCREASE. 1. Christ is the great Head of the Church—the centre of its unity, the source of its life, authority, and influence. 2. The Church is vitally and essentially united to Christ. 3. The vital union of the Church with Christ is the condition of spiritual increase. Lessons: A false philosophy—1. Distorts the grandest truths. 2. Substitutes for truth the most perilous speculations. 3. Against its teachings be ever on your guard. (*G. Barlow.*) *Angel worship*:—I. THE APOSTLE BRANDS THE SEDUCERS AND CONCLUDES THAT NO REGARD IS TO BE PAID TO THEM. 1. Because in sacred things they arrogated to themselves, by no right whatever, a power of determining as the judges were accustomed in contests. These voluntary umpires decreed the reward of eternal life to none who were unwilling to subscribe to their doctrines. Therefore, as St. Paul struck at this usurpation, we must understand that no such power is granted to man that he should determine anything in religion of his own

will; but is bound to judge according to Scripture (Isa. viii. 20). Hence estimate Romish tyranny which claims this very power. 2. They abused their power to deceive Christians. A director of the games, if he should order any one to run outside the course, would deprive him of his prize; because he would never that way arrive at the goal. So they who direct Christians to seek salvation apart from Christ, endeavour to beguile them of their reward (Heb. iii. 14). This condemnation rests on all who would lead us from the simplicity of Christ. II. He shows IN WHAT INSTANCE THEY ABUSED THEIR USURPED AUTHORITY. The foolish lowliness of mind which would seek the mediation of angels rather than that of Christ, is rebuked because Christ is more united to us than the angels (Rom. v. 2; Heb. iv. 16; Eph. iii. 12). 1. Because from this and similar places there arises between us and the Papists a great controversy about the worship of angels and deceased saints who are equal to the angels (Luke xx. 36); let us see with whom the truth lies. (1) Religious worship, whether it be called *latría* or *dulia*, is given to God alone, and not to angels or saints. "Religion," says Cicero, "is that which is comprised in the pious worship of the gods," and Hilary says that "religion paid to the creature is accursed." With this Scripture agrees (Deut. vi. 13; Gal. iv. 8; Rev. xix. 10). The foundation of religious worship is infinite excellence apprehended under the consideration of our first cause and chief good; it is not a sufficient reason therefore, for offering to them, that angels and saints are endowed with supernatural gifts, or procure for us many good things, unless they are the first and chief cause to us of our chief good. (2) The Papists ascribe to angels and even to saints supreme religious worship no less than these seducers here censured. (a) Prayer is an act of *latría* or highest worship; for where we pray we acknowledge that its object can hear, deliver, and answer (Psa. l. 15). But this is offered to saints. (b) To make a vow to another is an act of *latría*, due to God alone (Isa. xix. 21; Psa. l. 14). But vows are made to angels and saints. (c) To erect a house of prayer, to raise altars and offer incense upon them to any one is to pay Divine honour to him (Exod. xxx. 37; Matt. xxi. 13). But this is done wholesale by Rome to the angels and saints. 2. Paul rejects this doctrine, because (1) it proceeded from those who are accustomed rashly to invent and speak about matters unknown to them (1 Tim. i. 7). For they cannot trace angel or saint worship to the Word of God, or learn it from the example of prophets or apostles. Hence we may infer—(a) That their bold curiosity is not to be endured who intrude themselves into the determining of things, the investigation of which surpasses human wit (Rom. xii. 3). (b) Concerning religious matters nothing should be determined without a sure foundation, i.e., the Word of God, for whatever things we see relating to our salvation we find here. He who obtrudes anything not found there, hath not seen it but imagined it. (c) They, therefore, exercise tyranny over the Church who anathematize all who reject commandments of men for articles of faith. (2) The authors of this doctrine are puffed up with pride, and thence presume that their inventions are the dictates of truth. The fleshly mind denotes the animal man, or perspicacity, unenlightened by the Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 14). (*Bp. Davenant.*) *False confidences*:—One of the saddest incidents connected with the disastrous fire at Chicago is that so many trusted not only their goods, but their lives, to buildings that were regarded as fireproof, and that they perished together. Dr. Goodall records similar incidents connected with the great fire at Constantinople in 1831, and makes a suggestive reflection: "We, like many others, fared the worse for living in houses which were considered fire-proof. In the great burning day may no such false confidence prove our ruin." (*Christian Age.*) *Humility before God*:—Thomas à Becket wore coarse sackcloth made of goats' hair from the arms to the knees, but his outer garments were remarkable for splendour and extreme costliness, to the end that, thus deceiving human eyes, he might please the sight of God. (*Hoveden.*) *How self-will may be lost*:—A person who had long practised many austerities, without finding any comfort or change of heart, was once complaining to the Bishop of Alst of his state. "Alas!" said he, "self-will and self-righteousness follow me everywhere. Only tell me when you think I shall learn to leave self. Will it be by study, or prayer, or good works?" "I think," replied the bishop, "that the place where you lose self will be that where you find your Saviour." *Not holding the Head*.—*The union between head and body*:—The discoveries of modern physiology have invested the apostle's language with far greater distinctness and force than it can have worn to his own contemporaries. Any exposition of the nervous system more especially reads like a commentary on his image of the relations between the body and the head. At every turn we meet

with some fresh illustration which kindles it with a flood of light. The volition communicated from the brain to the limbs, the sensations of the extremities telegraphed back to the brain, the absolute mutual sympathy between the head and the members, the instantaneous paralysis ensuing on the interruption of continuity, all these add to the completeness and life of the image. Bearing in mind the diversity of opinion among ancient physiologists, we cannot fail to be struck in the text, not only with the correctness of the image, but also with the propriety of the terms; and we are forcibly reminded that among the apostle's most intimate companions at this time was one whom he calls "the beloved physician" (iv. 14). (*Bp. Lightfoot.*) *The Head and the body*.—I. THE HEAD SUPPLIES ALL THINGS NECESSARY TO ITS MEMBERS. In worshipping angels the seducers diminished the dignity of Christ, for they took away from Him the prerogative of the Head, and incorrectly judged of His virtue and sufficiency. For Christ, the God Man, is Head of the Church. If they acknowledged Him as God they would seek from Him alone grace and salvation; if as man, they would not solicit angels to intercede for them, since Christ, our Elder Brother, sits continually at the right hand of God. Hence we may infer—1. That they who are concerned about their salvation, ought never to turn their eyes from their Head in whom alone is salvation. 2. Christians are seduced to do so, and do not hold the Head, whenever they embrace new doctrines, worship, means of salvation never prescribed by Christ and His apostles (1 Tim. vi. 3, 4). II. THE HEAD BINDS AND KNOTS TOGETHER THE SAME TO ITSELF AND TO EACH OTHER. 1. The effect obtained from cleaving to Christ is that the whole body has by joints nourishment ministered. (1) The joints are—(a) The Spirit of Christ (Rom. viii. 9). As that member is not united to the head which is not animated by the same essence as the head itself, neither is that Christian united to Christ who lacks His Spirit. (b) The gifts of the Spirit, *e.g.*, faith by which as a secondary mean we are united to Christ, and receive the remission of sins and all the grace promised in the gospel (John vi. 35). (2) The whole body thus adhering to Christ hath nourishment ministered. The Greeks called him "minister" who supplied all the apparatus to the leaders of the sacred dances. By a metaphor derived from this he is said "to supply the expenditure" who furnishes to another the things necessary for any particular object; and the word used by Paul signifies the doing of this copiously and abundantly by Christ, who supplies all the means of salvation. For whether we regard the grace making grateful, or grace gratuitously given, Christ abundantly supplies both to His Church by His Spirit. (a) Of that grace which has reference to justification and sanctification, Paul testifies (Rom. viii. 10; 2 Cor. viii. 9) that it is ministered to all His members by Christ. (b) The same with that which relates to the edification of the Church (1 Cor. xii. 7, &c.; Eph. iv. 11). (3) We may here observe—(a) That in the whole body of the Church is not a single dry member, but all are watered by streams of grace flowing from the Head. (b) To adhere to the Pope as a visible head, does not constitute membership, but adherence to Christ. Therefore the ungodly are not true members, to whatever visible Church joined, unless by the joints of the Spirit and faith they are united to Christ. (c) As to doctrine and salvation the Church is supplied from its Head, not one member from another. (d) The Papists err, who will have the Church to draw the doctrine of salvation, not alone from Christ, but from tradition; who will have her receive holiness, merit, &c., not from Christ alone, but the saints. If this be so, the text is not true. 2. By virtue of the Head, the whole body is knit together (Rom. xii. 5). The "bands" are the same—the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. For the same Spirit who unites us to Christ is the principal band by which we are united to each other (1 Cor. xii. 13), and after He is infused into all the ligaments of the Church, He enkindles in every one that excellent gift of charity which is also the firmest bond of cohesion. The other ties are diversities of gifts and callings emanating from the same Spirit (Eph. iv. 11, 12). III. THE FRUIT OF THIS UNION. 1. While united to Christ by faith, and knit together by love, the whole body of the Church increaseth in faith, love, holiness, and all saving grace. This growth is said to be of God as He is the primary agent (1 Cor. iii. 6), and because it tends to His glory as the ultimate end. 2. Observe of this increase—(1) As there is a growth in the natural body in all its parts, so in the mystical body all the members increase spiritually. (2) Not every increase is approved. A member of the body is not said to increase when it is inflated with any bad humour. So the piety of a Christian man is not increased when his mind is filled with tradition and will worship, which proceed not from the Spirit, but from the empty mind of ignorance and pride. (3) Be not deceived by

that incongruous mass of opinions of the Romish Church. The kingdom of the Pope may be increased, viz., by temporal things, traditions, superstitions, not by the knowledge of God and piety. (*Bp. Davenant.*) (See also on chap. i. 18, and Eph. iv. 16.)

Vers. 20-23. *If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world.*—Two final tests of the false teaching:—I. THE CHRISTIAN'S DEATH WITH CHRIST. 1. To Paul the Cross of Christ was the altar on which the oblation had been offered which took away his sin, and because of that the law of his own life, and the power which assimilated him to his Lord. (1) We talk of an old man being dead to youthful follies and passions and ambitions, and we mean that they have ceased to interest him, that he is separated from, and insensible to them. So if we have got hold of Christ as our Saviour, that will deaden us to all which was our life. (2) Strong emotion, too, makes us insensible to things around. Many a man amid the excitement of the battlefield "receives, but recks not of the wound." Absorption of thought and interest leads to "absence of mind" when surroundings are entirely unfelt. Higher tastes drive out lower ones, as some great stream turned into a new channel will sweep it clear of mud. So if we are joined to Christ He will fill our souls with strong emotions and interests which will deaden our sensitiveness to things around. 2. To what shall we die if we are Christians? (1) To sin (Rom. vi. 11). (2) To self (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). (3) To the law (Rom. vii. 6). (4) To the world (Gal. vi. 14). Here it is to "the rudiments of the world" (ver. 8). Elementary precepts, fit for babes, moving in the region of the material. Why then, triumphantly asks Paul, do you subject yourselves to ordinances (ver. 4) such as "handle not, nor taste, nor touch," vehement reiterations of the ascetic teachers with an increasing intolerance—don't lay hold of, don't touch with the tip of your finger. So asceticism grows by indulgence. And, then, the whole thing is out of date, and a misapprehension of the genius of Christianity. Man's work in religion is ever to confine it to the surface. Christ's work is to focus it on the inner man of the heart, knowing that if that be right the visible will come right. 3. Paul goes on to show (ver. 22) that these meats and drinks, of which so much is said, are perishable. You cannot use them without using them up. Is it fitting for men who have died with Christ to this perishable world to make so much of its perishing things? But we may widen the thought so as to make it include sybaritic luxury as well as asceticism. Dives in his purple and the monk in his hair shirt, both make too much of "what they should put on." The one with his feasts and the other with his fasts, both think too much of what they shall eat and drink. The man who lives on high with his Lord puts all these things in their right place. There are things which do not perish with the using. All Christlike graces grow with exercise. 4. The final inconsistency between the Christian position and these practical errors is glanced at in "after the commandments of men." A quotation, used by our Lord, from Isa. xxix. 13. It is not fitting for those in union with Christ to be under the authority of men. Here is the true democracy of the Christian society—"Ye were redeemed with a price; be not servants of men." We are bound to take our orders from one Master. II. THE FAILURE OF THE FALSE TEACHING TO ATTAIN ITS END (ver. 23). 1. The apostle admits that it had a show of wisdom, and was very fascinating. It had the look—(1) Of devotion and zealous worship; but on closer examination it is the indulgence of the will and not surrender to God. They are not worshipping Him as He has appointed, and therefore not at all. Whether offered in a cathedral or a barn, in a cope or a fustian jacket, such service is not accepted. (2) Of humility. It looked very humble to say, We cannot suppose that such flesh-encompassed creatures can have fellowship with God; but it was a great deal more humble to take Him at His word and allow him to settle possibilities. (3) Of discipline. Any asceticism is a great deal more to men's taste than abandoning self. They will rather stick hooks in their backs than give up their sins or yield up their wills. Our poor human nature travesties Christ's solemn command to deny ourselves into doing something unpleasant to recommend ourselves to God. 2. The conclusive condemnation, however, lies in the fact that they "are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh" (see on ver. 18). This is one great end of all moral and spiritual discipline, and if practical regulations do not secure it they are worthless. By "flesh" is meant the entire unrenewed self which thinks, and feels, and wills apart from God. To indulge and satisfy it is to die, to slay and suppress it is to live. A man may be keeping the whole round of "ordinances" and seven devils may be in his heart. They distinctly tend to foster some of the "works of

the flesh," such as self-righteousness and uncharitableness, and they as distinctly fail to subdue any of them. A man may stand on a pillar like Simon Stylites for years and be none the better. The world and the flesh are willing that Christianity should shrivel into a religion of prohibitions and ceremonials, because all manner of vices and meannesses may thrive and breed under them like scorpions under stones. There is only one thing that will put the collar on the neck of the animal within us, and that is the power of the indwelling Christ. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Ritualism described and condemned*.—I. THE APPEAL.—1. Was to their position and profession as Christians. They had died with Christ, and, therefore, to that which was fulfilled in His death. 2. Was based upon their Christian liberty. What had they to do with those things from which they were delivered by Christ's death—the mere material alphabet of religion? It was as ridiculous as if an educated man should go back to his spelling book; or a liberated slave fear his task master. 3. Described the character of the bondage of which they were in danger. "Touch not," &c., are not Paul's words, but the mottoes of the heretical teachers, and refer to distinctions in meats and drinks. True Christians ought to be far above the region of such carnal commandments, for to them all things are pure, and every creature of God good. Moreover, they perish in the using, and how then can they benefit the soul? (Rom. xiv. 17; 1 Cor. viii. 8). And lastly they are based on human authority, whereas the Christian owes allegiance to none but Christ. II. THE ARGUMENT. 1. The ordinances are pretentious. They have a show of wisdom. (1) In will worship, or some mode of worship God has not required. (2) In humility. But it is an affectation of lowliness which cannot look up directly to God in Christ, but thinks it necessary to find some subordinate mediators. Such prevails now. (3) In neglecting the body. The fleshly tabernacle may indeed be weakened without the slightest effect in conquering any sinful tendency in the soul. (4) How these rudiments of the world had a show of wisdom is not difficult to see. To go beyond the Divine requirement in self-denial, and do works of supererogation has the appearance of magnanimity. 2. These ordinances are really worthless. (1) Negatively—"Not in any honour"—they are of no spiritual efficacy. (2) Positively—they gratify the flesh, and prop up the fleshly mind with notions of its self-righteousness and sufficiency. Lessons: 1. The vanity and error of asceticism. 2. The sacredness of Christian liberty. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The ceremonial in religion*.—I. IS SIMPLY ELEMENTARY. "The rudiments of the world." It is in its nature transitory and imperfect. It conveys knowledge but in part; and when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part is done away. II. IS UNWORTHY THE SUBMISSION OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER. The believer is liberated from the slavery of the ceremonial. III. IN ITS MAIN FEATURES IS UNIVERSALLY THE SAME. 1. It is the same in its dictatorial prohibitions. "Touch not," &c. 2. It is the same in its undue exaltation of the external and the transitory, "Which perish," &c. 3. It is the same in its human origin. "After the commandments and doctrines of men." The ceremonial in religion is an accumulation of the commandments and doctrines of men. Depending on human authority, it has no value in itself; and when it is made obligatory in order to salvation, it is an insult to Christ, and an intolerable servitude to man. IV. CAN NEVER SATISFY THE MANY-SIDED WANTS OF HUMANITY. 1. It pretends to a wisdom it does not possess. (1) In self-imposed methods of worship. The enthusiast for the ceremonial argues that he who only does what God positively demands does only what is common; but he who goes beyond reaches a higher degree of saintliness. (2) In the affectation of a spurious humility. It is a pretence of wisdom to renounce all worldly splendour, and profess to live in poverty and seclusion. (3) In an unjustifiable indifference to bodily wants. The body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and is to be honoured, and all its just wants satisfied, in order that its best powers may be employed in the service of God. But the abuse of the body in starvation and neglect is a folly and a sin. 2. It is of no value in preventing the indulgence of the flesh. "Not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh." The radical error of the ascetic lies in his belief that evil resides in matter. Not the body, but in the soul is the source of sin. (*G. Barlow.*) *Religion does not consist in bodily neglect*.—John Wesley, before his conversion, anxiously seeking rest for his soul, proposed to himself a solitary life in one of the Yorkshire dales. His wise mother interposed, admonishing him prophetically "that God had better work for him to do." He travelled some miles to consult "a serious man." "The Bible knows nothing of a solitary religion," says this good man, and Wesley turned about his face toward that great career which was to make his history a part of the history of his country and of the world. (*R. Stevens.*)

The soul's true freedom in Christ alone.—Let me tell you again my old story of the eagle. For many months it pined and drooped in its cage, and seemed to have forgotten that it was of the lineage of the old plumed kings of the forest and the mountain; and its bright eye faded, and its strong wings drooped, and its kingly crest was bowed, and its plumes were torn and soiled amid the bars and dust of its prison-house. So, in pity of its forlorn life, we carried its cage out to the open air, and broke the iron wire and flung wide the lowly door; and slowly, falteringly, despondingly, it crept forth to the sultry air of that cloudy summer noon and looked listlessly about it. But just then, from a rift in an overhauling cloud, a golden sunbeam flashed upon the scene. And it was enough. Then it lifted its loyal crest, the dim eye blazed again, the soiled plumes unfolded and rustled, the strong wings moved themselves, with a rapturous cry it sprang heavenward. Higher, higher, in broader, braver circles it mounted toward the firmament, and we saw it no more as it rushed through the storm-clouds and soared to the sun. And would, O ye winged spirits! who dream and pine in this poor earthly bondage, that only one ray from the blessed Sun of Righteousness might fall on you this hour! for then would there be the flash of a glorious eye and a cry of rapture, and a sway of exulting wings, as another redeemed and risen spirit sprang heavenward unto God! (C. Wadsworth, D.D.)

CHAPTER III.

VERS. 1-4. If ye then be risen with Christ.—*Risen with Christ.*—There is no doubt a supposition in the "if." The apostle takes it for granted that Christians were raised together with Christ, and admonishes them, therefore, to evince it in their life. The resurrection of Christ is represented as giving to His people—I. A NEW **MIND**. Man is born to aspire, and when he rises with the victorious Christ he aspires to heavenly things. The new quest is for righteousness, holiness, patience, devotion, love, and self-sacrifice. II. A NEW **HEART**. The affections are to be set on things above, not as in the unregenerate state on earthly things. It might be possible to seek heavenly things merely in obedience to authority or convictions of duty, but that we may be raised above that, we are encouraged to set our whole heart and mind upon Divine realities. III. A NEW **LIFE**. Dead to the world, they have nevertheless a resurrection life hid with Christ in God. And their earthly life of duty and endurance corresponds with the secret fountain from which it flows. IV. A NEW **HOPE** which—1. Respects Christ—"He shall be manifested." It is the blessed hope, the glorious appearing. He shall come the second time without sin unto salvation. 2. Respects Christians. Spiritually raised with Christ, they will share His revelation. (*Family Churchman.*) 1. St. Paul has just been dealing with a system of repression and abstinence which had a vain show of wisdom, but did not touch the spring of action, and was therefore of no value in resistance to indulgence of the flesh. Would you know, he asks, how you may be lifted above the tyranny of sense, and be initiated into the true secret of temperance and chastity? To go back to a system of bondage fit only for the childhood of the race is to forget the characteristic feature of Christianity, which is the elevating of the whole man into a new region of thought and action, in virtue of union with One who has ascended into that heaven where your true life is hid with Him in God. 2. This is Paul's great doctrine. (1) He seems almost to picture a pursuit of the sinner by the Avenger of blood which is disappointed by his reception into the City of Refuge. "That I may win Christ and be found in Him," so that when I am looked for only Christ is to be seen. (2) But inclusion in Christ is more than for safety, it is for comfort in trouble, strength in weakness, life in death. 3. This union is expressed in a retrospective way. If I am in Christ I am in Him as that which He is now, as one who has died, risen and ascended; and when He died I died, and when God exalted Him He set me with Him. Henceforth I must live the risen life, and live above the world as one who has done with its cares, toils, and lying vanities. "He that is dead is freed from sin;" he that is raised must mind the things above, have them for his interest, employment, study, affection, so that when the veil is removed which now hides Him we may be manifested with Him.

I. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IS A FACT, as much of history as of the faith of Christendom, and attested by convincing evidence on the part of unexceptionable witnesses. II. OUR RESURRECTION WITH CHRIST IS A FACT SPIRITUAL, BUT REAL, AND CONTAINED IN CHRIST'S RESURRECTION. To some minds a spiritual fact is a self-contradiction. But a spiritual fact is, above all other kinds, a factor in history. It sets in motion influences which change the face of nations, working those miracles of good in comparison with which the rise and fall of dynasties are vanity. III. This resurrection is EFFECTED BY UNION WITH CHRIST. The word "union" is used very loosely. We speak of a combination of a few thousands for a purpose salutary or mischievous as union, little thinking what the term is which we take in vain. But this union is one which man cannot have with man. It is a union of spirit, and such that the spirit of the Saviour not only influences the spirit of the man from outside, as our mind is wrought upon by speech or books, but from within. "He shall be in you." IV. HOW AND WHEN IS THIS UNION REALIZED. Paul says that all we who are baptized into Christ, there and then put on Christ. "We were buried with Him by our baptism into death." If this realization of Christ has not yet been given us, let us not take refuge in names and forms, saying, "I have it as a thing of course, for I have been baptized." If you have it you will know it; if you have it not yet it is yours by right. Baptism is at any rate the promise of God, to each one, of his grace and acceptance in proportion to the need and entreaty. V. THIS UNION IS BETWEEN CHRIST IN HEAVEN AND US. That Christ is there need not repel any one from seeking Him. "He ascended that He might fill all things." When He was upon earth He did not even fill Palestine. Now by virtue of His exaltation He can fill every soul with Himself. VI. THEREFORE WE MUST SEEK THE THINGS ABOVE. 1. The contrast is to things on earth—harassing anxiety, importunate vanity, consuming ambition, exciting pleasure, shameful self-indulgence. The things above are the realities of which these are counterfeits, the grand and satisfying pursuits of which these are the phantoms, things which bring comfort and peace and rest to the soul. 2. Every honest searching of the heart to root out what God hates, every earnest effort after forgiveness, every aspiration after a Diviner life, every sincere endeavour, is a seeking after the things above. 3. By degrees there shall be in every such seeker a change of places between earth and heaven. From seeking he shall rise to thinking the things above, and when at last the door opens, and he is called in to see the King in His beauty, he shall find himself in no strange scene or company. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Christ and the higher nature* :—That there is a higher life which we may and ought to live, all men, in whom there is any religion, feel; and what is peculiar to the gospel is not the bare idea of this life, but the revelation of its character, power, and attainment. I. THE NATURE OF THIS HIGHER LIFE. 1. It is "above." But is not this just what has been objected to—that Christianity concerns itself with another world rather than with this? And is not this very exaltation a weakness and a delusion. What nobler ideal can there be than to make the present life better. But Christ's ideal was a kingdom, in our hearts, it is true, yet "of heaven," not of earth. It was, in short, a higher Divine life that was to irradiate our poor human life, and to glorify it. It was no development from below, but a revelation from on high, and without this Christianity has no meaning. Cut away its Divine side, and it is destroyed. 2. This life is not merely in the future, although it embraces it. It concerns itself with another world, yet it does not despise things on the earth. The kingdom is now, and not to be reached after death, and the things above are to be possessed now. These are the things of which the apostle speaks presently, "kindness," &c. Spiritual qualities. The apostle does not contrast heaven and earth as places, nor set the future life against the present, but the spiritual against the natural, the carnal against the Divine. The higher life takes up the present and glorifies it, and finds its development in every variety of well-doing. It embraces every real virtue, and beautifies and ennobles the life that now is as well as that to come. II. ITS SOURCE AND MOTIVE POWER. It is no process of self-culture or moral discipline. It springs only from the living root Christ. It is a new life rising on the extinction of the old life of self. The same Divine power which raised Christ from the dead is supposed to live and work in Christians. But out of Christ there is no higher life in the Christian sense. But is this so? Are there not many beautiful characters who never heard of Christ; and are there not many Christians far from stainless? Yes, but—1. The Christian type of character is to be estimated by its ideal, as rendered by the highest examples, and not by the conduct of all professors. It is true that the best Christians but feebly represent Christ, yet where is there any list of worthies to be

compared with the roll of Christian saints? And all such have declared their strength for good to lie in the fact that their life was hid with Christ in God. 2. If there is goodness where the name of Christ is unknown, or which refuses to acknowledge Him, let us not deny it. If we must have a theory the true one is that all goodness, even when seeming to be apart from Christ, has really its root in Him. (*Principal Tulloch.*) *The hidden life*:—At the close of the preceding chapter St. Paul exposes the error of those who would bring back Christians to the rudiments of the world; but with that rapidity of thought which is characteristic of him, he passes on to other rudiments—everything that is loved and cultivated by the flesh—and makes no distinction between rites and worldliness, resting on the similarity between them. I. THE DIVINE LIFE PRODUCES DYING TO THE WORLD. It would be wrong to hold the reverse, of course. If you are risen with Christ, your life is no longer here below, but where Christ is. Here comes a series of transformations. 1. Spiritual death. You were dead in sins, but Christ has raised you (see Col. ii. 12, 13; Eph. ii. 5, 6; 1 Pet. i. 3). 2. In the very act of raising you Christ has subjected you to a new death—to the world. These two facts correspond as the projections of a coin do with the depressions of the mould. Resurrection is the *relievo* of the coin; it produces the void which is death: for our life cannot be everywhere; if it is in heaven it is not on the earth (ver. 4). II. It is true that **WE LIVE HERE BY OUR NECESSARY LIFE, BUT THE BEST PART OF OURSELVES IS ELSEWHERE.** We live where our heart is. The prisoner lives nowhere less than in his cell. You say of the person you passionately love, "She has stolen my heart." When any one is indifferent to his surroundings we say, "His heart is elsewhere." It is with the heart we live our real life; "out of it are the issues of life." It can restrict itself to earthly things, but it can also have its conversation in heaven. III. **WE MUST BE QUITE CLEAR AS TO THE MEANING OF THE WORDS "ABOVE" AND "BELOW," "HEAVEN" AND "EARTH."** Earth and heaven here are not exactly places and times, but principles called after the place and time of their perfect realization. To detach ourselves from earth is not to detach ourselves from activity, but to detach our hearts from earthly principles, and attach them to the principles to be realized in heaven. To fulfil social duties, &c., under God's eye is not to do earthly but heavenly things. And so the Christian becomes attached to the place and time, where the true principle finds its realization, and detached from that where the false principle is realized. Nevertheless, we must not be drawn into a false spirituality, a selfish separation from earth while attached to it in affection. It is an admirable thing when he who is weaned from life appreciates it; for he despises what in it is contemptible, and esteems in it what is really worth esteem. IV. **THE LIFE WEANED FROM EARTH IS HIDDEN FROM THE WORLD, AND DOES NOT SEEM LIFE.** For life does not consist in the involuntary fact commonly called by the name. The world judges, and rightly from its premises, that visible things are alone worthy of attachment, that a man who does not attend to them does not live. And yet everything is not obscure in regard to the Christian. He is unknown and yet known. It is impossible to see a Christian without saying, "There is something peculiar there! His life declares him to be a Christian." But because this life is not understood it is denied. The natural man sees something, but he does not regard it as life. And yet the Christian lives; he is not an anchorite. He has everything that others have as men, but as a Christian more. Worldlings may consider sin as essential to humanity; but it mutilates a man, Christianity increases him, and faith takes away sin. As a man the Christian mixes himself up in the business of life, for the earth belongs to his God; but in spite of this he is not understood, because the common aim which all pursue is with him only a means of attaining a higher end. And from misunderstanding to contempt and calumny the distance is not great. Whatever we may do in order to have peace with all men we shall never succeed unless we walk on the same footing. Thus the Christian is treated as dead, and with the same repugnance as is felt towards a dead man in the physical sense. V. **WHAT MOTIVES HAS THE CHRISTIAN TO CONSENT TO THIS, AND TO ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENCES?** 1. In reality he lives, and God knows that he lives, and that is enough. Those small and charming flowers which bloom in the desert or on the mountain-top will fold up their leaves without being seen by any human eye. God sees them, that is enough. In the Middle Ages unknown workmen spent their lives in rearing glorious cathedrals; some, working in positions dangerous and difficult of access, carved wonders of art and patience which are not seen except as you climb to the tops of columns. It was enough that God saw their work, and

that throughout the ages a continual hymn should rise to Him from the midst of the stone. So with the Christian. 2. What grand compensation. Obscurity does not hinder greatness. (1) A great work has been wrought for and in the Christian. He is a king, although disguised. (2) There is greatness in what he does by the strength of God, subjugation of passions, resignation, &c. 3. But the Christian will appear when Christ appears, and under what glorious circumstances (Phil. ii. 10, 11; Matt. x. 32; xiii. 43; Dan. xii. 3). (*A. Vinet, D.D.*) *When will the world grow better?*—The world is full of lamentations. The times are bad; business is stagnant. There is no confidence, but everywhere mistrust and discontent. Everybody says that this state of things cannot last. There are plenty of social quacks. We have been flooded with laws for improving the conditions of life; but the confusion is only the greater. New ecclesiastical laws have been made, but entire classes are alienated from the Church. Then when will the world be better? When each one of us begins to grow better himself; and if any one could devise the means of bringing about that result it would be of more use than all modern experiments. But we have the means in the well-tried Word of God and its Divine powers. The world will grow better. I. WHEN WE DIE AND RISE WITH CHRIST. 1. There was a time when a great deal was said about the moral improvement of the race. If men laid aside their grosser sins and endeavoured to live virtuously, all would be well. The theory was not confirmed by the facts. To-day men have fallen into a similar error. Culture is now the Saviour. All honour to it; but history proves that a man may be learned in every branch of knowledge, and yet be utterly bad. 2. One of the most absurd suppositions which lies at the root of most modern experiments is that human nature is good. The Scripture doctrine to the contrary, though much decried, is a fact of which every parent can convince himself. If the world is to be made better a commencement must be made with the inner life of each man. The old nature must die, and a new one arise, or you may as soon build the top storey of a house before you have laid the foundation. 3. Accordingly in Scripture this renewal is everywhere insisted upon. Ye are dead and ye have risen, and since ye are risen seek the things that are above. It is not by mere accident that this renewing is thus described, and in connection with the death and resurrection of Christ. There was needed for it a spiritual energy which does not exist in us, but is in Christ, the risen One. 4. This new life is by virtue of a personal surrender by faith to Christ (chap. ii. 12). Thus we die to sin and the world. A new purpose is disclosed, viz., to please God and enjoy fellowship with Him; a new rule of thought and action—the will of God; a new impelling principle—the Holy Spirit; and thus we come with our whole personal life into a higher order—the heavenly. What further proof do we need that when this happens things are better? II. WHEN HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS FILLS ALL HEARTS. 1. That which is below is the earthly world, with its tangible but perishable things; and the more the pursuit of them grows to a longing after them, the worse will it be for the inner and outer life. For this lower world, however beautiful, can never satisfy the heart, and the void is filled with base passions or wild schemes. 2. The world above is closed against the earthly mind. The natural man has no eye for its glory, no ear for its language. Nevertheless it is the real world, where Christ is seated, its light, life, and supreme attraction. When the mind is fixed on this the earthly life is glorified. For though Christ is exalted He dwells on earth with His faithful ones, and, therefore, brings heaven down below. Attachment to Him does not incapacitate us for the business of life, but only makes us independent of what is sinful and selfish, and teaches us to serve God in all things. 3. Who can doubt, therefore, that this heavenly-mindedness would be better for the home, the shop, the nation. III. WHEN CHRIST SHALL BE REVEALED. Now the Christian's life is hid. The world understands not its nature, power, or effects. But it shall be manifest at the appearing of Christ—and then in its full perfection. It will indeed be better then. (*G. Maurer.*) *Of the resurrection:—*I. Two suppositions. 1. Christ's resurrection. This needs no "if." It is a certainty. Three hundred years the world opposed it, and ever since has supposed it. But it is not supposed by itself, and ours inferred, but ours supposed likewise. And as they are so closely linked that one supposition serveth for them, so they are woven together that one preposition (with) holdeth them. 2. Our resurrection. (1) "If ye." Why only to a certain "ye"? Concerns it not all? As Christ died so is He risen for all, and all shall rise. Yes, but not all to the "right hand," a good many to the left. The resurrection reaches to all; this only to such as "seek," and "set their minds." (2) If ye "be risen." Is the tense right? For when we hear of the resurrection we are carried to the last day. He

rose, we say, we *shall* rise. But here the resurrection is already. Fall we in, then, with those who say that the resurrection is past (2 Tim. ii. 18)? No; but we believe that as there is one to come of the body, so there is one which we are to pass here, of the mind's. There are the first and second resurrections (Rev. xx. 6); and all the good or evil of the second depends on the passing or not passing the first. "Christ is risen" is not enough, nay is nothing at all, if He be risen without us. 3. "If." Is it so? If He is risen cry to Him to draw thee, as He said He would (John xii. 32); the soul first as being from above, so the more easily drawn to things above, and then with itself the soul to elevate the flesh. II. THE DOUBLE INFERENCE—"Seek"; "Set your minds." 1. The two acts jointly; for disjoined they may not be. One is little worth without the other. (1) There be that "seek," and be very busy in it, and yet savour (Matt. xvi. 23, same word) not the things of God. Some possessed with false principles fall a seeking; zealous, but without true knowledge to fix their minds aright (Prov. xix. 2). "The mind misled will set the affections awry." Look but to the close of chapter ii. Then they seek so as they will not taste, handle, or touch. Some seek as to worship angels, and spare not their own bodies, and yet with all their seeking not "risen with Christ." (2) On the other side there be that "savour Christ, but seek themselves" (Phil. ii. 21). They have knowledge competent, but no endeavour; they sit still and seek not. (3) So that both may be kept together, "seek" and "set your minds" both. As in the body a rheumatic head spoils the stomach, and a distempered stomach the head, so here. The mind mistaking misleads the affections, and a wrong-set affection puts the mind out of frame. 2. The acts severally. (1) Seek; he shall not stumble or hit upon it unawares. If the Saviour knew the way well, it is hard to hit (Matt. vii. 14). Pains and diligence are requisite. It were great folly when we see daily things without travail will not be come by, to think that things above will drop into our lap. Pilate asked, "What is truth?" and went his way before he had the answer. He never deserved to find what truth was. (2) But we shall never seek as we should unless we "set our minds." For a man will never kindly seek that he hath no mind to. That we may seek things above we must prize them as a silver mine (Prov. iii. 14), as a treasure hid in a field (Matt. xiii. 44), and sell all to compass them. Then, he that seeks should have as well eyes to discern, as feet to go about it, i.e., have knowledge. To seek we know not what is but to err, and never find that we seek for. Four things are in this. (1) To set the mind, not the fancy, and seek as many do with no other ground but their own conceits. Yet seek they will, and have all the world follow them, and have nothing to follow after but their own folly. So as being very idiots they take themselves for the only men who ever had wisdom to know what to seek or how. (2) But it is not an act of the understanding alone. It is to set our mind not only to know, but to mind it; not only to distinguish tastes, but in and with the taste to feel such delight as will lead us to seek it again more earnestly. (3) So to savour it that to seek it is our wisdom (Deut. iv. 6). To think when ye are about the things above that you are about the wisest action of your lives. (4) Not the contemplative wisdom only, but the active. To show that not only our grounds for judgment, but our rules for action, are to be set thence. What will He who sitteth at the right hand of God say or think of what I am about? May I offer it to Him? Will He help me forward with it, and reward me for it? 3. The order. "Seek" first—(1) To teach us that it is the first thing we are to have a care of (Matt. vi. 33). (2) Because there is more need of diligence in this business than aught else. Always we have more ado to quicken the affection than to inform the judgment. III. THE TWO REFERENCES or objects of hope. Rest—"sitteth"; glory—"at the right hand of God." 1. The things we are to seek, &c., are "above." (1) To do this we shall be easily entreated. We yield, presently, to seek to be above others in favour, honour, place, and power. All would be above, "bramble" (Judg. ix. 15) and all, and nothing is too high for us, not even the "right hand" (Matt. xx. 21). (2) The apostle saw clearly that we should err here, hence he tells us that "above" is not on earth, but in heaven. So the fault he finds is that our "above" is too low. (a) The very frame of body has an upward tendency, and bids us look thither. And that way should our soul make. It came from thence, and thither it should draw again, and we do but crook our souls against their nature when we set them to seek nothing but here below. (b) And if nature would have us no moles, grace would have us mount up as eagles—"Where the body is" (Luke xvii. 37). For contrary to the philosopher's sentence, "things above concern us not;" they chiefly concern us. 2. "Above" is Christ, and with Him the things we of all others seek for. (1) Rest (Psa. lv. 6).

And it is not the body's concern so much as the soul's. The soul is from above, and never finds rest but in her own place (Psa. cxvi. 17; Heb. iii. 11, 18-19). But we seek glory more, and for it we are content to deprive ourselves of rest, which otherwise we love well enough. For no rest will give us full content but at the right hand. Where are they to be found? Not here, and therefore it is folly to seek them here. In this troublesome tumultuous place there is no rest (Mic. ii. 10) nor glory, for in our gardens of delight there are worms, and spiders in kings' palaces. And whatever we fancy we have of either it is at the expense of the other. Rest is a thing inglorious, and glory a thing restless. 3. But both are united above, where we "sit at the right hand of God" with Christ; and then we have them not so that our rest may be sometimes broken, and our glory sometimes tarnished, but both perfectly and for ever. (*Bishop Andrewes.*) *The resurrection of Christ an argument for seeking things above.*—I. THE DUTY TO WHICH WE ARE EXHORTED. Affirmatively, to seek and set our affections on things above; negatively, not on things on the earth. 1. The act. In "seek" and "set your affections" are comprehended (1) An act of the understanding. Heaven and the way of getting there should be much in our thoughts. (2) An act of our affections, that we love and desire the things above proportionately to their excellence. (3) Activity and industry in the prosecution of these things, if by any means we may attain them. When our understandings have dwelt long enough on our heavenly treasures as to work on our affections, these, like so many springs of motion, will set our endeavours on work for the obtaining what we so much love and desire. (4) A clear preference of the things above to the things of the earth when they come in competition. "Set your affections" is often used for taking part with one side when two parties or interests come into competition. So when heaven and earth, the interests of your souls and of your bodies, a holy and a sinful course come into competition, choose the better part (ver. 5). 2. The objects of this act. (1) God in Christ. (2) The blessed state of glory in the next life. (3) The dispositions to be acquired and the duties to be performed as necessary qualifications for the obtaining this happiness. II. THE FORCE OF THE ARGUMENTS USED TO PERSUADE US TO IT. 1. "If ye be risen with Christ, seek," &c., i.e., (1) If ye believe in the resurrection of Christ. This was the great seal of His ministry and confirmation of His doctrine: and one great branch of His doctrine was that we should lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. (2) If we resemble Him in His resurrection. He is our pattern in His saving acts as well as in His virtues. So as He died for sin we must die to it; if He rose we must rise into newness of life; if He ascended so should we in our hearts (Col. ii. 12; Rom. vi. 4-5, 9-11). (3) If we are partakers of the power of His resurrection (John xi. 25; Eph. i. 19; Phil. iii. 10; Col. ii. 13). 2. "Seek the things which are above where Christ sitteth" (Luke xxiv. 26; Eph. i. 20-22). (1) The force of this argument is from the relation between the head and the members. The members have an affection for the head which makes them aspire heavenwards; and the head has an influence upon the members (John xii. 32-33). (2) The gift of the Holy Spirit is the fruit of Christ's ascension, and it is by His operation upon our hearts that our affections are fixed on heavenly things, as against the counter allurements of the world. 3. The transcendent excellence of heavenly things above things of the earth, which the apostle intimates by the opposition, "Set your affections," &c. (*Archbishop Tillotson.*) *Following the risen Christ.*—I. OUR SPIRITUAL RISING WITH CHRIST. The "if" is used logically, not theologically, by way of argument, and not by way of doubt. 1. We were dead in sin, but having believed in Christ we have been quickened by the Holy Ghost, and we are dead no longer. We remember the first sensation of life, how it seemed to tingle just as drowning persons when coming back to life suffer great pain. Conviction was wrought in us, and a dread of judgment, and a sense of condemnation, but these were tokens of life, but that life gradually deepened until the eye was opened, and the restored hand stretched itself out, the foot began to move in the way of obedience, and the heart felt the sweet glow of love within. 2. There has been wrought in us a wonderful change. Before regeneration our soul was as our body will be when it dies. (1) Sown in corruption. In some cases it did not appear on the surface; in others it was something fearful to look upon. Now the new life has overcome it, for it is an incorruptible seed, and liveth for ever. (2) In dishonour. Sin is a shameful thing; but "behold what manner of love" (1 John iii. 1). "Since thou wast precious in my sight," &c. "Unto you which believe He is an honour." (3) In weakness. When we were the captives of sin we could do nothing good; but "when we were without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly,

Now we know the power of His resurrection" (John i. 12; Phil. iv. 13). (4) A natural body. Aforetime we were natural men, and discerned not the things of the Spirit of God. Now a spirit has been created in us which lives for spiritual objects.

3. In consequence of receiving this life and undergoing this change the things of the world become a tomb to us. To a dead man a tomb is as good a dwelling as he can want; but the moment he lives he cannot endure it. So when we were natural men earthly things contented us. (1) A merely outward religion satisfied us; a dead form suited a dead soul. Judaism pleased those who put themselves under its yoke; traditions, ordinances make pretty furniture for a dead man's chamber; but when eternal life enters the soul they are flung off. A living man demands such garments as are suitable for life. 2. Merely carnal objects become as the grave to us, whether sinful pleasures or selfish gains. They are as a coffin to the renewed man: he cries for liberty. 4. We are wholly raised from the dead in a spiritual sense. Our Lord did not have His head quickened while His feet were in the sepulchre. So we have been renewed in every part. We have received, although it be in its infancy, a perfect life in Christ Jesus; our ear is awakened, our eye opened, our feet nimble. 5. We are so raised that we shall die no more. "Christ being raised, death hath no more dominion," &c. So we. II. LET US EXERCISE THE NEW MAN IN SUITABLE PURSUITS. 1. Let us leave the sepulchre. (1) The vault of a mere outward religion, and worship God in Spirit and in truth. (2) The vault of carnal enjoyments. These ought to be as dead things to the man who is risen with Christ. 2. Let us hasten to forget every evil as our Lord hastened to leave the tomb. He made the three days as short as possible; so let there be no lingering and hankering after the flesh. 3. As our Lord spent a short season with His disciples, we are to spend our forty days in holy service. (1) In greater seclusion from the world and greater nearness to heaven. (2) In testimony, even as He manifested Himself, to the resurrection power of God. (3) In comforting the saints. (4) In setting everything in order for the furtherance of His kingdom. 4. Let our whole minds ascend to heaven with Christ; not a stray thought. (1) Because we need heavenly things, prize them, and hope to gain them. (2) After heavenly things, faith, hope, &c. (3) Heavenly objects—the glory of God, not your own; the good of man. (4) Heavenly joys. Your treasure is above, let your hearts be with it. 5. What a magnet Christ should be. Where should the wife's thoughts be but with her absent and beloved one? (1) Christ is sitting, for His work is done; rise and rest with Him. (2) At the right hand of God, in the place of honour and favour. III. LET THE NEW LIFE DELIGHT ITSELF WITH SUITABLE OBJECTS. "Have a relish for things above"; "study them industriously"; "set your mind on them." What are they? 1. God Himself. "Delight thyself in the Lord." What is all the world if He be gone; and if you have Him, what though all the world be gone? 2. Jesus who is God, but truly man. Meditate on His Divine Person, His perfect work, &c. 3. The New Jerusalem of the Church triumphant. 4. Heaven, the place of holiness after sin, of rest after work, of riches after poverty, of health and life after sickness and death. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Risen with Christ.—I. CHRIST IS RISEN. This appears—(1) From the Holy Scriptures. (2) From eye-witnesses. (3) From the testimony of the Spirit. II. Christians are RISEN WITH CHRIST. What is this? (Eph. ii. 5-6; Col. ii. 12, 20.) 1. Christ is our Head, and a public Person (Eph. v. 23). 2. Whatever He did, He did it not in a private but a public capacity, and therefore we are looked upon as doing it in Him (Isa. liii. 5). 3. Hence, when He arose, we arose in Him and with Him. 4. Metaphorically we rise from sin. III. BEING RISEN WITH CHRIST WE ARE TO SEEK THE THINGS ABOVE. 1. What things? (1) The perfection of graces. (2) The society of angels. (3) The vision of Christ (John xvii. 24). (4) The enjoyment of God; consisting (a) in our clear knowledge of Him (John xvii. 3). (b) Perfect love to Him. (c) Infinite expressions of love from Him (Zeph. iii. 17). 2. How seek them? It implies—(1) Our knowledge of them. (2) Our love for them. (3) Our labouring to be instated in them (Matt. vi. 33). IV. WHY SHOULD THEY WHO ARE RISEN WITH CHRIST SEEK THE THINGS ABOVE? 1. Because now all things else are below them. 2. Their inheritance is there. V. USE. 1. Motives. (1) The things below are unsuitable, the things above suitable. (2) They empty and deceiving; these full and satisfying; nay, there is more happiness in seeking heaven than enjoying earth. (3) They uncertain to be attained; these certain if sought for. (4) They mixed with troubles, these pure comforts. (5) They transient and fading, these perpetual and everlasting. 2. Means. (1) Exercise graces—repentance, faith (Heb. xi. 5-6). (2) Perform duties. (Bishop Beveridge.) *The Christian risen with*

Christ :—I. A GLORIOUS TRUTH SUPPOSED—that believers are risen with Christ. This involves—1. A firm belief in His resurrection. This doctrine is of paramount importance as the principal evidence of Christianity. Every other doctrine hangs upon it. If Christ be not risen, where—(1) Our access to God. (2) Our success in prayer. (3) Our hope of pardon. (4) Our holy aspirations. (5) Our bright prospects (see 1 Cor. xv. 14–19). 2. A personal experience of its power. (1) In the renewing of the mind. (2) The changing of the heart. (3) The quickening of the spirit. (4) Newness of life. 3. A well-grounded anticipation of conformity with His resurrection. (1) Spiritual life with Him now in heaven. (2) Completeness of bodily and soul likeness to Him by and by. II. A MOMENTOUS DUTY REQUIRED. 1. The superiority of its object—"the things above." (1) The glorious state of happiness in reserve for believers in heaven. (2) The sublime realities of religion that belong by way of preparation to the heavenly state—growth in grace and knowledge; spirituality of mind, holiness, devotion to God, love to His people. How superior to the pleasures of the ungodly. 2. The extent of its application. It implies more than a belief in things above, and includes—(1) A persuasion of their value. We shall not be induced to seek what we do not value. Worldly men underrate them: but rising with Christ brings spiritual perception, by which they are viewed in the light of eternity. (2) A fixing of the mind on them—choosing them in preference to sublunary things. The wisdom of the Christian's choice will be seen when the universe is in ruins. "The things which are seen are temporal." (3) A diligent pursuit after them in the use of the appointed means. Beware of the fascinations of the world. Cultivate heavenly dispositions. 3. The power of its motive. (1) In general. The principles we profess call for it; the profession we make demands it; love, gratitude, our own interest and God's glory, all urge us to it. (2) In particular. Mark the Person—Christ. He is over all. Mark the posture—"Sitteth," &c.—one of dignity and authority. This was the joy set before Him, and is the joy set before us? (*Ebenezer Temple.*) *The risen life* :—I. "RISEN WITH CHRIST." 1. In the earliest Christian teaching the resurrection dominates over all other Christian doctrines. It is the palmary proof of the truth of Christianity. It rested upon the evidences of the senses, and accordingly the first ministerial effort of the apostles was to publish the fact, and let it do its proper work in the understandings and consciences of men (Acts iv. 32, &c.). The resurrection is equally prominent in the teaching of St. Paul. But here the apostle teaches us its relation, not to Christian belief, but to Christian living. It is not pressed upon us as a "detached and unfruitful dogma"; it is a vitalizing principle in the living soul. Indeed all Christian doctrine in the Christian soul is inseparable from Christian practice. The practical relation between the two is observable in St. Paul's Epistles. They are not separated in the two sections into which he usually divides his letters. With him the moral element interpenetrates doctrine, and rises spontaneously out of it; while the dogmatic truth is continually reasserted as the motive or basis of the morality. In the text the resurrection is a germinant principle out of which the soul derives its new life, and by which the laws and obligations of that life are determined. This is not a mere metaphor (Eph. i. 18–20); but if it were, a metaphor surely means something: it conveys a truth under the form of an illustration. What, then, is the truth latent beneath the metaphor? 3. This resurrection with Christ is not merely a movement, a shifting of spiritual position from a lower to a higher point in the same sphere. That would be an elevation. (1) It is necessary to mark this distinction, because the one is often confounded with the other. Individuals, families, populations, are often "elevated" without being "risen with Christ." A certain mental and moral elevation is the natural result of contact with a Divine religion; may be received unconsciously; comes as if from some subtle element afloat in the atmosphere; passes unnoticed into a literary school, philosophical system, or political society; and may thenceforward be detected in half-formed ideas, and fitful currents of thought, or turns of expression. It comes to men as they gaze on the fair form of the Church, or as they mark a Christian who is seriously living for another world. (2) But what is this elevation worth? Felix underwent a certain "elevation" of conscience; Agrippa was raised above his natural level; but in each case the moral pulsation died away. The Emperor Alexander Severus underwent a certain elevation when he assigned a niche in the Imperial Pantheon to the statue of Jesus; so did Julian, who in his letters applauds the love and discipline of the Church. The same may be said of Rousseau, who enhanced the beauty of the French language in expressing his sense of the gospel, and of those modern writers of fiction who

lavish their encomiums with no sparing or graceless hand upon the religion of our Lord, and who yet apologize for the errors which His teaching condemns. But these were not risen with Christ. (3) We here touch on a distinction that is vital, and which is based upon the deeper difference which parts nature from grace. Moral elevation lies within the sphere of nature, and may be accounted for by the operation of natural causes; spiritual resurrection belongs to nature just as little as does the resurrection of a corpse. 4. Resurrection with Christ is a supernatural thing. What is meant by this? Any idea of the supernatural—(1) Presupposes belief in God as a personal agent. Clearly, therefore, it must be rejected by those philosophers which deny the primary truths of theism. (a) The Positivist must see in it a stupid phantom to be relegated to "the theological period" of human development. (b) The Pantheist will object to it as implying a distinction which, if it be admitted, must be fatal to the essential principles of his philosophy. (c) Nor does it approve itself to the sensuous materialism which is sceptical of all that lies beyond. (d) But no serious Theist can deny its possibility. He who made the world which we touch can superadd another world which we cannot touch. (2) As the term enters theology it is concerned with the relations which God has established between Himself and man in the higher sphere, such as, *e.g.*, that union with Christ, part of which is expressed in rising with Him. The lesson of our text is often not learnt; because the difficulty of learning it is spiritual rather than intellectual. To understand it we must be living the life of the supernatural resurrection. The apostle elsewhere explains what he means (Eph. ii. 3-6; i. 17-20). What wonder that all around us in the Church is supernatural, if it be a continuous exercise of the power which raised Jesus from the dead? Or that in Christian souls we behold graces of which nature is incapable. II. "SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE." 1. Seek, above all, communion with God, work for God, rest in the felt presence of God, and the final reward in God; and then all that is highest and purest in the sphere of nature. 2. What a rule for conversation. All may do something to raise or degrade it. Each may insist that in his presence it shall keep a pure tone; and a few men who are simply determined to maintain an elevated standard of social intercourse can affect for good an entire society. 3. What a rule for making friendships! How much depends for time and eternity on the choice of one whose affections shall be entwined in ours. 4. What a motto for a library, and even for sacred studies! 5. What a solemn word for those who are deciding their line of work for life, particularly if they are seeking the ministry of souls. 6. But above all, the text is a rule for the regulation and employment of secret thought. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Believers risen with Christ, and their duty in consequence.*—I. A FACT ADMITTED: the resurrection of Christ. 1. That He was dead cannot be questioned. 2. He was buried. What became of His body? 3. He rose, and in the providence of God many circumstances transpired to render it obvious and undeniable. II. THE PRIVILEGE SUPPOSED. Christians are risen with Christ. 1. Professedly, by joining the Church; coming to the Lord's table; confession with the tongue. 2. Representatively, by virtue of that federal union with Christ by which His acts become theirs. 3. Spiritually, from death in sin to a life of faith, hope, acceptance, holiness, duty. 4. By anticipation, having the pledges, earnest, and first-fruits of exaltation with Christ. These anticipations differ in various Christians, but four seasons are peculiarly favourable to it—(1) The solitude of the closet. (2) The ordinances of God's house. (3) Affliction. (4) The dying hour. III. A DUTY ENJOINED. 1. The things themselves are described not by their nature, but by their residence, which shows their excellency. There is no night there, no pain, no sin; but the peace that passeth understanding; the joy unspeakable and full of glory; beloved connexions; the good of all ages; angels; Christ. 2. We should seek them because they are—(1) Necessary. While many things are desirable and some important, one thing is needful. (2) Attainable. You are not quite sure of earthly things. 3. They must be sought—(1) Principally. "Seek ye first," &c. (2) Intensely. (3) Perseveringly. IV. AN INFERENCE DERIVED. "If." 1. It is surely desirable to know this. 2. There is no evidence of our religious condition that can be depended upon separately from heavenly-mindedness. 3. If you are seeking the things above, they must correspond with your condition, and your practice must accord with your profession. Conclusion: 1. Some entirely disregard the things above. 2. Others regard them as doubtful. 3. Others "declare plainly that they seek a country." (*W. Jay.*) *Seek those things that are above.*—Contemplate—I. THE SUBLIME OBJECTS TO WHICH THE EXHORTATION RELATES. The future blessedness of believers in heaven. Notice—1. The perfection of character

they shall exhibit. There they shall partake of God's nature, and be holy as He is holy. It is impossible for sin and sinners to enter there. There is no imperfection in things above. The most eminent saints have faults and blemishes, but there they shall be free from spot or wrinkle. 2. The exercises in which they shall be engaged. Ease is sometimes regarded as necessary to enjoyment. But analogy and revelation are against the sentiment. A heaven of ease would be death rather than life. The service of heaven constitutes one part of the blessedness of the angels, and we are to be equal with them. And how multiplied must be the actions involved in a service which night never interrupts, of a mind and body that are never wearied, and of an existence which knows no end! This view may tend to moderate our surprise and sorrow at the deaths of eminent and useful Christians, who now spend their energies over wider regions. 3. The happiness of which they shall participate. All religious experience on earth affords but a faint emblem of the bliss of heaven. Here, however great, it is much marred, but there it is perfect, because all the saints are made perfectly holy. Here they taste the streams, there the fountain, and the happiness is made complete by a sight of Jesus' face. 4. The friendships they shall share. Man is constituted for society. Place him in solitude and he will pine and wither. But in heaven we shall enjoy the company of angels, of the wise and good of all ages, of our own loved ones. We look for those breaches which are made in our holy connexions to be repaired there. II. THE CONDUCT ENJOINED UPON US IN RELATION TO THEM. "Seek" them. 1. This implies belief of them. (1) Those who have just views of the Divine perfections will believe in the possibility of such a state as we have contemplated. (2) Numerous considerations indicate the probability. Every man has that within him which thinks and wills, &c., which cannot be the result of a material organization, is perfectly distinct from the body, and will not be more endangered by the dissolution of the latter than a sunbeam is crushed by the demolition of the house through which it is passing. Then again, the strong desire of immortality, common to men, is an argument in its favour. Why should God universally plant a desire He never meant to gratify? (3) But why argue its probability when I have a Bible which tells me it is certain. 2. It implies that attention is directed much towards them. They must be minded as well as credited. This is necessary because of the wrong bias the mind has received. (1) You must labour that your minds may acquire a heavenly direction, seeing that you are surrounded by the secularities of life. (2) The thoughts must go frequently forth, not now and then with long intervals between. Not that it is inconsistent with diligence in business, &c.; for that also is the service of God. 3. To set our attachment upon them. Surely it would be inconsistent in one who is going to heaven not to set his heart upon it. 4. Diligent and persevering exertions to obtain them are included. Belief awakens attention, attention kindles desires for possession, desires give birth to efforts. You are called upon, then, to use the means. Christ is our "Way" to the holy of holies, and faith, prayer, meditation, &c., are the means. III. SOME MOTIVES OR CONSIDERATIONS WHICH SHOULD IMPEL US TO THIS CONDUCT. 1. A regard to consistency. "You who were dead have been quickened, and are risen with Christ, therefore," &c. From so great a difference of state it is expected that the greatest difference of conduct should follow. 2. The reasonableness of the duty. Can there be anything more reasonable than that among the multiplicity of things which court attention, we should seek those that are most excellent and enduring. As well might a chemist hope for a universal elixir from polluted water, as mankind expect from earthly things the light and bliss of their immortal souls. Besides, earthly things are transitory as well as vain. Like the bubble that glitters in all the colours of the rainbow, but, whilst we view it, bursts, and is no more; like the splendid hues that bedeck the insects' wings fluttering in the sunbeam, but which are brushed off as soon as the beam is withdrawn, so rapidly do they flee away. 3. The present advantages resulting from the exercise here enjoined. By a wise and gracious appointment of God, duty and interest are joined together. "Godliness is profitable unto all things," &c. 4. The things above are the scene in which are displayed Christ's presence and glory. The argument of the apostle and the Saviour's prayer (John xvii.) are that we should meet Him there. In conclusion: be admonished by the consideration of the dreadful alternative which must inevitably follow the neglect of this duty. If you follow not holiness you cannot see the Lord. (*J. Beaumont, M.D.*) *Seeking things above*:—I. This is the business of the UNDERSTANDING. 1. Of late years the word "thinker" has been employed to designate those who

bring their reasoning faculties to bear on abstract problems, and who give proof of this by lectures and books, and of no others. If this use is correct, thinkers would constitute a select class indeed; it would be just as reasonable to confine the term "worker" to a manual labourer. But all human beings think, and this is none the less true because the understanding apprehends what is before it indistinctly. The eye may none the less see because the objects are somewhat confused.

2. Thus the solemn question arises, "What do we think about?" For most of the day we have no choice. To give your mind to it is the condition of all good work. But there is a fixed hour when business ends and we regain liberty of thought. What do you habitually think about then? The question is important, for the instructive direction of thought at such times may tell us much about our real selves and our destiny.

3. Is it not true that the mind of many is occupied with much that does not guide it heavenwards? It is almost at the mercy of the first claimant; weighted with the importunity of sense; dissipated or distorted by passion; darkened by avoidance of God. What mean those long periods spent over a work of fiction which suggests at almost every page what it dares not describe; those long hours of sullen moodiness, or of hard thoughts of God?

4. It is sometimes thought that if thought is only active it must needs be good, and that only when it stagnates it breeds evil. But thought may be exercised on subjects that degrade it, and in proportion to its activity.

5. Easter then bids thought rise heavenward with Christ; it is the warrant and pattern of mental resurrection. Before Christ rose men had thought and written about another world; but at best the veil was only half withdrawn. Men hoped and guessed. But Christ made it clear and certain, and bade thought arise into the world beyond the stars, into which He passed to prepare a place for us.

6. Seek then in thought the things above. Seek the conversation of the wise, make the most of whatever enlarges and ennobles. In all higher and purer regions of thought you are nearer Christ (Phil. iv. 8). But as you seek, cry *Excelsior!* Rest not until you have struggled beyond literature, science, and nature, into the kingdom of heaven where Christ the King of Glory sits.

II. This is the business of THE AFFECTIONS.

1. The affections are a particular department of desire. (1) Desire is the strongest motive power in the soul, it is what gravitation is to matter. When we know upon what desire is set, we know the direction a soul is taking. If its objects are in heaven then the soul is moving upwards, if earthly then downwards (Matt. vi. 21).

(2) Desire is the raw material which is fashioned on the one hand into covetousness, or ambition, or sensuality, or into the love of God on the other (James i. 15).

(3) Desire was meant to attach the soul to God by a spiritual attraction that should keep it, though in its freedom, true to its centre, just as the planets move ever round their central sun. And sin resembles those catastrophes which might result if it were conceivable that a planet should leave its orbit and dash wildly into space.

2. God gives to every man a certain measure of that affection which is a department of desire. It is dealt out by us partly to those whom providence has appointed to receive it—a father, mother, &c.; and also on objects which we choose to be its recipients. So we may squander it on the pleasures of sense, or compress it into high self-sacrifice. But we do not spend it twice. Since the being who loves is finite the supply is limited; and the despair of those who have given their all at the bidding of some unlawful pleasure is to find, while life is still young, but all too late, that the heart may be like a dried-up spring, "without natural affection" (Rom. i. 31; 2 Tim. iii. 3). That "wasting fever of the heart" is almost worse than the moral death of which, if unassuaged, it is the assured presentiment.

3. Seek, then, with your affections the things above. As truth is the prize of the understanding, so beauty is the prize of the heart. Let the Eternal Beauty woo and win your hearts. In that higher world there are many objects (1 Cor. ii. 9) to win them; but there is One above all others who has claims such as no other can have upon them. To love Him is to love a Being who sustains love (Rom. v. 5; Eph. vi. 24). He is the only Being in loving whom the heart can never incur the risk of exhaustion or disappointment.

III. It is the business of THE WILL. There is at the centre of our being a power which rules all others, which, while professing obedience to reason, not seldom arranges its premises and settles its conclusions, and which gives play to affection or restrains it almost at discretion. It is not reason nor feeling which in the last resort rules the soul, and by which the great question of its destiny must be decided. Grant that the will is weakened, this weakness has been corrected in those who are risen with Christ (Phil. iv. 3). Away with the faint-hearted and false notion that religious effort is

an affair of temperament! Natural disposition may make things easy or difficult, but it cannot arrest the upward movement of a free, because regenerate, will. We have been made masters of ourselves by Christ, and we cannot shift the responsibility. (*Canon Liddon.*) *High ground for the affections*:—Thou puttest wheat in the low ground, and thy friend comes, who knows the nature of the corn and the land, and instructs thine unskillfulness, and says to thee, "What hast thou done? thou hast put the corn in the flat soil, in the lower land; the soil is moist; the seed will rot, and thou wilt lose thy labour." Thou answerest, "What, then, must I do?" "Remove it," he says, "into the higher ground." Dost thou, then, give ear to a friend who gives thee counsel about thy corn, and despisest thou God, who gives thee counsel about thy heart? Thou fearest to put thy corn in the low ground, and wilt thou lose thine heart in the earth? (*T. H. Leary.*) *Homewards*:—As the fire mounteth upwards to its proper place, and as the needle still trembleth till it stands at the north; so the soul, once inflamed with the heavenly fire, and acquainted with her first original, cannot be at rest until it finds itself in that comfortable way which certainly leads homewards. (*Ibid.*) *Above the tide*:—There is a plant called samphire, which grows only on cliffs near the sea. But though it grows near the salt sea waves, yet it is never found on any part of a cliff which is not above the reach of the tide. On one occasion, a party of shipwrecked sailors, flung ashore, were struggling up the face of precipitous rocks, afraid of the advancing tide overtaking them, when one of their number lighted upon a plant of samphire, growing luxuriantly. Instantly he raised a shout of joy, assuring his companions, by this token, they were now in safety. The sea might come near this spot, and perhaps cast up its spray, but would never be found reaching it. Such is the position of a soul in Christ: justified and united to Him, the person may be in full sight still of the world's threatening and angry waves, but he is perfectly safe, and he cannot be overwhelmed. (*J. L. Nye.*) *Reasons for seeking the things above*:—The things above—I. FORM THE PROPER OBJECT OF OUR REGARD. Every person should attend to the things which relate to his own home. But the home of a Christian is above. There is "his Father's house." II. THEY ARE THE OBJECT FOR WHICH MAN IS BY HIS NATURE MADE; and especially for which he is prepared in his sanctified character. 1. By the constitution of his mind, man requires an object of a spiritual and eternal kind. Nothing of a worldly nature, however multiplied, is congenial with the tendencies and desires of the immortal spirit. 2. Much more, the Christian, as renewed in his spirit by the power of God, must "seek the things above," as alone suited to his soul. Spirituality is the essence of the Christian: he breathes and tends heavenward. III. THEIR TRANSCENDENT EXCELLENCE. There all is perfection; all holiness and happiness. There are inconceivable glories in the heavenly world. Whatever can render it a scene worthy of the majesty of God, of the infinite merit and purchase of the Son of God, of the most enlarged desires and hopes of the redeemed; all is collected and perfect there. IV. THEIR PERPETUITY. The smallest good, of a lasting duration, is deemed preferable to a much greater benefit that is only transient. But the things which are not seen are eternal. V. THE CERTAINTY OF SUCCESS ASSURED TO ALL THAT SEEK THEM IN THE RIGHT WAY. In the pursuit of all earthly objects there is no certainty of attainment. Conclusion: What reasons, then, exist why we should seek these things with increased earnestness! 1. The apostle, who wrote the text, affords a striking example of the manner in which we should seek them (*Phil. iii. 12-14*). 2. These reasons are always growing stronger; every moment is impairing the lustre and the value of everything below; while every moment is adding to the nearness and importance of eternal things. (*Robert Hall, M.A.*) *The heavenly aspirations of the renewed nature*:—I. THE INTIMATE CONNECTION BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE. "Dead with Christ," "Risen with Christ." The latter phrase implies—1. That the soul was once dead in sin. The body of the sinner lives—his mind is vigorous, but his soul is dead. It sees no beauty in Christ, hears not the gospel, is unmoved by the love of God, is insensible to the terrors of the coming judgment. 2. The same power which raised Christ from the dead raises dead souls to life. II. THE DUTY ENJOINED—"Seek," &c. 1. The godliness is not merely a "state," but a "life." 2. In this active course the Christian is not treated as a mere machine—moved irrespective of his will. God's power is manifested in it all, but the Christian himself is to "seek." 3. We are not left in ignorance of the object of our search. "Things above." This indicates—(1) Their character. "Things above"—spiritual, heavenly, Godlike, holy, pure. (2) Their locality. Satisfaction is not to be found in earthly things.

III. THE INDUCEMENT TO THIS LIFE. "Christ sitteth" above. It is His will that those whom the Father has given Him be with Him where He is. Christ's position is—1. One of honour. "The right hand." Him hath "God greatly exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour." 2. One of power. "The right hand" is a symbol of authority. From heaven He shall come to judge the world. 3. Meanwhile it is the position of an Intercessor. (*F. Wagstaff.*) *Excelsior*:—The resurrection of Christ occupies a central place in the gospel system, and from it lines of vital connection radiate to every doctrine. As planets revolve round the central sun, and derive light and heat therefrom, so every doctrine connected with man's salvation circles round the risen Christ. 1. Apart from this no guilty man can be justified, for Christ was raised for our justification. "If Christ be not risen we are yet dead in our sins." 2. But now is Christ risen, and the opposite results follow. I. A FACT ASSUMED, viz., that Christ has risen. 1. A fact which Christ foresaw would possess transcendent interest. When the Jews asked a sign, this was the one given. 2. A fact well certified, or no fact in history is, and sceptics to be consistent must destroy their Livy, Cæsar, Gibbon, and Grote. No one of Christ's friends was pre-disposed to belief. The jealousy of the priesthood was a safeguard against deception. 3. A fact which alone can account for the apostle's heroic service. II. A SUPPOSITION. "If," &c. In Paul's view regeneration and progress could not be disjointed. Ascension must follow resurrection. To rise with Christ means—1. A transition from darkness to light. The grave symbolizes our state of moral darkness, conversion is the dawning of heavenly light. 2. From bondage to liberty. The grave is an emblem of captivity. When Christ rose, He led captivity captive. 3. From death to life. Christ liveth in us, and because He lives we shall live also. III. AN INSPIRING EXHORTATION. 1. Every form of life has its corresponding form of activity. "If you live," says Paul, "grow." Superior life is manifested by superior conduct. 2. Our aspiration should have a definite aim. The things above are those which purify and ennoble. (1) Knowledge, of God, Scripture, &c. (2) Faith. (3) Love. (4) Righteousness. (5) Conformity to Christ. 3. The exhortation is supported by a principle of self-consistence. You have risen, rise higher still. On what ground have we started on the heavenly race if we do not mean to continue! (*D. Davies, M.A.*) *Aspiring towards heaven*:—Ere autumn has tinted the woodlands, or the cornfields are falling to the reaper's song, or hoary hill-tops, like grey hairs on an aged head, give warning of winter's approach, I have seen the swallow's brood pruning their feathers, and putting their long wings to the proof; and, though they might return to their nests in the window-eaves, or alight again on the house-tops, they darted away in the direction of sunny lands. Thus they showed that they were birds bound for a foreign clime, and that the period of their migration from the scene of their birth was nigh at hand. Grace also has its prognostics. They are infallible as those of nature. So, when the soul, filled with longings to be gone, is often darting away to glory, and, soaring upward, rises on the wings of faith, till this great world, from her sublime elevation, looks a little thing, God's people know that they have the earnest of the Spirit. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The Christian temper*:—First, then, those who do "seek the things which are above," as a matter of fact, become elevated in tone and temper. Do not think that tone and temper are nothing. In the best pictures of great masters, tone is almost everything. Form goes for much. Form, indeed, and the steadiness of the drawing, go for very much in the "composition" of the picture; but deprive it of the wonderful *non so che* called tone, and it stands out hard and unpleasing, and supplies to the soul no real pleasure. On the other hand, let the tone of the true artist be there, and now it covers in a great degree even badness in the drawing. In the same way, in nature, atmosphere counts for much, very much, in the charm of a scene, in its power, that is, to touch the heart; and when you come to personal life, what tone is to the picture, what atmosphere is to the landscape, such is general temper to the human character. (*Knox Little.*) *Attaining higher life*:—I have known men who have been up in balloons, and they have told me that when they want to rise higher they just throw out some of the sand with which they ballast the balloon. Now, I believe one reason why so many people are earthly-minded and have so little of the spirit of heaven, is that they have got too much ballast in the shape of love for earthly joys and gains; and what you want is to throw out some of the sand, and you will rise higher. (*D. L. Moody.*) *The affections elevated*:—On board iron vessels it is a common thing to see a compass placed aloft, to be as much away from the cause of aberration as possible; a wise hint to us to elevate our affections and desires; the nearer to God, the less swayed by worldly influences. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 2. **Set your affections on things above.**—*Things above*:—It is implied in this exhortation that the things above are—I. KNOWN TO US. We may love the unseen, not the unknown. We know them through the Scriptures. II. OURS. We may not set our hearts on what is not ours. But "all things are ours." III. IF WE DO NOT SET OUR AFFECTIONS UPON THEM WE SHALL ON THINGS BELOW. Empty man's heart cannot be. IV. THEY ARE THOSE AMID WHICH EVERY CHRISTIAN WILL SOON BE PLACED FOR ETERNITY. It becomes the pilgrims of time to visit by faith their future home. V. THEY ARE FITTED AND WORTHY TO OCCUPY A CHRISTIAN'S SOUL. None else are. VI. THEY HAVE A TRANSCENDENT EXCELLENCY. Note the Apocalyptic figures of them. VII. THEY ENDURE FOR EVER. All else is perishable. VIII. IN SETTING OUR AFFECTIONS ON THEM WE ARE CERTAIN OF SUCCESS. We can say this of nothing else. IX. THEY BECOME DAILY MORE AND MORE IMPORTANT, WHILE THE THINGS OF EARTH GROW DAILY LESS SO. Every day lessens the duration of temporal things and brings us nearer to eternal things. X. THEY CAST DOWN UPON US A TRANSFORMING BEAUTY. Man's heart never acts without being acted upon. Contact with the good sanctifies; communion with the happy gladdens. Conclusion: Seek these things then—1. In the Scripture. 2. In Christ. 3. In the ministry of the gospel. 4. On the Sabbath. 5. In prayer. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *Setting the affections on things above*:—I. WHAT THINGS ABOVE? Things above nature and above earth. II. WHAT THINGS ON EARTH? (1 John ii. 16; Gen. iii. 6). 1. Lust of the flesh—pleasures. 2. Lust of the eye—riches (Eccles. v. 11). 3. Pride of life—honours. III. WHAT BY AFFECTIONS? 1. The understanding and meditation. 2. The will and affections. (1) Love. (2) Desire. (3) Joy. IV. THESE AFFECTIONS ARE NOT TO BE SET ON THINGS UPON EARTH (Psa. lxxii. 10). 1. They are below us (Phil. iii. 8). 2. Unsuitable to us. 3. Unsatisfying (1 Cor. vii. 31; Job xxx. 15; Psa. lxxviii. 39; Hos. xiii. 13; Prov. xxiii. 5; Luke viii. 18). 4. Troublesome and vexatious (Matt. xiii. 22). 5. Unnecessary. (1) To the making of us happy (Job xxviii. 15). (2) To the bringing us to happiness. 6. Fleeting and unconstant (Prov. xxiii. 5; 2 Sam. xix. 43, xxi.; Belshazzar; Luke xii. 19, 20). Uses: 1. Information. (1) How sin hath debased and infatuated mankind. (2) See the folly of covetous worldlings. (3) See the easiness of charity. What a little thing God demands, and what vast returns there will be (Matt. x. 41, 42). (4) What little cause men have to be troubled for the want of such things. (5) Or others to be proud of having them. 2. Exhortation. Consider if ye do set your affections on things below—(1) Ye cross God's end in giving them. (2) Ye provoke Him to take them away (Psa. lxxviii. 5-7). (3) Or to give you them for your portion (Psa. xvii. 14). (4) The more you affect them, the less comfort you will have in them (Psa. cvi. 15). (5) They will divert your thoughts from heaven (Psa. x. 3, 4). (6) And so disturb you in duty (Ezek. xxxiii. 31). (7) It is gross idolatry (Col. iii. 5). (8) You have better things to mind (Matt. vi. 33; Col. iii. 1). V. WE ARE TO SET OUR AFFECTIONS ON THINGS ABOVE. 1. Why? Because—(1) They are suitable for our affections (Psa. xvii. 15). (2) Our chief relations are three. (a) Our Father (Luke xii. 32; John xx. 17; Mal. i. 6). (b) Our Husband (Hos. ii. 16; Isa. liv. 5). (c) Brethren (Heb. ii. 11; Rom. viii. 29). (3) Our treasure is there. (a) Riches (Matt. vi. 19-21). (b) Honours (1 Sam. ii. 30). (c) Pleasures (Psa. xvi. 11). (d) Your affections were made on purpose for these things (Prov. xvi. 4). (e) Setting your affections on them now is the way to come to their enjoyment hereafter. 2. What? (1) Our thoughts (Phil. iv. 8). (a) Upon God (Psa. x. 4; cxxxix. 18). (b) Upon Christ (Luke xxii. 11-19). (c) Upon the Scripture that leads to them (Psa. i. 2). (2) Our love (Deut. vi. 5). (3) Desire (Psa. lxxiii. 25; Phil. i. 23). (4) Hope (Rom. v. 2). (5) Joy (Psa. iv. 6-7; 1 Pet. i. 8). 3. How? (1) In the most intense degree (Luke xiv. 26). (2) Constantly. Uses: 1. Examination. (1) What do you most think of? (2) What are you most loath to part with? (3) What do you spend most time about? (Mark iv. 19). 2. Exhortation. "Set your affections," &c. (1) There is nothing else worthy of them (1 John ii. 15). (2) This will keep you from doating on the world (Phil. iii. 8). (3) It will keep you from grieving too much about the affairs of this life (Phil. iv. 11, 12). (4) It will make you more active in all duties (Acts xx. 24). (5) By so doing you will partly enjoy them (2 Cor. xii. 2, 3). (6) This will make you willing to die (Phil. i. 23). (7) And fit you for the enjoyment of God after death. (*Bishop Beveridge.*) *Affections rightly placed*:—I. THE AFFECTIONS ARE—1. The motions of the reasonable soul. When Jerusalem was much affected about the tidings of Christ's birth it is said that "all Jerusalem was moved." And when the Jews were affected against Paul they "were moved with envy." 2. So they are the movings of the soul whereby the heart is sensibly carried

out upon what is good or evil. 3. And as it is sensibly carried out towards, so it must embrace the same. By one we follow what is good and the other shun what is evil. There are several affections, but all are ministers of love. I love a thing and, if absent, desire it; if present, delight in it. If I hate a thing I shun it or am angry with it. II. THE AFFECTIONS ARE TO BE SET ON THINGS ABOVE, AND NOT ON THINGS ON THE EARTH. 1. What, may we not at all affect the things of earth? Yes, ye may desire them, and grieve at the loss of them, and both desire and grief are affections. (1) But not for themselves, only in deference to Christ and in subordination to God. You are commanded to love your wives, husbands, &c., because you can love them in the Lord—but nowhere to love ourselves, money, &c., because “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him.” (2) In comparison with spiritual things your affection for them is to be as no affection. “Let him that rejoiceth be as though he rejoiced not.” “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.” 2. Why are we to set our affections on things above? Because, if they are not set on Christ and the things of Christ—(1) You will not be found marriageable unto Him. That woman is not fit to be married to a man whose affections are not knit to him. (2) You will never own Him. Ardent love is required for faithful testimony, and those who are ashamed of Christ, of them will He be ashamed. (3) Our affections will never be drawn from things beneath. Sin is mortified by the contrary good; the joy and grief of the world by spiritual joy and grief. The snow is melted by the warm beams of the sun, and the more your hearts are warmed with love to Christ, the easier will earthly affections fall away. (4) We shall never press much after the knowledge and enjoyment of heavenly things. A child if he have no affection for his book will never make a scholar. (5) We shall never be zealous for God, for zeal is the heat of Divine love. (6) We shall never do any great thing for God. The reason for David’s great gift was his affection (1 Chron. xxix. 3). (7) We shall never please God in anything we do (Rom. xii. 11). (8) We shall not be safe from apostasy. Conclusion: Do you set your affections on things above? 1. This is a hard thing to do: for it means to have a sympathy with that against which we had an antipathy; and to change our sympathies into antipathies, and *vice versa*, is no easy matter. 2. It is one thing to affect the best things and have some affections for them, and another thing to set our affections on them. Herod heard John gladly, and the stony ground received the Word with joy. 3. If men’s affections were set on things above they would not be so indifferent in the things of God as they are. For this is described as hungering and thirsting. 4. Then they would always carry these things about with them in their minds. 5. They would seek them first, of their age, day, and competition; in youth, morning, and before all. 6. They would be often speaking of them, and would love to hear others (Psa. xlv. 1). 7. They would be most indulgent and tender of them. 8. They would not be put off with any slight evidence of their interest in them. (*W. Bridge, M.A.*) *Affections the wings of the soul*:—If you will go to the banks of a little stream and watch the flies that come and bathe in it you will notice that while they plunge their bodies in the water, they keep their wings high out of it; and after swimming about a little while they fly away with their wings unwet through the sunny air. Now that is a lesson for us. Here we are immersed in the cares and business of the world; but let us keep the wings of our soul, our faith and our love, out of the world, that with these unclogged we may be ready to take our flight to heaven. (*J. Inglis.*) *Spirituality a safeguard against temptation*:—“Birds,” says Manton, “are seldom taken in their flight; the more we are upon the wing of heavenly thoughts the more we escape snares.” Oh that we would remember this, and never tarry long on the ground lest the fowler ensnare us. We need to be much taken up with Divine things, rising in thought above these temporal matters, or else the world will entangle us, and we shall be like birds held with limed twigs, or encompassed in a net. Up, then, my heart. Up from the weedy ditches and briery hedges of the world into the clear atmosphere of heaven. There, were the dews of grace are born, and the Sun of Righteousness is Lord paramount, and the blessed wind of the Spirit blows from the everlasting hills, thou wilt find rest on the wing, and sing for joy where thine enemies cannot even see thee. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The affections to be habitually heavenward*:—After painting the Sistine ceiling, Michael Angelo found that the habit of looking upward, which that long-continued work rendered necessary, made it for some time impossible to read or to look carefully at a drawing except in the same attitude. So our converse with heaven should affect our attitude in looking at the things

of earth. (*T. F. B. Tinting, B.A.*) *The supreme attachment due to spiritual objects*.—I. AFFECTION IS THE GOING OUT OF THE SOUL TOWARD OBJECTS WITHIN ITS VIEW. 1. How happy it were if affection might go just at its own pleasure and all be right and safe, *i.e.*, that an infallible perception accompanied it with which the moral taste strictly agreed. Then nothing would attract it that ought not; it would be in repulsion to all evil, and both in the right degrees. 2. But this is not so. (1) Our nature, composed of two kinds of being, places us in strict relation to two different economies. Therefore there is great difficulty in apportioning the regards towards these in due proportion. (2) By the output of our nature our relation to one class of interests is immediate and sensible, while the relation to things spiritual is only through thought and faith. (3) Our nature is sunk in such a state that it has a most obstinate tendency to give itself to the inferior class of interests, the effect of which is to throw away the supreme interests of the soul. (4) One would imagine the terror of this to make the doctrine of Divine grace welcome. Except in reliance on this we should hear the text with despair. II. A MEASURE OF AFFECTION FOR THINGS ON EARTH IS LEGITIMATE. Good men have used an indiscreet language almost of requiring an indifference to or contempt for earthly things; and according to this there is one essential inconsistency between our duty and the condition in which God has placed us. But our interests here have claims that must be allowed. 1. Think in how many ways we derive pleasure or pain from earthly things. Surely our Creator does not desire the pleasure denied or the pain endured more than is inevitable, or disciplinary. And, therefore, we may in measure desire the pleasing, and be anxious to avoid the painful. 2. Think how much care is necessary to avoid the ills of life, and that we may have the most benefit of its relations. Affection is inevitably and justly set on health, near relatives, and as a matter concerning him and them, on his temporal condition. And then a man that looks on the conduct of public affairs, by which his own, his family's, and his fellow-citizens' welfare are affected, will necessarily feel considerable interest in that direction. Again, if a man be of a cultivated intellect and taste, he cannot help being affected by the beauties of nature and the great works and discoveries of men. 3. But how sad it is that the relations of the present are all which many recognize. Think if they were exhorted to such an utter indifference to their temporal interests as they indulge respecting their eternal ones. What madness would be charged. *A fortiori*, then, is not theirs an awful madness.

III. SUPREME AFFECTION SHOULD BE RESERVED FOR THINGS ABOVE. 1. By the nobler part of our nature we are placed in solemn relations with another economy comporting with its immortality—to God, the one infinite Being; to the Redeemer, the Lord of the new economy; to an unseen state of holy companionships and endless felicity. How marvellous that the soul can consent to stay in the dust when it might live beyond the stars. 2. What then should be the comparative state of the affections as towards the former and the latter? (1) The answer can but be that there must be, at the lowest, a decided preponderance in favour of the spiritual and the eternal. Otherwise how is the great purpose of Christ accomplished who came to redeem us to them? (2) But if no more than barely this is attained, how often it is likely to be put in doubt. We should aspire to have therefore more than a preponderance. IV. WHAT, THEN, MAY BE TAKEN AS PROOFS THAT WE HAVE THE REQUIRED PREPONDERANCE OF AFFECTION FOR THINGS ABOVE. In most cases this is a matter of prompt and unequivocal consciousness; but in this the best men find tests valuable. 1. Let a man examine when he is strongly interested in some temporal concern whether he can say more than all this is the interest I feel in things above. 2. When he is greatly pleased with something, and his thoughts suddenly turn to higher objects, is he then more pleased? 3. Or is he solicitous that this temporal good may not injure his spiritual interests? 4. If he suffers in goods or body does he feel that he would far rather suffer so than in soul, and does he feel a strong overbalancing consolation from above. 5. Is he more pleased to give earnest application to higher things than to inferior, and that he would sacrifice more for one than for the other? 6. Does he check his temporal pursuits directly they interfere with heavenly, and double his diligence in regard to the latter. 7. Do heavenly things grow increasingly attractive the nearer he gets to them? (*John Foster.*) *The heavenly inheritance preferred*.—I. SUPPOSE TWO OBJECTS ADMITTED TO BE OF EQUAL VALUE PRESENTED THEMSELVES IN COMPETITION FOR OUR FAVOUR. 1. In pursuing one of them we can only gain itself, but in pursuing the other we gain it and a large share of its competitor—who could hesitate about making an election? So if a man choose the earthly he can gain

none of the heavenly ; whereas if he choose the heavenly, besides securing it, he gains the best of the earthly. Nay, the choice of the heavenly portion is the more promising way of obtaining the earthly on the ground of the greater prudence and superior morality which the choice inspires, together with the blessing of God. And further, this is the only way of finding satisfaction in earthly things, and without that satisfaction they are worthless. 2. We shall be wise if we prefer that which we are sure of attaining, and resist that of which it is doubtful if we ever gain it. You who have chosen the earthly consider what a gambler's work you make of the pursuit of happiness. You must have the whole of your uncertain life in health ; you must be pure amidst temptations without grace ; you must have uninterrupted business prosperity ; a wife who shall prove a helpmeet although chosen under dubious circumstances, and children who shall love and honour you in spite of a godless education. And happiness, according to your estimate, depends on such chances as these. But the happiness of him that seeks the things above is independent of these, and is assured not only now, but for ever. 3. Wisdom will prefer that which requires less labour. Reflect, then, what skilfulness, scheming, racing, anxiety, sleeplessness are required for gaining and retaining earthly things. Not that the life of the heavenly seeker is one of sloth, but his heavenly-mindedness enables him to go through the same work without the same disturbance, and to add others of a benevolent character by way of pastime.

II. BUT THE TWO THINGS ARE NOT OF EQUAL VALUE, and though the pursuit of the heavenly excluded the earthly, though it were uncertain while the pursuit of the earthly were certain, and though it were more laborious, yet—1. Its intrinsic value would outweigh all adverse considerations. The earthly is mainly for the body and fortune, the heavenly for both body and soul and for eternity. 2. Its necessity to our happiness is another weighty consideration. Earthly things are only at best a temporary convenience ; but without the heavenly a man perishes for ever. Let, then, the most depressing view of life be taken, it is soon over, and then the Christian is for ever with the Lord. But where is the worldling after every earthly gratification then ? (*W. Anderson, LL.D.*)

The vital transference :—I. THE FOLLY OF SETTING OUR AFFECTIONS ON THINGS ON THE EARTH. 1. They destroy while they please. (1) Take riches ; there is no harm in preferring them to poverty ; but thousands are destroyed by the pleasure of their accumulation, bodily, spiritually, and eternally. Men demean themselves, defraud, and lie for money, and think of nothing else. You have not got so far as that ? But you will acknowledge that during the week if you hewed away all that was given to earthly things there would not be much left. (2) Take the approval of the world. A good name is, of course, an immense power for good : but thousands have gone down under worldly applause. Beauty, genius, everything that men and women have have been sacrificed for this, and as they went up in fame went down in character. Think of Byron, Sheridan, Burns, &c. The approval of the world while it pleases it damns. 3. They are unsatisfactory. (1) Where is the man who has been made happy by temporal success. First a man wants to make a living, then a competency, then a superfluity, then he wants more. The husks of this wilderness can never satisfy the hunger of the soul. How is it with you now with your large house of twenty rooms sumptuously furnished ; are you any happier than when you had only two ? If you have never found out the true secret of life—the love of God and His service, you are not so happy. Besides, if they had all that they profess, we cannot keep them. How many dollars is Cræsus worth now ? (2) We cannot depend on friendships. Some play us false ; the truest leave us. (3) We cannot build on domestic enjoyments, pure and holy though they be. II. TRANSFER, THEN, YOUR AFFECTIONS TO THINGS ABOVE. 1. We ought to do so. We have a throne there, a multitude to greet us, and Jesus. 2. If we did so it would change everything in us, and make us more gentle, loving, hopeful, and when we come to die we should need no Jacob's ladder or angel's wing. 3. The apostle had such an idea of heaven that it made the troubles of life seem insignificant. "This light affliction." (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*)

Drawings toward heaven :—A man was passing along the street, and saw a blind boy seated on his father's knee, holding in his hand a kite-string, the kite flying away in the air. The man said, "Is it any satisfaction to you, my lad, to fly that kite, when you cannot see it ?" "O yes, sir," he replied, "I cannot see it, but I can feel it pull." And so out of this dark world, and amid this blindness of sin, we feel something drawing us heavenwards ; and though we cannot see the thrones, and the joy, and the coronation, blessed be God, we can feel them pull. (*Ibid.*)

The antidote to asceticism and sensualism :—You must not

only seek heaven; you must also think heaven. (*Cf. Phil. iii. 19, 20.*) Extremes meet. Here the apostle points the antithesis between earthly and heavenly things to controvert a Gnostic asceticism: in the Philippian letter he uses the same contrast to denounce an Epicurean sensualism. Both alike are guilty of the same fundamental error; both alike concentrate their thoughts on material, mundane things. (*Bishop Lightfoot.*)

The death of Melancthon:—"Is there anything else you want?" was asked Melancthon on his deathbed. "Nothing but heaven," was the reply.

Not on things on the earth:—In return for his splendid services to China, Gordon would accept only the distinctions of the "Yellow Jacket" and the "Peacock's Feather," which correspond to our own orders of the Garter and the Bath. Of these rewards he wrote to his mother: "I do not care twopence about these things, but know that you and my father like them." The Chinese Government twice offered him a fortune. On the first occasion ten thousand taels were actually brought into his room, but he drove out the bearers of the treasure, and would not even look at it. On the second occasion the sum was still larger, but this also he declined, and afterwards he wrote home:—"I do not want anything, either money or honours, from either the Chinese Government or our own. As for the honours, I do not value them at all. I know that I am doing a great deal of good, and, liking my profession, do not mind going on with my work. Do not think I am ill-tempered, but I do not care one jot about my promotion, or what people may say. I know I shall leave China as poor as I entered it, but with the knowledge that through my weak instrumentality upwards of eighty to one hundred thousand lives have been spared." (*E. Hake.*)

The heart misplaced:—To set the heart on the creature is to set a diamond in lead, or to lock coals in a cabinet and throw jewels into a cellar. (*Bishop Reynolds.*)

Vanity of earthly things:—Æsop's fable says:—"A pigeon oppressed by excessive thirst, saw a goblet of water painted on a sign-board. Not supposing it to be only a picture, she flew towards it with a loud whirl, and unwittingly dashed against the sign-board, and jarred herself terribly. Having broken her wings by the blow, she fell to the ground, and was killed by one of the bystanders." The mockeries of the world are many, and those who are deluded by them not only miss the joys they looked for, but in their eager pursuit of vanity bring ruin upon their souls. We call the dove silly to be deceived by a picture, however cleverly painted, but what epithet shall we apply to those who are duped by the transparently false allurements of the world! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Attractions of the world:—Nearly all can recall that favourite fiction of their childhood, the voyage of Sinbad the sailor into the Indian Sea. They will remember that magnetic rock that rose from the surface of the placid waters. Silently Sinbad's vessel was attracted towards it; silently the bolts were drawn out of the ship's side, one by one, through the subtle attraction of that magnetic rock. And when the fated vessel drew so near that every bolt and clamp was unloosed, the whole structure of bulwark, mast, and spars tumbled into ruin on the sea, and the sleeping sailors awoke to their drowning agonies. So stands the magnetic rock of worldliness athwart the Christian's path. Its attraction is subtle, silent, slow, but fearfully powerful on every soul that floats within its range. Under its enchanting spell bolt after bolt of good resolution, clamp after clamp of Christian obligation, are stealthily drawn out. What matters it how long or how fair has been the man's profession of religion, or how flauntingly the flag of his orthodoxy floats from the masthead? Let sudden temptation smite the unbolted professor, and in an hour he is a wreck. He cannot hold together in a tempest of trial, he cannot go out on any cruise of Christian service, because he is no longer held together by a Divine principle within. It has been drawn out of him by that mighty loadstone of attraction, a sinful, godless, self-pampering, Christ-rejecting world. (*Cuyler.*)

Earthly and heavenly things:—As it is but foolish childishness that makes children so delight in baubles that they would not leave them for all your lands, so it is but foolish worldliness, and fleshliness, and wickedness, that makes you so much delight in your houses, and lands, and meat, and drink, and ease, and honour, as that you would not part with them for heavenly delights. But what will you do for pleasure when these are gone? Do you not think of that? When your pleasures end in horror, and go out like a taper, the pleasures of the saints are then at their best. (*R. Baxter.*)

Earthly-mindedness:—It is storied of Henry the Fourth of France, asking the Duke of Alva if he had observed the eclipses happening in that year, he answered, that he had so much business on earth, that he had no leisure to look up to heaven. A sad thing it is for men to be so bent, and their hearts so set on the things of this world, as

not to cast up a look to the things that are in heaven; nay, not to regard though God brings heaven down to them in His Word and sacraments. Yet so it is: most men are of this Spanish general's mind; witness the oxen, the farms, the pleasures, the profits and preferments, that men are so fast glued unto, that they have hardly leisure to entertain a thought of any goodness. (*J. Spence.*) *Love of the world*:—A dervish once went into a confectioner's shop. The confectioner, to honour him, poured some honey into a dish before him. Immediately a swarm of flies settled, as was their wont, upon the honey; some upon the edge of the dish, but the greater number in the middle. The confectioner then took up a whisk to drive them off, when those upon the side flew away with ease, but the others were prevented from rising, the honey clinging to their wings, and were involved in ruin. The dervish noticed this, and remarked, "That honey-dish is like the world, and the honey like its pleasures. Those who enjoy them with moderation and contentment, when the whisk of death approaches, not having their hearts filled with the love of them, can with ease escape its snare, while all who, like the foolish flies, have given themselves wholly to their sweetness will meet with destruction." (*From the Hindustani.*)

Vers. 3, 4. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.—*The Christian's life*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN'S DEATH. "Ye are dead." Is not this a paradox? Did not Christ come that we might have life abundantly. And yet when we enter His service we are told to die. Who can solve the enigma? Scripture only. 1. "She that liveth in pleasure," &c. (1 Tim. v. 6)—dead to spiritual things. In that heart there beats no pulse for God; in that spirit there is no desire of heaven; pleasures of sense engross it. Just the reverse of this will explain the text. Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is an enemy to God. Impiety has entered into an unholy compact to amalgamate the two; but it is a covenant with death, and shall be disannulled. The Christian regards the world as though it were not, although the difference may not be apparent to a superficial observer. Try him. Let his duty be set before him, and however difficult he will not shrink it. Mark him in sorrow sustained by an energy of which the world wotteth not. He is risen with Christ. 2. The Christian is crucified with Christ, and is so dead to sin. As by the Saviour's dying, the power of death was destroyed, so by the sinner's dying it is dethroned, and he becomes a new creature in Christ. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE. It is hid with Christ in God. 1. In the sense of secrecy. (1) Revelation has not been minute in new discoveries of the better world. Just enough is known to increase faith and confirm hope. This is necessary to the idea of probation, for perfect knowledge would leave no room for faith. Hence we only know in part. Our senses can give no information, for it is out of their province; it baffles reason; imagination may plume her tireless pinions, and revel in the ideal magnificence she can call into being, but still it hath not entered into the heart of man. None of those who have travelled the road have returned. (2) This is a secrecy of mercy. The eye of the mind, like the eye of the body, is injured by excess of light; and the office of faith would be prematurely gone. 2. In the sense of security. We are continually reminded of the instability of all around us. Fair buds of promise are blighted by the wintry blast. Friends twine themselves round our affections, and then die. The world is rapidly decaying. But the life to come abideth. Time affects not them who live for ever. Death is destroyed for them, and so they are safe. Where is it hidden? With Christ. Where He is—in that land where "there shall in nowise enter anything that can hurt or destroy." "In God," in His great heart—who is never faithless to His promise, and whose perfections are pledged to confer it. How can we be distrustful? III. THE CHRISTIAN'S PROSPECTS (ver. 4). These words imply—1. Enjoyment. Scanty as is our knowledge of the future, enough is revealed to exalt our highest hopes. It is brought before us as an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled; as a paradise amongst whose trees of life there lurks no serpent; a country every fresh revelation of whose beauties shall augment our knowledge and joy; a city whose every gate is of jewellery, whose every street is a suntrack; as a temple, and above all as our Father's house where our elder Brother dwells. Yet these are but emblems. 2. Manifestation. The irreligious world perceives a difference between it and the children of God which it cannot understand. It thinks not that that man whom it charges with hypocrisy or fanaticism is among the favoured ones of heaven, and that beneath a beggar's robes there throbs a prince's soul. Bide your time. With what different feelings will they be regarded

whom they appear with Him in the glory of the Father and with the holy angels. IV. THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY (ver. 2). If all this be the case, how can we resist the conclusion? For a Christian to be absorbed in the gainfulness of the world is at once an infatuation and a sin. It is as though a prince were to revel with beggars. What have you, of the blood royal of heaven, to do with this vain fleeting show? Call faith to your aid—"the evidence of things not seen." (*W. M. Punshon, LL.D.*) *The present condition and future glory of life in Christ*:—Observe—

I. THAT THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE BELIEVER'S LIFE IN CHRIST INVOLVES A NEW RELATION TO OUTWARD THINGS. "For ye are dead." There was a time when he lived in, to, and for the world. But now, while still in it, he is dead to its charms and to its ordinances. All the mainsprings of activity are changed. Man lives where he loves. II. THAT THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE BELIEVER'S LIFE IN CHRIST IS ONE OF CONCEALMENT FROM THE OUTWARD WORLD. 1. It is hid. All life is hid. Its origin is a profound mystery. The botanist fails to discover it. The scalpel of the anatomist has not pierced its dark domain. Its presence is known only by its effects. It is not a life of vulgar display. 2. It is hid with Christ. Christ Himself was hidden when here, and is now to the world, and the believer's life is with Him as a river concealed in a hidden channel flowing beneath. This hiding indicates (1) dependence. It is not hid with the believer himself; he derives it from Christ, and on Him depends for its nourishment. The springs of this life abide when every other source is exhausted. (2) Security. Our life is safer in His keeping than it could be in our own. Man was once entrusted with it, and he lost it. 3. It is hid in the depths of the Godhead. Not lost in the abyss of Deity, as the mystic or pantheist would teach; but so hid as to retain its own conscious individuality, while sharing in the boundless life of God. III. THAT THE BELIEVER'S LIFE IN CHRIST WILL, IN THE FUTURE, BE MANIFESTED IN INEFFABLE GLORY. 1. There will be a signal manifestation of Christ in the future. 2. The believer will share in the ineffable glory of that manifestation. This implies (1) public recognition. The believer, obscure and despised on earth, is acknowledged before the universe as related to Christ. All the ends of secrecy are answered. The hidden is revealed. (2) A personal participation in the splendour of Christ's triumph and in the bliss of His character. (*G. Barlow.*) *The Christian life is*—I. A DEATH. "Ye are dead." 1. You have retained an individuality, but lost a consciousness. You had a knowledge once of which you have no knowledge now. Your old sins are like names on a tombstone; once they were your whole being and personality. 2. "Dead," for how can life be sustained without food? and the old life is unaltered. You have ceased to fulfil the lusts and thus to maintain the being. 3. "Dead," for you are a mystery to the world. They think there are no pure men and women, but there are, and they have been crucified with Christ. II. A DIVINE GIFT LOST AND RESTORED. Life was the most precious jewel in the gift of God. God inbreathed this life—gave it to man to keep it. Man threw it away. Then said Christ, "I will recover it, and crown him again." "I am come that they might have life." But it could only be recovered at the expense of His own. He conquered, and a second time "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." And from that moment He said to His people, "I am the Keeper of your life." That jewel must not be thrown away again. III. HIDDEN. All life is. The life of a tree, of an insect, eludes the physiologist. It is an awful mystery. We have, too, to feel in our friendships that the heart that beat very near to us, even after all its confidences, is hidden. Our spiritual life is hidden. 1. In its origin. It is a Divine seed. It is the breath of the holy. When men attempt to reason on this matter their processes are sometimes startling and their conclusions uninformative. It is "hidden from the wise and prudent," &c. It is hidden, but Divinely true. 2. In its development. "The world knoweth us not because it knew Him not." True, we may be known by our deeds, but we are hidden, like a pearl in the sea, a star in the daytime. But God sees what we see not. He watches the growth, tends and trains His loved ones. But the growth of a Christian often contradicts the expectations of the world. When the world says, Behold their weakness, Christ says, Behold their strength, and *vice versa*. Your hopes, fears, prayers, &c., the world never saw. All the most sacred things are secret. 3. In its destiny. As all waters run into the sea, so all fulness in us terminates in our fulness in Him. IV. SAFE. We feel this for our lost friends; let us feel it for ourselves and our living dear ones. The treasure we could not keep is guarded among the regalia of the skies. The forces of eternity bind us to our Lord as the earth is held in order by her parent sun. Good people are neither born, nor live,

nor die by chance. So of little children. Why are they born to die? it seems so vain, the parents solicitude and agony. No, it is not vain. "Their life is hid with Christ in God." A citizen may be safe, although the walls may be destroyed; the man, although the dress be destroyed; the root, although the flower may be destroyed; the soul, although the body be destroyed. Diseases and fiends may prow around, and fires consume, but they cannot touch him whose life is hid, &c.

V. TO BE MANIFESTED IN GLORY. 1. Glory! What is that? The revelation of the hidden life. Think of it less as the triumph of the conqueror than as the ecstasy of the new-born delight in the thrice holy state. 2. With Him. In the deeper recesses of the heavenly state, when glory does not cast too dreadful a brilliancy; there meditating on the wonder that we appear with Him, that we have seen Him smile, that He has introduced us to our dear ones, that He will employ us in holy toil. 3. Meanwhile, in the presence of this thought, let all light afflictions be forgotten. (*Parton Hood.*)

The hidden life.—I. ITS REALITY. A traveller in Brazil on passing a mountain, was informed that there was a priceless treasure in the heart of it, which, when disenchanted, would appear. What was a fiction here is a truth concerning the interest of the Christian in Christ, the Rock of Ages. Our title to salvation is in Him; but He is hidden. None the less sure, however, is it that we are saved if we believe in Him. Two considerations may assure us. 1. The consciousness of spiritual change. We have changed views and feelings in regard to God and His claims. We have peace where once was disturbance. We have the Spirit of Adoption, who bears witness with our spirit (Rom. viii. 16).

2. The evidence of spiritual character: walking in the light, fruitfulness, Christly dispositions, Christian service. The life of the Christian is a testimony to the power of Divine grace. Without Christ we can do nothing; but our character and actions show that we have Him.

II. ITS PRECIOUSNESS. Great store is set on it as men set upon the treasures which they used to bury. Statesmen, philanthropists, &c., are presented with the freedom of a city, and the pledge of honour is enclosed in a golden casket. Our citizenship is in heaven with Christ. What dignities are consequently conferred upon us? We are sons, heirs, kings, priests. The service and death of Christ made this privilege possible, and with it "all things are ours," and to keep it we willingly count "all things loss."

III. ITS SURE GUARDIANSHIP. There is nothing valuable but is exposed to danger. Full well we know the peril of the spiritual life, and if it were in our own custody we should soon lose it. But who can erase the shining characters from the life-roll of heaven, traced by the finger of God? Satan's dark hand cannot reach the archives of heaven. A phosphoric flame can be kept alight in water by electric influence communicated through a wire; so the life of God can be maintained within us, notwithstanding all that tends to extinguish it, through the influence derived from Christ. The late Duke of Brunswick had an iron jewel chest which was so skillfully contrived that when any one opened it, who knew not the secret, bells rung, and pistols were fired. But skilful thieves one night dug through the wall against which it was placed, pierced the chest, and stole many of the gems. And, however careful we might be, if there were not One greater and more vigilant than ourselves our life treasure would be lost.

IV. ITS RESERVE. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." The glory that shall be revealed is not yet manifest. Hence the world knoweth us not, and therefore treats us with contempt. The world values rank, wealth, parade, &c. But some day there will be a full recognition. Look upon a landscape in winter, how dark the trees, dull the grass, cold and uninteresting the scene. But look again when spring and summer have breathed their influences abroad; what luxurious foliage, flower-enamelled turf, singing birds. The hidden life is come forth and is acknowledged. Once, when Lord Macaulay was surrounded by courtly friends in a brilliant assemblage he recognized and shook hands with a retiring literary man whose genius he knew, but whom others passed by. Christ at last shall confess His own before His Father and the angels. But till then this life and glory are hid in Christ. Yet be encouraged; your redemption draweth nigh.

V. ITS DEATHLESSNESS. The perishable body shall decay, but the life secured by Christ shall not be harmed. He will bring it forth and crown it. A cloud passes over the nightly sky; but you wait, and a breeze chases the mist away, and then all the splendour of the starry firmament bursts on your gaze. So death is but a passing eclipse. "Then shall the righteous shine," &c. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear." Conclusion: 1. Prize this life. 2. Seek the proof of its possession. 3. Thank God for it. 4. In patience possess your souls. (*G. Mc Michael, B.A.*)

Death and life in Christ.—I. WHERE OUR LIFE IS NOT. It is not in ourselves.

"Ye are dead." 1. How completely the image of bodily death in the senseless, motionless, and unimpressive state of the mortal frame, compared with its vigour and activity during life, represents the natural condition of the soul before God. Talk to the dead of the most stirring truths, surround them with all that charms the living, lavish upon them all the endearments that the heart can bestow, and what return will you receive? Just so is it with the soul in its unconverted state. How else is it that men hear these verities of God and go on as though there were no soul, God, eternity? It is because the soul is dead, cannot see, hear, feel. 2. But this absence of life is ascribed to the converted likewise. They are not dead so as to denote the actual want of life, for Christ is their life; but dead because they have not this life in themselves. The soul has no power to quicken and regenerate itself. Shall the dead raise the dead! Who has not striven to rouse the stagnant affections, kindle the cold desire, to walk closer with God, and render a more zealous obedience, yet found his efforts profitless as trees thrice dead. It is well for us to know the depth of our own need, and the feebleness of our best strength. It is from ignorance that we make these efforts in our own strength, and fail till the heart grows sick. Yes, and grace does not on this side heaven remove this state of impotency. At no stage does God give the soul life in itself; He imparts and renews it, as the soul has need, all fresh from Himself in daily streams to meet daily wants. He does not in one act of conversion store the soul with a treasure of strength, but breathes into it more and more of His spirit, keeping the soul dependent on Himself as a child on its parent. II. WHERE OUR LIFE IS. "Hid with Christ in God." 1. But why not have given man life directly in Himself? This is what God really did; but man lost it beneath his first temptation. Then was moved the fount of Divine compassion, and through a scheme of redemption, culminating in Christ's resurrection, life is procured for man again. 2. Then comes the question, Into whose keeping shall this life be put? Doubtless life will be in man himself hereafter; but that will be in heaven, when the adversary, all bound and fettered, shall have been cast into his own place. But in whom shall it be placed meanwhile? (1) In man, who had already once lost it? Entrusted to fallen man to keep that which unfallen man could not keep? Our experience may well teach us how dark had been our lot, if the preservation of our spiritual life amid this world of sin had been left merely to our own strength. (2) Should it, then, have been entrusted to some mighty archangel? Ah! then we had seen war, when angel was mated against angel, and we, all fearful, had seen our all at stake upon a dubious contest. (3) No! that gift which, once lost, had been recovered at so vast a cost, had it been a second time lost could never have been a second time recovered—for God had no second Son to give. That life was not to be lightly imperilled, and therefore God laid it up in His own Son, that He who had purchased should preserve what He had purchased, and against whose infinite strength all hell is weak to snatch one soul that trusts in Him. "He is able to keep that which is committed unto Him," &c. (*E. Garbett, M.A.*) I. THE CHRISTIAN'S DEATH AND LIFE. 1. Two periods in the history of a Christian: death, resurrection (*Comp. Eph. ii. 1, and 1 Pet. i. 3*). 2. Why these expressions—death, life? Three kinds of life—bodily; of the heart; religious. The last alone real, according to the gospel. It consists in setting our affections on things above, and is in God with Christ. Christ having borne our life away we are dead. "Set not your affections on things on the earth." (1) The earth is not our place. (2) The Christian, although dead, is not useless nor desolate in spirit, for He has God. (3) Nevertheless he is dead—(a) To sin. (b) To the world. (c) He has fixed his goal beyond all that is transitory; he is a stranger, a traveller, a passer-by. He is dead, and appears dead. How natural this is. Nothing troubles, or excites, or astounds him; gives the right cheek, &c.; this man it is said has no blood in his veins. 3. Yet he lives, but his life is hidden. In one sense it is not so. But—(1) Its principle is hidden. (2) Its best parts are invisible—prayer, &c. (3) The Christian conceals himself. When all the world speaks well of you, tremble. II. MOTIVES FOR TAKING UP ONE'S POSITION. 1. Christ has not yet appeared. Christ is known and unknown. "Shall the disciple be more than his Master?" 2. The Christian is seen of God, this must be enough. There are flowers on inaccessible heights seen only by Him. Mediæval sculptors carved exquisite images on the top of pillars to be "seen of God." 3. Glorious compensations—king in disguise. 4. Promise of being manifested some day. "He that shall confess Me" (*Dan. xii. 3*). III. APPLICATION. All this is Christianity, neither more nor less. You might be asked, Are you risen? Are you dead? I ask—1. Do you love invisible things? Angels

love them. 2. Do you love the hidden life? To be last, &c. 3. Do you feel that this is your safety as well as your natural position? Or do you perform all your actions with a view of being seen of men. (*A. Vinet, D.D.*) *The hidden life* :—

1. What gives Christ's mediatorship its practical dignity is not only its display of Divine mercy but also its fitness to invigorate and encourage a spiritual life in the believer; and the most reverential view of God manifest in the flesh is the largest producer of daily holiness, as well as the dearest to the heart. 2. The first fact that we encounter in the historic consciousness of the Church is Christ's invisible supremacy as its head and Lord in the private hearts of disciples and in their public organization and activity. No sooner was Jesus gone than, with the widest diversities of tastes and habits, they were united in one common bond of a hidden life. Journey where they will their hearts cling to one invisible Master. 3. And so it has been in the line of spiritual descent every since. Personal fellowship with Christ has been the hereditary blood in the veins of the Church. This inward life we have now to interpret. I. IN ITS NECESSITY. The need of sharing the Mediator's life lies within the soul itself. 1. From the consciousness of spiritual deficiency. (1) We all feel that we are not what we ought to be, but terribly otherwise. (2) Now if we lived under an abstract law this sense of deficiency would remain an inoperative discontent at having fallen short only of an ideal standard, so that we should be but offenders against our own ambition, not sinners. (3) On the contrary, we are under the government of a personal God. Our goings astray are not mistakes, but sins; not merely dwarfings of our manhood's stature, but affronts against a heavenly Father. His law is good, but our lives are not. Suppose the past score settled by repentance, who of us but knows that he will sin again. (4) What, then, were our life without a Mediator reconciling it? What, except it were animated by His power, and forgiven by His pardon? 2. From the native notion of perfection. (1) The trace of glory past, and pledge of immortality to be lingers with us. The soul will not be content with its degradation. Nicodemus dreams of a character saintlier than a Pharisee, and feels his way to Christ. (2) Here again, if there were no personal God to whom these aspirations reach up, if they did not culminate in the supreme desire for harmony with the holy Father, then we should need no Mediator, and these notions would be only transient visitants. But the moment our eyes are opened on our true relations to God we see that there is no such thing as a satisfactory striving after ideal standards, but only after reconciliation with Him, that the restless heart gets peace at the moment of the conviction that God is its friend. Perfection of character is not to be gained except by that inspiration; a peaceful progress in goodness comes only by that faith. (3) And now again, the only way to the Father is by the Son. For in Christ every ideal of excellence is realized. We no longer aim at the cloudy excellence of imagination. Christ is before us. Those that place their hands in His He leads to the Father. To be Christlike is to be perfect; to have faith in Christ is to be brought near to God. II. ITS NATURE. In what special kinds of force do its power and peace and charm consist. 1. In this, that being received into our faith in just these two characters in which we need Him, (1) Christ creates within the disciples the freedom that comes from the consciousness of being forgiven. That is the beginning of all healthful obedience. What was a dismal compulsion before becomes a spontaneous and freewill offering now. With life all is new; its spring is gratitude, not law; its principle love, not fear; its end, the Divine glory and man's good, not a selfish salvation. But this life is thankfully and joyously hid with Christ. Expunge the Cross, and in what other gospel will you look for the glad tidings of forgiveness. (2) Christ directs the disciple's practical energies to a model that is Divine. Christ is the pattern for the energies that form character. But the example of Jesus loses its grandest inspiration when He is made to stand apart from His followers. It is not a statue outside us, but a vital force working within. To have our life hid with Him we must have Him formed in us. And the pattern is not the Christ of Cæsar's time, but the ever living Immanuel. Paul had that fellowship so palpably that he said, "I live, yet not I," &c. 2. The life hid with Christ in God is a life constantly invigorated by Christ's quickening spirit received by faith. 4. The doctrine of spiritual union through Christ with God affects devotion. He who is conscious of it knows it by the richer interest given to his prayers. For it reveals Christ as our "advocate with the Father." How can He intercede for us but by a present acquaintance with our needs? Praying in His name is something more than repeating a proposition at the end of our petitions. It must be praying from the feeling that He knows the substance of our prayer and

the heart it confesses, and that He aids it by His prevailing sympathies now as much as when He taught His disciples to say, "Our Father." 4. Even in those relations which lie most directly between our souls and the Father, which might therefore seem to be most independent of a Mediator, the highest style of piety is not seen without a lively sense of Christ. That faith, *e.g.*, that every concern in our lives is contrived for us by a sympathizing God, a faith which embosoms us in a care so fatherly that we want some warmer word than Providence to express it, is not found except in hearts alive with personal love for Christ. III. ITS RESULTS.

1. It is the life of love. Being hid with Christ it is penetrated with the spirit of Him who loved as never man loved. Being hid in God it is suffused by the affections of Him whose name is Love. No man hating his brother can abide in this fellowship, no despiser of the poor, no bigot, no oppressor, no conceited Pharisee. Jesus is charity, and to live in Him is to live mercifully, fraternally, and liberally. When the world's life is hid with Him, the bloodshed of nations, the overreachings of commerce, the unequal administrations of governments, the barbarous contrasts in Christian cities, the hatreds of households, will yield to a constructive principle of heavenly order. "I in them," &c.—the social life of the disciples hid with Christ in God. 2. This life solves the old contradiction between works and faith. Christian character is not a mosaic of moralities, but a growth. All we have to do is to receive Christ, and then the fruits of daily righteousness will naturally spring forth, in all forms of manly uprightness, womanly serenity, conscientious citizenship, beneficent industry. 3. The doctrine gives the world truth in all its uncompromising rigour and concrete applications. If Jesus be admitted in all the purity of His transparent soul as a visible witness of the conventional veracity that is satisfied if it equivocates by lying labels, or evasions in a bargain, and artifices in law courts, of the silly falsehoods of flattery, or cowardly falsehoods to avoid offence, who would dare to confront with them the look of His Divine rebuke? Christ, then, hid in the heart, is the test and guardian of truth. 4. And of justice no less; not that formal honesty, which is only a moral name for a selfish policy, not the legal integrity which has no higher sanction than the letter of the statute book, and so cheats the helpless or steals a competitor's reputation, but rather that spiritual justice which treats every man uprightly because a child of God, although only a servant or an office boy. 5. The hiding of our life with Christ corrects the error that religion is a product of humanity. A few conquests over matter have flattered us into the conceit that God must look down with vast complacency on our attainments, and so we come to substitute decorum for piety, and fancy that we make ourselves acceptable with God. A reception of Christ would expel this self-reference and measurement. The inner life in Christ is offered because otherwise the soul is weak and dark. (*Bishop Huntington.*) *The hidden life*:—Standing by the telegraph wires we may often hear the mystic wailing and sighing of the winds among them, like the strains of an Æolian harp; but one knows nothing of the message which is flashing along them. Joyous may be the inner language of those wires, swift as the lightning, far-reaching and full of meaning, but a stranger meddles not therewith. Fit emblem of a believer's inner life: men hear our notes of outward sorrow wrung from us by external circumstances, but the message of celestial peace, the Divine communings with a better land, the swift heart-throbs of heaven-born desire, they cannot perceive: the carnal see but the outer manhood, but the life hidden with Christ in God flesh and blood cannot discern. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The hidden life of the Christian*:—I. THE TREASURE. Natural life is a treasure. How highly we value it. When sick what measures we take for recovery. But what is that compared with the life of the soul? The life referred to is—1. A life of justification (Rom. viii. 32). 2. A life of sanctification (Eph. ii. 10). 3. An eternal life of glory. II. ITS CONCEALMENT. 1. It is hid from the world, not in its characteristics and effects, but in its nature and spiritual operations. Communion with God, justification, assurance, Christian peace and joy, are all inscrutable to the natural man, because only spiritually discerned (1 Cor. i. 11). 2. It is partly hidden from Christians themselves. Not that a man can be a Christian without knowing it; but there are ever fresh and astonishing phases opening up, *e.g.*, in the apprehension of the meaning of Scripture, and in the heights and depths of Christian experience (1 John iii. 2). And the greatest mystery is that we are Christians at all. 3. It is hidden for safety. Because so precious it is placed out of Satan's reach. III. ITS CARETAKER—"with Christ." This may mean—1. Mystical union with Him (Eph. v. 25). 2. Federal union. We are represented by Christ in all that He has done and is, and the Father regards us

as in Him. Nothing, then, can injure us, since Christ has borne all the injuries which the law could inflict. We cannot be arrested for our debt since Christ has paid it; nor condemned for our crime since Christ has borne our curse (Rom. viii. 1).

3. Vital union (John xv. 1-5). The continuance of our life is provided for, and its abiding fruitfulness. IV. ITS HIDING-PLACE. "In God." God accepts the charge, and with Christ elevates us to—1. Divine dignity. We are of heaven while on earth; in God while before men. 2. Divine rest. Who can doubt or sorrow who has a revelation and experience of the character of God? (*T. B. Baker, M.A.*) *Life hid in Christ*.—I. WHAT OF THE DEATH WHICH PRECEDES THIS LIFE? 1. It is a conscious death. There is no spiritual chloroform in the dispensary of the Great Physician. Man is wide awake during the whole process of conviction and conversion. No drug is wanted to stupify, but like the Saviour's death consciousness must not be disturbed or destroyed. 2. It is a willing death. The will, like a brave helmsman, conducts the soul out of the troubled waters of sin, and shapes and steers the course for the peaceful haven. Here is another parallel. What gave value to the death of Christ was its willingness. 3. It is an honourable death. Was it becoming at every Waterloo banquet to drink a toast in solemn silence in honour of the brave who fell? Men hang out the tattered colours in our national sanctuaries as honourable trophies. We turn to a nobler warfare with grander issues. When the black flag of rebellion is hauled down, the spirit of hostility is changed into devotion, reverence, fellowship, and service. When a man ceases to do evil and learns to do well, when he dies to sin and lives to God, we may call his death an honourable one. 4. It is a useful death. Who shall calculate the usefulness of death. Who shall reckon for us the value of the death of Sir John Franklin in the land of ice; of Allan Gardiner in the land of fire; of Abraham Lincoln, &c.? So here; the tomb in which these dead are buried is changed into the "womb of the morning," and they become "children of the light and of the day." II. WHAT OF THE LIFE WHICH FOLLOWS THIS DEATH? 1. It is a life of safety (Psa. xxvii. 5). "Hid with Christ;" what a companion! Hid "in God"; how impregnable. What slender bulwarks man erects. "I hid myself," is the sorrowful expression of impotency, and is not a wiser policy than that of the ostrich who buries her head in the sand when escape has become impossible. 2. It is a life of privilege. That holy margin of the Saviour's time between His resurrection and ascension helps us to understand our privileges. How He comforts, confirms, and feeds. What recognition and communion. Outsiders could not see it. "Their eyes were holden." 3. It is a life of mystery. "It doth not yet appear," &c. We know in part only. (*H. T. Miller.*) *The Christian's life hid with Christ*.—I. WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF TWO WORLDS, A SEEN AND AN UNSEEN, as we ourselves are two selves, seen and unseen; the unseen showing itself in our countenance, and impressing some portion of our character upon it, still, for the most part, unseen except by God. And even our very soul is of a twofold character, belonging in part to the world of sense, in part to the unseen world; and belonging most to either according as the corrupt nature or the new life gains the mastery. And each of these worlds is real, in that each acts upon our soul and moulds it for heaven or hell. But to us that only is real which we realize. Our soul hangs between the two, and as it is drawn down or up, it loses sight of that from which it is withdrawn. 1. To fleshly persons this world is their all; they have no senses for the unseen which they love not. They lose the power to think of God. The truths relating to God become fainter and fainter, and in some dreadful cases God is thought of "as such an one as himself." The natural mind can think of God only as one with the world. Among the heathen this is seen most nakedly (Rom. i. 28; 21-23). "The pure in heart shall see God;" the impure, then, cannot see Him. "In His light we shall see light;" they, then, who have it not in them must be blind (1 Cor. ii. 14). 2. In like way as men become spiritual, they, too, lose their power of discernment of the things of the flesh. They cannot understand the world, nor the world them. Having learned desire to be last, they cannot understand man's ambition to be first; nor covetousness, having learned that poverty with Christ is the true riches; nor pride, knowing the blessedness of humility. The sounds, maxims, and pursuits of the world are unreal to the Christian. All seems hollow: its merriment a heaviness; its eagerness a chasing of the wind; its show a painted mask; its laughter madness; its pleasures revolting (1 Cor. ii. 16; Luke xvii. 15). II. SINCE, THEN, THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE IS HID, HE MUST BE PREPARED FOR THE WORLD'S MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND OPPOSITION. 1. This naturally follows (1 John iii. 1; John i. 10), and Christians should take it cheerfully. It is an eternal law that we under-

stand those only to whom we are like. We have no power of judging except by the principles and standards we have made our own. We cannot see what is beyond our range of vision. So the world judging by its own standards cannot understand the Christian. It could not act on his principles, and so thinks him a dissembler or mad (Mark iii. 21; Acts xxvi. 24). The world must misjudge us, however careful we are to avoid offence; and God would teach us hereby to commit ourselves to His judgment (Psa. xxxvii. 5, 6). 2. The world misjudges because it knows nothing of the inner experiences of the Christian life. They who live amid the tumult of the outward cannot hear the secret whispers of His love by which God speaks to souls that seek Him. They cannot tell the secret thrill of joy in the hope that we are indeed God's, and shall be His for ever. They cannot tell the sweetness when the soul feels itself beloved. III. SINCE OUR LIFE IS HID, WE MUST BEWARE HOW WE PREJUDGE ANYTHING THAT GOD SEES NECESSARY FOR THAT LIFE. We understand only so much as we, by acting, know. So we must not be prejudiced against what comes to us in the form of untried self-discipline and self-denial. One of the most frequent hindrances to a more excellent way is that men, instead of trying it, ask of what good it is. At every stage knowledge is the reward of obedience. IV. SINCE OUR LIFE IS HID WE MUST NOT BE DOWNCAST IF WE HAVE NOT THE REFRESHMENT WE WOULD HAVE, NOR SEE AT ONCE THE END OF OUR ACTIONS AND OURSELVES (1 John iii. 2). We are hidden from ourselves. We know not what we are. We see ourselves surrounded by death, and amidst this death have earnestness of life (Rom. viii. 23); but since our love is imperfect, so is our life and our sense of life. Its source is our Lord hidden, streaming thence to us through the Comforter, discovering itself in holy aspirations, strength, victories; but since it is hidden we must not long for it as though revealed. Had we the fulness of that life it were heaven itself. Now we have at one time the brightness of His presence that we may be cheered onward; now it is veiled that we may be humbled. V. IT WILL EVER BE THAT OF THIS HIDDEN LIFE, THE VERY HIGHEST DEGREES WILL BE WHAT WE LEAST UNDERSTAND. For it is of God. And since, being finite, we cannot grasp the infinite, our nearest approaches to Him will ever be what we can least grasp or analyze. When caught up into the third heaven what Paul heard were words unspeakable; his inward sense heard what words could not embody; and so in our degree, our highest bliss is what we can least represent or define, or reason upon; yet we know it to be real. VI. AS THIS HIDDEN LIFE IS OBTAINED, SO IT IS TO BE MAINTAINED AND PERFECTED BY DEADNESS TO THE WORLD. Death to the world is life to God; the life in God deadens to the world. The less we live for things outward the stronger burns our inward life. The more we live amid the distractions of the world, the less vivid is the life of the soul. It matters not wherein we are employed or how. We may in the most sacred things forget God, or in the most common things serve Him. We may be promoting His truth, and ourselves be the unfruitful conduit through which it flows; or we may in the meanest things be living to His glory, and thereby promoting it. Self-denying duty, love, and contemplation together advance this life; but not either alone. Conclusion: 1. It is our office to see how, day by day, we may be more hidden from the world, that we may be more with God. 2. As this life is God's great gift, and our present duty is to cherish it, so it is our stay and support to know that it is hid, &c. (Isa. xxvi. 3; Psa. xxvii. 5; xxxi. 29). As evil reacheth Him not, nor losses affect Him, nor dispraise hurt Him, so not the Christian. And if [so now, how much more hereafter (Rom. viii. 35-39). (E. B. Pusey, D.D.) *The hidden life—with Christ in God* :—It is hidden—I. IN ITS ORIGIN. Conversion is a hidden operation. We have read many accounts of it. We are told how certain words, thoughts, providences, were followed by certain feelings, resolutions, actions, but the change itself is beyond the cognizance of the person changed. "The wind bloweth," &c. II. IN ITS GREATEST MOMENTS. 1. That of self-dedication. When a man takes the oath of allegiance to his country, it is in the presence of others; but when he swears fealty to God, he is hidden with God. 2. That of communion with God. The soul wants something more than is supplied by public worship. 3. Those of its highest joys, as when Jesus was transfigured, He was hid from His disciples by the bright overshadowing cloud. 4. Those of its deepest sorrows, as Jesus was separated from His disciples in Gethsemane. The greatest actions have not appeared on the public stage of history: they are obscure, unchronicled, unmonumented, but God has seen and estimated them. III. FROM THE EYE OF THE WORLD. The life of the world consists in being alive unto sin and dead unto God. The Christian has withdrawn from and is dead to this. Hence though his life be manifest as the sun, the world cannot see him. "If our gospel be hid,"

&c. Nature may be hidden in two ways; at midnight by darkness, at noonday by blindness. When Christ appeared the world knew Him not; so with His disciples. It requires a Christian to understand a Christian. The world has not the key to the Christian life. IV. WITH CHRIST. 1. As our representative. The union between the believer and his Lord is a hidden one. It is the sheet anchor of spiritual life cast within the veil, and therefore hidden; but it is in the strength of that the soul can ride securely through the tempest of time. 2. As the object of our affections. Our true home is the spot towards which the heart tremblingly turns as the needle to the pole. "Where your treasure is," &c. 3. The full meaning of our present life is hidden with Christ. It is full of mystery. Think of its suffering; its relation with sin; its mortality, &c. 4. The final glory of this life is hid with Christ. "It doth not yet appear," &c. V. IN GOD. God Himself is the hidden one. "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." "Canst thou by searching," &c. What safety, comfort, joy, the Christian has. (*F. Ferguson.*) *The life hid with Christ in God.*—Have we not heard of rivers rolling in their calm and apparent majesty, hidden from the eye by the deep woods, by the solemn mountains, and the wide-extending prairie? Hidden! nay, has it not been our lot to listen to the murmurings of far-off mountain streams we could not see? The Christian's life is such; like one of those glorious streams born and taking its rise in far-off mountains, then descending the awful sides of the rugged hill, and shooting into light; then winding and wending its way through villages and fields, by cities and by towns; more or less quiet, more or less observed; then betaking itself to far-off country places again; telling, as it rolls, no story of its birth, and little of its means of widening growth; now watering the giant oak, and the graceful beech, and the lovely elm; and apparently lost in creeping its way by sedgy nettle-beds, and banks covered with the hemlock and the weed; but not less useful in the one place than the other, till at last, beyond sight, it is lost in the distant sea. So, for all purposes of illustration, it is with the Christian life and the life of God, as revealed in the human soul. (*Paxton Hood.*) *The need of an inner life.*—On a winter's night I have noticed a row of cottages, with a deep load of snow on their several roofs: but as the day wore on, large fragments began to tumble from the eaves of this one and that other, till, by and by, there was a simultaneous avalanche, and the whole heap slid over in powdery ruin on the pavement, and before the sun went down you saw each roof as clear and dry as on a summer's eve. But here and there you would observe one with its snow-mantle unbroken, and a ruff of stiff icicles around it. What made the difference? The difference was to be found within. Some of these huts were empty, or the lonely inhabitant covered over a scanty fire; whilst the peopled hearth and the high-blazing faggots of the rest created such an inward warmth that grim winter melted and relaxed his grip, and the loosened mass folded off and tumbled over on the trampled street. It is possible by some outside process to push the main volume of snow from the frosty roof, or chip off the icicles one by one. But they will form again, and it needs an inward heat to create a total thaw. And so, by sundry processes, you may clear off from a man's conduct the dead weight of conspicuous sins; but it needs a hidden heat, a vital warmth within, to produce such a separation between the soul and its besetting iniquities, that the whole wintry incubus, the entire body of sin, will come spontaneously away. The vital warmth is the love of God abundantly shed abroad—the kindly glow which the Comforter diffuses in the soul which He makes His home. His genial inhabitation thaws that soul and its favourite sins asunder, and makes the indolence and self-indulgence and indevotion fall off from their old resting place on that dissolving heart. The easiest form of self-mortification is a fervent spirit. (*James Hamilton, D.D.*) *The lost taste.*—A traveller who was asked whether he did not admire the structure of some stately building made reply, "No; for I have been at Rome, where better are to be seen every day." *The power of a new affection.*—Dr. Chalmers, riding on a stage-coach by the side of the driver, said, "John, why do you hit that off leader such a crack with your lash?" "Away yonder there's a white stone; that off leader is afraid of that stone; so, by the crack of my whip and the pain in his legs, I want to get his idea off from it." Dr. Chalmers went home, elaborated the idea, and wrote, "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection." You must drive off the devil and kill the world by putting a new idea in the mind. (*Dr. Fish.*)

Ver. 4. When Christ who is our life shall appear then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.—*Christ our life.*—What is meant by life? The word is very compre-

hensive, and includes—1. Appropriate activity. 2. Happiness. The life here intended is (1) not natural life; (2) not intellectual life; (3) but spiritual and eternal life. Christ is our life in that He is—I. *ITS AUTHOR*. 1. He saves us from death. (1) By His atonement which satisfies the law. (2) By delivering us from the power of Satan. 2. He is the author of inward spiritual life. Because—(1) He procures for us the gift of the life-giving Spirit. He has redeemed us in order that He might receive the promise of the Spirit. (2) He not only merits, but imparts the gift of the Holy Spirit. II. *ITS OBJECT*. 1. The exercises in which Christian life consists terminate on Him. 2. The happiness involved consists in fellowship with Him. He is our life as He is our joy, portion, inheritance. III. *ITS END*. It is Christ for us to live. While others live for themselves—some for their country, some for mankind—the believer lives for Christ. It is the great design of his life to promote Christ's glory and advance His kingdom. Inferences: 1. Test of character. The difference between the true and nominal Christian lies here. The one seeks and regards Christ as His life only as He delivers from death; the other as the end and object of life. 2. The true way to grow in grace, or to get life, is to come to Christ. 3. The happiness and duty of thus making Christ our life. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Christ our life*:—1. Life is seen around us striking out in tender beauty in the tiny flower which opens its delicate bosom to the light of the sun, or developing into majesty and grandeur in the giants of the forest—this is vegetable life. 2. Life is seen breaking out in the songs of birds, and displayed in the movements of the lower creatures and in the manifold activities of men—this is animal life. 3. Life is seen in the speculations of the philosopher, the research of the historian, the musings of the poet, and the contrivances of the architect and mechanician—this is intellectual life. 4. Life is seen in that hatred to sin, those yearnings after holiness, those graces of faith, hope, &c., the anticipation for heaven which characterize the true Christian—this is spiritual life. To Christ all these may be traced, but Paul is here speaking of the last. I. *CHRIST ON THE CROSS IS THE SOURCE OF OUR LIFE*. Spiritual life is no new principle; it was bestowed by Christ as the Almighty Creator. But here we have to view Christ not as the Lord of life, but the victim of death. What an amazing contrast. Yet by the latter He brought life and immortality to light. From this His life flows out to those dead in sin. II. *CHRIST IN THE HEART IS THE ESSENCE OF OUR LIFE*. He not only procures, but is our life. "I am the life." When we receive life we receive Him. The faith which saves embraces not an abstraction, a truth, but a Person. Many are satisfied with knowing about Christ—the Christian has vital union with Him. III. *CHRIST IN HIS ORDINANCES IS THE SUPPORT OF OUR LIFE*. All life requires sustenance. A flower that receives no rain or sunshine withers. God has appointed means for the nourishment of our life. 1. Secret prayer. What is this? An interview with a Person, not the mere utterance of desire breathed into the vacant air; growing intimacy with Christ; the soaring of the soul into the atmosphere of love and joy which makes the pulse of life beat more firmly. "The Christian's vital breath," &c. 2. The Sabbath, and its opportunities for sustained intercourse with Christ in sanctuary services (*Psa. lxxiii. 2*). The want of profit in these arises from not seeking God in them. Those who find Him receive augmentation of life. 3. The Lord's Supper, in which Christ brings Himself specially near, and to realize Him in it is to receive out of His fulness grace for grace. IV. *CHRIST ON EARTH IS THE PATTERN OF OUR LIFE*. All life has some outward manifestation. Every grace embodies itself in act. "Work of faith," &c. God has given us a rule in His Word after which we should conform ourselves. But He has taught us also by example. In Christ's lowly condition He has taught us not to be ashamed of our poverty. As a workman He ennobled trade. The sorrowful may be comforted by thinking of the Man of sorrows. What an example we have in Him of self-sacrifice, love, forgiveness, courage, &c. The closer we study His life the more we shall be assimilated to it as Moses was to the glory of God (*2 Cor. iii. 18*). V. *CHRIST IN HEAVEN IS THE CONSUMMATION OF OUR LIFE*. Here we have but grace, glory lies beyond. His presence in glory is a pledge that we shall share it. The bonds of union will be drawn closer. "For ever with the Lord," &c. Conclusion: There is no true life but in Christ. Let us beware lest Christ's lamentation, "Ye will not come unto Me," &c., be over us. (*W. Steele, M.A.*) *Christ our life*:—"What think ye of Christ?" The proper answer is the text. It is not said merely that He lives in us, or that we live by Him or through Him, but that He is our life. Let us apply this—I. *TO THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATIVE LIFE*: justification. 1. We are all dead in law. The soul destitute of the favour of God is dead.

There remains only the execution of the sentence to complete our misery. 2. In this state Christ finds us and undertakes to be our life. One of the first questions of an awakened soul is, "How shall a man be just with God?" The gospel replies, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." There was such merit in His cross that God, though just, becomes a Saviour. It is not by the works of the law or repentance, but by the atonement laid hold of by faith that we legally live. But this only justifies us instrumentally; Christ through it meritoriously. Whatever view the Scriptures take of it—release from curse, deliverance from wrath, remission of penalty, acceptance with God—Christ is always the author. II. **THE CHRISTIAN'S ACTUAL LIFE: sanctification.** 1. Our death in sin is not only a death in law, but a proper alienation from the life of God. Before we can be restored to communion with God a life of purity must be imparted. Of this Christ is the cause, His Spirit the agent, His word the instrument, His example the model. The outcome of all which is that as He was so are we in the world. 2. But Christ is our life not only as it respects the way in which we are made holy, but as it respects holiness in detail. He is (1) the life of all Christian graces. (a) Faith which gives life to good works, holy tempers, joyful affections; but faith is looking to an object; that object is Christ. It is receiving a gift; that gift is Christ. (b) Hope. Our anchor is cast within the veil, and is sure and steadfast; but if Christ had not entered first our attempts to cast it had been in vain. (c) Love. Christ is its object, purifier, director. (2) The life of all Christian duties. They are inspired by Him and directed to His glory. (3) The life of Christian ordinances. These will be wells without water if He be absent—sacraments, prayers, thanksgiving, preaching. III. **THE CHRISTIAN'S FUTURE LIFE.** 1. Of resurrection. (1) As His power is the agent to effect it. (2) Because His raised body will be its model. (3) Inasmuch as His appearance the second time will be its signal. 2. Of glory. (1) It is His to assign to each saint his proper place and occupation in heaven. (2) His presence mainly constitutes the bliss of heaven. (3) The degrees of heavenly glory will be regulated by the degrees of our nearness and intimacy to Christ. Conclusion: 1. The subject addresses itself most powerfully to the hearers of the gospel. Preachers labour in vain, hearers listen in vain, if there be no communication of life. 2. To earnest seekers of salvation the subject affords much encouragement. You want pardon, purity, strength, hope. Secure Christ for your life and you will have all. 3. Let Christians learn to be grateful, consistent, useful. (*Jabez Bunting, D.D.*) *Christ our life:*—No thoughtful man can be satisfied with a mere worldly life—continued existence, a round of selfish pursuits, and sensual delights which deaden the finest instincts. I. **THE VITAL PRINCIPLE THAT IS RECOGNIZED.** The relation between Christ and His people is vital. Christ is not merely the source and support of their life, but is it. There can be no life—physical, mental, or spiritual—apart from the action of the Divine mind. A sculptor may carve a most life-like figure, but he cannot impart the vital principle. 1. This life is spiritual in its nature. The Christian is surrounded by material things, and resides in a material body; but his spiritual life is distinct. Christ creates and controls it. It is the life of faith, hope, love. 2. It is eternal in its duration. It does not prevent physical dissolution, but survives it. Christ has given us the fullest assurance of our immortality? It is part of the Divine life; therefore age cannot enfeeble its powers, disease cannot impair its beauty, and death cannot terminate its existence. 3. What is your life? Are you living to gratify the lowest or highest instincts of your nature? If the former your life is not worth living. II. **THE SPLENDID SPECTACLE THAT IS PREDICTED.** 1. The manner of Christ's appearing "in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." It is a splendid sight to witness a military review, to see the glittering swords, serried ranks, waving banners, to hear the clattering drums, martial strains, triumphant shout. But no earthly scene is worth comparing with the grandeur and solemnity of the second coming of Christ. Millions were ignorant of His first advent; all shall see His second. 2. Its purpose. (1) To be glorified. Once He appeared in weakness and humiliation; then in power and majesty. (2) To glorify us. 3. Its time. Unknown, and to attempt to settle it is to trifle with God's Word. When it comes it will be sudden and unexpected. III. **THE GLORIOUS HOPE THAT IS AWAKENED.** From the cradle to the grave our life is inspired by hope. The Christian hope is—1. That one day we shall be with Christ. There are earthly companionships for which the heart sighs. Our affections cling to those we love. The believer clings to Christ who is the object of all his hope and desire. 2. That one day we shall participate in Christ's glory. What that glory is no mind can

conceive. Can the seed understand the sweetness and beauty of the flower? the stone the form and grace of the statue? Here God's children are often poor and unknown. By and by Christ will recognize, honour, crown them. The poet's fame is brief, the soldier's glory uncertain, the king's crown perishable, but the Christian's triumph certain and eternal. (*J. T. Woodhouse.*) *Christ our life:*—Yet to appear. I. CHRIST IS OUR LIFE. 1. This is John's way of talking. "In Him was life," &c. (1) Christ is the source of our life. "As the Father raiseth up the dead," &c. Jesus is our Alpha as well as Omega. We should have been dead in sin if it had not been said, "You hath He quickened." He gives us the living water, which is in us a well springing up into everlasting life. (2) Its substance. There is much mystery in the new nature, but none as to what is its life. Penetrate the believer's heart and you will find Christ's love throbbing there; penetrate his brain and you will find Christ to be its central thought. (3) Its sustenance. He is the living bread which came down from heaven. (4) Its solace. His loving-kindness is better than life. (5) Its object. As speeds the ship towards the port, the arrow to its goal, so flies the Christian towards the perfecting of His fellowship with Christ. As the soldier fights for his captain and is crowned in his captain's victory, so the Christian. "To me to live is Christ." (6) Its exemplar. The Christian has the portrait of Christ before him as the artist has the Greek sculptures. If he wants to study life, he studies from Christ. Husbands and wives truly knit together grow somewhat like each other in expression, if not in feature, and the heart in near fellowship with Jesus must grow like Him. Grace is the light, our loving heart the sensitive plate, Jesus the object who fills the lens of the soul, and soon a heavenly photograph of His character is produced—similarity of spirit, temper, motive, action. 2. What is true concerning our spiritual life now is equally true of our spiritual life in heaven. 3. This life of Christ marks our dignity. Kings cannot claim it as such. Talk of their blue blood and pedigree, here is something more. 4. This accounts for Christian holiness. How can a man remain in sin if Christ is his life? 5. See how secure the Christian is. Unless Christ dies he cannot die. II. CHRIST IS HIDDEN, so, THEREFORE, IS OUR LIFE. 1. To the unspiritual Christ is as though He did not exist. The worldling can neither see, taste, nor handle Him. Yet unseen as He is He is in heaven, full of joy, pleading before the throne, reigning, and having fellowship with His saints everywhere. 2. The servant is as his Lord, and is treated accordingly. III. CHRIST WILL ONE DAY APPEAR AND WE WITH HIM. 1. How? (1) In person. (2) With great splendour. 2. When? No one knows, and it is impertinent to inquire. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ our life and our hope:*—There are two things in daily life which exert a great influence over men—fear and hope. A man will work hard through fear that want may come or through hope of bettering his condition. God appeals to both to awaken conscience and stir up the heart to diligence. "Flee from the wrath to come." "Lay hold on eternal life." "Mortify," &c. (vers. 5, 6, and text). I. CHRIST OUR LIFE. Many are Christ's glorious titles, but none more precious than this. Christ is our life inasmuch as He negatively delivers from death. But He does much more. In a positive sense He is our life. 1. In bringing spiritual and eternal life to the soul dead in sin. There is no life without light. When God said, "Let there be light," life soon came. So "in Him was light, and the light was the life of men." We cannot believe Christ till we know Him; when we know Him we believe, and by faith comes life. "This is life eternal," &c. 2. In being the indwelling life of the soul. An infidel once said to a negro, "How can God dwell in man and man in God?" "How can fire be in iron and iron in fire? When the bar is in the furnace," was the reply. "In Christ." "Christ in you." 3. Through the soul's going out to Him for spiritual life and blessing. Plants stretch towards the light. If they are closed in a dark house, and there be a chink through which the light shines, they will stretch in that direction. Where there is spiritual life it will move towards Christ in faith and love. 4. In being the strength of our life. Herein lies alone our power for good against evil. It is no easy thing to live the Christian life; and forms afford little help against temptation and for duty. The old man must be thrown off and the new man put on, and Christ only is sufficient for that. And just as we are strong in Christ shall we be able to discharge the duties here laid down. II. CHRIST OUR HOPE. 1. The present position of the Christian is good: his prospect is equally good. Hence not only Christ crucified, but Christ coming was the subject of apostolic teaching. Christ's first coming was the desire of all nations; His second the grand hope of the Church. 2. His redeemed people will appear with Him. (1) They will for ever emerge from

their obscurity. (2) They will be made glorious. The ambition of many is to shine in positions of honour; but surpassing every earthly distinction will be that of appearing with Christ. "If we suffer we shall also reign with Him," and "be like Him." A dying soldier said to his friend, "I am going to the front." The front is a position of danger and honour. This good soldier of Christ was going to the front to meet the last enemy, and also to receive the crown of victory. (T. West, B.A.)

Christ the life and hope of believers:—Paul in the previous verse tells believers that their life is hid. "When shall it be discovered?" they might object. He here tells them. I. CHRIST IS OUR LIFE. 1. As its author (John iv. 6). 2. As its matter (John vi. 49). 3. As its exerciser and actor (John xv. 5). 4. As its strengthener and cherisher (Psa. cxxxviii. 3). 5. As its completer and finisher (Heb. xii. 2; Phil. i. 6). This being the case let us—(1) Not repent of anything done, suffered, or lost for Him. "All that a man hath will he give for his life." (2) Highly prize the Lord Jesus. He is worthy, and consider how highly He prizes you; and a Christ highly prized will be gloriously obeyed. II. BELIEVERS SHALL AT LAST APPEAR GLORIOUS (Judges xv. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 43-44, 51-55; 1 Thess. iv. 13; Matt. xix. 26-28). The reasons are because—1. The day of their appearing will be the marriage day of the lamb. Mourning weeds will be put off, and glorious robes put on. 2. They shall appear as kings crowned; here they are kings elected with the crown in reversion (2 Tim. iv. 7-8). 3. Their enemies and persecutors will see them in their true character as God's favoured ones. 4. Their manifestation will make much for the honour of Christ. The more glorious the body or the bride, the more glorious the head or bridegroom. 5. The wicked will then justify the goodness and mercy of God in His dealings with His people. Objections will then be answered (Job xxi. 15; Mal. iii. 14). 6. They shall be employed in glorious work (1 Cor. vi. 2-3). (T. Brooks.)

Christ the life and hope of the Church:—I. CHRIST IS OUR LIFE. Our life is bound up with His. He is Source, Medium, Giver. This destroys every hope of obtaining salvation without Him. Then let the sinner trust Him alone; and let this truth fill the Christian with joy. II. CHRIST IS NOW HID. 1. He was so to the Old Testament Church, before His first coming; He is so to the New Testament Church before His second coming. There is nothing that speaks to our eyes or ears. But this is true also of God Himself. 2. But as the invisible things of God are manifested in creation, so the invisible things of Christ are made patent by the influence of His preached truth upon the mind and heart. We live "by faith not by sight." 3. This does not interfere with His purposes of mercy. Both God and Christ can bless without discovery to the senses, and if this fact becomes a snare and an affliction to those who trust Him, it is because they seek Him by sense not by faith. 4. By this arrangement the gospel appeals to the higher elements of our nature, to those faculties which identify us with the angels; and thus it tends to lift us above the seen and temporal. It compels us to think, and should call forth gratitude. III. CHRIST SHALL ONE DAY APPEAR. 1. This subject is shrouded in mystery, and every speculation as to the time, &c., has been falsified; which should warn us off, and turn us to practical preparation for His coming. 2. There is a sense in which Christ appears—(1) in proportion as His cause triumphs; (2) to nations, that knew Him not, when they receive His gospel; (3) to believers at conversion and every stage of the spiritual life; (4) to dying saints; (5) to His people in the disembodied state. But these are all different from and inferior to the manifestation at the last day. 3. His second coming is looked forward to not only by the Church on earth. Patriarchs, &c., who never saw Him on earth await it; so do glorified saints who have not forgotten the promises they learned here. 4. The purposes for which He shall appear are important in relation to—(1) His adversaries, who shall be completely subdued. (2) His friends, who have been aspersed and persecuted, and shall then be honoured and rewarded. (3) Himself; for His honour will then be vindicated in the presence of the Jew, unbeliever, and denier of His Godhead. (4) God, whose justice and mercy have been denied. IV. HIS PEOPLE SHALL APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY. 1. As Christ is hid so are His people. The angels know them (Luke xv. ; Heb. i.) but not the world, and sometimes not one another; and many are hid in heaven. 2. When He appears so will they. (1) In countless multitudes; think of the millions of infants who have been saved the conflict, and the millions of believers who have triumphed over it. (2) In distinct individuality, as "every eye shall see Him," so they. (3) As identified with Christ. "Thine they were, and Thou hast given them Me." (4) In glory—free from sin and sorrow; publicly acquitted; possessed of the kingdom; body and soul happy for ever, and both like

Christ. Let us hasten forward to meet this glory. (*Joseph Davies.*) *The Christian's winter and summer* :—In winter the green tree is like the dry. Summer comes, and the living root produces leaves and fruits. So our winter is the concealment of Christ, our summer His manifestation (ver. 3). Yes, dead full surely. But dead in appearance, alive at the roots. And think of the summer burst which is to follow—when Christ, who is our life, shall appear. Lo, my covenant, dear God! I will die to myself that Thou mayest live in me. (*Augustine.*) *Anticipations of glory* :—Do you ever feel like those lions in the Zoological Gardens, restlessly walking up and down before the bars of their cage, and seeming to feel that they were never meant to be confined? Sometimes they are for thrusting their heads through the bars, and then for dashing back and tearing the back of their dungeon, or for rending up the pavement beneath them, as if they yearned for liberty. Does your soul ever want to get free from her cage? Here is an iron bar of sin, of doubt, and there is another iron bar of mistrust and infirmity. You may have seen an eagle with a chain upon its foot, standing on a rock—poor unhappy thing! it flaps its wings—looks up to the sun—wants to fly right straight ahead at it and stare the sun out of countenance—looks to the blue sky, and seems as if it could sniff the blue beyond the dusky clouds, and wants to be away; and so it tries its wings and dreams of mounting—but that chain, that cruel chain, remorselessly holds it down. Has not it often been so with you? You feel, "I am not meant to be what I am; I have a something in me which is adapted for something better and higher, and I want to mount and soar, but that chain—that dragging chain of the body of sin and death will keep me down." Now it is to such as you that this text comes, and says to you, "Yes, your present state is not your soul's true condition, you have a hidden life in you; that life of yours pants to get out of the bonds and fetters which control it, and it shall be delivered soon, for Christ is coming, and the same appearance that belongs to Him belongs to you. And then your day of true happiness, and joy, and peace, and everything that you are panting for, and longing for, shall certainly come too." I wonder whether the little oak inside the acorn—for there is a whole oak there, and there are all the roots, and all the boughs, and everything inside that acorn—I wonder whether that little oak inside the acorn ever has any premonition of the summer weather that will float over it a hundred years hence, and of the mists that will hang in autumn on its sere leaves, and of the hundreds of acorns which itself will cast, every autumn, upon the earth, when it shall become in the forest a great tree. You and I are like that acorn; inside of each of us are the germs of great things. There is the tree that we are to be—I mean there is the spiritual thing we are to be, both in body and soul even now within us, and sometimes here below, in happy moments, we get some inklings of what we are to be; and then how we want to burst the shell, to get out of the acorn and to be the oak! Ay, but stop. Christ has not come, Christian, and you cannot get out of that till the time shall come for Jesus to appear, and then shall you appear with Him in glory. You will very soon perceive in your rainwater certain ugly little things which swim and twist about in it, always trying if they can to reach the surface and breathe through one end of their bodies. What makes these little things so lively, these innumerable little things like very small tadpoles, why are they so lively? Possibly they have an idea of what they are going to be. The day will come when all of a sudden there will come out of the case of the creature that you have had swimming about in your water, a long-legged thing with two bright gauze-like wings, which will mount into the air, and on a summer's evening will dance in the sunlight. It is a gnat you have swimming there in one of its earliest stages. You are just like that; you are an undeveloped being; you have not your wings yet, and yet sometimes in your activity for Christ, when the strong desires of something better are upon you, you leap in foretaste of the bliss to come. I do not know what I am to be, but I feel that there is a heart within me too big for these ribs to hold, I have an immortal spark which cannot have been intended to burn on this poor earth, and then to go out; it must have been meant to burn on heaven's altar. Wait a bit, and when Christ comes you will know what you are. We are in the chrysalis state now, and those who are the liveliest worms among us grow more and more uneasy in that chrysalis state. Some are so frozen up in it that they forget the hereafter, and appear content to remain a chrysalis for ever. But others of us feel we would sooner not be than be what we now are for ever, we feel as if we must burst our bonds, and when that time of bursting shall come, when the chrysalis shall get its painted wings and mount to the land of flowers,

then shall we be satisfied. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory." (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Vers. 5-9. **Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth.**—*Slaying self*:—Mortify, therefore, because ye were raised with Christ. The homeliest moral teaching of the Epistle is based upon its "mystical" theology. Character is the outcome and test of doctrine. But too many people deal with their beliefs as they do with their hassocks and hymn-books in their pews, so it is necessary to put the practical issues very plainly. I. THE PARADOX OF SELF-SLAYING AS THE ALL-EMBRACING DUTY OF A CHRISTIAN. "Mortify" conveys less than is meant. "Slay your members" is the spiritual duty which stands over against the error of "severity to the body" against which the Colossians had been warned (chap. ii. 23). It consists in the destruction of the passions and desires. 1. Paul's anthropology regards men as wrong and having to get right. A great deal of moral teaching talks as if men were rather inclined to be good, and its lofty sentiments go over people's heads. The serpent has twined itself round my limbs, and unless you give me a knife to cut its loathsome coils it is cruel to bid me walk. Culture is not the beginning of good husbandry. You must first stub up the thorns and sift out the poisonous weeds or you will have wild grapes. 2. The root of all such slaying is being dead with Christ to the world. What asceticism cannot do in that it is weak through the flesh, union with Christ will do; it will subdue sin in the flesh. 3. There must, however, be vigorous determination. "Slaying" cannot be pleasant and easy. It is easier to cut off the hand which is not me than to sacrifice passions and desires which are myself. The paths of religion are ways of pleasantness, but they are steep, and climbing is not easy. The way to heaven is not by "the primrose path." That leads to "the everlasting bonfire." Men obtain forgiveness and eternal life as a gift by faith; but they achieve holiness, which is the permeating of their characters with that eternal life, by patient believing effort. II. A GRIM CATALOGUE OF THE CONDEMNED TO DEATH. Paul stands like a jailer at the prison door, with the fatal roll in his hand, and reads out the names of the evildoers for whom the tumbril waits to carry them to the guillotine. It is an ugly list, but we need plain speaking, for these evils are rampant now. 1. Fornication covers the whole ground of immoral sexual relations. 2. All uncleanness embraces every manifestation in word, look, or deed of the impure spirit. 3. Passion and evil desire are sources of evil deeds, and include all forms of hungry appetite for "the things that are upon the earth." 4. Covetousness, whose connection with sensuality is significant. The worldly nature flies for solace either to the pleasures of appetite or acquisition. How many respectable middle-aged gentlemen are now mainly devoted to making money whose youth was foul with sensual indulgence. Covetousness is "promoted vice, lust superannuated." And it is idolatry, a fetish worship, which is the religion of thousands who masquerade as Christians. III. THE EXHORTATION IS ENFORCED BY A SOLEMN NOTE OF WARNING (ver. 6). 1. The thought of wrath is unwelcome because thought inconsistent with God's love. But wrath is love wounded, thrown back upon itself, and compelled to assume the form of aversion, and to do its "strange work" of punishment. God would not be holy if it were all the same to Him whether a man was good or bad; and the modern revulsion against "wrath" is usually accompanied with weakened conceptions of God's holiness. Instead of exalting, it degrades His love to free it from the admixture of wrath, which is like alloy with gold, giving firmness to what were else too soft for use. Such a God is not love but impotent good nature. 2. The wrath "cometh." That may express the continuous present incidence of wrath or the present of prophetic certainty. That wrath comes now in plain and bitter consequences, and the present may be taken as the herald of a still more solemn manifestation of the Divine displeasure. The first fiery drops that fell on Lot's path as he fled were not more surely precursors of an overwhelming rain, nor bade him flee for his life more urgently, than the present punishment of sin proclaims its own future punishment, and exhorts us to flee to Jesus from the wrath to come. IV. A FURTHER MOTIVE IS THE REMEMBRANCE OF A SINFUL PAST. 1. "Walking." That in which men walk is the atmosphere encompassing them; or to walk in anything is to have the active life occupied by it. The Colossians had trodden the evil path and inhaled the poisonous atmosphere. "Lived" means more than "Your natural life was passed among them." In that sense they still lived there. But whereas they were now living in Christ, the phrase describes the condition which is the opposite of the present—"When the

roots of your life, tastes, affections, &c., were immersed, as in some feculent bog, in these and kindred evils." 2. This retrospect is meant to awaken penitence and to kindle thankfulness, and by both emotions to stimulate the resolute casting aside of that evil in which they once, like others, wallowed. The gulf between the present and the past of a regenerate man is too wide and deep to be bridged by flimsy compromises. It is impossible to walk firmly if one foot be down in the gutter and the other up on the curb-stone. V. WE HAVE AS CONCLUSION A STILL WIDER EXHORTATION TO AN ENTIRE STRIPPING OFF OF THE SINS OF THE OLD STATE (vers. 8, 9). 1. The Colossians, as well as other heathen, had been walking and living in muddy ways; but now their life was hid, &c., and that in common with a community to join which they had left another. Let them keep step with their new comrades, and strip themselves, as their new associates do, of the uniform they wore in that other regiment. 2. This second catalogue of vices summarizes the various forms of wicked hatred in contrast with the various forms of wicked love in the other list. The fierce rush of unhallowed passion is put first, and the contrary flow of chill malignity second; for in the spiritual world as in the physical, a storm blowing from one quarter is usually followed by violent gales from the opposite. Lust ever passes into cruelty, and dwells "hard by hate." Malice is evil desire iced. (1) Anger. There is a righteous anger which is part of the new man; but here it is the inverted reflection of the earthly and passionate lust after the flesh. If anger rises keep the lid on, and don't let it get the length of wrath. But do not think that its suppression is enough, saying, "I did not show it"—strip off anger, the emotion as well as the manifestation. But "I have naturally a hot disposition"; but Christianity was sent to subdue and change natural dispositions. (2) Malice. Anger boils over in wrath, and then cools down into malignity; and malice as cold and colourless as sulphuric acid, and burning like it is worse than boiling rage. (3) It is significant that while the expressions of wicked love were deeds, those of wicked hate are words. The "blasphemy" of Authorised Version is bitter "railing" of Revised Version—speech that injures, which when directed against God is blasphemy, and against man vituperation. 4. Lying has its proper place here because it comes from a deficiency of love or a predominance of selfishness. A lie ignores my brother's claims upon me, and is poisoned bread instead of the heavenly manna of pure truth. (A. Maclaren, D.D.) *The flesh to be crucified*:—A brave officer said once to his soldiers in a day of battle, "Unless you kill your enemies they will kill you." In like manner may it be said, "Unless we crucify the flesh, it will be our everlasting ruin." *The mortification of the sinful principle in man*:—I. THE SINFUL PRINCIPLE HAS AN ACTIVE OUTWARD DEVELOPMENT. 1. It is mundane in its tendencies. "Your members," &c. It teaches the soul to grovel when it ought to soar. 2. It is manifested in acts of gross sensuality. "Fornication," &c. 3. It is recognized by debasing idolatry. Covetousness is insatiable lust for material possessions. II. THE ACTIVE OUTGOINGS OF THE SINFUL PRINCIPLE CALL FOR DIVINE VENGEANCE (ver. 6). The wrath of God is not a malignant unreasoning passion. Nor is it a figure of speech into which the maudlin philosophers of the day would fain resolve it, but an awful reality. III. THE INDULGENCE OF THE SINFUL PRINCIPLE IN MAN IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE NEW LIFE HE HAS IN CHRIST (ver. 7). IV. THAT THE SINFUL PRINCIPLE IN MAN IS THE SOURCE OF THE MOST MALIGNANT PASSIONS (vers. 8, 9). The former classification embraced sins which related more especially to self: this includes sins which have a bearing upon others. 1. There are sins of the heart and temper. 2. There are sins of the tongue. V. THE SINFUL PRINCIPLE IN MAN, AND ALL ITS OUT-GOINGS, MUST BE WHOLLY RENOUNCED AND RESOLUTELY MORTIFIED. "Now ye also put off all these" (vers. 8, 9). (G. Barlow.) *Denying the flesh*:—A brave officer said once to his soldiers in a day of battle, "Unless you kill your enemies, they will kill you." In like manner may it be said, "Unless we crucify the flesh, it will be our everlasting ruin." *Mortifying the flesh*:—Panting after perfection Dr. Judson strove to subdue every sinful habit and senseward tendency. Finding that for want of funds the Mission was languishing, he cast into the treasury his patrimonial estate. Finding that his nicety and love of neatness interfered with his labours among the filthy Karens, he sought to vanquish this repugnance by nursing those sick of most loathsome diseases. Finding that his youthful love of fame was not utterly extinguished, he threw into the fire his correspondence, including a letter of thanks he had received from the Governor-General of India, and every document which might contribute to his posthumous renown. And finding that his soul still clave unto the earth, he took temporary

leave of all his friends, and retired into a hut on the edge of the jungle, and subsisting on a little rice, for several weeks he gave himself entirely to communion with God. (*T. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Corruptions overcome by grace*.—My gardeners were removing a large tree which grew near a wall, and as it would weaken the wall to stub up the roots, it was agreed that the stump should remain in the ground. But how were we to prevent the stump from sprouting, and so disarranging the gravel-walk. The gardener's prescription was, to cover it with a layer of salt. I mused awhile, and thought that the readiest way to keep down my ever-sprouting corruptions in future would be to sow them well with the salt of grace. O Lord, help me so to do. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Corruptions overcome gradually.—When Sir Christopher Wren was engaged in demolishing the ruins of old St. Paul's in order to make room for his new cathedral, he used a battering-ram with which thirty men continued to beat upon a part of the wall for a whole day. The workmen, not discerning any immediate effect, thought this a waste of time; but Wren, who knew that the internal motion thus communicated must be operating, encouraged them to persevere. On the second day, the wall began to tremble at the top, and fell in a few hours. If our prayers and repentances do not appear to overcome our corruptions, we must continue still to use these gracious battering-rams, for in due time by faith in Jesus Christ the power of evil shall be overthrown. Lord, enable me to give hearty blows by the power of thy Holy Spirit until the gates of hell in my soul shall be made to totter and fall. (*Ibid.*)

Covetousness.—1. Is a thirst for gain. When it burns in a man's heart, he must make some effort to obtain relief. He must try either to extinguish or satisfy it; to starve it by a religious self-denial, or feed it by a carnal indulgence. 2. Covetousness is ruinous to the individual, to the nation, and to the Church, and the elements which go to constitute the material prosperity of each contain in them the seeds of ruin. Hence the stern exhortation, "Take heed and beware of covetousness." I. ITS COMPANY.

Things and men are known by the company they keep. It is the companion of fornication. The collocation is not accidental, it is uniform (1 Cor. v. 11; Eph. v. 3; 2 Pet. ii. 14.) When a man has plunged into some fashionable vice, he is indignant to find that the law makes him stand side by side with more vulgar convicts. So with covetous people who find themselves here branded with the same infamy as the unclean. All its respectability is here stripped off. Covetousness is like sins of uncleanness, in that it is—1. The unlawful direction and acting of desires not in themselves unlawful. Its great strength lies here. The complex apparatus of trade is innocently and dutifully set in motion; but who shall tell when it ceases to be impelled by virtue and begins to be impelled by vice.

But the evil spirit enters, and when mammon gets the power, he allows others to retain the name; and the love of money takes the place of a God-fearing, man-loving sense of duty, as the motive-power in a man's soul. 2. It grows by indulgence. It grows by what it feeds on. The desire of the mind as well as of the body is inflamed by tasting its unhallowed gratification. It burns in the breast like a fire, and fuel added, increases its burning. And the man who makes money an object to be aimed at for its own sake is by common consent called a miser (miserable one). Mammon first entraps, and then tortures its victims. Many would be afraid to dally with approaches to lasciviousness (Prov. v. 5). But the two lusts are born brothers. 3. The least incipient indulgence displeases God, and sears the conscience. Although the disease may never grow to such a height that men will call you a miser, yet He who looketh on the heart is angry when He sees a covetous desire. He who has said "Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her," &c., has not a more indulgent rule whereby to judge this kindred sin. II. ITS CHARACTER.

Idolatry. Other Scriptures less directly, but no less surely, affirm the same (Luke xvi. 13; 1 Tim. vi. 17; Job xxxi. 25-28). It is not the form or name of the idol that God regards, but the heart-homage of the worshipper. This leads us back to the former topic; idolatry is represented as uncleanness in the Bible. God is our Husband, and to transfer our affections from Him is adultery. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*)

Covetousness.—The Romans worshipped their standards; and the Roman standard happened to be an eagle. Our standard is only one-tenth of an eagle—a dollar—but we make all even by adoring it with tenfold devotion. (*Edgar A. Poe.*)

Gold in the heart.—Mr. Fuller was one day taken into the Bank of England, where one of the clerks, to whom he had occasion to speak, showed him some ingots of gold. He took one of them into his hand, examined it with some care, and then, laying it down, remarked to his friend, "How much better to have this in the hand than in the heart!" *Covetousness is idolatry*.—I.

WHAT IS COVETOUSNESS? 1. There is a good covetousness (1 Cor. xii. 31), as of grace and glory. 2. Sinful: to love the world inordinately. (1) In the inordinate desire of riches—above God's glory and our own spiritual good. (2) In the sinful acquiring them (a) As to matter—another's goods (1 Kings xxi.). (b) As to manner and means—unjust (Prov. x. 2; xxviii. 8). (3) In the wrongful retaining them—not laying them out for the ends God has appointed.

II. WHAT IS IDOLATRY? 1. External. 2. Internal: worship given to what is not God (John iv. 24).

III. HOW IS COVETOUSNESS IDOLATRY? 1. In that (1) man admires riches (Rom. xi. 33). (2) Loves it (Matt. xxii. 37). (3) Desires it (Psa. lxxiii. 25). (4) Fears losing it (Matt. x. 28). (5) Trusts on (1 Tim. vi. 17; Mark x. 23, 24). (6) Grieves for the loss of. (7) Rejoices in (Phil. iv. 4). (8) Labours after (Matt. vi. 33). 2. Objections. (1) "I worship no images." Yes, of thine own fancy. (2) "I do not fall down to them." But in thy soul, and that is the principal. (3) "I offer no sheep or rams." But thyself. The Phœnicians and Carthaginians offered men, but yours is the greater sin. For they offered bodies not souls, others not themselves. (4) "We do not look upon them as gods." You do in effect, because as the chiefest good. You know them to be no gods, and yet worship them as such. **IV. SIGNS.** 1. Such as whose thoughts run more upon earth than heaven (Luke xii. 22, 25, 29). 2. Whose joy and grief depend on outward successes (Luke xii. 19). 3. Who strive to be rich, but no matter how. 4. Whose desires increase with their estate. 5. Who grudge the time spent in Divine duty (Amos viii. 5). 6. Whose hearts are upon the world, while their body is before God (Ezek. xxxiii. 31). 7. Who do not improve the estates God has given them (Matt. xxv. 24-25). **V. USE.** Avoid it. Consider—1. How odious it is to God (Psa. x. 3). 2. How injurious to our neighbour. 3. Dangerous to us (1 John ii. 15; 1 Tim. vi. 10). It fills the heart with anxiety (1 Tim. vi. 9-10) and will certainly keep us from heaven (1 Cor. vi. 9-10). 4. Foolish in itself. (1) To act so much below ourselves. (2) To throw away our souls for vanity (Matt. xvi. 26). (3) To spend that little time on earth, wherein we should prepare for heaven. (4. To make oneself a slave for he knows not whom (Psa. xxxix. 6; Eccles. iv. 8).

VI. MEANS. 1. Think much of the vanity of earth and the glory of heaven. 2. Act faith in the promises (Psa. xxxvi. 25; Heb. xiii. 5). 3. Meditate on the universal providence of God, and His fatherly care (Luke xii. 31, 32; Matt. vi. 25, &c.). 4. Be much in prayer. 5. Often remember the text (1 John v. 21). (Bp. Beveridge.)

The idolatry of covetousness:—Idolatry is the earliest thing mentioned in the decalogue, and coveting the latest. The two tables bend round and touch each other so closely that he who breaks the tenth commandment breaks the first. The inordinate love and pursuit of wealth are simply heathenish, and are put down on the same level as the worship of images. Gold seems in many respects very like a god. **I. IN THE ATTRIBUTES IT POSSESSES.** 1. Omniscience. Wealth seems to know everything. Let any novelty be presented and men will know of it instantly. You cannot keep any plan or line of business secret if there is any money in it. 2. Omnipresence. The least opening for business invites competition, and so wealth rushes in. "Mammon wins its way where seraphs might despair." 3. Omnipotence. How many of us know to our sorrow the power of riches! the overmastering, crushing opposition it sets up before every poor man's enterprise. Gold rules the world, covers the land, buys up the offices of the nation, sways the sceptre of social influence. **II. THE WORSHIP IT ATTRACTS.** 1. The roar of excited men who clamour with each other in the death grapple of competition, how little does it differ from the cries of the Town Hall of Ephesus. 2. But this is not mere lip-worship. The devotees are as desperately in earnest as the priests of Baal on Carmel. Body and soul are consecrated. **III. THE FAVOURS IT BESTOWS.** The fine residence, the gorgeous apparel, the flowing wine, the tremulous obeisance of the seedy gentleman, the obsequious flattery of the lady whose charms have faded, the adulation of the crowd, the flutter in the market, the cringe of ancient enemies; and then the fine funeral, and the marble tomb. "Verily they have their reward." Wealth, as a duty, is not remarkably beneficent, but it would be uncandid to say that he has nothing to bestow on his faithful devotees. The world likes priestcraft; and the priest has power according to his nearness to his duty, and to the faith of the populace. And hence there is no hierarchy so absolutely revered, feared, and obeyed as those who crowd the temples of gold. **IV. THE SCORNOES IT INFLECTS.** The temples of heathenism are beautiful, but the gods are ugly because malignant. They are supposed to maltreat and even eat their subjects, and mammon is well typed in them. His most noticeable characteristic is that he loves

to trample on and devour his devotees. "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall." There are some sins which seem to be considered by the Almighty as sufficient for their own punishment, such as pride and anger; passion means suffering. So here this trusting in riches possesses a kind of inflated power to balloon one up to such a height that he suffocates and falls headlong into ruin. It is painful to see how rich men pitch on each other when any one falls into difficulty. The horrible heartlessness with which a neighbourhood will devour a broken estate reminds one of the fabled furies. Conclusion: 1. See, then, why God strikes against this sin. It sets up another god in the place of Him. One of the Roman Emperors offered Jesus a place beside Jupiter. It would not do then, neither will it now. God will have all or none. 2. See how covetousness destroys grace and piety. "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" 3. See how it ruins all one's future, "Ephraim is joined to his idols," &c. But when one's god is gone, where is he! Shrods have no pockets. 4. See how it prevents all hope of progress in a Church. "Will a man rob God," &c. (C. S. Robinson, D.D.)

For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh.—*Dissuaves from evil*:—I. THE DESTRUCTIVE CONSEQUENCE. 1. The cause, "fornication," &c., not that we should conclude that it is peculiar to these sins alone to excite the Divine wrath, but because upon these which especially overthrow human happiness God is especially provoked (Heb. x. 31). The apostle wished to point out distinctly the cause of human misery and Divine judgment. (1) That God might be cleared from all suspicion of injustice. God the Father of mercies is not indifferent to evil, but is incensed against it. (2) To throw a restraint on the wicked. Those who are proof against reason and right may yield to fear. 2. The effect. The wrath of God; or the punishment inflicted by wrath. Augustine says, "The anger of God is not the perturbation of an excited mind, but the tranquil constitution of righteous judgment. This wrath is particularly connected with sins of the kind referred to here (Gen. vi. 11, 17; xviii. 20; xix. 24). 3. The persons subjected to it—"Children of disobedience." Two crimes are involved—unbelief and disobedience, the latter as the genuine offspring of the former (1 Peter iii. 20; Matt xxiv. 38-39; Gen. xix. 14; Zech. vii. 11). 4. From these things draw the following instructions. (1) Under public calamities we must not murmur against God; but impute them to our sins. (2) Oppose to solicitation to sin the consideration of the Divine wrath. (3) Nothing is more to be desired than the Divine favour, nothing more to be dreaded than the Divine wrath. (4) God is not so much provoked by sin as by the obstinacy of the sinner. (5) However much the children of disobedience flatter themselves, the wrath now cometh upon them, and will come, and will not tarry. (6) The same holds good of God's children when disobedient.

II. THE REMOVAL OF THE CAUSE (ver. 7). Sin is the reigning cause of a wicked life; but sin is not living in you, but mortified; the cause, therefore, having ceased, the effect ceases. 1. From the consideration of their former life learn—(1) Nothing is more unhappy than unrenowned man. To walk in sin with pleasure is to hasten towards hell with pleasure (Rom. vi. 23). (2) The fruits of a man in a corrupt state are not works preparatory to grace, or, deserving of eternal life—congruity, as the schoolmen say—but are preparatory to hell, and meritorious of eternal death, from condignity. 2. From their new state learn—(1) It is not idle for the renewed to call to mind their former state, inasmuch as the apostle reminds the Colossians of theirs, not to upbraid, but to encourage them. (2) Christians ought not to take it amiss when ministers remind them of their former state (Rom. vi. 19; 1 Cor. vi. 10-11; Eph. ii. 11-13). (3) The regenerate receive a twofold advantage from a notice of this kind. They are excited (a) To gratitude (Rom. vi. 17; 1 Tim. i. 12-13). (b) To newness of life (Rom. xiii. 12; Eph. v. 8). (Bishop Davenant.)

The wrath of God a present thing:—It is not merely a thing of the past, as seen in the deluge, the destruction of Sodom, the overthrow of Israel in the wilderness; nor a thing wholly reserved for the world to come. It cometh as an enduring and essential principle of the Divine government. In physical debility and disease, in a shattered constitution, in dethroned reason, in destroyed power, you often witness the working of a righteous retribution, the marks of Divine indignation against sin. A sight of terrible penalty under God's law is it, to see a man carrying to a premature grave the evidences in his body of God's curse on sins of sensuality; to see the rich man, who has lived in avarice for gold, and has amassed it in millions, now in his old age unable to enjoy it, and haunted with the idea of dying in a workhouse; to see a man of pleasure, who has tried and exhausted all the resources of the world in finding it, now ending

his days as a gloomy maniac. Yet these cases are nothing as compared with "the wrath to come;" only a few drops from a dark and dismal cloud, which will hereafter discharge itself in a storm of "judgment and fiery indignation." (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The children of disobedience*:—Men are sent to the ants to learn diligence, to the conies to learn that there is a way which terminates in a great rock, to the locusts to learn how littles, when combined, may become mighty, sufficient for all the duty and obligation of the day. What if it be found at last that all the lower orders and ranks of creation have been obedient, dutiful, loyal, and that the child only has wounded the great heart. "The ox knoweth his owner," &c. God has no trouble with His creatures—no trouble with His great constellations—they never mutinied against Him; He has had no trouble with His forests, no rebel host ever banded themselves there. Where has His sorrow lain! His own child, His beloved one, in whom He has written, in fairest hues, the perfectness of His own beauty, that child has lifted up his puny fist and smitten Him, not in the face only, but in His heart of love, which can be only forgiven by shedding sacrificial blood. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Effects of disobedience*:—"Let the sickles alone," said a farmer to his son, who was left in the fields while the reapers went to dinner. James obeyed his father for a time; but at length he grew lonesome, and took up a sickle, "just to look at it." He then felt its edge, and at last thought he would cut "one handful." In so doing, he cut his little finger, inflicting a wound which rendered the middle joint useless for life. When it was healed an ugly scar and a stiff finger were lasting mementoes of his disobedience. Disobedience to his heavenly Father leaves a scar on the sinner's soul, and lessens his capacity for virtue. (*E. Foster.*) *The wrath of God*:—The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the higher the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. If God should only withdraw His hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it. (*Jonathan Edwards.*) But now ye also put off all these.—*The believer's view of past sin*:—I once walked into a garden with a lady to gather some flowers. There was one large bush whose branches were bending under the weight of the most beautiful roses. We both gazed upon it with admiration. There was one flower on it which seemed to shine above all the rest in beauty. This lady pressed forward into the thick bush, and reached far over to pluck it. As she did this a black snake, which was hid in the bush, wrapped itself round her arm. She was alarmed beyond all description, and ran from the garden screaming, and almost in convulsions. During all that day she suffered very much with fear; her whole body trembled, and it was a long time before she could be quieted. That lady is still alive. Such is her hatred now of the whole serpent race, that she has never since been able to look at a snake, even though it were dead. No one could ever persuade her to venture again into a cluster of bushes, even to pluck a beautiful rose. Now this is the way the sinner acts who truly repents of his sins. He thinks of sin as the serpent that once coiled itself round him. He hates it. He dreads it. He flies from it. He fears the places where it inhabits. He does not willingly go into the haunts. He will no more play with sin than this lady would afterwards have fondled snakes. (*Bishop Meade.*) *Conversion and the old nature*:—There are a great many men who are like one of my roses. I bought a *Gloire de Dijon*. It was said to be one of the few ever-blooming roses. It was grafted on a manetti-stalk—a kind of dog-rose, a rampant and enormous grower, and a very good stalk to graft fine roses on. I planted it. It thrived the first part of the summer, and the last part of the summer it grew with great vigour; and I quite gloried, when the next spring came, in my *Gloire de Dijon*. It had wood enough to make twenty such roses as these finer varieties usually have; and I was in the amplitude of triumph. I said, "My soil suits it exactly in this climate; and I will write an article for the *Monthly Gardener*, and tell what luck I have had with it." So I waited and waited and waited till it blossomed; and behold! it was one of these worthless, quarter-of-a-dollar, single-blossomed roses. And when I came to examine it I found that it was grafted, and that there was a little bit of a graft down near the ground, and that it was the manetti-sprout that had grown to such a prodigious size. Now, I

have seen a great many people converted, in whom the conversion did not grow, but the old nature did. (*H. W. Beecher.*) I. THE GENERAL PERSUASION.

1. The circumstance of time—"now." Ye did indulge in these as long as sin lived, but now, since sin is mortified, ye must put these things away (Rom. xiii. 12; 1 Thess. v. 5-6). 2. The act commanded. The word may be explained either to "put off" as men put off their old and dirty clothes, or to "lay aside" from the affections and senses, as dead bodies shut up in sepulchres. The last best agrees with "mortify." 3. Learn then—(1) We must not account sin a pleasure, but a thing to be hated as deadly poison, or to be avoided as a putrid carcase. (2) This putting off applies to all sin, of which anger, &c., are only samples. II. We are to put off SINS OF THE HEART. 1. What they are. (1) Anger, an inordinate desire to injure one's neighbour for some past offence. Damascenus defines it as "an appetite for revenge, and in this what the schoolmen term the "formal" of anger is contained. (2) Wrath denotes the hasty excitement of this passion, and that accession of blood round the heart which schoolmen call the "material" of anger. "Wrath," says Damascenus, "is the boiling up of the blood around the heart, and arises from the kindling of resentment." (3) Malice some affirm to be that vicious propensity which infects all the affections and desires, and inclines them to evil; and Bernard, "the taste for evil," which makes evil sweet and good insipid. But it is rather that machination of evil in the heart which is wont to arise from anger in malevolent minds (Gen. iv. 5; xxvii. 41). 2. The reasons why they should be extirpated. Because—(1) Through anger wisdom is lost, and reason for the time extinguished (Eccles. vii. 19). "Anger is a short madness." (2) Justice is violated; for while an exasperated mind sits in judgment everything which its fury may suggest it thinks right (James i. 20; Gen. xxiv. 7; cf. xlix. 7). (3) The kindness of social life is lost (Prov. xxii. 24). (4) The illumination of the Spirit is shut out. (5) Forgiveness of sin is hindered (Matt. xi. 26). (6) The attribute of God is usurped with sacrilegious audacity (Prov. xx. 22; Deut. xxxiii. 35). An angry man makes himself the judge, and would have God the executioner. 3. But is all anger unlawful? No! for God has implanted in the mind the faculty of anger, and Christ was angry (Mark iii. 5). Hence the apostle enjoins, "Be ye angry and sin not." (1) Anger is good—(a) Which arises from a good motive, viz., from the love of God or our neighbour. (b) Which tends to a good end, the glory of God and the correction of our neighbour. (c) Which proceeds according to a good rule, awaiting or following the determination of reason. Basil would have anger to be a bridled horse, which obeys reason as a curb. (2) Anger is evil—(a) Which arises from a bad beginning—hatred or love of praise. (b) Which tends to a bad end—revenge and our neighbour's injury. (c) Which is exercised in an improper manner, forestalling the judgment of reason. III. SINS OF THE MOUTH, arising from the inordinate affections of the heart. 1. What they are. (1) Evil speaking. Blasphemy means injuring the fame of another by evil words. (a) It is offered to God; first, when that which is repugnant to His nature is attributed to Him; secondly, when that which most befits Him is taken away; thirdly, when that which is His property is attributed to the creature. So heinous was it that God made it a capital crime (Lev. xxiv. 16, 23). (b) It is offered to man (Rom. iii. 8; 1 Cor. iv. 18; Tit. iii. 2), and is secret (detraction) and open (railing). Rash and angry persons take the open course; the crafty and malicious the secret. Its grievousness is evident. First, it greatly injures the person himself. His reputation, a principal external blessing is wounded, and is not easy to repair, since the quantity of the loss cannot be estimated. Secondly, it greatly injures those who take it up, engendering as it does suspicions and strifes (Psa. cxx. 2). Thirdly, it is a great injury done to God. For as He is praised in the saints when the works He effects in them are praised; so when they are defamed He is defamed. (2) Corollaries. (a) Such as respect the blasphemers. First, the habit argues an unregenerate state, for it is one of the principal deeds of the old man. Second, slanderers are unhappy, for, as Nazianzen says, "It is the extreme of misery to place one's comfort not in one's own happiness, but in the evils of others." Third, they are the disciples of the devil (Rev. xii. 10). (b) Such as respect hearers. First, since it is so great a crime, those who delight to hear it are not void of sin. Each has a devil; this in the ear, that in the tongue. Second, it behoves a pious man to turn away from and reprove slanderers, and to defend his brother (Prov. xxv. 23; Psa. ci. 5; Job xxix. 17). (c) Respecting those injured. First, grieve more for the slanderer than for what he says. Second, slander harms not a good conscience. Third, there is the counterbalancing testimony of conscience and good men. Fourth, do

not be provoked to return evil for evil (1 Cor. v. 12). 2. Filthy communication (Eph. ii. 29; 1 Cor. xv. 33). This is to be avoided because—(1) It makes that most precious and peculiar faculty of speech foul and ridiculous. (2) It indicates a corrupt mind. (3) It is opposed to the sacred profession of a Christian (Eph. v. 3-4). (4) It corrupts speaker and hearers. Wherefore rebuke it in others. Avoid it yourselves. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *Anger*:—There is an anger that is damnable; it is the anger of selfishness. There is an anger that is majestic as the frown of Jehovah's brow; it is the anger of truth and love. If a man meets with injustice, it is not required that he should not be roused to meet it; but if he is angry after he has had time to think upon it that is sinful. The flame is not wrong, but the coals are. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The evils of bad temper*:—There are households where this demon of anger governs all at its pleasure, incessantly troubling the concord of husband and wife, the union of parents and children, and the peace of masters and servants. There is nothing done, nothing said, but in anger. You would say of these houses, that they are the fabled cavern of Eolus, where the winds shut up in it are heard night and day, roaring and blustering. There is no climate, no sea, no coast in all the earth, where storms are greater or more frequent. For whereas natural tempests happen but at some seasons of the year, in these miserable houses no calm is ever seen; and there needs but one petty action, one word, yea, one look, to raise storms of many days' continuance: as it is said of certain lakes in the mountains of Berne, that if one cast but a stone into them, the surrounding air becomes turbid, and is immediately filled with winds and clouds, which soon issue lightning, thunder, and excessive rain. Yea, there are some whose passion is so violent, that it cannot be kept within the enclosure of their houses. It issues out of doors, and without respect to the faces of those who pass by, without apprehension of scandal, audaciously shows itself in public, and acts its tragedies in the presence of all the world. (*J. Daillé.*) *Control of temper*:—When M. de Persigny was French Minister of the Interior he received a visit one day from a friend. A warm discussion arose between them. Suddenly an usher entered and handed the minister a note. On opening it he at once changed his tone of voice, and assumed a quiet and urbane manner. Puzzled as to the contents of the note, and by the marked effect it had suddenly produced upon the minister, his friend cast a furtive glance at it, when, to his astonishment, he perceived that it was simply a plain sheet of paper. More puzzled than ever the gentleman took his leave, and proceeded to interrogate the usher. "Sir," said he, "here is the explanation, which I must beg you to keep secret. My master is very liable to lose his temper. As he is aware of his weakness, he has ordered me, each time his voice is raised sufficient to be audible in the ante-room, without delay to place a sheet of paper in an envelope and take it to him. That reminds him that his temper is getting the better of him, and he at once calms himself. Just now I heard his voice rising, and immediately carried out my instructions." (*W. Bazendale.*) *Malice*:—The word is of great extent, and signifies in general that venom and evil of sin which is diffused through any one of our passions, whichever it be. But here, as frequently elsewhere, I suppose it is taken for the malignity of anger; when a mischievous and vindictive stomach inwardly broods on its passion, and feeds its fire under the ashes, hatching some ill turn for the person it aims at, and waiting for opportunity to break out. Such a man works under ground, as miners do, and appears not till the ruin he prepares for his enemy is fully ready. His passion is like a stinted fire, that does not burn up till its season. Of all kinds of anger, there is none more black and malignant in itself, or more noxious and pernicious in its effects. Wherefore the apostle calls it malice, naughtiness, or malignity particularly; and it seems to be the same thing he elsewhere calls bitterness. (*J. Daillé.*) *Blasphemy, its nature*:—Though the term, in our tongue, imports words spoken to the offence of God, when things unworthy of his greatness, and holiness, and truth, are attributed to Him, or those which belong to Him are denied Him; or when that which is proper to His divinity is communicated to creatures; yet in the Greek, that is, in the language the apostle speaks, the word "blasphemy" generally signifies any offensive, injurious speech, whoever it concerns, whether God, or angels, or men. The truth is, this word, if we respect its origin or etymology, simply denotes injuring the reputation, or offending some one's honour. Consequently, St. Paul uses it not only here, but also in other places, to signify such revilings and detractions as are directed properly to men, and not to God (1 Cor. iv. 13; Titus iii. 2). (*Ibid.*) *The evil speaker*:—While the Lord desires us to consider the good qualities with which He has endowed His creatures,

to the end that we might praise and esteem them, and imitate them, the evil-speaker looks upon nothing but their defects and vices. And as vultures fly over fair meadows, and flowery and sweet-smelling fields, and alight only on dunghills, and places full of carrion and infection; and as flies, without touching the sound parts of the body, fasten only upon sores and ulcers; so the evil-speaker, without so much as noticing what is graceful and happy in the lives of men, falls upon that which is weak and sickly in them. If they have chanced to stumble, as is very ordinary in this infirmity of our nature, it is upon this that he fixes; in this he takes pleasure, this he gladly exposes and publishes, amplifying and exaggerating it with his infernal rhetoric. It is by this he knows persons; it is by this he marks them out and describes them; as bad painters, who represent nothing so exactly as the moles and scars of the faces which they draw, the deformity of the nose, the protuberance of the lips, and other such marks which they have from the birth, or receive by some accident. Charity covers sins, and forgets them; the evil-speaker divulges them, and remembers them perpetually, and takes out of the grave that which had been buried in oblivion, and brings it to light again. He loves pollution, and feeds on nothing but poisons and filth. And for this end he has always a sufficient store of such provision by him. His memory is a magazine, or rather a sink, where he heaps up the villainies, the sins, and the scandals, not of his own neighbourhood, or his own quarter only, but of the whole city; yea, if he possibly can, of the whole state. It is from this diabolical treasury that he derives the subject of his sweetest thoughts and most pleasing entertainments. These things are his perfumes and his dainties. But he is not content only to rake together and lay open the imperfections which he finds in his neighbours; he is so malignant that he feigns more, and fancies some where there are none. He spreads it abroad for truth; and that he may persuade others of it, he artificially colours his fictions, giving out shows for truths, and shadows for substances. He so bitterly hates all good, that where he sees any he bespatters, blackens, and disguises it, and causes it to pass for evil. And as the snail sullies the lustre of the fairest flowers with its sordid slime; just so this bad man, by the poison of his malignity, defames the most grateful virtues, and turns them into vices. He takes valour for temerity, and patience for stupidity; justice for cruelty, and prudence for craftiness. Him that is liberal he calls prodigal, and the frugal person covetous. If you be religious, he will not fail to accuse you of superstition; and if you be free and generous, and far from superstition, he will accuse you of being profane. In fact, there is no virtue nor perfection for which this wicked man has not found an infamous name, taken from the vice that borders next upon it. To this iniquity he usually adds a base and black piece of treachery, when, to cause his poisons to be the more easily swallowed, he mischievously sugars them, beginning his detractions with a preface of praise, and with an affected commendation of the persons whom he intends to revile; protesting, at his entrance, that he loves and respects them, for the purpose of creating a belief that it is nothing but the mere force and evidence of truth that constrains him to speak evil of them. He kisses his man at meeting, and then murders him, as Joab formerly did: he crowns his victims before he kills them: a fraud which, notwithstanding its ordinary occurrence, is the blackest that can be perpetrated. (*Ibid.*) *Slander cannot be recalled*:—A lady presented herself to Philip Neri one day, accusing herself of being a slanderer. "Do you frequently fall into this fault?" inquired he. "Yes, my father, very often." "My dear child," said Philip, "your fault is great, but the mercy of God is still greater. For your penance do as follows: Go purchase a chicken, and walk a certain distance, plucking the feathers as you go along. Your walk finished, return to me." Accordingly she repaired to the market, did as she was bidden, and in a short time returned. "Ah," said Philip, "you have been very faithful to the first part of my orders. Retrace your steps, and gather up one by one all the feathers you have scattered." "But, father," exclaimed the poor woman, "I cast them carelessly on every side; the wind carried them in every direction. How can I recover them?" "Well, my child," replied he, "so is it with your words of slander; like the feathers, they have been scattered. Call them back if you can. Go and sin no more." (*W. Barendse.*) *Filthy conversation*:—As offensive breath betokens some inward indisposition and corruption; so filthy and dishonest conversation discovers the impurity and unchastity that are in the soul of him who uses it. Hence the apostle in another place expressly puts this among other parts of Christian sanctity, that our conversation be pure, chaste, and honest (Eph. v. 3-4; iv. 29). (*J. Daillé.*) *Purity of conversation*:—It is related that General Grant

was once sitting in his tent with officers around him, when a general came in in much glee and said: "I have a good story to tell; there are no ladies present, I believe." "No," said General Grant, "but there are gentlemen present." The man's countenance fell; the good story was never told. Some Christians could learn a good lesson from the great commander's remark. (*Christian, Boston.*)

Vers. 9-11. Lie not one to another: seeing that ye have put off the old man and his deeds.—*Spiritual renewal in Christ*:—The apostle enforces his exhortation by two arguments: first, "Ye died with Christ," &c.; second, "Ye have put off the old man," &c. I. EVERY CHRISTIAN IS THE SUBJECT OF A CHANGE. The "old man" refers to our degenerate nature, and "its deeds" the practical outcome of this degeneracy. The "new man" is the new nature, for the creation of which God has provided in His Son. The grand change takes place in the heart, and is perfected in the life. This change is—1. Divine in its origin. It is not the result of human skill or self-development. 2. Progressive in its nature, "which is being renewed." There is in every case a commencement, whether known or not, at regeneration; but as in the case of the new-born infant, its powers have to be expanded and renewed day by day. At no point in this progress can the Christian say, "I have attained or am perfect." There is in this fact (1) a solace which may well prevent discouragement at the consciousness of manifold imperfections; and (2) a stimulus which should lead us to seek with ardour the influence and evidence of a progressive piety. A statue under the chisel of the sculptor is ever being renewed, until the marble form assumes a perfect likeness of the ideal; so under the hand of God the soul grows in the attributes of spiritual life and the beauties of holiness. 3. Glorious in its model. "After the image of Him." Christ is "the image of the invisible God," and conformity to Him is the pattern of our renewal. This includes much more than the mere restoration of the image lost by Adam. 4. Grand in its result. "Renewed into knowledge"; i.e., knowledge is not the means, but the purpose. It is that of God and things Divine. To know God and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent, is life eternal. To the attainment of some kinds of knowledge character is essential, and pre-eminently it is so here. It is to be an intuition—not a cold intellectual acquisition (Rom. xii. 2; Eph. iii. 16-19). Life without this change is vanity. The "old man" may be rich and strong, but the "new man" only can see God and enter heaven. "Except a man be born again," &c. II. IN THIS SPIRITUAL RENEWAL HUMAN DISTINCTIONS ARE OF NO AVAIL OR ADVANTAGE. 1. National distinctions: "Greek and Jew." One nation has no advantage over another. The sensual Hindoo, the literary Chinaman, the stolid Hottentot, the energetic European, are alike by sin removed from the life of God; and the gospel is equally adapted to all. 2. Ritual distinctions (Gal. vi. 15). A man born in a Christian country requires a change of heart as much as one who dwells in a pagan land. There may be much higher external privilege in one case than in the other, but that does not confer the change, nor is it to be confounded with it. 3. Political distinction: "Barbarian, Scythian." The Scythians were at the lowest point of the scale of civilization. The savage and the polished citizen require alike the washing of regeneration. 4. Social distinction: "Bond, free." The diversities of condition which divide men are unrecognized. Here rich and poor meet together. III. IN THIS SPIRITUAL CHANGE CHRIST IS EVERYTHING. "All and in all, Christ." 1. He is the principle of the change. Every Christian is created anew in Christ Jesus. 2. He is its sustenance and strength. As the renewed soul feeds on Him by faith, so it grows up in Him. There can be no advancement away from Him. 3. He is its perfection. We are to be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) The new nature wrought out in the new life:—I. THE CHANGE OF THE SPIRIT'S DRESS. 1. We have the same idea before. "Death" is equivalent to the "putting off of the old," and "resurrection" to "putting on of the new." The figure of the change of dress to express change of moral character is frequent in Scripture. "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness." Zechariah saw the high-priest change his filthy garments for festal robes when God "caused his iniquity to pass from him." See also Christ's parables of the Wedding Garment and Prodigal Son, and Paul's exhortation to Christ's soldiers to put off their night-gear, "the works of darkness," &c. In every reformatory the first thing done is to strip off and burn the rags of the new-comers, and then give them a bath, and dress them in clean clothes. Character is the garb of the soul. Habit means costume and custom.

2. The apostle hazards a mixed metaphor—"Put on the new man"—to show that what is put off and on is much more truly part of themselves than an article of dress. There is a deeper self which remains, the true man, the centre of personality. Thus the figure expresses the depth of the change and the identity of the person. 3. This entire change is assumed as having been realized at that point of time when the Colossians began to put their trust in Christ. (1) Of course the contrast between the old and the new is greatest in converted heathens. With us, where Christianity is widely diffused, there is less room for a marked revolution. Many can point to no sudden change, or if they have been conscious of a change, have passed through it as gradually as night passes into day. (2) But there are those who have grown up without God who must become Christians by sudden conversion. And why should this be regarded as impossible? Is it not often the case that some ignored principle has come, like a meteor in the atmosphere, into a man's mind, and exploded and blown to pieces the habits of a lifetime? And why should not this be so with the truth of God's great love in Christ? (3) The New Testament does not insist that everybody must become a Christian in the same fashion. Sometimes there will be a dividing line between the two states as sharp as the boundary of adjoining kingdoms; sometimes the one will melt imperceptibly into the other. Sometimes the revolution will be as swift as that of the wheel of a locomotive, sometimes slow and silent as the movement of a planet. 4. But however brought about, this is a certain mark of the Christian life. (1) If there be any reality in the act by which we have laid hold of Christ, old things will have passed away—tastes, desires, &c.—and all things will have become new, because we move with a new love, have a new hope, aim, song. (2) This is a most needful test for those who put too much stress on believing and feeling. Nor is it less needful to remember that this is a consequence of faith in Christ. Nothing else will strip the foul robes from a man. To try to begin with the second stage is like trying to build a house at the second story. 5. The practical conclusion: "Seeing that." The change, though taking place in the inmost nature, needs to be wrought into character and wrought out in conduct. The leaven is in the dough, but to knead it thoroughly into the mass is a lifelong task, only accomplished by our continually repeated efforts. 6. So the apparently illogical, Put off what you have put off, and put on what you have put on, is vindicated. It means, Be consistent with your deepest selves; carry out in detail what you have already done in bulk. Cast out the enemy already ejected from the central fortress, from the isolated positions he still occupies. You may put off the old man, for he is put off already; you must do so, for there is still danger of his again wrapping his poisonous rags about your limbs.

II. THE CONTINUOUS GROWTH OF THE NEW MAN, ITS AIM AND PATTERN. 1. The new man is "being renewed"—a continuous process, perhaps slow and difficult to discern, but, like all powers and habits, it steadily increases; and a similar process works to opposite results in the old man (Eph. iv. 22). 2. This renewing is on the man, not by him. There is a Divine side. The renewing is not merely effected by us, nor due only to the vital power of the new man, but by the "renewing of the Holy Ghost." So there is hope for us in our striving, for He helps us. "Work out your own salvation," &c. 3. The new man is renewed "unto knowledge." Possibly there may be an allusion to the pretensions of the false teachers to a higher wisdom. There is but one way to press into the depths of the knowledge of God, viz., growth into His likeness. We understand one another best by sympathy. We know God only on condition of resemblance. For all simple souls, bewildered by the strife of tongues, and unapt for speculation, this is a message of gladness. 4. The new man is created after "the image," &c. As in the first creation, so in the new. But the old image consisted mainly in the reasonable soul, the self-conscious personality, the broad distinctions between men and animals. That humanity, in a sense, still has, though marred. The coin bears His image and superscription, though rusty and defaced. But the new image consists in holiness. Though the majestic infinitudes of God can have no likeness in man, we may be "holy as He is holy," be "imitators of God," "walk in love as He hath loved us," and "in the light as He is in the light."

III. THE GRAND UNITY OF THIS CREATION. 1. "Christ is all." Wherever that new nature is found, it lives by the life of Christ. 2. All who are His partake of that common gift. He is in all. There is no privileged class, as these teachers affirmed. Necessarily, therefore, surface distinctions disappear. Paul's catalogue may be profitably compared with Gal. iii. 28. (1) Greek and Jew. The cleft of national distinctions, which never yawned more widely than

this, ceases to separate. (2) Circumcision and uncircumcision. Nothing makes deeper and bitterer antagonisms than differences in religious forms. (3) Barbarian, Scythian : which reflects the Greek contempt for outside races as of lower culture. A cultivated class is always tempted to superciliousness, and a half-cultivated class more so, as was the case at Colossæ. In the interests of the humble virtues Christianity wars against the pride of culture, the most heartless of all. (4) Bondman, freeman. That gulf was too wide for compassion to cross, though not for hatred to stride over. The effacement of this distinction is seen in the letter to Philemon which was despatched with this. 3. Christianity waged no direct war against these evils. Revolution cures nothing. The only way to get rid of evils engendered in the constitution of society is to elevate and change the tone of thought and feeling, and then they die of atrophy. Change the climate, and you change the vegetation. Until you do, neither mowing nor uprooting will get rid of the foul growths. So the gospel does with all these lines of demarcation between men. What becomes of the ridges of sand that separate pool from pool at low water? The tide comes up and over them, and makes them all one, gathered into the oneness of the great sea. (*A. MacLaren, D.D.*) *New leaves pushing off the old* :—Manton says that "Old leaves, if they remain upon the trees through the autumn and the winter, fall off in the spring." We have seen a hedge all thick with dry leaves throughout the winter, and neither frost nor wind has removed the withered foliage, but the spring has soon made a clearance. The new life dislodges the old, pushing it away as unsuitable to it. So our old corruptions are best removed by the growth of new graces. "Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." It is as the new life buds and opens that the old, worn-out things of our former state are compelled to quit their hold of us. Our wisdom lies in living near to God, that by the power of His Holy Spirit all our graces may be vigorous, and may exercise a sin-expelling power over our lives: the new leaves of grace pushing off our old sere affections and habits of sin. With converts from the world it is often better not to lay down stringent rules as to worldly amusements, but leave the new life and its holier joys to push off the old pleasures. Thus it will be done more naturally and more effectively. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Life changed for the better* :—The leader of a very ungodly set of fellows in a dye-house became converted. Two of his fellow-workmen were so struck with the change that for a time they followed him in his new way, and behaved like good Christians. The ridicule and violence of the rest were, however, too strong for their resolution, and they turned to their old ways, while John, the first convert, clung close to Christ, and stood firm as a rock. John did not say much, but he answered scoffs and railing by a consistent Christian life. One day, however, when his fellow-workmen were boasting what good infidelity could do, and how much harm the Bible had done, his soul was stirred within him; he turned round, and said, feelingly, but firmly, "Well, let us deal plainly in this matter, my friends, and judge of the tree by the fruit it bears. You call yourselves infidels. Let us see what your principles do. I suppose what they do on a small scale they will do on a large one. Now, there are Tom and Jem," pointing to the two who went with him and then turned back. "You have tried your principles on them. When they tried to serve Christ, they were civil, good-tempered, kind husbands and fathers. They were cheerful, hardworking, and ready to oblige. What have you made them? Look and see. They are cast down and cross; their mouths are full of cursing and filthiness; they are drunk every week; their children half clothed, their wives broken-hearted, their homes wretched. Now, I have tried Christ and His religion, and what has it done for me? You know well what I used to be. There was none of you who could drink so much, swear so desperately, and fight so masterly. I had no money, and no one would trust me. My wife was illused; I was ill-humoured, hateful, and hating. What has religion done for me? Thank God, I am not afraid to put it to you. Am I not a happier man than I was? Am I not a better workman and a kinder companion? Would I once have put up with what I now bear from you? I could beat any of you as easily now as ever. Why don't I? Do you ever hear a foul word from my mouth, or catch me at a public-house? Go and ask my neighbours if I have not altered for the better. Go and ask my wife. Let my house bear witness. God be praised, here is what Christianity has done for me; there is what infidelity has done for Jem and Tom." John stopped. The dyers had not a word to say. He used a logic they could not answer—the logic of a life. (*Family Treasury.*) *The nature of lying* :—If the following three circumstances concur—that what is uttered be

false, that it was wished to announce a falsehood, and that it was the intention to deceive—then it has the qualities of a lie complete; for it is false both materially and formally. (*Thomas Aquinas.*) *Kinds of lies*:—There are lies pernicious, officious, and jocose. The first is employed for the sake of injury; the second for that of assistance; the third for diversion. But the Scripture denies any one of these to be lawful (Rev. xxi. 8, xxii. 15; Prov. xii. 22; Eph. iv. 25). (*Bishop Davenant.*) *Lying against reason*:—Language was instituted, not that men might deceive one another by it, but that they should use it to tell their mutual thoughts; it is therefore an act unlawful to reason for one to utter words to signify that which he doeth not intend in his mind. (*Durandus.*) *Speech and mind must be at one*:—Language is a natural sign of the understanding; it is therefore unnatural that any one should signify that by his speech which does not exist in his mind. (*Aquinas.*) *The disgrace of lying*:—Clear and sound dealing is the honour of man's nature; and that mixture of falsehood is like alloy in gold or silver, which may make the metal work better, but it debaseth it. For these windings and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent, which goeth basely upon the belly, not upon the feet. There is no vice that doth so cover a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious; and therefore Montaigne saith prettily, "If it be well weighed, to say that a man lieth is as to say that he is brave towards God and a coward towards men. For a lie faces God and shrinks from man." (*Lord Bacon.*) *Lying unsafe*:—A liar is sooner caught than a cripple. Liars should have good memories. A lie has no legs. (*Proverbs.*) *Falsehood difficult to maintain*:—It is difficult to maintain falsehood. When the materials of a building are solid blocks of stone, very rude architecture will suffice; but a structure of rotten materials needs the most careful adjustment in order to make it stand. (*Archbishop Whately.*) *The folly of lying*:—Truth is always consistent with itself, and needs nothing to help it out; it is always near at hand, sits upon our lips, and is ready to drop out before we are aware. A lie is troublesome, and sets a man's invention upon the rack; and one trick needs a great many more to make it good. It is like building on a false foundation, which continually stands in need of props to shore it up; and proves at last more chargeable than to have raised a substantial building at first on a true and solid foundation. (*Addison.*) *Acting a lie*:—Once while Rowland Hill was spending an evening at the house of a friend, a lady, who was there on a visit, retired, that her little girl of four years old might go to bed. She returned in about half an hour, and said to a lady near her: "She is gone to sleep; I put on my nightcap, and lay down by her, and she soon dropped off." Mr. Hill, who overheard this, said: "Excuse me, madam: do you wish your child to grow up a liar?" "Oh dear, no, sir; I should be shocked at such a thing." "Then bear with me when I say you must never act a lie before her. Children are very quick observers, and soon learn that that which assumes to be what it is not is a lie, whether acted or spoken." This was uttered with a kindness which precluded offence, yet with a seriousness that could not be forgotten. *Folly and misery of lying*:—The folly of lying consists in its defeating its own purpose. A habit of lying is generally detected in the end; and after detection, the liar, instead of deceiving, will not even be believed when he happens to speak the truth. Nay, every single lie is attended with such a variety of circumstances which lead to a detection, that it is often discovered. The use generally made of a lie is to cover a fault; but as this end is seldom answered, we only aggravate what we wish to conceal. In point even of prudence, an honest confession would serve us better. (*R. Gilpin.*) *Example of truthfulness*:—In the course of my acquaintance with Sir Robert Peel I never knew a man in whose truth and justice I had a more lively confidence. In the whole course of my communication with him I never knew an instance in which he did not show the strongest attachment to truth, and I never saw, in the whole course of my life, the smallest reason for suspecting that he stated anything which he did not firmly believe to be the fact. (*The Duke of Wellington.*) *Love of truth*:—One drizzly March evening, Stonewall Jackson was about to start at dusk for the residence of a friend a mile distant. "Is it imperative that you go to-night?" he was asked. "Not specially so," he replied. "Then why walk a mile in the rain if to-morrow will do as well?" "Well, I was talking with Colonel M— this morning, and told him that my conversation with Cadet D— was held in barracks on Monday. I have since recollected that it was held on the parade-ground, and that it was on Tuesday." "Does anything depend on this statement?" "Nothing whatever." "Why, in the name of reason,

then, do you walk a mile in the rain for a perfectly unimportant thing?" "Simply because I have discovered it was a misstatement, and I could not sleep comfortably to-night unless I corrected it." And go he did. (*H. O. Mackay.*) *Truth and falsehood*.—I. The NATURE of the sin of lying. The youngest of us knows the thing too well—the intentional leading of others to understand as true what we know to be false. 1. It may be by a lying word—a sin of the tongue, telling a lie, speaking a lie. 2. It may be by a lying look—a sin of the eye—looking a lie. 3. It may be a lying act—a sin of the hand—acting a lie. This is one of the most common forms of it, and least thought of. Still to keep by school-life: It is the hour for arithmetic. You have got some hard sums to do—too hard for you to master without more time than you have got now. You ask your neighbour to show you his slate, or you look over the shoulder of the boy before you who is always correct, you see you have been mistaken, rub out the wrong figures, fill in the right—in a moment you are on your feet as having finished your work, read off your sum, get your mark, and, with it, credit for being one of the few who are correct. That is a theft, but it is also a lie; it is stealing, but it is also lying. It was not the tongue, but the hand that did it. And here let me warn you against being parties to the lies of others. You are a young servant. You have broken accidentally a favourite china bowl. You do not know what to do. It is the first time such a thing has happened with you. You fear your mistress will be angry; perhaps you will have to replace it out of your half-year's wage, small as it is, just on purpose to make you more careful for the future. So instead of making an immediate and full confession, explaining how it took place, and saying you will be more careful in time to come, you take up the pieces, and lay them aside till you have opportunity of getting them out of the way; or you join the broken piece in as neatly as you can, set the bowl in the press, and the discovery is never made that you had any hand in it, till you are in another situation. You have been acting a lie; and I can hardly over-estimate the wrong you have done, most of all to yourself. When Jacob put the kid-skins on his hands and neck, and served up dainty meat to his old blind father Isaac, passing himself off for his brother Esau, he acted a lie; it was lying kindness. Before leaving this head, let me say a word regarding equivocating—that is, saying what has a double meaning—what may be taken up in two ways—the mere word true, the thing false—a kind of half-lie. II. The CHARACTER of this sin. It would take long to bring out all the bad features of it. Take the following: 1. It is a cowardly thing. No brave boy would lie. Cowards tell lies. Fear lies at the bottom of falsehood, and no liar need pretend to be brave. If I were in search of courageous boys, I would seek truthful ones. Our Scottish martyrs, the good Covenanters in olden times, were bright examples of strict adherence, not only to the truth, but to truthfulness; and where shall we find any more brave? A lie would have saved their lives—a single lying act—one lying bow of the head—but they would not. 2. It is a mean thing. It is not manly. Some of the cases I have mentioned, showing utter disregard to the feelings and interests of others, are base, shabby contemptible in the extreme. Never expect much at the hand of liars. They would sacrifice your interests to their own any day. 3. It is a God-dishonouring thing. How much is said of God in connection with truth! He is called the "God of truth." It is said, He "keepeth truth for ever." Every word of His is so unchangeable that His "truth" is just used for His "word"; they mean the same thing. He is called "God who cannot lie." His people are called "children that will not lie." Lying lips are said to be "an abomination" to Him. Truth is part of God's likeness—God's image. What dishonour, then, must be done to the God of truth by lying! You don't like lying things; a lying apple, beautiful and inviting without, but rotten within; a lying penny, bright but bad; a lying cat, that invites you to make much of it, and seems ever so friendly, and then bites or scratches you; a lying lottery, that promises a prize and gives a blank; a lying branch, that invites your foot to rest upon it, and then gives way and throws you to the ground. And God dislikes lying things too. This is the worst feature in it all—it is so dishonouring to God. This is seen in the way He speaks of it and punishes it. 4. It is a devilish thing. God is the "God of truth," the devil is the "father of lies," is a "liar," ay, and the father of liars. Lying is so vile a thing, and the word "lie" is so black, even to the world, even to the wicked, even to careless children, that they try to use it as little as possible, and it is spoken and thought lightly of, under another name—a "fib"; "it was only a fib"—a kind of harmless, innocent falsehood—a little lie—a softer name for a bad, black thing. III. The DANGER of it. 1. It is a growing sin. By this I

mean it is always increasing. One lie leads to and necessitates another, till no one knows where it will end. It is like a snowball, the further it is rolled the more it increases in size. Once or twice indulged, it soon becomes a habit. 2. It leads to and is linked with many other sins. You seldom find lying alone. It is something like drinking: it leads to almost every other sin, and all other sins seek its help, and hide themselves under it. I can hardly fancy a liar to be honest—either to fear God or regard man. 3. It degrades the whole character. When a habit of lying has been formed, we may well fear the worst. When truthfulness goes, the whole character goes along with it. There is an end to all confidence. For a young apprentice, or a young servant, there is nothing I fear so much as untruthfulness. IV. The PUNISHMENT of it. This is two-fold. 1. Here—in the present world. There is the loss of character; the loss of all respect. There is degradation; misery; shame. No one can respect a liar. It carries its own punishment with it. 2. Hereafter—in the world to come. Remember, dear children! that sooner or later the lie will be discovered—every lie! If not here, at any rate hereafter. V. Our DUTY regarding it. "Lie not; putting away lying—speak the truth." 1. Strive against it. 2. Watch against it. You must not leave the door open. 3. Pray against it. 4. Seek to love the truth. Get the heart filled with the love of Christ, and then you will love the truth, and of necessity hate lying. Every effort will strengthen you, and the more you seek after the truth, the stronger you will become in it. Rather be simple than deceitful; rather be the cheated than the cheater, for it is written, "The Lord preserveth the simple." (*J. H. Wilson.*)

Ver. 10. **And have put on the new man.**—In allusion to the white garments with which the primitive converts, having first laid aside their heathen vestments, were wont to be arrayed, St. Paul exhorts the Colossians to "put off the old man with his deeds, and to put on the new man." Christians should no more dishonour God and disgrace religion by any of the vices and passions of their natural state, than a courtier should insult his prince by appearing before him in squalid and ragged attire. But this is not enough—this is negative merely. The Christian must also actually array himself in the white and becoming dress of his new character and relation; as a courtier would not only abstain from insulting his prince by wearing defiled and mean garments, but would also be studious to attire himself, when approaching his presence, with the suitable and ornamental dress which he knew was required. (*Bishop D. Wilson.*) Which is being renewed.—Divine creation is not a mere mechanical work. It is wholly different from all work of ours. The builder builds a house, and when it is built he has done with it, and may never see it again; still the house stands. An artist paints his picture; it passes from the easel, it is hung in the gallery; he has done with it; he does not stand there day by day, with brush and palette, keeping the yellows brilliant, and the purples rich, and the browns mellow. A poet writes his verses, prints them, and he has done with them. The pathos, beauty, music remain; they touch the heart, charm the ear, kindle the imagination of millions in many ages and lands long after his own heart has ceased to throb, and the fire of his own genius is quenched. This is not the kind of relation between God and His creatures. He transcends the universe, but is immanent in it; it only exists as long as He sustains it. If He were to let it go it would pass into chaos—into nothing. Its enduring forces are the witnesses of His eternal power. The universe, this vast temple which God has made for Himself, would not stand if the Builder were to leave it; its foundations would shake, its walls be rent, it would sink in ruins. The glory of the mountain, lake, and river would not remain like the artist's picture, if the Divine Artist were to leave it, every outline would lose its firmness and grace, every colour its softness or its strength, and the canvas would forget the beauty which had covered it. The revelation of thought which God has given in all created things would not remain if He, the great Teacher and Poet, ceased to live or ceased to speak; the great poem would perish, it remains only as long as living inspiration is in it. God creates, and, as we are accustomed to say, sustains. But the word is inadequate; it suggests too mechanical and external a relation between God and what He has made. His action might almost be described as a continuous creation. His power is within every created thing, active, persistent, or what He has created would cease to be. His thought is within every created thing, determining, maintaining its form, the characteristic mode of its existence. The sun rises over sea and land, and creates the day; but the sun renews the day from moment to moment, or the day would pass back into night. So were it not for

the great power of God ever active, all things would cease to be. The new man was created by Him; day by day the new man is kept new by the fresh and continuous activity of the same power that brought it into being. Every moment, in a true sense, we are born again, just as the stream has the continuous birth from the mountain, and the light from the sun; every moment we are arising anew from the dead, every moment there passes into us afresh the energy of the creative power; we are being renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us. And, therefore, as we begin to live in answer to our faith, so we continue to live in answer to our faith. We never stand apart and alone. Yesterday's inspiration gives us no light to-day; the power of the Holy Ghost that was active in us yesterday is unavailing for to-day's righteousness. And this new life is also a life of continuous prayer. What is the real meaning of indisposition to prayer? It means that the spirit of independence is mastering us, and for us independence means death. We are living only as God lives in us. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*)

The Image of God restored to men:—1. Man was created in the image of God. Righteous as God was righteous he saw God in his own nature; other intelligent creatures saw God in him; and God in His offspring saw Himself. 2. The image of God is now defaced. The substance remains, but its glorious attributes are gone. The form abides but the glorious features are not there. 3. To be right and blessed men must recover this image. Without likeness to God we are unable to appreciate His revelations, and incapable of filial intercourse. 4. By his own power or with the assistance of his fellows, no man can recover it. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," therefore he must be "born not of blood," &c., "but of God." I. GOD HAS MADE PROVISION FOR THE RENEWAL OF HIS IMAGE IN MAN.

1. This provision consists in—(1) The atonement which justifies God's interposition for man's regeneration. If without a sacrifice God had restored man, the idea of misfortune, not guilt, would have been associated with man's fallen state. But now sin appears exceeding sinful. (2) The living Mediator is the way for man to God—as the source of life and light. (3) The testimony of God's Word informs men of the atonement and Mediator. How can they avail themselves of what they have not heard? (4) The Holy Spirit so acts upon the heart as to produce sympathy with the testimony of the gospel; and under His influence men believe God's Word and are born again. 2. There is provision: the recovery of God's image is possible. The aged cannot become young, the diseased healthful, the mutilated whole; but man may be renewed. Nature illustrates this. Trees shed their leaves in autumn, and remain in winter as though dead. In the spring the sap rises and circulates, the branches extend, and the foliage returns. The plumage of the bird loses its vigour and gloss, but moulting recovers strength and restores beauty. The human body is exhausted through the waste of its functional operations, and for its renewal we have provision in food and sleep. And for the soul there is as real a provision. Let none despair. There is balm in Gilead, &c. 3. This provision is of God. He first thought of making it, not man; and He has carried out this design. (1) The creative power of God is unlimited. "The things which are impossible with men," &c. (2) Power connected with malevolence is a fearful combination, but how changed the aspect of power when the hand and arm of love. What benevolence is here. "Behold what manner of love," &c. This proves—(1) That God is faultless concerning the entrance of evil. (2) That He has no complacency in the evil of men. (3) That he has no pleasure in the death either of holiness or joy. (4) That He delights in mercy. 4. There is but one provision. If men could have restored themselves or each other, God would not have made provision. As you cannot respire by the light, nor see by the air, but *vice versa*, so you cannot be regenerated by intellectual or social education.

II. MEN ARE, THROUGH THE DIVINE PROVISION, ACTUALLY REGENERATED INTO THE IMAGE OF GOD. 1. Its sphere. (1) Not the body, although regeneration does effect salutary changes here. Where vice has reigned, regeneration arrests disease and restores health. Where passions have been dominant, the countenance is changed. It also affects temporal circumstances by improving habits. (2) The soul is its true seat, and the change consists in the leading forth Godwards of all its powers, and the awakening of all its susceptibilities. (a) A renewed man thinks, and his knowledge is of God and Christ. (b) He feels, and his affections are led away from the unlawful and are fixed on the good. (c) His conscience is rectified and made sensitive, and His will and actions are brought under its control. (d) Over the world he is a conqueror. (e) He is made like Christ, and through Christ like God.

2. Its nature. (1) It is radical and general. It penetrates to the core of the soul,

and spreads itself over the entire surface. The likeness of a statue to its subject is merely on the face of the marble; as you get below you reach the unlike. (2) Its perfection is a work of time. A man is born again so soon as he believes in Christ; but into the likeness of God he grows up. Conclusion: Such changes are effected, and cannot be questioned. John i. 13, James i. 13, and 1 Peter i. 23 hold good to-day everywhere. 1. When the provision of God's mercy for the regeneration of the race is unknown, no such change is observed to take place. 2. When regeneration does take place, the remedial dispensation of the gospel is acknowledged as the means. (*S. Martin.*) *Religious affections arise from spiritual enlightenment*:—In order to have the love of Divine things, in the exercise of which religion consists, the soul must be spiritually enlightened so as to apprehend them. I. The Scriptures teach that GRACIOUS AFFECTIONS ARISE FROM SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING (1 John iv. 7; Phil. i. 9; Rom. x. 2; Psa. xciii. 3-4; John vi. 45; Luke xi. 52). 1. Affections which arise from external impressions on the imagination are not gracious. 2. The same is true of those which are awakened by texts of Scripture which come to the mind without carrying any instruction in them. When Christ makes the Scriptures a means of the heart burning with gracious affections, it is by opening the Scriptures to men's understandings (Luke xxiv. 32). 3. Affections that have their ground in bodily sensation, freedom of speech in prayer, aptness of thought, and the like, are not derived from spiritual instruction. Hence the affection is not gracious, unless the light in the understanding, which is its origin, be spiritual. There is, therefore, a "spiritual, supernatural understanding of Divine things that is peculiar to the saints, and which those who are not saints know nothing of" (1 Cor. ii. 14; 1 John iii. 6). II. THIS SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT CONSISTS IN "a sense of the heart of the supreme beauty and sweetness of the holiness or moral perfection of Divine things, together with all that discerning and knowledge of the things of religion that depends upon and flows from such a sense." 1. There is thus a difference between speculative knowledge and that which is experimental (Rom. ii. 20; 2 Cor. ii. 14). 2. He is led by the Spirit who is first instructed in his duty, and then powerfully inclined to comply with such Divine instruction. III. SOME CONCLUSIONS. 1. This spiritual sense will enable the soul to determine what actions are right and becoming to Christians more readily than the greatest abilities without it. 2. This sense will be distinguished from forms of enthusiasm and supposed discoveries of truth and communications other than those which the Scriptures have always contained. 3. Satan and evil spirits have power to tempt us through the imagination. We need to guard against vain imaginations. 4. We need to distinguish "between lively imaginations that spring from strong affections, and strong affections that arise from lively imaginations." What is external and natural in its origin cannot be spiritual and gracious. (*L. O. Thompson.*)

Ver. 11. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew.—Comparing the enumeration here with that in Gal. iii. 28, we mark this difference. In Galatians the abolition of all distinctions is stated in the broadest way by the selection of three typical instances: Religious prerogative, Jew and Greek; social caste, bond and free; natural sex, male and female. Here, on the other hand, the examples are chosen with special reference to the circumstances of the Colossian Church. 1. The Judaism of the Colossian heretics is met by Greek and Jew, and as it manifested itself especially in enforcing circumcision, this is further emphasized by "circumcision nor uncircumcision." 2. Their Gnosticism is met by "Barbarian, Sythian." They laid special stress on intelligence, penetration, gnosis. The apostle offers the full privileges of the gospel to barbarians even of the lowest type. In Rom. i. 14 the division "Greek and Barbarian" is almost synonymous with wise and unwise. 3. Special circumstances connected with an eminent member of the Colossian Church had directed his attention at this moment to the relation of master and slaves. Hence he cannot leave the subject without adding "bond, free." (*Bishop Lightfoot.*) *The high level*:—I. THE GOSPEL PRODUCES THE NEW MAN. 1. Before man is made anew all influences fail to produce the change. The glories of heaven never move him to praise, the riches of the earth never touch his gratitude. Like a withered tree, which receives no benefit from sunshine or shower, gracious influences made no impression. 2. But thrown into the crucible and mould of the Cross, he comes out a new man. New thoughts crowd the theatre of his mind, new emotions flower in the garden of his soul, new prospects enliven his future, and impelled by new convictions he

builds up a new character. When ignorant become learned and subjects kings, there is less change than when lions become lambs, and God's enemies His friends.

8. The new man is possible to all. You cannot make poets, painters, musicians, soldiers, statesmen of all men, but the gospel can renovate all.

II. THE GOSPEL UNITES MANKIND UNDER ONE HEAD. 1. There were distinctions. (1) The national contrast between Jew and Greek was strong. The boast of race, achievements, culture, &c., created mutual contempt. Those who gloried in Alexander and Socrates were scornfully reminded of David and Solomon. (2) The religious distinction was still sharper. (3) That between high and low was observed with rigour, there being no middle class. 2. All these distinctions must be sunk and the race come up by another way. (1) All men must humble themselves in the sight of God. The gospel does not propose to readjust these various claims, but to press regeneration on all. Paul once prided himself on his distinctions, but they vanished in view of the great question, "What must I do to be saved?" (2) The gospel leads to an exaltation which leaves the most exalted human stations behind. Stars shine brightly till the sun appears. The barbarian at the foot of the Cross is higher than Cæsar on his throne. He who embraces Christ is rich, while the millionaire who trusts in riches is poor.

III. THE GOSPEL ASSIMILATES HUMAN LIFE TO THAT OF CHRIST. 1. Christ absorbs every other condition which influences the mind. The river which flows over mountain and dale preserves its name and identity all the way to its mouth—then it is lost. So with him whose life-streams flow towards Christ, they will be absorbed in the ocean of His love. We surrender all to the claims of the Cross. 2. Christ is seen and felt in all the relations of life. Nature, duty, &c., which before were Christless, are now full of Christ. 3. As Christ is all in all and we in Him, therefore all things are ours. (*T. Davies, Ph. D.*)

Christ is all.—Christ is all:—There are two worlds, the old and the new. These are peopled by two sorts of manhood, the old man, and the new man, concerning whom see verses 9, 10.

I. WHAT THERE IS NOT IN THE NEW. When we come to be renewed after the image of Him that created us, we find an obliteration of—1. National distinctions: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew." Jesus is The Man. In the broadest sense He is neither Jew nor Gentile. Jesus furnishes us with a new patriotism, loyalty, and clanship, which we may safely indulge to the utmost. 2. Ceremonial distinctions: "There is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision." The separating rite is abolished, and the peculiar privilege of a nation born after the flesh is gone with it. 3. Social distinctions: "There is neither bond nor free." We are enabled through Divine grace to see that these distinctions are—(1) Transient. (2) Superficial. (3) Of small value. (4) Non-existent in the spiritual realm. What a blessed blending of all men in one body is brought about by our Lord Jesus! Let us all work in the direction of unity.

II. WHAT THERE IS IN THE NEW. "Christ is all and in all."

1. All our culture. In Him we emulate and excel the "Greek."

2. All our revelation. We glory in Him even as the "Jew" gloried in receiving the oracles of God.

3. All our ritual. We have no "circumcision." All Scriptural ordinances are of Him.

4. All our simplicity. 5. All our natural traditions. He is more to us than the freshest ideas which cross the mind of the "Barbarian."

6. All our unconquerableness and liberty. The "Scythian" had not such boundless independence as we find in Him. 7. All as our Master, if we be "bond." Happy servitude of which He is the head!

8. Our Magna Charta: yea, our liberty itself if we be "free." Conclusion: "Christ all and in all" furnishes a test question for us. 1. Is Christ so great with us that He is our all? 2. Is Christ so broadly and fully with us that He is all in our all? 3. Is He, then, all in our trust, our hope, our assurance, our joy, our aim, our strength, our wisdom—in a word, "all in all"? 4. If so, are we living in all for Him? 5. Are we doing all for Him, because He is all to us? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

But Christ is all in all:—Here in the text Christ is said to be all; but in what sense is Christ all? 1. Christ is all by way of eminency; all good things are eminently to be found in Him, as the sun doth virtually contain in it the light of the lesser stars. 2. Christ is all, by way of derivation; all good things are transmitted and conveyed to us through Christ; as your rich commodities, jewels, and spices come by sea, so all heavenly blessings sail to us through the red sea of Christ's blood; "through Him and to Him are all things." Christ is that spiritual pipe, through which the golden oil of mercy empties itself into the soul. Christ must needs be all, for "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead." He hath a partnership with God the Father; "all things that the Father hath are Mine;" so that there is enough in Him to scatter all our fears, to remove all our burdens,

to supply all our wants; there can be no defect in that which is infinite. It shows us the glorious fulness of Jesus Christ; "He is all in all." Christ is a panoply, a magazine and storehouse of all spiritual riches: you may go with the bee from flower to flower, and suck here and there a little sweetness, but you will never have enough till you come to Christ, for He is "all in all." Now, in particular, Christ is in all six respects: 1. Christ is all in regard of righteousness—"He is made to us righteousness." 2. Christ is all in regard of sanctification—"He is made to us sanctification." This doth tune and prepare the soul for heaven; it turns iron into gold; it makes the heart which was Satan's picture, Christ's epistle. There must be first our days of purification before our days of glorification. What a blessed work is this! A soul beautified and adorned with grace, is like the firmament bespangled with glittering stars. But whence is this? Christ is all; He is made to us sanctification; He it is that sends His Spirit into our hearts to be a refiner's fire, to burn up our dross, and make our graces sparkle like gold in the furnace; Christ ariseth upon the soul "with healing in His wings." 3. Christ is all in regard of Divine acceptance. As Joseph did present his brethren before Pharaoh, and brought them into favour with the king, so the Lord Jesus carries the name of the saints upon His breast, and presents them before His Father, so bringing them into repute and honour. Through the red glass everything appears of a red colour; through the blood of Christ we look of a sanguine complexion, ruddy and beautiful in God's eyes. 4. Christ is all in regard of Divine assistance; a Christian's strength lies in Christ. Whence is it a Christian is able to do duty, to resist temptation, but through Christ's strengthening? 5. Christ is all in regard of pacification; when conscience is in an agony, and burns as hell in the sense of God's wrath; now Christ is all, He pours the palm of His blood into these wounds, He maketh the storm a calm. Christ doth not only make peace in the court of heaven, but in the court of conscience; He not only makes peace above us, but within us. 6. Christ is all in regard of remuneration; He it is that crowns us after all our labours and sufferings. If Christ be all, it shows what a vast disproportion there is between Christ and the creature; there is as much difference as between *ens* and *nihil*; Christ is all in all, and the creature is nothing at all: "wilt thou set thine eyes on that which is not?" In all our spiritual wants we should repair to Christ as Jacob's sons did to their brother Joseph. He opened all the store-houses, and "gave to his brethren corn and provision for the way." Thus the Lord hath made Christ our Joseph; "in whom are hid all treasures." If Christ be all, see here the Christian's inventory, how rich is he that hath Christ! he hath all that may make him completely happy. Plutarch reports that the wife of Phocion being asked where her jewels were, she answered, "My husband, and his triumphs are my jewels!" so, if a Christian be asked, where are his riches, he will say, "Christ is my riches." How could a Christian sit down satisfied with Christ! "Christ is all." What though he wants other things, is not Christ enough? If a man hath sunshine, he doth not complain he wants the light of a candle. Thou hast Christ with all His perquisites and royalties! Suppose a father should deny his son furniture for his house, but should settle all his land upon him, had he any cause to complain? If God denies thee a little furniture in the world, but in the meantime settles His land upon thee, He gives thee the field wherein the pearl of price is hid, hast thou any cause to repine? A Christian that wants necessities, yet having Christ, he hath the one thing needful; "ye are complete in Him." What! complete in Christ, and not content with Christ? If Christ be all, see the deplorable condition of a Christless person; he is poor, he is worth nothing; "thou art wretched, miserable, and poor," &c. The sadness of a man that wants Christ will appear in these seven particulars. 1. He hath no justification. 2. He that wants Christ, wants the beauty of holiness; Jesus Christ is a living spring of grace; "full of grace and truth." 3. He that wants Christ, wants His freedom; "if the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed." 4. He that wants Christ, hath no ability for service. 5. He that wants Christ, hath no consolation; Christ is called "the consolation of Israel." A Christless soul is a comfortless soul. 6. He that wants Christ, hath no salvation. 1. If Christ be all, then set a high valuation upon Jesus Christ; "to you which believe, He is precious." 2. If Jesus Christ be all, then make sure of Christ; never leave trading in ordinances, till you have gotten this pearl of price. In Christ there is the accumulation of all good things. And that I may persuade all to get Christ, let me show what an enriching blessing Christ is. 1. Christ is a supreme good; put what you will in the balance with Christ, He doth infinitely outweigh. Is life sweet? Christ is better: He is the life of the soul; "His loving-kindness is better than life."

2. Christ is a sufficient good ; He who hath Christ, needs no more ; he who hath the ocean, needs not the cistern. 3. Christ is a sanctifying good, He makes every condition happy to us, He sweetens all our comforts, and sanctifies all our crosses. 4. Christ is a select, choice good. God shows more love in giving us Christ, than in giving us crowns and kingdoms. 5. Christ is such a good, as without which nothing is good, without Christ health is not good, it is fuel for lust ; riches are not good, they are golden snares ; ordinances are not good, though they are good in themselves, yet not good to us. 6. Christ is an enduring good ; other things are like the lamp, which while it shines it spends, the heavens "shall wax old like a garment." 7. Christ is a diffusive, communicative good ; He is full, not only as a vessel, but as a spring, He is willing to give Himself to us. But how shall I get a part in Christ ? 1. See your need of Christ, know that you are undone without Him. 2. Be importunate after Christ. "Lord, give me Christ, or I die !" 3. Be content to have Christ, as Christ is offered, a Prince and a Saviour. 1. Make Christ all in your understanding, be ambitious to know nothing but Christ. What is it to have knowledge in physic—to be able with Esculapius and Galen to discourse of the causes and symptoms of a disease, and what is proper to apply, and in the meantime to be ignorant of the healing under Christ's wings ? What is it to have knowledge in astronomy—to discourse of the stars and planets, and to be ignorant of Christ, that bright morning-star which leads to heaven ? We cannot know God but through Christ. 2. Make Christ all in your affections. Love nothing but Christ ; love is the choicest affection, it is the richest jewel the creature hath to bestow ; O if Christ be all, love Him better than all ! 3. Make Christ all in your abilities, do all in His strength, "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." When you are to resist a temptation, to mortify a corruption, do not go out in your own strength, but in the strength of Christ : "be strong in the Lord." 4. Make Christ all in your aims ; do all to His glory. 5. Make Christ all in your affiance ; trust to none but Christ for salvation ; the Papists make Christ something, but not all. 6. Make Christ all in your joy. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." When a Christian sees a deficiency in himself, he may see an all-sufficiency in his Saviour : "happy is that people whose God is the Lord !" That servant needs not want who hath his master's full purse at command : he needs not want who hath Christ, for "Christ is all and in all." (T. Watson.) *Christ is all* :—The doctrine of the text—I. ACCOUNTS FOR THE ESSENTIAL SIMILARITY OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. Innumerable are the causes of diversity—constitutional peculiarities, external circumstances, accidental associations. But amidst all these, whether men are slaves or freemen, rude or civilized, &c., the Christian principle equalizes all, as forming a common centre, a standard under which all are enlisted, the source of their felicity, the rejoicing of their hearts. Christ is all in all. 1. To those who believe in Him. 2. In all the felicities of an eternal life. II. ILLUSTRATES THE TRUE UNITY OF THE CHURCH. To produce unity uniformity has been attempted, but this is different from oneness of spirit. No visible accordance by subscribing to formularies or uniting in observances can realize unity. There will be a period when this will be realized ; but amidst all that separates, amidst all that enemies and friends have done to injure the cause, there is a real and effective unity between Christians. Bring believers of every age, class, name together, and one chord will vibrate in every heart, one topic be the theme of every song, one principle the life of all. They are all in Christ and therefore one : one in relationship, sympathy, joy, sorrow, hope. III. PROVES THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION. This is the religion of man ; adapted to him wherever you find him, whether scorched by Indian suns or blanched by northern snows. All men are lost ; Christianity comes to save all men. The religion of Christ, unlike any other, has nothing local or restrictive. There are no circumstantial in it to narrow its range. This universality—1. Is founded on the condition of man in all circumstances. 2. Is proved by its actual results wherever received. 3. Is provided for by the security of the everlasting covenant. 4. Is guaranteed to the Church by the presence of Christ. IV. CONSTITUTES THE GREAT SUBJECT OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, AND ASSIGNS THE TRUE CAUSE OF ITS EFFICIENCY. "I if I be lifted up," &c. V. EXHIBITS AN ADEQUATE SOURCE OF CONSOLATION AND SUPPORT IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH AND ETERNITY. 1. It secures a victory over the king of terrors. 2. It ensures an abundant entrance into heaven. (J. Fletcher, D.D.) *Christ is all* :—These three words are the essence of Christianity. If our hearts really go along with them it is well. If not we have much to learn. Christ is all. I. IN ALL THE COUNSELS

OF GOD CONCERNING MAN. 1. There was a time when this earth had no being, where was Christ then? (John i. 1; Phil. ii. 6; John xvii. 5, 24; Prov. vii. 23). 2. There came a time when this earth was created in its present order. Where was Christ then? (John i. 3; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 10; Prov. viii. 27-30). 3. There came a day when sin entered the world. Where was Christ then? (Gen. iii. 15). 4. There came a time when the world seemed buried in ignorance of God. For 4,000 years the nations of the earth appeared to have clean forgotten the God that made them (1 Cor. i. 21). What did Christ do then? Left His eternal glory and came down to provide a salvation. 5. There is a time coming when sin shall be cast out from this world (Rom. viii. 22; Acts iii. 21; 2 Pet. iii. 13; Isa. xi. 9). Where shall Christ be then? And what shall He do? (Matt. xxiv. 30; Rev. xi. 15; Psa. ii. 8; Phil. ii. 10-11; Dan. vii. 14). 6. There is a day coming when all men shall be judged. Where will Christ be then? (John v. 22; Matt. xxv. 32; 2 Cor. v. 10). Now, if any think little of Christ, he is very unlike God. He is of one mind and God of another. In all the eternal counsels of God the Father, in creation, redemption, restitution, and judgment Christ is all (John v. 23). II. IN THE INSPIRED BOOKS WHICH MAKE UP THE BIBLE. 1. It was Christ crucified who was set forth in every Old Testament sacrifice (1 Pet. iii. 18). 2. It was Christ to whom Abel looked when he offered a better sacrifice than Cain (Heb. xi. 4). 3. It was Christ of whom Enoch prophesied in the days of abounding wickedness before the flood (Jude 15). 4. It was Christ to whom Abraham looked when he dwelt in tents in the land of promise (John viii. 56). 5. It was Christ of whom Jacob spoke to his sons, as he lay dying (Gen. xlix. 10). 6. It was Christ who was the subject of the ceremonial law. The sacrifices, altar, priesthood, &c., were emblems of Christ and His work (Gal. iii. 24). 7. It was Christ to whom God directed the attention of Israel by all the miracles of the wilderness (1 Cor. x. 4; John iii. 14). 8. It was Christ of whom the Judges were types. 9. It was Christ of whom David was a type. 10. It was Christ of whom all the prophets from Isaiah to Malachi spoke (1 Pet. i. 11). 11. It is Christ of whom the whole New Testament is full. The Gospels are Christ living among men; the Epistles are Christ explained and exalted; the Acts are Christ proclaimed. What is the Bible to you? A book of good moral precepts, or one in which "Christ is all and in all"? If not the latter you have used it to little purpose. You are like a man who studies the solar system and leaves out the sun. III. IN THE RELIGION OF ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS. Christ is all—1. In a sinner's justification before God (Eph. iii. 12; Rom. iii. 26). Wherewith shall man come before God? Shall we say we have done our duty, and bring forward prayers, morality, church-going? Which of these will stand God's searching inspection? None. We must come through Jesus. (1) His righteousness is the only robe which can cover us. (2) His name our only shibboleth at the gate of heaven. (3) His blood the only mark that can save us from destruction. 2. In a Christian's sanctification. (1) No man is holy till he is united to Christ (John xv. 5). (2) None grows in holiness except he abide in Christ (Col. ii. 6-7). 3. In a Christian's comfort in time present. A saved soul has many sorrows and trials, which were unbearable but for Christ (Phil. ii. 1). Jesus is a brother born for adversity (Heb. iv. 15). We talk of the preciousness of sympathy, but there is none like that of Christ (Psa. xciv. 19; cxiv. 5). In Him alone there is no failure. Rich men are disappointed in their wealth, learned men in their books, husbands in their wives, &c., statesmen in their places; but none was ever disappointed in Christ. 4. In a Christian's hopes for time to come. He has a good hope, the worldly man has none. It is a blessed hope (Titus ii. 13; Psa. lxxii. 5). IV. IN HEAVEN. 1. Like the altar in Solomon's temple Christ will be the grand object in heaven (Rev. v. 6; xxi. 23). 2. His praise will be our eternal song (Rev. v. 12-13). 3. His service will be our one occupation (Rev. vii. 15). 4. His presence will be our one everlasting enjoyment (Rev. xxii. 4; Psa. xvii. 15). All this being the case, then Christ ought to be all in all. V. IN THE VISIBLE CHURCH. Splendid buildings, gorgeous ceremonies, troops of ordained men are nothing in the sight of God if Christ be not magnified. VI. IN THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. Its one work is to lift up Christ. Conclusion: Learn—1. The utter uselessness of a Christless religion. 2. The enormous folly of joining anything with Christ in the matter of salvation. 3. If you want to be saved to apply direct to Christ. 4. If you be Christians deal with Him as if you really believed this; trust Him far more than you have ever done. (*Bishop Ryle.*) *Christ is all:—I. BY WHOM THIS TRUTH IS RECOGNIZED.* 1. There are many to whom Christ is nothing; He scarcely enters into their thoughts. 2. There are others to whom Christ is something but

not much. They are anxious to save themselves, and use the merits of Christ as a sort of makeweight to their own slight deficiencies. 3. Others think Him to be much but not all, and so want to feel more, repent more, before they accept Him. 4. Some regard Christ as all in some things, in justification, *e.g.*, but not sanctification, whereas it is said that He is "made unto us wisdom," &c. There is no point between the gates of hell and the gates of heaven where a believer has to say, Christ fails me here and I must rely on my own endeavours. 5. This is a truth which every believer recognizes, and on which the Church, in spite of its divisions, is one. The man who cannot say this is no Christian, the man who can is. II. WHAT THIS TRUTH INCLUDES. 1. Christ is all by way of (1) National distinction. As a man I may rejoice that I am an Englishman, but not with the same joy as that I am a Christian. A Christian foreigner is more allied to me than a godless Briton. (2) Subject for glorying. The Greek said, "We are a nation of heroes, remember Sparta"; but when he joined the Church he boasted of a nobler victory through the Cross. So the Jew laid aside his national traditions; the Scythian spoke the language of Canaan as correctly as his Greek brother; the slave was no longer a slave when he breathed the air of a Christian Church. (3) Sinful national customs. Each asked no more, What did my ancestors do? but what does Christ bid me do? 2. Christ is all to us—(1) Godwards. We need a Mediator; Christ is that. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (2) Before our enemies. Satan, and the world with all its vicissitudes. (3) Within ourselves. If we look into our inner nature we see all manner of deficiencies; but when we see Christ there we know that He will destroy the works of the devil and perfect that which He has begun in us. 3. Christ is all. (1) For us. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "He made Him to be sin for us," &c. (2) To us. We have no other hope but in His righteousness. (3) In us. Whatever there is in us that is not of Christ will have to come out. Christ on the cross saved us by becoming Christ in the heart. 4. Shift the kaleidoscope; Christ is all. (1) The channel of all. All the love and mercy of God flow through Him. Other conduits are dry, but this is always full. (2) The pledge of all. "He that spared not His own son," &c. (3) The sum of all. When we travel we need only to take money which answereth all things. So Christ has the substance of all good. 5. Christ is all (1) we desire; (2) can conceive. III. WHAT THIS TRUTH INVOLVES. 1. The excellence of Christ. Of whom else could this be said? There are many good things in this world, but nothing that is good for everything. Some plants may be good medicine but not good cordial; but the plant of renown is good every way. Good clothing is not able to stay your hunger, but Christ is the bread of heaven and the best robe. 2. The safety and blessedness of the believer. Christ is all that he will as well as does want; but we are devoid of all when destitute of Christ. 3. A rebuke for the doubts of many seekers. "I have not this or that," but Christ has it if it be good for anything. 4. A rebuke for the coldness of saints. If Christ be all, how is it we prize and love Him so little? 5. A means of measuring young converts. We ought not to expect them to be philosophers or divines. Is Christ all in all to them? If so, welcome them. 6. A measure for ministers. Is Christ all in their preaching? 7. A help to estimate our devotions. IV. WHAT THIS TRUTH REQUIRES—the exhibition of a Christ-like life. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ all in all*:—Christianity is simply Christ. Without His person there is nothing left that is distinctively Christian. Other religions may be separated from their founders; and we may take any feature away without destroying its force. But separate any truth of Christianity from Christ and it has lost its peculiar character. Christ is the all in all—I. OF CHRISTIAN MORALITY. Even sceptics admit the extraordinary reformatory effect of Christianity. This is not due to any new truth of morals Christ gave to the world. His system is original in the new form and power given to truth. It would be absurd to deny the claim of an inventor to originality, simply because the materials of his machine were known before. But the peculiar power which has made Christian morality so effective is the living person of Jesus. Embodied in Him the truth is seen and felt and loved as never before. We first love Him and then we love the purity, charity, &c., which make Him "the altogether lovely," and enthusiasm for these follows. When the sun has set, the mountains, plains, and rivers may be still visible, but their glory has gone. When the person of Jesus is removed from His moral system, its precepts and maxims are there still, but their charm has gone. II. OF CHRISTIAN PHILANTHROPY. There is no such self-sacrifice and devotion as in Christianity. Witness the history of missionary and

charitable effort. Its secret inspiration is "The love of Christ constraineth us," There are other motives, and Christians feel them as much as non-Christians—the beauty of self-sacrifice, the fine sentiment of humanity, the grandeur of heroic effort. But the grand inspiration is as Paul puts it. A child will work wonders under the approving eye of father or mother. A soldier will fight marvellously under the eye of his captain. A Highland chief fell; and his clan thinking him slain began to waver, but raising himself on his elbow he called, "My children, I am not dead, I am looking at you." That turned defeat into victory. At the battle of Ivry Henry IV. said, "My children, when you lose sight of your colours rally to my white plume. You will always find it in the way to glory." So when every other motive fails; when the flags of humanity, sentiment, duty have gone down, the Christian rallies round the Captain of his salvation. III. OF CHRISTIAN CONSOLATION. It is not in any new philosophy of suffering, or philosophical way of looking at it, that the Christian finds that peace which the world knows not nor can give. Take to an afflicted Christian even Paul's "These light afflictions," &c., and you elicit no peculiar response. But speak to him of the personal love and sympathy of Jesus; say, "In all thy affliction He is afflicted"; point out to him in the dark valley he is treading the bloody foot-prints of his Redeemer; show him in the furnace "one like unto the Son of Man," and mark the different effect. IV. OF THE CHRISTIAN PLAN OF SALVATION. Conclusion; Learn—1. The folly of that cant about retaining all that is essential in Christianity without the person of Christ. 2. That to be a Christian is to be in personal communion with Christ. (*S. P. Sprecher, D.D.*) *Christ all in all*:—I. FOR THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE CHURCH. He is the Lord our Righteousness. "He hath made Him to be sin for us," &c. II. IN A SINNER'S ACCEPTANCE BEFORE GOD. "No man cometh to the Father but by Me." III. FOR THE SANCTIFICATION OF BELIEVERS. "Made unto us . . . sanctification." IV. FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF A SAINT'S WEAKNESS. "Present help in time of trouble." "My grace is sufficient for thee." V. FOR THE TRANQUILITY OF THE CHRISTIAN'S SOUL. "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "The peace of God which passeth all understanding," &c. VI. IN THE GRACIOUS REWARDS OFFERED TO HIS DISCIPLES. "Father, I will that . . . they be with Me." Inferences: 1. How great the difference between Christ as our portion, and all those sources of comfort which earth can afford. The one is "the fountain of living waters," the other "broken cisterns." All are yours if ye are Christ's. 2. The believer should glory in none but Him. 3. How deplorable the condition of those who have no interest in Him. 4. Let us make Him all in all to ourselves. (1) In our understandings; (2) affections; (3) ability; (4) every aim and action. (*R. P. Buddicom, M.A.*) *The Lord Jesus Christ all in all*:—I. There are some persons who have no essentials in their creed, and others no circumstantial. (1) Some seem perfectly regardless of doctrinal principles; it is nothing to them whether they address the Supreme Being as "Jehovah, Jove and Lord," whether Christ is Divine or merely human, and whether His sacrifice is an atonement or an example. (2) Others regard everything as equally important, and lay as much stress upon discipline as on doctrine, on the mode of administering an ordinance as upon the ordinance itself, and plead as much for "mint, anise," &c., as for the weightier matters of the law. (3) While one of these parties has no room for faith, the other has no room for charity. Both extremes are to be avoided. 2. Surely there are differences between things, between speculative opinion and a practical truth, the ornament of a bridge and the key-stone of an arch, a man maimed and a man dead. The Scriptures, therefore, diminish the value of inferior things in religion, and magnify the importance of the superior ones. Hence, it everywhere shows that Christ is all in all. This is so—I. IN THE OPERATIONS OF DIVINE GRACE. 1. Redemption. "Ye are bought with a price," and this price is "the precious blood of Christ." 2. Justification. "By Him all that believe are justified from all things." Men talk of making their peace with God. That is made "by the blood of Christ's cross"; all that is required is to accept it. 3. Renovation. We are "new creatures in Christ Jesus." 4. Perseverance. The righteous hold on their way not by their own resolutions and efforts, but because He is able to save to the uttermost. We are "more than conquerors through Him." 5. Glorification. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear," &c. II. IN THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE. The Bible is a revelation of Christ, and is therefore called "the Word of Christ." Christ is all in all. 1. In the historical part. In Adam you see him as the head and representative of his people; in Noah, as the restorer of the new world; in Isaac, as a burnt offering; in Joseph, as humbled and

exalted, and the saviour of his father's house; in Aaron, as a high priest; in Moses, as a lawgiver; in Joshua, as the leader and commander of the people; in Solomon, as the Prince of Peace; in Jonah, rising again the third day. 2. In the Levitical part, which was a shadow of which He is the body. Everything in this dispensation reminds us of Christ: the smitten rock, of His refreshment; the manna, of the Bread of Life; the mercy seat, of His propitiation; the pass-over, of His blood sprinkled on the conscience securing us from the avenger; the sacrifices, of His atonement. 3. In the prophetic part. "To Him gave all the prophets witness." "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." 4. The promissory part. The promises are only "exceeding great and precious," as they are "Yea and Amen in Him." 5. The evangelical part. 6. The epistolary part.

III. IN THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY. 1. In its institution. When He ascended on high He gave gifts to men, and gave some apostles, &c., "for the work of the ministry." 2. In its commission. "Go ye into all the world." 3. In its qualification. He only can make men "able ministers of the New Testament." 4. In its successes. He confirms the word by signs following. 5. In its theme. "God forbid that I should glory," &c. All other themes radiate from or converge in Him—God, providence, heaven. IV. IN THE ESTIMATION OF HIS PEOPLE. 1. This applies to Abraham, who "rejoiced to see his day"; to Moses, who esteemed His "reproach greater riches than the treasures of Egypt"; to Job, who knew that his Redeemer lived; to David, to whom He was "fairer than the children of men"; to the Church, in whose sight He is "altogether lovely"; to Simeon, who saw in Him God's salvation; to Paul, who esteemed all things loss for the excellency of His knowledge; to the first Christians, who exclaimed, "Whom not having seen we love"; to the noble army of martyrs, who said, "We cannot dispute for Him, but we can burn for Him." 2. This applies to His own people now, for He is all in all in their thoughts, desires, experience, actions. (*W. Jay.*) *Christ is a Christian's all.*—1. By a Christian is meant: (1) Negatively: not those who have nothing more to declare than their baptism and professions (Rev. iii. 1). We account them monsters who have faces of men and limbs of beasts, and they are religious monsters who have the faces of Christians and the lives of pagans. (2) Positively: those who are Israelites indeed. 2. To such Christ is all (1 Cor. i. 30). We are foolish, but Christ is our "wisdom"; we are guilty, but He is our "righteousness"; we are polluted, but He is our "sanctification"; we are lost and undone, but He is our "redemption"; we are empty, He is a full fountain; we are necessitous and indigent, in Him dwells all fulness of everything (Col. i. 19; ii. 3, 9, 10). The rich merchant was none the poorer for parting with all for the pearl of great price (Matt. iii. 45-46). 3. When ever so much is said, there cannot be a greater word than "all." The Greeks deemed it an excellency to speak much in few words; "an ocean of matter in a drop of words." The apostle gives us here gold in the wedge, which we are to beat out. The two names given by the ancient philosophers to God were "The Being," and "The All." These the apostle gives to Christ. Physicians speak of an universal medicine, but Jesus is a true panacea. There are thousands of cases in which no other can help, but not one in which Christ cannot help fully.

I. WHEREIN CHRIST IS ALL. 1. To all Christians, to free them from whatever might hinder their salvation. (1) Sin. This he does (a) by expiating its guilt, and so removing the wrath of God (Eph. v. 6; Rom. viii. 1). This neither legal sacrifices nor good works could do; but Christ not only frees us from condemnation but confers the adoption of children (Rom. viii. 14-16). (b) By cleansing its pollution (Zech. xiii. 1), and restoring us to purity (Isa. i. 18). (c) By conquering its tyranny, and reigning Himself where it once held sway. (d) By redeeming us from its bondage, and giving us the glorious liberty of the children of God. (2) The oppositions of Satan, his wiles and subtleties. These are of great importance, as our first parents knew; and we, though redeemed, are not exempt from them (2 Cor. xi. 3). But Christ hath spoiled him (Col. ii. 15), and led captivity captive (Eph. iv. 8). Christ is all, and in that we may rely for resisting power. (3) The disturbances, allurements, discouragements, smiles and frowns of a profane world. Be of good cheer, Christ hath overcome it: live by faith in Him who is your all, and you will overcome. 2. To fill the souls of believers with all that good which may capacitate them for happiness. The experience of grace is essential for the enjoyment of glory. Heaven must be brought down into our souls, before we can ascend thither (Col. i. 12; Eph. v. 5). We are by nature unmeet, and could we enter heaven in a state of nature, it would not be heaven for us (Rom. viii. 6, 7), because all delight arises from the suitableness of object to

subject. Now Christ is all in this respect (John i. 16, x. 10; Eph. v. 8, ii. 5-10). 3. To fill all ordinances with power. These are means of salvation, and through His concurrence effectual means. Yet they are but empty pipes unless Christ is pleased to fill them, who "fillet all in all" (Eph. i. 23). It is He who baptizes with the Holy Ghost; and in the preaching of the Word speaks to the heart (Luke xxiv. 32). While the disciples fished alone they caught nothing; but when Christ came they caught multitudes (John xxi. 3-6). 4. To fill every condition with comfort. The best condition is not good without Him, nor the worst bad with Him (Psa. lxxxiv. 10; lxxiii. 25; lxxiii. 3). The sense of Christ's love enabled Paul to overcome all adversaries (Rom. viii. 38, 39). 5. To furnish us with strength to persevere. The way to heaven is no smooth and easy way (Matt. vii. 14; Acts xiv. 22); and inasmuch as the crown is reserved for the head of perseverance (Rev. ii. 10), we require a strength greater than our own (Rom. vii. 24). In ourselves we can do nothing (John xv. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 5), but in Him who is our all, we can do all things (Phil. iv. 13). Thus the Christian is complete in Christ (Col. ii. 10).

II. How is CHRIST OUR ALL? 1. Negatively: not so as to excuse us from all endeavours. Christ's sufficiency does not excuse, but engage our industry (Phil. ii. 12-13). It is God who does all; therefore, do all you can. 2. Positively: (1) By way of impetration, inasmuch as our salvation was His purchase. Whence is it that they who have brought themselves under the deserts of hell, may have the hopes, means, and first fruits of heaven? All are the price of Christ's blood (Eph. v. 25-27; Acts xx. 28; John xv. 13). It was by His own blood that He entered heaven, and opened the door for all who are incorporated into Him (Heb. ix. 12; x. 19, 20). (2) By way of application, inasmuch as He brings home the blessings He has purchased into the soul of His people. He has not only purchased salvation for them, but them for it: not only the possibility of heaven, but the proprietorship, and this is necessary to every comfort. What are the treasures of the Indies to him who only hears of them? Mere stories. What are the glories of heaven to him deprived of the enjoyment of them? Mere torments. But we enjoy all in Christ. What the root is to the tree, the vine to the branches, the head to the body, all this is Christ to believers (Col. ii. 7; John xv. 1, 5; Eph. i. 22-23), viz., not only a treasury of all good, but a fountain continually streaming down blessings into our souls.

III. WHAT ADVANTAGE IS IT TO HAVE OUR ALL IN CHRIST. 1. Because our salvation can be in no hands so safe as Christ's. Had it been in ours, alas for us; but in His who is able to save to the utmost it is secure. Hence, as we can have no other Saviour beside Him, we cannot have any other like Him (Acts iv. 12). 2. Because our salvation could have been in no way so comfortable. As God has the glory of every attribute, so Christians have the comfort of every attribute in this way of salvation. Application: 1. If Christ be all, then there is no ground for despondency, either from your own deficiencies or those of creature helps. You need nothing since Christ is your all. (1) You have the sum of all. Though you have not estates, friends, worldly comforts, you have Christ, who more than makes up for the want of them. The cistern may well be dispensed with by him who lives at the fountain; and the light of a candle by him who enjoys the sun (2 Cor. vi. 10). (2) You have the pledge of all (Rom. viii. 32). 2. What cause have we to be thankful for Christ (Gen. xxii. 10; Eph. i. 3). 3. How great is their folly and misery who keep at a distance from Christ (John v. 40; Eph. ii. 12). 4. That Christ may be all in all to you. (1) Labour to get your judgments settled in the belief that all things in the world are nothing without Christ. (2) Cast out all inmates which, because they are unmeet companions for Christ, may hinder His taking possession of your souls. The ark and Dagon could not stand together in the same room (Amos iii. 3). (3) Accept Christ on His own terms. (4) Measure all things by their reference to Christ. (5) Be serious in resolving this great question—Whether Christ who is all to sincere Christians is all to you. (a) Are you conformable unto Christ (Rom. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 17; 2 Cor. v. 17). (b) Are you all to Him in your affections (Psa. lxxiii. 3; lxxiii. 5; Heb. xi. 26; Matt. x. 37); in your acknowledgements (1 Cor. xv. 10; Eph. v. 20); in your contentment and satisfaction (Heb. iii. 17-18); in your dependencies and expectations; in your designs and aims (Phil. i. 20). (*W. Whitaker, A.M.*) *Christ everything to the Christian*:—The happiness we derive from creatures is like a beggar's garment; it is made up of pieces and patches, and is worth very little after all. But the blessedness we derive from the Saviour is simple and complete. In Him all fulness dwells. He is coeval with every period. He is answerable to every condition. He is a Physician to heal, a

Counsellor to advise, a King to govern, a Friend to sympathise, a Father to provide. He is a Foundation to sustain, a Root to enliven, a Fountain to refresh. He is the Shadow from the heat, the Bread of Life, the Morning Star, the Sun of Righteousness—all and in all. No creature can be a substitute for Him, but He can supply the place of every creature. (*W. Jay.*) *Christ all in all in death:*—Foster Rutherford when dying said, “He has indeed been a precious Christ to me; and now I feel Him to be my rock, my strength, my rest, my hope, my joy, my all in all.” Robert Newton said, “Christ Jesus the Saviour of sinners and life of the dead. I am going, going, going, to glory! Farewell, sin! farewell, death! Praise the Lord!”

Vers. 12–15. **Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved.**—*The essentials of a Christian character:*—The Christian character is distinguished by—I. A SPECIAL DESIGNATION, signifying—1. Divine choice—“Elect.” 2. Personal purity—“Holy.” The evidence and practical result of election (Eph. i. 4). 3. Divine affection—“Beloved.” Each of these epithets has the force of a motive. II. A HEARTFELT SYMPATHY. Arising from—1. A spirit of tender mercy—“Bowels of mercy”—a phrase expressing the effect on the body of strong emotions of pity. A genuine pity is not only visible on the countenance, and uttered by the lips, but is felt in the inmost heart, and prompts to generous actions. 2. A spirit of kindness. III. A GENUINE HUMILITY. 1. This is not undue self-depreciation, but a proper estimate of self. 2. It proceeds from exalted views of God. 3. It is fruitful, as that branch in the garden which is most heavily laden with fruit is nearest the ground. IV. A GENTLE AND PATIENT SPIRIT. 1. “Meekness” (Judges viii. 2), which is slow to take and scorns to give offence. 2. “Longsuffering,” meekness continued, though subjected to the strongest provocations. V. A PRACTICAL MANIFESTATION OF A SPIRIT OF MUTUAL FORBEARANCE AND FORGIVENESS. 1. This is to be exercised universally—“Any.” Quarrel would be better rendered complaint. It takes two to make a quarrel; the Christian should never be one. 2. It is enforced by the highest example—“Even as Christ.” The heart that is not moved by this is incorrigible. Lessons—1. The unity of Christian character is made up of many separate essential graces. 2. The condition of things in this world affords ample scope for the exercise of every Christian grace. 3. To forgive is at once the most difficult and most Christlike. (*W. Barlow.*) *The costume of a saint:*—1. Clothing is the external badge of individuality. Without clothing, or with an absolute uniformity of clothing, it would scarcely be possible for one man to be known from another. And much of the character comes out in one’s dress. The vain, the proud, the miserly, the profligate, the orderly, or the reckless man, may often be quickly distinguished by his dress. So a man’s disposition is the dress of his soul. You know the tone of spirit which distinguishes him from another, and you are struck with it as soon as you are in his company. The word “habit” may be applied either to the material or to the immaterial parts and adjuncts of the human being, and it is a connecting link between the dress of the body and the disposition of the soul. 2. There are distinctive costumes peculiar to certain classes or communities. There are national costumes, by which an Englishman is known from a Turk, a German from a Spaniard, &c. There are costumes of the sexes, and of various ages. There are costumes of professions and trades, as the soldier’s, the sailor’s, the king’s, the judge’s, &c. Thus also there are characteristic phases of mind which belong to special classes. 3. Let us apply these things to Christians. With due allowance for individual idiosyncrasies, there is yet a certain tone and temper of mind which should belong to every child of God. It should be to him as a suit of clothes, at once significant of his character and citizenship, and also contributing to his comfort and comeliness. The parts of this suit are here carefully enumerated, and you will see how admirably they correspond with one another. I. THE COSTUME OF A SAINT AS HERE DESCRIBED. 1. “Bowels of mercies,” a yearning and tender sympathy with the sorrowful and afflicted: as opposed to carelessness or cruel delight in their griefs. 2. “Kindness,” active goodwill, not merely ready to sympathize with suffering, but in every way to do good to others. It is simple, pure, brotherly, and disinterested. 3. “Humbleness of mind” has two phases. It is a low estimate of ourselves, and it leads us highly to estimate others in comparison with ourselves. 4. “Meekness” is a spirit of patience and self-control under reproach, misrepresentation, and unkind treatment by others. 5. “Long-suffering” elongates meekness, and stretches it out, if unkindness from others should be systematic and

long continued. 6. "Forbearing one another," in case of little hitches and provocations. 7. "Forgiving one another," in case of actual injury to character or estate. 8. "Over all these put on charity." This is like a girdle round the loins, or like an easy-fitting toga, or cloak, which is at once elegant and useful. It completes our spiritual dress, and adds a general grace to the entire outfit. Further, all this is not to be merely "put on." There is a radical cause which should produce it all. This lies deep in the heart; and without it, the rest would be a cloak of hypocrisy. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." It is the peace of God in Christ Jesus. Where this is in the heart, the outward clothing will have an inward root. It will be like the natural and vital clothing of the autumn trees, and not like the artificial attire of the human body: the outward and the inward will correspond. We shall put on externally, by putting out or developing from within, all the graces here sketched. II. THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THIS ATTIRE. 1. Consider your position as God's elect—holy and beloved. God's election of you has exemplified in Him all these graces, therefore it is right that you should exhibit them as well. Besides, you are called to be like Him, and such as He can admire; therefore, conform to His character in these particulars. 2. Consider especially His grace in forgiving your sins. How great that boon! It is a small thing to ask you to do the same for others. 3. Your vocation as a Christian Church demands the exercise of these virtues. You are called to be one compact and corporate body in the Lord. There should be no schism, no lack of mutual sympathy and interest among you. On the contrary, there should be the utmost gentleness, kindness, patience, &c. This is the dress which God requires you to wear. Do you possess it? Seek it more fully now: renew it continually, and so walk, worthy of the high vocation wherewith ye are called, and be thankful. (T. G. Horton.) *The garments of the renewed soul*:—Because the new nature has been assumed, therefore array your souls in vesture corresponding; because Christ is all in all clothe yourselves with all brotherly graces corresponding to that unity into which Christians are brought by their common possession of Christ. I. AN ENUMERATION OF THE FAIR GARMENTS OF THE NEW MAN. 1. Let us go over the wardrobe of the consecrated soul. (1) A heart of compassion; the rendering by conventional propriety of a phrase it regards as coarse, simply because Jews choose one part of the body and we another as the supposed seat of the emotions. Is it not beautiful that the series should begin with pity? What every man needs, and most often, and yet what is so difficult to achieve in the face of obstructions of occupation, selfishness, and custom. Therefore we have to make conscious efforts to "put" it "on." Without it no help will be of much use to the receiver, nor any to the giver. Aid flung to a man as a bone to a dog usually gets as much gratitude as it deserves. But if we make another's sorrows ours, that teaches us tact and gentleness. But beware of letting the emotion be excited, and then not allowing it to act. (2) Kindness. A wider benignity, with which some are so dowered that they come like the sunshine. But all can cultivate it. When we come out of the secret place of the Most High, we shall bear some reflection of Him whose "tender mercies are over all His works." This is the opposite of that worldly wisdom which prides itself on its knowledge of men and is suspicious of everybody. It is the most powerful solvent of ill-will and indifference. (3) Humility. That seems to bring a virtue occupied with self into the middle of a series referring exclusively to others. But the following graces have reference to our demeanour under slights and injuries, and humility constitutes the foundation for the right bearing of these. This is not necessarily blindness to our strong points. Milton would be none the less humble though he was sure that his work was better than that of Sternhold and Hopkins. Any unchristian fire of pride which the devil's breath may blow up should be damped by "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" and "Who is pure before God's judgment-seat?" (4) The distinction between meekness and long-suffering is slight. The former is the temper which accepts God's dealings, or evil inflicted by men without resistance, and its opposite is rudeness or harshness; the latter the long holding out before giving way to a temptation to an action or passion, and its opposite is swift resentment. While long-suffering does not get angry soon, meekness does not get angry at all. (5) Forbearing and forgiving are meekness and long-suffering in exercise. A man may forbear and bite his lips till the blood come rather than speak unkindly, but forgiveness is an entire wiping of enmity and irritation out of the heart. 2. Is this a type of character that the world admires? Is it not uncommonly like what most people call "a poor spiritless creature"? It was a new man emphatically, for the world had never seen anything like it; and it is a new man still. It may be true

that Christianity has added no new virtue to those prescribed by conscience, but it has altered the perspective of the whole, and created a type of excellence in which the gentler virtues predominate, and the novelty of which is proved by the reluctance of men to recognize it. By its side worldly "heroic virtues" are vulgar and glaring, like some daub of a soldier on a sign-board by the side of Angelico's white-robed visions. Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. 3. The great pattern and motive of forgiveness. "As Christ has forgiven us." (1) The R. V. adopts the reading of "the Lord" which recalls the parable about the servant who had been forgiven by his "Lord," and yet squeezed the last farthing out of his fellow-servant. The parallel passage in the Ephesians speaks of "God for Christ's sake forgiving us." Observe the interchange of Divine office and attributes. What notion of Christ's Person underlies it? (2) Christ's forgiveness is not simply revealed that trembling hearts may be made calm. A heart softened by pardon will be a heart apt to pardon. (3) This new pattern and motive make the novelty and difference of Christian morality. "As I have loved you" makes "Love one another" a new commandment. Obedience to one we love is delightful. (4) We have each to choose what shall be the pattern for us. The world takes Cæsar, the Christian takes Christ. (5) This is not inconsistent with the Lord's prayer, which teaches us that our forgiveness is the condition of God's. Without the first we shall not be conscious of the second. II. THE GIRDLE WHICH KEEPS THE GARMENTS IN THEIR PLACES. 1. "Above all" is equivalent to "over." The silken sash of love will brace all the rest into a unity. "Perfectness" does not mean that it is the perfect principle of union, but is a collective expression for the various graces which together make up perfection. Love knits into a harmonious whole virtues which would otherwise be fragmentary and incomplete. 2. We can conceive of the dispositions named as existing in some fashion without love, but let love come into the heart and knit a man to the poor creature whom he had only pitied before, or to the enemy whom he had only been able to forgive with an effort, and it lifts these into a nobler life. 3. Perhaps there is the deeper truth that love produces all these graces. The virtues are best cultivated by cultivating it. Paul elsewhere calls love the fulfilling of the law even as his Master had taught him that all the duties were summed up in love to God and love to man. (4. *Maclaren, D.D.*) *The elect and their duties*.—I. THE QUALITIES OF THE ELECT OF GOD. 1. They are chosen and separated from the world to serve God according to the discipline of the gospel (Eph. i. 4). It is this that Moses represented to ancient Israel the type of the new (Deut. xxvi. 18). They who boast of being elected but lead a godless life mock God and man. Election is ever accompanied by conversion and sanctification. No one knows of his election but by its effects. 2. They are holy—all of them. Paul is not of Rome's opinion that none are saints but the canonized. In the Creed, the Church, which is the body of all true Christians, is called holy, and the communion of saints. No man can be a Christian who is not a saint (Rom. viii. 9). This quality obliges us to the following virtues which are parts of holiness (Lev. xi. 44; xx. 26). 3. Beloved of God. This obliges us to love God, the effect of which is—(1) Obedience, which includes every virtue (John xiv. 15). (2) Transformation into the thing loved; so that God being charity, justice, and holiness, if we love Him, we shall put these on. II. THE GRACES OF THE ELECT. 1. Mercy is a tenderness which causes us to commiserate the miseries of others as if we took part in them ourselves. "Bowels of mercies" is a Hebrew expression signifying that the real virtue is one which moves the heart, and is not merely a face expression. The gospel has no affinity with stoicism, which holds compassion to be an infirmity (Luke vi. 36; 1 Pet. iii. 8; Rom. xiii. 15), and is exemplified in Christ (Heb. v. 2; iv. 15). 2. Kindness is a goodness of nature that takes pleasure in obliging and avoids injuring. We are obliged to this by our stewardship of God's manifold grace. 3. Humility is the mother of patience and the nurse of charity. It is a difficult virtue to proud man, and its difficulty arises out of our ignorance of ourselves and our relation to God. Could we know this pride would be impossible. 4. Meekness is gentleness, the most amiable ornament of life, which receives every one with an open heart and pleasing countenance, takes things in good part, and is proof against self-injurious irritations. 5. Patience is the sister of gentleness, and undergoes affronts under which gentleness might break down. 6. For the better clearing of these Paul adds—(1) Forbearance (Matt. xii. 20). (2) Forgiveness (Matt. xviii. 35). III. THE EXEMPLAR OF THE ELECT (Eph. iv. 32). What stronger reason could he urge? Christ being the image to which we ought to be conformed, how shall we be His living portraits if we have not the goodness He has shown to

us? (Matt. xviii. 32-33). We were His enemies, and His treatment of us must be our inspiration and model in our treatment of our enemies. (*J. Daillé.*) *Gentle Christians*:—A true Christian is like the lily which stings no one, and yet he lives among those who are full of sharpness. He aims to please, and not to provoke, and yet he lives among those whose existence is a standing menace. The thorn tears and lacerates: it is all armed from its root to its topmost branch, defying all comers. But therestands the lily, smiling, not defying; charming, and not harming. Such is the real Christian, holy, harmless, full of love and gentleness and tenderness. Therein lieth his excellence. Who would not stop and turn aside to see a lily among thorns, and think he reads a promise from his God to comfort him amid distress? Such is a true Christian: he is a consolation in his family, a comfort in his neighbourhood, an ornament to his profession, and a benediction to his age. He is all tenderness and gentleness, and yet it may be he lives among the envious, the malicious, and the profane, a lily among thorns. The thorn saith, "Keep away; no one shall touch me with impunity." The lily cries, "I come to you, I shed my soul abroad to please you."

The power of kindness:—A Christian lady, in the course of visitation, was told of a very depraved woman, who was ruining herself by debauchery, but was of so violent a temper that no one durst interfere with her. She proposed to go up and see her, but was warned, "she will kill you." She bethought her, "If my Lord were here, He would do it." She went and entered the miserable apartment, and saw her lying in a corner as if a bundle of rags. She spoke, and an old, withered, miserable-looking creature raised herself upon her elbow, and with frenzied look, demanded what she wanted. She replied, "I love you; I want to be kind to you, because Jesus loves you." She went forward and kissed her brow, and, notwithstanding violent, repelling words, kissed her again. Then came the exclamation, "Go away, go away! you will break my heart; you put me in mind of my mother. Never has any one kissed me as she did; never have I been so treated since I lost her: many kicks and blows have I had, but no kisses like this." The fountain of feeling was opened, the confidence of the heart was won, and step by step that all but utterly lost soul was led back to Jesus.

Elect.—As to this matter of election, I would to God that some who object to it were as common sense in this matter as they are in the daily actions of ordinary life. Let me assume that a purse has been lost in the next street containing a thousand guineas, and that whoever finds it may keep it. "Ha!" we say. "Well, only one can find it; what is the good of a thousand seeking it? Only one can have it; and if I am elected to be the man, it will come in my way." I never heard people reasoning so in an affair of that kind. Though only one may have it, ten thousand will strive for it if they know the conditions. There is one prize to be given in a school of five hundred scholars. The boys say, "Well, only one of us can get it, why should five hundred of us be toiling and fagging to get it?" Another boy says, "I know if I am to have the prize I shall get it; so I shall read no books, and make no preparation." You would not allow a boy to reason so. Yet there are men who say this, "If we are called to heaven we'll get to heaven; if we are elected to be saved, we need not make any effort about it." "Thou wicked and slothful servant; out of thine own mouth I condemn thee; the whole action of thy evil life shall be thy answer on the day of judgment." (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

Election:—A senator related to his son the account of the book containing the names of illustrious members of the commonwealth. The son desired to see the outside. It was glorious to look upon. "Oh! let me open it," said he. "Nay," said the father, "it's known only to the council." Then said the son, "Tell me if my name is there." "And that," said the father, "is a secret known only to the council, and cannot be divulged." Then he desired to know for what achievements the names were inscribed in that book. The father told him; and related the noble deeds by which they had eternized their names. "Such," said he, "are written, and none but such are written in the book." "And will my name be there?" asked the son. "I cannot tell thee," said the father; "but if thy deeds are like theirs, thou shalt be written in the book; if not, thou shalt not be written." And then the son consulted with himself, and he found that his whole deeds were playing, and singing, and drinking, and amusing himself; and he found that this was not noble. And as he could not count on his name being there as yet, he determined to make his calling and election sure. And thus "by patient continuance in well doing, the end is crowned with glory." (*Parson Hood.*) *Holy*.—*The nature of holiness*:—Holiness is religion shining. It is the candle lighted, and not hid under a bushel, but lighting the house. It is religious principle put into

motion. It is the love of God sent forth into circulation, on the feet and with the hands of love to man. It is faith gone to work. It is charity coined into actions, and devotion breathing benedictions on human suffering, while it goes up in intercessions to the Father of all piety. (*Bishop Huntington.*) *A holy life* is made up of a number of small things. Little words, not eloquent speeches or sermons; little deeds, not miracles, nor battles, nor one great heroic act or mighty martyrdom. The constant sunbeam, not the lightning; the waters of Siloam "that go softly" in the meek mission of refreshment, not the "waters of the river great and many," rushing down in torrents, are the emblems of a holy life. The avoidance of little evils, little sins, little inconsistencies, weaknesses, follies, indiscretions, imprudencies, foibles, indulgencies of self and of the flesh; the avoidance of such-like things as these goes far to make up at least the negative beauty of a holy life. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *A holy Church*:—A living thing grows from itself, and not by accession from without as a house grows. A flower does not grow by adding a leaf to it, nor a tree by fastening a branch to it, nor a man by fixing a limb to his frame. Everything that has life grows by a converting process, which transforms the food into means of nourishment and enlargement. A holy Church lives, and its holiness converts all its ordinances and provisions into means of deep-rooted, solid, enlarged, and beautiful usefulness. (*T. W. Jenkyn, D.D.*) *Beloved*.—The thought that some one loves us has great restraining influence. A young man or woman may be here without friends, alone in this vast city and surrounded by a thousand snares. But you cannot forget that far away in some distant town or village there is a father whose heart yearns towards you, a mother who never ceases with many tears to pray for you—and the thought that there is at least one in the world who loves you, is a stimulus to exertion, a safeguard against evil. Many an effort to do right is prompted by the thought that you are "beloved;" many a debasing pleasure is rejected, from many a seducing snare you turn aside, because you desire to act worthy of such love. And we are "beloved" of God. What an honour is this! Insignificant, sinful creatures of earth—thought of, cared for, beloved in heaven! If so, shall we not "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called?" Can we rejoice in being "beloved" of God while indulging enmity towards our brethren? Shall the fellow-servants hate one another while thus beloved by their Lord and Master? "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies." (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *The King's livery*:—As the soldier who is in the queen's service is required to appear in his uniform, that all may know his calling, so the soldier of Christ must appear clothed in certain characteristics needful to prove his loyalty, and show his allegiance to his Lord. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Bowels of mercies* (see Phil. i. 8).—I. THE NATURE OF THIS GRACE. The real inward and unpretended affection of condoling with another's woe. The phrase is a Hebraism, and is taken from the emotion, and, as it were, concussion which is felt in the stomach, in deep affections of the mind (Gen. xliii. 30; Lam. ii. 11; Luke i. 78; Phil. ii. 1). The apostle wisely begins with the expression of condolence; because from hence flows the act of relief; and because, as Gregory says, "it is more to compassionate any one from the heart, than to give: for he who gives what is external, gives what does not belong to his own person; but he who gives compassion, gives somewhat of himself." II. ITS OBJECTS. 1. Persons who have none to give them relief, as widows and orphans. 2. But in general it comprehends all oppressed with misery—the poor, the prisoner, the sick, the afflicted. III. ITS MOTIVES. 1. The express and oft repeated command of God (Luke vi. 36; Rom. xii. 15; 1 Pet. iii. 8). Whence Gregory Nazianzen says, "If thou hast nothing, give but a tear; for pity is a great solace to the afflicted." 2. The examples of the prophets, of Christ, and the apostles, and of all good men (Jer. ix. 1; Matt. ix. 36; Luke xix. 41; 2 Cor. xi. 29). Hence that saying of the poet, "The good are tear-abounding men." 3. The conformity of nature, and the possibility of suffering similar things. The possibility of suffering similar evils, when seriously considered, forces mercy from any man that is not destitute of feeling. For what has happened to some one may happen to any one. IV. HENCE WE CONCLUDE—1. The apathy of the Stoics must be exploded by a Christian; as not agreeing either with our natural condition or our supernatural regeneration. Prosper well remarks, "We are not in fault for having affections, but for making a bad use of them." 2. Bowels of mercy are found in every regenerate person: he is therefore moved at the very first view of another's misery. 3. They who, ere they can be excited to mercy, must have much solicitation from the afflicted, can lay claim to little or nothing of the spiritual man; they

who are not moved by these, have nothing human in them. (*Bishop Davenant*.) *Pity* :—As love is the most delightful passion, pity is nothing else than love softened by a degree of sorrow. It is a kind of pleasing anguish as well as generous sympathy that knits mankind together, and blends them in the same common lot. (*Addison*.) *The power of compassion* :—There is something marvellous in the spirit of compassion. I do not mean that it seems to feel a positive pleasure in breathing the atmosphere of distress, nor that it seems to find time for every kind of well-doing, nor that the heart and memory are so enlarged that a range of interest ten times wider and more varied than personal interest finds room, but that compassion, though it is not talent nor energy, stands in the stead of these and does their work. The social good that is done in the world is not the work of its greatest minds. These set themselves one great task, and gather up all their powers for its accomplishment. They are jealous even of the minutes of their time. They resist all distractions. The compassionate man gives up his time to others, and yet seems to find time for all things. Like the bread miraculously multiplied, he gives, and yet he gathers up for himself more than he gave. How great, again, is its power to find its way to the miserable heart. Convince the wretched man that you know his misery and would ease his burden, and you have already made it lighter. Show the vicious man that you can see in him something worth caring for, and you thereby take off the despair that is at the bottom of so much vice. Let your enemy see that you have not room in your heart for any bitterness against him, and his arm will fall powerless. (*Archbishop Thomson*.) *Religion moves to pity* :—Now I would like you to mark that there is not a true grace of a Christian man, nor a true activity of the disciple of Christ, which does not lead to pity and love like this. Repentance leads to it, for repentance laments selfishness as the essence of its evil, and dreads relapsing into a religion which would be merely a selfishness refined; and repentance remembers its lost estate, the fearful pit and miry clay, and pities those that are still struggling in it; so repentance cherishes love and moves to pity. Faith kindles these virtues. You cannot take refuge in the heart of Christ, and build your hope upon redeeming love, and rejoice in His saving pity that stooped to Calvary, without catching some of the qualities on which you rest. Your heart softens with the warmth of that heart on which it rests, and is kindled by the pity in which it takes refuge. As our faith leads to these qualities, decision moves to them. Except we deny ourselves we cannot be disciples. Self-renunciation, which is the beginning of discipleship, leaves the heart free to cherish love. The comforts of religion move to them. Forgiveness, and peace, and hope, and gratitude swell the heart with the question, "What shall I render?" and move it to share its mercies with those that still lack them. All adoration of God kindles them. In the degree in which we see Him as He is, see Him in the face of Christ, see Him as He weeps over Jerusalem or groans on Calvary, in the degree in which we see the pitiful love that sometimes fills God's heart: in that degree we are changed. All hope changes the heart and fills it with this spirit. Hope of earthly providence and hope of immortal heaven, both move men to pity and to love. Every step you take in following Christ kindles pity, for when He leads it is not always unto green pastures and rapturous heights: it is to the haunts of misery, to the widows of Nain, to homes of grief. He would use us, borrows our hand to wipe away a tear, our voice to still a grief. Exactly in that degree in which He employs us, and we follow Him step by step, exactly in that degree do we catch the spirit in which He lived, and the compassion which is the everlasting motive and the perpetual habit of our God. So that I want you to observe that there is not a single Christian instinct, activity, relationship, employment, or grace which does not work out in love and pity. (*R. Glover*.) *Pity the secret of prophetic light* :—I want to point out that in love and pity, such as is here expressed, you have not merely the work of the disciple, but you have the secret of prophetic light: that Paul's light was due, not to his genius, not to his erudition, not even so much specially to heavenly effulgence that visited him, as to the fact that he had a heart of love and pity that could enter and absorb the light of God. Is it not obvious that it was so? We know God by what is kindred to Him, and by what resembles Him. It was Paul's love of man that could read God's love of man, that gazed on God till "the shadow" grew into a "face" and the "face" of God was seen glowing with infinite love. He would have been in the darkness till now if his love had not permitted him to see God's love. The light is ever shining. It is the eye, the eye of the heart, that is wanted; and that he had. He looked on man, not with the cynical eye that sees only what moves men to despair of, or to despise,

them; but he looked with a loving heart, and could see the world in God's light; something that made man a pearl of great price in his Saviour's eyes. He could see Divine movings in them; high capacity; possibilities of change; unrest—all these Divine elements, on which grace could move, and which grace could lead to light. He looked in the face of Christ, and his yearning permitted him to behold Christ's yearning, so that his love and his pity enlarged his heart, and opened it to light. He walked in the light of the Lord, and truths too grand for poorer eyes lay naked and open to his. One of the greatest theologians of the century, Neander, took for his motto, "It is the heart that makes the theologian." And one of the greatest historians, Niebuhr, uttered some similar words: "I have said, again and again, I will have no metaphysical deity, but the God of the Bible, who is heart to heart." (*Ibid.*)

Kindness.—*The blessings of a benignant spirit.*—I. IN WHAT KINDNESS CONSISTS. 1. In a disposition to be pleased; a willingness to be satisfied with others. This goes a long way towards our being actually pleased. This temper stands opposed to the spirit of fault-finding, the propensity to magnify trifles. 2. In a disposition to attribute to others good motives when we can do so. One of the rights of every man is to have it supposed that he acts with good intentions until it is proved to the contrary. 3. In bearing with the infirmities of others. We do not journey long with a fellow traveller before we find that he is far from perfection, and the closer our relations become the more necessity there is for bearing patiently the foibles of others. In the most tender connexions, that of husband and wife, &c., it may require much of a gentle and yielding spirit to so adapt ourselves that life shall move on smoothly and harmoniously. When there is a disposition to do this we soon learn to bear and forbear, and to avoid the look, gesture, allusion, that would excite improperly the mind of our friend. Like children, we must allow each other to build his own play-house in his own way. Conscious of our own imperfection we must be indulgent to others. 4. In not blaming others harshly when they fall into sin. In no circumstances do men need kindness so much as here. We weep with the bereaved, we sympathize with the unfortunate; but when a man is overtaken in a fault our sympathies frequently die. Yet they ought then to be in fullest operation (Gal. vi. 1). Remember—(1) He is a brother still. (2) If all the circumstances were known the aspect ought to be changed (Luke vi. 37; 1 Pet. iv. 8). (3) An explanation may remove the difficulty, therefore give him the opportunity. 5. It prompts us to aid others when in our power. If relief cannot be afforded it should be declined with a gentle and benevolent heart. II. ITS VALUE. 1. Much of the comfort of life depends upon it. Life is made up of little things, which, if displaced, render us miserable. Breathing, the beating of the heart, the circulation of the blood, are small matters, and ordinarily scarcely noticed, but when deranged we are sensible of their importance. So in morals and social intercourse. The happiness of life depends not so much on great and glorious deeds as on quiet duties, the gentle spirit, the cheerful answer, the smiling face, &c. 2. Usefulness depends upon it. This and far more than on deeds which excite general admiration. The rivulet that glides through the meadow is far more useful than the grand cataract. Kindness prompts us to seek the good and happiness of others. And it is by this, and not by great martyrdoms, that men will judge of the nature of the gospel. All usefulness may be prevented by a sour temper. Nothing will compensate for the want of that charity which is "kind." 3. It is commended by the example of Jesus (2 Cor. x. 1). Christ performed great deeds, but not that we should imitate them. But He was meek and gentle that we might be so too. (*d. Barnes, D.D.*)

Kindness.—The fundamental idea of kindness is ascertained by tracing the connection between kindred or kin and kindness. The latter is the feeling natural to us in relation to our own kind. 1. Take the innermost circle of kindred, the home, and that which constitutes its sweetness is kindness. Unkindness, then, is most unnatural. In German and Dutch the word for child is kind. Kindness was first of all the relation of a child to its parents, and then the feeling of a parent for a child. That was the original and architypal kindness, is its ever present and undying element, and gives character and tone to all the more extended instances of kindness which ripple out with the extension of our kinship. 2. Though our kindred begins in our homes it does not end there. We have remoter relatives to whom it is our duty, and the prompting of our natures, to be kind. Our nation consists of individuals who are of our own kind, and we ought to be kindly towards them all. And then our kith and kin are found in colonies, and the parent state should always feel kindly towards them, and when any colony grows into an independent nation, like the United States of America, it would be a

calamity and a sin if kindness on either side were to cease. 3. The family relationship extends farther than to those who manifest their kinship by the use of the common mother tongue, embalmed in the English Bible. The Dutch and Germans are our cousins, so are the Danes; and there was a time when the Greeks also, and the Romans belonged to the same family circle. Their ancestors came from the same paternal home in Asia from which our ancestors came; and so with the Hindoos, and hence the old old words which are common to the now diverse languages. 4. Indeed, all the nations are kindred to each other. All the families of the earth belong to the great family of man—mankind; hence all owe kindness to one another. Hence Peter exhorts us to add to our godliness brotherly kindness. Some think it more difficult to attain the former than the latter. In some respects it is, in others not; and so the apostle urges us to seek the latter by way of the former. In mere speculation we might have supposed that man must first climb to the terrestrial thing—"brotherly kindness"—and thence ascend to the celestial. But the reverse is the true and better order. We must first get right with God the Father—then, and not till then, shall we get right with man the brother. (*J. Morrison, D.D.*) *The power of kindness*:—"Go away from there, you old beggar boy! You've no right to be looking at our flowers," shouted a little fellow from the garden where he was standing. The poor boy, who was pale, dirty, and ragged, was leaning against the fence, admiring the splendid show of roses and tulips within. His face reddened with anger at the rude language, and he was about to answer defiantly, when a little girl sprang out from an arbour near, and looking at both, said to her brother,—"How could you speak so, Herbert! I'm sure his looking at the flowers don't hurt us." And then, to soothe the wounded feelings of the stranger, she added: "Little boy, I'll pick you some flowers, if you'll wait a moment," and she immediately gathered a pretty bouquet, and handed it through the fence. His face brightened with surprise and pleasure, and he earnestly thanked her. Twelve years after this occurrence, the girl had grown to a woman. One bright afternoon she was walking with her husband in the garden, when she observed a young man in workman's dress, leaning over the fence, and looking attentively at her and at the flowers. Turning to her husband, she said,—"It does me good to see people admiring the garden; I'll give that young man some of the flowers;" and approaching him she said, "Are you fond of flowers, sir? It will give me great pleasure to gather you some." The young workman looked a moment into her fair face, and then said in a voice tremulous with feeling: "Twelve years ago I stood here a ragged little beggar boy, and you showed me the same kindness. The bright flowers and your pleasant words made a new boy of me; aye, and they have made a man of me, too. Your face, madam, has been a light to me in many dark hours of life; and now, thank God, though that boy is still an humble, hard-working man, he is an honest and grateful one." Tears stood in the eyes of the lady as, turning to her husband, she said, "God put it into my young heart to do that kindness, and see how great a reward it has brought. (*American Agriculturist.*)

Humbleness of mind.—I. THE NATURE OF THIS TEMPER: A low apprehension or esteem of ourselves (Rom. xii. 3), the opposite to pride and arrogance. The word leads us to consider the disposition of mind; for there may be a humility of behavior which covers a very proud heart. It consists of—1. A humble apprehension of our own knowledge (1 Cor. viii. 1). There is nothing of which men are more proud. Many would sooner bear a reflection on their moral characters than on their understandings. The serpent was early sensible that this was man's weak side (Gen. iii. 5). And no kind of pride has more need of a cure (Job xi. 12). So it will include—(1) A sense of the natural imperfection of our faculties (Job xi. 7). This will dispose us to receive God's revelation (1 Cor. ii. 10-11). (2) An apprehension of our own fallibility. Humility in this view would teach us (a) not on that account to surrender ourselves to the absolute control of others. To this Rome would lead us in pretence of infallibility; and if any others would lead us to such an implicit faith in their dictates, while they disclaim infallibility, their claim is still more absurd. We must answer for ourselves to God in the great day; and therefore it can neither be a laudable nor a safe humility to take our religion from the dictates of fallible men. (b) But a just apprehension of our liability to mistake should induce us in all our searches after Divine truth to be very desirous of Divine illumination and guidance (Psa. xxv. 4-5). It should keep us ever open to further light and willing to learn. (3) A moderate apprehension of our own attainments in knowledge when we compare them with the attainments of other men (1 Cor. xiii. 9; viii. 2). If some know less, others know more than we. (4)

A persuasion of the small value of the most exalted knowledge without a suitable practical influence (John xiii. 7; Luke xii. 47-48). A man of low attainments, if his heart is right with God, is truly acceptable; while a resolved sinner, though he understood all mysteries, will be eternally disowned by Him. Exalted knowledge may leave a man of no better a temper than a devil. 2. Humble thoughts of our own goodness. Not that we are to be insensible to anything that is truly good in us; but Christian humility includes—(1) A sense of the undeservingness of our own goodness at the hands of God even if it was perfect (Luke xvii. 10). (2) An apprehension of the disparity between the goodness of God and that of any creature (Luke xviii. 19). (3) An affecting conviction of our own sinfulness (Luke v. 31-32). (4) A sense of the imperfection of our goodness at its best (Psa. xix. 12). (5) An acknowledgment that we are principally indebted to God for whatever is good in us (Phil. i. 6; 1 Cor. iv. 7, vi. 11, xv. 10). (6) A modest apprehension of our own goodness compared with that of other men (Phil. ii. 3). 3. A humble sense of our dependence and wants—(1) As regards God. (a) In the sphere of nature (Acts xvii. 28). (b) In the sphere of grace. We should have a deep sense of our need of His mercy to pardon our sins and His grace to help our infirmities. (2) As regards our fellow-creatures. It is ordered by the law of our creation that we cannot comfortably subsist independent of them (Eccles. v. 9). Every link in the chain of societies contributes to the good of the whole (1 Cor. xii. 21, 24). And then in the changeableness of human affairs, those who are now in the most prosperous estate know not how soon they may need the kind offices of the lowliest. 4. A modest apprehension of our own rank and station. (1) As compared with God we cannot think too low of ourselves (Isa. xl. 15). All our relations to Him bespeak the profoundest submission, as His creatures, subjects, children (Psa. viii. 4, cxliv. 3; Job vii. 17). Humility will teach us to dispute neither the precepts nor the providences of Him who has a natural authority over us. (2) Revelation teaches us that we are beneath other invisible beings (Psa. vii. 5). (3) For our fellow-creatures we should consider them all as of the same nature with us, and therefore near akin (Acts xvii. 26), and that distinctions in outward circumstances are in the account of God and in themselves but little things (Rom. xiii. 7, xii. 16).

II. THE SPECIAL OBLIGATIONS WHICH REST ON Christians to cultivate this temper. 1. Humility is a grace of the first rank. (1) It is mentioned in Scripture with peculiar marks of distinction (Micah vi. 8; Prov. viii. 13; Psa. cxxxviii. 6; Matt. v. 4, xviii. 4). (2) The most distinguished promises are made to it (Psa. ix. 12, x. 17; Isa. lvii. 15; James iv. 6; 1 Pet. v. 5; Matt. xxxiii. 12). (3) It is in its own nature a necessary introduction to the other graces and duties of Christianity. This is not a religion for the proud but for the lowly. (a) Humility is necessary to faith. Without this we shall not have a disposition to receive a revelation. Pride and self-sufficiency was the reason why Christ crucified was a stumbling-block to the Jew, &c. (b) To obedience. A proud heart says, "Who is the Lord over me?" Humility asks, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (c) To the acceptance of Christ as offered in the gospel (Luke v. 31; Rev. iii. 17-18; Luke xviii. 9-13). (d) To the reception of the grace of the Holy Spirit. (e) To perseverance, for without it we shall be ready to take offence at crosses. (f) To the reception of assistance in the way to heaven from other men. Those who are wise in their own conceit despise admonitions. (g) To the performance of Christian duty. 2. It is this grace which adorns every other virtue and recommends religion to every beholder (1 Pet. v. 5). 3. It is recommended by the example of Christ. (1) His incarnation was the greatest instance of humility (Phil. ii. 3, 5, &c.; 2 Cor. viii. 9). (2) When He appeared in human nature He affected not worldly honour (Luke ii. 7-11; Matt. xiii. 55). (3) As a man He was the pattern of great humility toward God (John viii. 50, vii. 18; Mark xiii. 32; Matt. xix. 17). (4) He was the pattern of the greatest humility to mankind. (a) He was ready to condescend to the meanest in order to their good (Matt. viii. 6; Mark x. 46; John iv. 27; Matt. xviii. 1-10, xix. 13-14). (b) He was willing to stoop to the meanest offices for the meanest persons (Mark i. 41; John xiii. 5; Matt. xx. 28). (c) He was not above receiving and acknowledging the respect shown Him by the meanest (Luke vii. 3; Matt. xxi. 15, xxvi. 13). Learn, then, like Him, to be meek and lowly of heart. 4. Humility is a grace which will go along with us to heaven. The only inhabitants of that world who were ever lifted up with pride have been cast out. The angels abase themselves (Isa. i. 2, 3; Rev. iv. 10, v. 10, vii. 11, xi. 16), and humility will receive a glorious reward (Mark xxv.). Like charity, it never faileth. (*Dr. Evans.*)

Humility a safeguard:—A French general, riding on horseback at the head of his

troops, heard a soldier complain and say, "It is very easy for the general to command us forward while he rides and we walk." Then the general dismounted and compelled the complaining soldier to get on his horse. Coming through a ravine a bullet from a sharpshooter struck the rider and he fell dead. Then the general said, "How much safer it is to walk than to ride." *Humility and cheerfulness* :—Observe the peculiar characters of the grass which adapt it especially for the service of man are humility and cheerfulness—its humility, in that it seems created only for lowest service, appointed to be trodden on and fed upon; its cheerfulness, in that it seems to exalt under all kinds of violence and suffering. You roll it, and it is the stronger next day; you mow it, and it multiplies its shoots as if it were grateful; you tread upon it, and it only sends up richer perfume. Spring comes, and it rejoices with all the earth, glowing with variegated flame of flowers, waving in soft depth of fruitful strength. Winter comes, and though it will not mock its fellow-plants by growing then, it will not pine and mourn, and turn colourless or leafless as they. It is always green, and is only the brighter and gayer for the hoar frost. (*J. Ruskin*.) *Meekness*.—*Meekness: its nature* :—Meekness is love at school, at the Saviour's school. It is the disciple learning to know himself, to fear, distrust, and abhor himself. It is the disciple practising the sweet, but self-emptying lesson of putting on the Lord Jesus, and finding all his righteousness in that righteous other. It is the disciple learning the defects of his own character, and taking hints from hostile as well as friendly monitors. It is the disciple praying and watching for the improvement of his talents, the mellowing of his temper, and the amelioration of his character. It is the loving Christian at his Saviour's feet, learning from Him who is meek and lowly, and finding rest for his own soul. (*James Hamilton, D.D.*) *Meekness: its blending* :—It is power blended with gentleness, boldness with humility, the harmlessness of the dove with the prowess of the lion. It is the soul in the majesty of self-possession, elevated above the precipitant, the irascible, the boisterous, the revengeful. It is the soul throwing its benignant smiles on the furious face of the foe, and penetrating his heart and paralyzing his arm with the look of love. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Meekness: its power* :—Sir Walter Raleigh, a man of courage and honour, was once insulted by a hot-headed youth, who challenged him, and on his refusal spat upon him in public. The knight, taking out his handkerchief, made this reply: "Young man, if I could as easily wipe your blood from my conscience as I can this injury from my face, I would this moment take away your life." The youth was so struck with a sense of his misbehaviour that he fell upon his knees and asked forgiveness. (*E. Foster*.) *Meekness: its blessedness* :—It is in the lowly valley that the sun's warmth is truly genial; unless indeed there are mountains so close and abrupt as to overshadow it. Then noisome vapours may be bred there; but otherwise, in the valley we may behold the wonderful blessing bestowed upon the meek that they shall inherit the earth. It is theirs for this very reason, because they do not seek it. They do not exalt their heads like icebergs, which, by the by, are driven away from earth, and cluster—or rather jostle—round the pole; but they flow along the earth humbly and silently; and wherever they flow they bless it; and so all its beauty and all its richness are reflected in their peaceful bosoms. (*Archdeacon Hare*.) *Meekness: its usefulness* :—The timber of the elder tree is the softest, and can without difficulty be split, cut, and wrought, and yet it does not rot in water. The greater part of the city of Venice stands upon piles of elder, which, sunk into the sea, form the foundation of massive buildings. It is the same with meek hearts. There is no better foundation for important undertakings of public or private utility than that intelligent modesty which is gentle indeed, and ready to yield as far as a good conscience will allow, but which, nevertheless, lasts and continues stable, in the flood of contradiction. (*Gotthold*.) *Long-suffering* is threefold.—I. In JUDGMENT; when, in doubtful cases, we suspend our opinions and censures. II. In WORDS; which consists either in not answering, or in giving soft answers. III. In DEEDS; when we render not evil for evil. (*N. Byfield*.) *Long-suffering rewarded* :—Some years ago I had in my garden a tree that never bore. One day I was going down, with my axe in my hand, to fell it. My wife met me in the pathway and pleaded for it, saying, "Why, the spring is now very near; stay, and see whether there may not be some change; and, if not, you can deal with it accordingly." As I never repented following her advice, I yielded to it now; and what was the consequence? In a few weeks the tree was covered in blossoms; and in a few weeks more it was bending with fruit. "Ah," said I, "this should teach me not to cut down too soon, i.e., not to consider persons incorrigible or abandoned too soon, so as to give up hope and the use of the means in their behalf. (*W. Jay*.)

Ver. 13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.—*Forbearance*.—To forbear is not only freely to forgive, but to meet half way, with extended hand (*E.T.E.B.*). During the celebrated John Henderson's residence at Oxford, a student of a neighbouring college, proud of his logical achievements, was solicitous of a private disputation. Some mutual friends introduced him, and having chosen his subject, they conversed for some time with equal candour and moderation; but at length Henderson's antagonist, perceiving his own confusion inevitable, in the height of passion threw a full glass of wine in Henderson's face. The latter, without altering his features, or changing his position, gently wiped his face, and coolly replied, "This, sir, is a digression. Now for the argument." A greater victory than any controversial success could have given him. (*Cottle.*) *Divine forgiveness admired and imitated*.—I. STUDY THE

PATTERN OF FORGIVENESS. 1. What is this forgiveness of Christ? (1) He forgave offences most great and grievous. Men did all they could against Him. Say not that you have never thus transgressed. "He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." These offences were unprovoked. Towards no man had He acted harshly. Such is human depravity that His very virtue provoked hostility. "They hated Me without a cause." He continues to forgive causeless wrong. (2) He forgave the most unworthy persons. None deserved such kindness; in fact, to talk of deserving it is a contradiction. If He had left us in our sin we could have brought no complaint against Him. (3) He had always power to execute vengeance. Some pardon because they cannot punish. Half the forgiveness in the world comes from weakness of hand rather than forgiveness of heart. 2. How did He forgive? (1) Unsolicited. Before we had thought of mercy He had thoughts of mercy toward us. "I have blotted out . . . return unto Me." Pardon is not first as matter of experience, but it is as matter of fact with God. (2) Heartily. Forgiveness when it comes from human lips in studied phrase is not worth the having; but when Jesus absolves it is from the heart, and sin is put away for ever. (3) Completely. He keeps no back reckonings. "I will not remember thy sins." Even fathers, when they have forgiven a wayward child, will, perhaps, throw the offence in his teeth years after; but Christ says, "Thy sins shall not be mentioned against thee any more." (4) Continuously. He forgave us long ago. He still forgives. It is not a reprieve, but a free pardon. (5) Graciously. Some people make it appear as though they were coming down from such awful heights. You never feel that about Christ. He never scolds the sinner with scornful pity. (6) Greatly. The offence had brought trouble into the world, and He bore that trouble. Some people hand us over to consequences; Christ delivers us from them. (7) Consciously. There is a theory abroad that we may be forgiven and not know it. But the Holy Spirit writes forgiveness on our hearts. II. COPY IT FOR YOURSELVES. 1. This precept is universally applicable. It is unqualified in its range. It is not put that superiors are to forgive inferiors, or the less are to forgive the greater. The rich are to be forbearing to the poor, and the poor to the rich; the elder is to forgive the junior for his imprudence, and the junior the elder for his petulance and slowness. 2. This forbearance and forgiveness are vital. No man is a child of God who has not a likeness to God; and no man is forgiven who will not himself forgive. 3. Gloriously ennobling. Revenge is paltry; forgiveness is great-minded. David was greater than Saul, and Saul acknowledged it. To win a battle is a little thing if fought out with sword and gun, but to win it in God's way with love and forgiveness is the best of victories. A nation in fighting, even if it wins the campaign, has to suffer, but he that overcomes by love is all the better and stronger for it. 4. Logically appropriate to all. If our Lord has forgiven us ten thousand talents, how can we take our brother by the throat for one hundred pence. 5. Most forcibly sustained by the example in the text. "Even as Christ." It is said—(1) "If you pass by every wanton offence you will come to be despised." But has Christ's honour suffered? Far from it. It is His glory to forgive. (2) "If we overlook offences, other people may be tempted to wrong us." But has any been tempted to do so because Christ has forgiven you? Why, that is the very groundwork of holiness. (3) "I know several pious persons who are unforgiving." But that proves their impiety; and if it did not, the Master is your example, not your fellow-servant, particularly in his faults. (4) "These persons would not have forgiven me." Just so; but you are a child of God, and must not lower your standard down to that of publicans and sinners. (5) "I would forgive him, but he does not deserve it." That is why you are to forgive him; if he deserved it you would be bound to do him the justice he could claim. (6) "I cannot forgive."

You "can do all things through Christ that strengthens you." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Human forgiveness.—The world is rife with human quarrels; families, neighbourhoods, Churches, have their quarrels. They arise from many principles in the depraved heart besides misunderstandings. Hence forgiveness is important. The text suggests two things concerning forgiveness. I. THE DUTY. Here it is urged as well as in other places (Rom. xii. 19). Besides this there are two reasons. 1. You desire forgiveness yourself. Who would like to have the vengeance of a man always in his heart towards him? If you would like forgiveness, you must do as you would be done by. 2. You need forgiveness yourself when you have offended. He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he himself has to pass. Besides, an unforgiving spirit is an injury to its possessor. II. ITS MODEL. "Even as Christ." 1. How did Christ forgive? Promptly, generously, fully, without any reflection upon past offences. 2. Examples: The woman taken in adultery. His enemies—"Father, forgive them." The dying thief. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Forgiveness* implies—1. The remission of the right to retaliate when safe and proper. 2. The dismissal of the revengeful feelings which injury may have excited. 3. The revival of those feelings of goodwill which it becomes us habitually to cherish. (*W. Fleming.*) *Forth-giving*.—To forgive a thing is to "forthgive" by your own act and freewill, to give it forth from you that it may go clean out from you—out of sight and out of mind. *Forgiveness a distinctively Christian virtue*.—We cannot say that it was unknown to the ancients; under certain conditions, no doubt, it was very common. In domestic life, in which all the germs of Christian virtue are to be found, it was undoubtedly common. Undoubtedly friends fell out and were reconciled in antiquity as among ourselves. But when the only relation between the two parties was that of injurer and injured, and the only claim of the offender to forgiveness was that he was a human being, then forgiveness seems not only not to have been practised, but not to have been enjoined nor approved. People not only did not forgive their enemies, but did not wish to do so, nor think better of themselves for having done so. That man considered himself fortunate who on his deathbed could say, in reviewing his past life, that no one had done more good to his friends or more mischief to his foes. The Roman Triumph, with its naked ostentation of revenge, fairly represents the common feeling of the ancients. Nevertheless, forgiveness even of any enemy was not unknown to them. They could conceive it, and they could feel that there was a Divine beauty in it, but it seemed to them more than could be expected of human nature, superhuman. (*Ecce Homo.*) *International forgiveness*.—Is that which is right between individuals wrong as between societies? Am I to forbear and forgive when acting alone, but when associated with two or three others am I to manifest a different spirit? Is my individual conscience to be merged in the associated conscience, and does the Christian law for a society differ from the law for individuals? Enlarge the society till it becomes the nation. Is the law of Christ abrogated? It would seem to be so considered by the "Christian nations" of the world. Why is Europe in time of peace an entrenched camp? Why are millions of the strongest and healthiest men withdrawn from productive labours and domestic life to be trained in the art of killing, while the people groan under the burden of a taxation and a poverty God never sent? Because in international law there is so little recognition of the Divine precept—"forbearing one another and forgiving one another." Because many who in their private relations manifest meekness and gentleness, as politicians and statesmen seem to think the old Pagan law is unrepealed. How few of the wars which have desolated Europe during the last thousand years would have been waged had it been more than nominally Christian! If instead of resenting every supposed affront, of vindicating on every petty occasion what is called the honour of a flag, of supposing the dignity of an empire precludes all forbearance, patience, and concession, there had been even a little of the "bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering" enjoined in our text, the history of the world had been differently written; heathen nations would have said, "see how these Christians love;" instead of the flags of Europe inspiring terror in distant regions, they would have been everywhere hailed as symbols of peace; and the old prophecy would have had a fulfilment in the case of Christendom—"the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion." (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*)

A quarrel.—*A quarrel*: Both sides wrong.—In most quarrels there is a fault on both sides. A quarrel may be compared to a spark, which cannot be produced without a flint as well as a steel; either of them may hammer on wood for ever, no fire will follow. (*R. South.*) *Quarrels prolonged*.—"I have seen in the south

of France a row of beggars sitting on the side of a bridge, day after day, winter and summer, showing sore legs and sore arms; these sores never get well, they were kept continually raw with caustic in order to excite compassion and obtain alms. And the most bitter jealousy reigned between these beggars as to the size and irritability of their respective sores. The man with only an inflamed knee burned with envy of the man whose whole leg was raw. Not for all the world would they let their wounds heal, as that would cut off from them a means of livelihood. I fear a great many people love their grievances against neighbours much as those beggars loved their sores. They keep them constantly open and irritable by inventing and applying fresh aggravations. They are proud of them, they like to expose their wrongs, as they call them, to all their neighbours." (*S. Baring-Gould.*)

Ver. 14. And above all these things put on charity.—*The grace of charity*.—I. Charity is the greatest of graces in THE WIDTH and EXTENT of ITS SPHERE. Other graces have particular things with which they are more intimately concerned; special parts of life on which they throw the light of their charm; special times in which they actively operate. They are like the winds that blow, the rain that falls, the snow that covers, or the lightning that purifies sometimes. But charity is like the Divine sunlight that shines on always, works always, tempers the winds, warms the rains, dissipates the mists, melts the snow; sometimes seen and felt, sometimes unseen, but never ceasing its influence, and recognizing no earth limits to its sphere. Charity covers the whole life and relationships of the Christian, and 1 Cor. xiii. maps out and distinguishes them. 1. The sphere of a brother's opinions. 2. The sphere of a brother's failings. 3. The sphere of a brother's sorrows. 4. The sphere of a brother's sins. II. Because of THE DIFFICULTY WITH WHICH IT IS ATTAINED. Difficulty is often the test of value. Gold is valued because of the cost and toil of procuring it. Charity is difficult mainly through the separatings of sin. Sin broke up the fellowship of the human family, and filled the world with opposing interests. Charity is to heal these great wounds, temper the opposing relations, and on its own substantial basis to make the human family one again. And, as charity is God's own nature, we have first to be reconciled to, and come into sympathy with Him. III. Because IT NEVER FAILETH. The summer flowers which blossom in beauty fade and fail. Charity is no summer flower born of earth, sunshine, and showers. It is a heaven-born plant; its flowers never fail; it is like the tree of life. (*R. Tuck, B.A.*) *Gospel charity*.—There is no grace or duty that is not commanded in Scripture, but this is commanded above all others (1 Pet. iv. 8; 1 Cor. xii. 31). I. THE NATURE OF THIS LOVE. It is the second great duty brought to light by the gospel. There is a natural love which follows on natural relations, and there is a love which arises from society in sin or in pleasure, from a suitableness of humour in conversation, or of design as to political ends, but all these are utter strangers to evangelical love. And therefore, when it was first brought to light by the gospel, the heathen were amazed. "See how these Christians love one another." What is this love. 1. It is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22), as contradistinguished from that which arises from our natural inclination. 2. It is an effect of faith. "Faith worketh by love." How? When it respects God's command requiring this love, His promise accepting it, and His glory whereunto it is directed. Self may work by love sometimes, and flesh, interest, and reputation, but not by this love. 3. It is that which knits the souls of believers with an entire affection (Eph. iv. 16; Psal. xvi. 2). (1) The whole mystical body of Christ being the adequate object of gospel love, it is indispensably required of us that we love all believers as such. But this is accompanied by some limitations. (a) In the exercise of it, it will much answer the evidence that persons are interested in the body of Christ. There are some whose opinions and practices will exercise the most extensive charity to judge that they belong to it. Yet, according to our evidence, so is our love to be. (b) There may be degrees in our love, especially as to delight and valuation, according as we see more or less of the image of Christ upon a believer, this likeness being the formal reason of this love. (c) Its exercise must be determined by opportunities. (2) There is required an inclination to all acts of love towards all believers, as opportunity shall serve. If we turn our face away from our brother how dwelleth the love of God in us? If it be in us let it be advantaged by any opportunity, and it will break through difficulties and pleas of flesh and blood. (3) Christ has provided us with a safe, suitable, and constant object by His institution of particular Churches. Let none, then, pretend that they

love the brethren in general while their love is not exercised towards those in the same Church society with them. II. THE GROUNDS WHY THIS LOVE IS SO NECESSARY. 1. Because it is the great way whereby we can give testimony to the power of the gospel (John xvii. 21-23). There is no oneness but that whereof love is the bond of perfectness, that will give conviction unto the world that God hath sent Christ, for He alone can give it. 2. We have no evidence that we are disciples without it (John xiii. 34-35). 3. This is that in which the communion of saints principally consists. (1) The fountain and spring of this communion is our common participation of one Spirit from the one Head, Jesus Christ. (2) This communion is expressed in the participation of the same ordinances in the same Church. (3) The life and formal reason of this communion is love. Eph. iv. 15-16 is the most glorious description of this communion of saints. It begins in love—"speaking the truth in love;" it ends in love—"edifying itself in love;" it is carried on by love: it is all love. III. CAUTIONS AGAINST ITS HINDRANCES. 1. Take heed of a morose disposition. If it does not hinder some fruits of love, yet it sullies the glory of its exercise. Grace is intended to change our natural temper and make the froward meek, and the passionate patient. 2. Take heed of hindrances which may attend your state and condition. Riches and honour encompass with so many circumstances that it is difficult to break through them to familiarity with the meanest members of the Church. The gospel leaves you your providential advantages, but in things which concern your communion it lays all level (James ii.). We all serve one common Master, who for our sakes became poor. 3. Take heed of satisfying yourselves with the duties of love without looking after the entire working of the grace of love. (*J. Owen, D.D.*) *Charity the bond of perfectness*:—These words come after an exhortation to the practice of the Christian virtues of mercy, &c. In addition to these we are to put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. Not perfect bond, but that which renders perfect. Love is that which unites all the others into a complete whole. Another interpretation is to this effect. As in ver. 14, Paul has said in the Church and in Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew," &c., he says here that love is the unifying principle which binds together all the otherwise discordant members of the Church. I. LOVE IS USED OF—1. Benevolence to man. 2. God's love to us. 3. Our love to God. 4. Brotherly love among Christians. 5. Love in general as a Christian grace without specification of object. Its characteristics are noted in 1 Cor. xiii. II. OF THIS LOVE IT IS TAUGHT—1. That without this all our passions, professions, hopes, are vain and worthless. No amount of orthodoxy, power, natural or supernatural, devotion, almsgiving, Church membership, assiduity in religious duties, is of any avail. 2. That this love is the fruit of faith. It cannot exist without it, and faith without it is dead. 3. It is the bond of perfectness. (1) It unites all the Christian virtues. (2) It unites all the members of Christ's body. 4. It is the image of God. It makes us like Christ. 5. It is the beauty and blessedness of heaven. Perfection of the religion of the Bible. (1) Not ritualism, benevolence, orthodoxy, but (2) Faith which works by love. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Love the bond of perfectness*:—The Christian is here conceived a cleansed and beautifully-robed man, fitted to enter the presence of the great King. He describes the work which we have to do in order to prepare ourselves for the royal audience. There is an inner cleansing of the heart, the thoughts, the secret springs of our being. "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth." There is also a putting off of the old garments of self, pride, and indulgence; the clean spirit cannot do with the foul clothes; and there is the putting on of the new dress—the various garments that compose it are called, "bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, and forgiving." These are, as it were, the under-garments; the man is not clothed fit for the presence of the Divine royalty without the robe, worked in graceful colours, made of finest material, hanging in graceful folds, putting the touch of harmony and grace on all the other garments, and being, as it were, "the bond of perfectness," finishing off and perfecting the whole dress. That over-covering, all-hallowing robe is charity; in its adornings, and completings, and harmonisings, being the very "bond of perfectness" to a gracious character. (*R. Tuck, B.A.*) *Love a perfecting grace*:—Here is an evident allusion to the zone of the orientals, which was generally adorned with jewels and ornaments, and which, by adjusting the folds of the drapery, served at once to give a beautiful form to the human figure, and to unite and perfect the whole dress. The use the apostle here makes of the metaphor is apparent: as the zone was a most material part of the dress, combining and perfecting all, and giving symmetry and

beauty to the form of the person by whom it was worn ; so charity is the best of all the graces, perfecting and combining the whole in beauty and in love. And ; like that also, we may remark that it is put on last. Men in general are much more anxious to hate and to destroy than to love and do good ; and even after they seem to have imbibed much of the Christian temper, this sacred bond, this beautiful zone, is long wanting. (*R. Hewlett, D.D.*) *Love the perfection of the Christian character* :—Love is the most potent affection of the human heart. I. IT IS THE PRIME ELEMENT IN EVERY OTHER GRACE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. It is the soul of every virtue, and the guarantee of a genuine sincerity. Without it all the rest are but glittering sins. It is possible to have all those mentioned in ver. 12 ; but without love they would be meaningless, cold, and dead. Mercy would degenerate into sentimentality, kindness into extravagance, humility into mock depreciation, long-suffering into dull, dogged stupidity. II. IT OCCUPIES THE MOST EXALTED PLACE IN CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. "Above all these things," as the outer garment covers and binds together the rest. III. LOVE IS THE PLEDGE OF PERMANENCY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. As the girdle, or cincture, bound together the loose flowing robes of the ancients, so love is the power that holds together all those graces which together make up perfection. Love is the preservative force in the Christian character. Without it, knowledge would lose its enterprise, mercy and kindness become languid, humility faint, and long-suffering indifferent. Love binds together in a bond which time cannot injure, the enemy unloose, or death destroy. IV. THE PERFECTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER IS SEEN IN THE PRACTICAL MANIFESTATION OF LOVE. "Put on charity." I. Love is indispensable. It is possible to possess many beautiful traits—much that is humane and amiable—without being a complete Christian : to be very near perfection, and yet lack one thing. Without love all other graces are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. 2. Love is susceptible of individual cultivation. Lessons : 1. The mere profession of Christianity is empty and valueless. 2. Every grace of the Christian character must be diligently exercised. 3. Above and through all other graces love must operate. (*G. Barlow.*) Love is over all, and the bond of perfectness, because—I. IT IS OF GREATER EXTENT THAN ANY OTHER VIRTUE. Mercy and kindness, and humbleness and forgiveness, are separate graces ; but love embraces them all, regards generally our neighbour and those in adversity, our friends and enemies, the good and the bad. II. WITHOUT IT ALL OTHER GRACES ARE VAIN AND DELUSIVE. Mercy without it is weakness ; humility, debasement, meekness, cajolery, and deceit ; patience, stupidity ; forgiveness, hypocrisy ; all is inconsistent, heartless, wayward, selfish. III. IT SUPPLIES THE WANT OR REMEDIES THE DEFECT OF ANY OTHER GRACES AND VIRTUES. For we are always falling short in one or other, from indwelling sin, from temptation, from cast of character, from peculiar circumstances. A sweet charitable temper provides the articles of Christian attire in which we are from time to time most defective, supplies their place, hides their imperfections, remedies the ill effects of their absence. (*Bishop D. Wilson.*) *Love the "finish" of the Christian character* :—When the cutler brings his goods to market, he may have the best of steel in the blade and the best of horn in the handle, and every part may be rivetted strongly ; but if the blade has not been polished, and if there be no finishing work in the handle, he cannot sell his stock. It is just as good for practical purposes as though it were finished ; but people do not want it. They want their blades polished and their handles finished, and they are so used to having goods sand-papered and burnished, that they will not take them unless they are so. There must be art in them. And this is carried so far, that when articles are good for nothing art is put on the outside to make them seem good for something. And men buy things for the sake of their looks. The idea of perfection lies in the direction of the æsthetic ; and as much so in social and moral elements as in physical things. Men are not now finished in any respect in their higher relations. I mean even good men. There are hundreds of men that are in the main laying out their life and character in right directions, and on right foundations ; but how few men know how to be good variously, systematically, gracefully, genially, sweetly, beautifully. (*H. W. Beecher.*) When the apostle speaks so highly of charity, he does not mean to disparage the other graces. They also are most beautiful, considered apart from charity, only charity has such a sun-like excellence, in its presence all star-like beauty, and even moon-like beauty, seem to grow dim and fade away. Compare the diamond with a common wayside stone, and we are not greatly impressed with its superiority ; the contrast is too great. Set it in the royal crown ; encircle it with pearls ; let it

compare with other jewels; with ruby, and garnet, and emerald; then the depth of its crystal purity seems so impressive, and the flashing of its light so exquisite. Set charity alongside "humbleness, bowels of mercies, long-suffering," or forgiving, then it seems to gather up into itself much of the charm and loveliness of such graces, and stands forth in the centre of them all, "the very bond of perfectness." *R. Tuck, B.A.*)

Ver. 15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts.—*The peace of Christ*:—The various reading "peace of Christ" is not only recommended by MS. authority, but has the advantage of bringing the expression into connection with the great words of our Lord, "Peace I leave you," &c. A strange legacy left at a strange moment. It was but an hour or so since He had been "troubled in spirit" as He thought of the betrayer—and in an hour more He would be beneath the olives of Gethsemane; and yet even at such a time He bestows on His friends some share in His deep repose of spirit. Surely the "peace of Christ" must mean what "My peace" meant: not only the peace which He gives, but the peace which lay like a great calm on the sea on His own deep heart, and we must not restrict it to mutual concord. When He gave us His peace He gave us some share in that meek submission of will to His Father's will, and in that stainless purity, which were its chief elements. The hearts and lives of men are made troubled not by circumstances, but by themselves. Whoever can keep his own will in harmony with God's enters into rest. Even if within and without are fightings, there may be a central peace. Christ's peace was the result of the perfect harmony of His nature. All was co-operant to one great purpose; desires and passions did not war with conscience and reason, nor did the flesh lust against the spirit. Though that complete uniting of all our inner selves is not attained on earth, yet its beginnings are given us by Christ, and in Him we may be at peace with ourselves, and have one great ruling power binding all our conflicting desires in one, as the moon draws after her the heaped waters of the sea. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The power of Divine peace*:—The connection between this verse and the foregoing is obvious. The man who has this peace is most likely to cultivate love. Christian calmness is the concomitant and stimulus of Christian affection which is hindered by doubt, anxiety, or fear. **I. THE NATURE AND VALUE OF THIS BLESSING.** 1. It is the highest blessing. It is peace with God and the rest of the soul in Him—the peace which comes from Christ and through Him. In its character it is that which Christ Himself enjoys, and when we have it, with no gloom from the past, no forebodings for the future, no pursuing vengeance and no depressing fear, we stand strong and calm amid the troubles of this world, like the rock unmoved amid the ocean surges. It is a Divine tranquillity which the world cannot take away and no earthly sorrow diminish. 2. It is a present blessing—not one hoped for to be realized by and by. Yet there are many who are in uncertainty about it, and they go about doubting and unhappy. It ought not to be so when Christ gives it freely. Come forth and dwell in the glory of the Divine love and it will flow into the soul. 3. It is a powerful blessing. (1) A power of stimulus. It is the mightiest help on the side of piety, it leads and lifts the soul to Him from whom it comes. (2) A power of defence (*Phil. iv. 7*). (a) It fortifies against temptation and sin; (b) against infidelity. A Christian may be a poor logician and unacquainted with historical evidences, but if Divine peace rules his heart, he has a stronger defence than reason or learning can supply. (3) A power of control. It is a wise and safe monitor. We are often perplexed as to what is right or wrong in pursuits, amusements, alliances, &c. But if the peace of God is supreme it will settle these moral difficulties at once. (4) A power of concentration. It gathers together all the powers of manhood that they may go forth in obedience to Christ. It enabled Paul, freed as he was by it from all doubts and fears, to say, "This one thing I do." **II. INDUCEMENTS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS TO ITS REALIZATION.** 1. The Divine call to it—"To which we also are called." They surely forget this who go in doubt or uncertainty. It is God's gracious design that we should have it. The gospel summons us to happiness. "Peace on earth" was the proclamation of the angels. To give it was the mission of Christ, and His promise to the disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me peace." 2. Our condition in this world of turmoil and sin. By it we may be raised above the sorrows and anxieties of time. We can and ought to be calm when other men are agitated—when panic is abroad, credit shaken, commerce paralyzed, the bonds of society loosened, human hopes stricken. 3. The unity of the Church—"in one body." The more we are conscious of it, and let it rule, the more shall we con-

tribute to the manifest oneness of the body of Christ. No strifes and divisions can exist where it reigns. **III. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH IT IS TO BE CHERISHED.** Thankfulness is an habitual exercise of the Christian soul; here it is for peace. And when we think that God has called us to it, and contemplate the way in which it has come to us through the Cross, and estimate its value in this world of sorrow, how profound should be our gratitude. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The ruling peace of Christ*:—The figure is that of the umpire or abitrator at the games who, looking down on the arena, watches that the combatants strive lawfully, and adjudges the prize. The peace of Christ, then, is to sit enthroned as umpire in the heart; or if we might give a mediæval instead of a classical shape to the figure, that fair sovereign, Peace, is to be Queen of the Tournament, and her "eyes rain influence and adjudge the prize." When contending impulses and reasons distract and seem to pull us in opposite directions, let her settle which is to prevail. We may make a rude test of good and evil by their effects on our inward repose. Whatever mars our tranquillity, ruffling the surface so that Christ's image is no longer visible, is to be avoided. That stillness of spirit is very sensitive, and shrinks away at the presence of an evil thing. Let it be for us what the barometer is to the sailor, and if it sinks let us be sure that a storm is at hand. There is nothing so precious that it is worth while to lose the peace of Christ for the sake of it. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The peace of God ruling the heart*:—There are here four pieces of advice. **I. POSSESS THE PEACE OF GOD.** Many persons have peace but it is a false peace, the peace of ignorance, stupidity, indifference—the followers of the false prophet who cried "peace, peace," when there was no peace. Woe to the man whose peace of mind is like the deadly smoothness of the current just as it nears the cataract! The text refers to—**1. Peace with God.** If you are reconciled through Jesus Christ, don't act as though it were doubtful (Rom. v. 1). Growing out of this there is peace with God in all His providences which can only come through an entire submission to the Divine will. If thou caust not change thy place change thy mind till thy mind shall love thy place. If forgiven why raise minor points. It is like quarreling on small points of law when the great case has been decided. **2. Peace such as God commends.** Perfect peace with Himself and then with all men. What are men's offences against us compared with those which God has forgiven? And what can men do to us at the worst that we should fear or revenge their injuries? "Peace on earth: good-will toward men." **3. Peace which God works in the soul.** We cannot create this. To take the wild-beast heart out of us and to put a new heart in us is a Divine work. **4. The peace of God—a Hebraism for excellence, as great mountains and trees are called hills and trees of God.** It is greater than any other peace. It is the holiest, deepest, one which passeth all understanding, and eternal. **II. LET THIS PEACE RULE IN YOUR HEARTS.** **1.** In order to peace there must be a ruler. Those people who are for putting down all governors may bid farewell to peace. The worst king is better than the despotism of the mob, the carnival of misrule wherein every man doth what is right in his own eyes, and all eyes love darkness rather than light. See how it is in a house! Where the head is not the head, the hand is not the hand, and nothing is itself. You must have a governing faculty somewhere; and if nothing governs within your heart the devil governs. **2.** It is a blessed gift of grace when the peace of God rules in the heart. If it is in your heart at all, it must rule, for it has power to put down all rebellion. When a riot arises we appeal to the lawful power to come and put down the uproar. So in our hearts we can say to the master principle, the peace of God, "Come, put down my murmuring, arrest this bad temper, help me that I may not break out into anger." **3.** Yield yourself to the blessed umpireship of the peace of God. Resolve to judge all things by it, and do nothing that would upset its government. If you do—say by getting angry—you harm yourself physically, but much more spiritually. In such a case you cannot pray as you did, nor read some scriptures as you did, nor look the Well-beloved in the face and say "I am acting in a way that pleases Him." It is therefore a serious thing for a believer to break this peace. **4.** If a man has this peace he may go down to any meeting, however turbulent—and yet he will be wise to answer and be silent, to do or not to do, for it will keep him quiet. But if his mind be unhinged before the Lord he will be weak as another man, and say and do what he will wish to wipe out with tears. **III. STRENGTHEN YOURSELF BY GOD'S SPIRIT WITH ARGUMENTS.** Remember—**1.** Only can you be happy in heart and healthy in spirit as long as you keep the peace of God. **2.** Only then can the Church prosper. A Church disputing is a Church committing suicide; and most disputes are about little points? **3.** Only thus can God be

glorified. If you are always fretting and anxious how can you promote that; or if you are finding fault with everybody. 4. God calls you to this. If you are not a peaceful man you have not inherited your true calling. He called you to be a peacemaker. 5. He calls you in one body. What would you think of the hand if it should say, "I will have no peace with the eye," or the foot if it should say, "I will not carry the heavy body about"? What is to become of the glory of Christ if the members live in contention? IV. OCCUPY YOUR MINDS HEALTHILY—"Be ye thankful." 1. That is the way to keep our peace with God. Bless Him for all your miseries as well as for all your mercies. 2. That is the way to keep our peace with men. Be thankful in the home, society, &c., for benefits received. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Unity and Peace:—1. It may surprise us to find peace urged as a duty, whereas it seems a matter over which we have no control. But the text proceeds upon the supposition and urges thankfulness for it also. 2. Moreover, remember that these words were written when the apostle lay in prison, expecting a violent death; when false doctrines were rife and religious animosities fierce; and they are part of an eager controversial Epistle. Therefore it is possible to be in the midst of danger, to breathe the atmosphere of religious controversy, and even to be a controversialist, and yet the soul not lose its deep peace. Joined with this is the doctrine of Church unity as its basis. I. THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

1. Distinguish between the unity of comprehensiveness and that of singularity. The army is one, that is the oneness of unity; the soldier is one, that is the oneness of the unit. The body is a unity of manifold comprehensiveness, a member of a body exhibits a unity of singularity. Without unity peace is impossible. There is no peace in a soldier, but there is in an army; none in a limb, only in a body. In order to have peace you must have a higher unity, and herein consists the unity of God's own being. When the Unitarian speaks of God as one, he means simply singularity of number. We mean that He is of manifold comprehensiveness. "I and My Father are one."

2. Unity subsists between things dissimilar. (1) There is no unity in the separate atoms of a sand-pit; they are things similar. Even if they be hardened into a mass they are only a mass. There is no unity in a flock of sheep; it is simply a repetition of things similar. (2) But a body is made up of dissimilar members and is thus a unity; so that if you strike off from this any one member the unity is destroyed and only a part is left. (3) So with the Church.

(a) The unity of its ages is not that every age is the repetition of every other, but that each has put forth its own fragment of truth. In early ages martyrdom proclaimed the eternal sanctity of truth rather than give up which a man must lose his life. This age by its revolutions and socialisms proclaims the brotherhood of man. So that just as every separate ray—violet, blue, and orange—make up the white ray, so these manifold fragments blended make up the perfect white ray of truth.

(b) With regard to individuals. At the reformation, e.g., it was given to one to proclaim that salvation is not local; to another, justification by faith; to another, the sovereignty of God; to others, the supremacy of the Scriptures, the right of private judgment, the duty of the individual conscience. (c) So again with regard to Churches. Would we force upon others our Anglicanism? Then in consistency you are bound to demand that in God's world there shall be but one colour, and one note. But the various Churches advance different truths, varieties to be blended in unity.

3. Unity consists in submission to one single influence or spirit. Take away the unifying life of the body, and decomposition begins, the principle of cohesion being gone. We know the power of a single living influence. Take, e.g., the power wherewith the orator holds together a thousand men as if they were one; or that which concentrates the conflicting feelings of a people when the threat of foreign invasion has fused down the edges of variance and makes the classes of this manifold and mighty England one; or the mighty winds which hold together the various atoms of the desert, so that they rush like a living thing across the wilderness. And this is the unity of the Church, the subjection to the one unifying spirit of its God. You cannot produce unity by ecclesiastical discipline, by consenting to some form of expression, such as "Let us agree to differ," by parliamentary enactments. Give us the living Spirit of God and we shall be one. This was exhibited at Pentecost, and may be so again. II. THE INWARD PEACE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.

1. This peace is when a man is contented with his lot, when the flesh is subdued to the spirit, and when he feels in his heart that all is right. To this we are called, "Come unto Me all ye that labour, &c." 2. This was the dying bequest of Christ; and herein lies the power of Christianity to satisfy the deepest want of man—the repose of acquiescence in the will of God. 3. It is God's peace. God is

rest. The "I am" of God is contrasted with the "I am becoming" of all other things. And this peace arises out of His unity. There is no discord between the powers and attributes of God. 4. It is a living peace, and must be distinguished from the peace of the man who lives for and enjoys self: the peace on the surface of the caverned lake that no wind can stir; that is the peace of stagnation: the peace of the stones which have fallen down the mountain's side; that is the peace of inanity: the peace in the hearts of enemies who lie together on the battle field; their animosity is silenced in death. If ours is the peace of the sensualist, or of inaction, apathy or sin, we may whisper to ourselves "Peace, peace," but there will be no peace. 5. It is the peace which comes from an inward power—"rule." There is no peace except where there is the possibility of the opposite of peace, although now restrained and controlled. You do not speak of the peace of a grain of sand, or of a mere pond, but of the sea, because its opposite is there implied. And we make a great mistake when we say there is strength in passion. If the passions of a man are strong, the man is weak if he cannot control them. The real strength of a man is calmness, the word of Christ saying, "Peace!" and there is "a great calm." 6. It is the peace of reception, but not of inaction. (1) The peace of obedience. Very great is this when a man has his lot fixed, and his mind made up, and sees his destiny before him and acquiesces in it. Deep is the peace of a soldier to whom has been assigned an untenable position, with the command, "Keep that, even if you die," and he obediently remains to die. Great was the peace of Elisha. "Knowest thou," said the excited men around him, "that the Lord will take," &c. "Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace." (2) The peace of gratefulness; that peace which Israel had when these words were spoken. "Stand still and see the salvation of God." (F. W. Robertson, M.A.) *The heart controls the life*:—An engine, dragging its train on the rail, is sweeping along the landscape. As it comes near it strikes awe into the spectator. Its furious fire and smoke, its rapid whirling wheels, its mighty mass shaking the ground beneath it, and the stealthy quickness of its approach,—its whole appearance and adjuncts make the observer bate his breath till it is past. What power would suffice to arrest that giant strength. Although a hundred men should stand up before it, or seize its whirling wheels, it would cast them down, and over their mangled bodies hold on its unimpeded course, with nothing to mark the occurrence but a quiver as it cleared the heap. But there is a certain spot in the machinery where the touch of a little child will make the monster slacken his pace, creep gently forward, stand still, slide back, like a spaniel fawning under an angry word at the feet of his master. I find a law in my members that when I would do good evil is present with me. No power in heaven or earth will arrest that downward fall, unless it be laid upon the heart. (W. Arnot, D.D.) **Be ye thankful.**—*Thankfulness*:—I. THINGS TO BE THANKFUL FOR. 1. Providential mercies. (1) Your food. (2) Your clothing. (3) Your health. (4) Your learning. (5) Your reason. (6) Your parents, friends, and homes. (7) Deliverance from danger. 2. The means of grace. (1) Your Bible. (2) Your sabbaths. (3) Prayer. (4) Christian companionships. (5) Christian books. 3. Christ and salvation. II. THE WAYS OF SHOWING THANKFULNESS. 1. In word. Thank God—(1) at your meals. (2) In your prayers. (3) In your praises. 2. In deed. (1) By giving of our money. (2) Your time. (3) Yourselves. III. THE SIN OF UNTHANKFULNESS. It is ranked with the vilest sins. (J. H. Wilson, M.A.) *Thankfulness; natural*:—If you consider the universe as one body, you shall find society and conversation to supply the office of the blood and spirits; and it is gratitude that makes them circulate. Look over the whole creation, and you shall see that the band or cement which holds together all the parts of this glorious fabric is gratitude or something like it. You may observe it in all the elements; for does not the air feed the flame, and does not the flame at the same time warm and enlighten the air? Is not the sea always sending forth as well as taking in? And does not the earth quit scores with all the elements, in the noble fruits and productions that issue from it? And in all the light and influence that the heavens bestow on this lower world, though the lower world cannot equal their benefaction, yet, with a kind of grateful return, it reflects those rays that it cannot recompense; so that there is some return, however, although there can be no requital. (R. South, D.D.) *Thankfulness should be practical*:—As physicians judge of the condition of men's hearts by the pulse that beats in their arms and not by the words that proceed from their mouths; so we may judge of the thankfulness of men by their lives rather than by their professions. (E. Foster.) *Gratitude the one thing needed*:—A gentleman in Bombay seeing

an anchorite sitting under a cocoa nut tree, asked for an interest in his prayers. The anchorite replied he would with pleasure grant the request, but he scarce knew what best to ask for him. "I have seen you often," he said, and you appear to have everything you want that can conduce to human happiness; perhaps the best thing I can ask for you will be a grateful heart. (*W. Baxterdale.*) *Rest and be thankful*:—There is a picturesque tract of the Western Highlands of Scotland, in passing through which the traveller has to ascend a long winding path, very steep, rough, and lonely, leading up a wild and desolate glen. The savage and awful grandeur of the scenery, with its bare hills and rocks, is hardly equalled in this country. But if the traveller goes up that glen on foot (and it is hardly possible to go up it otherwise), his appreciation of the scene around him is gradually overborne by the sense of pure physical fatigue. Not without a great strain upon limbs and heart, can that rugged way be traversed. At last you reach a ridge, whence the road descends steeply on the other side of the hill. You have ended your climbing, and you may now begin to go down again, from whichever side you come. And there, at this summit, you will find a rude seat of stone, which bears the inscription in deeply-cut letters, "Rest and be thankful." Many weary travellers have rested there: let us trust that a good many have been thankful. We all know that the like name has been given to more than one or two like resting-places, that it is borne by various seats, at the top of various steep ascents in this country. There is something pleasing, and something touching, in the simple natural piety which has dictated the homely name. He was a heathen who said it, but he spoke well who said, Wheresoever man feels himself in peace and rest, let him think of God, and give thanks to Him. "Rest and be thankful," says the stone in the Highland glen: "Be ye thankful," says St. Paul to the Christians of Colossæ. It is not said to whom we are to be thankful. There is a touch of natural piety in the fact, that that does not need to be said. That is taken for granted! We all know who it is that is the Giver of all good: and when we are told, generally, to be thankful, of course we know to whom! Resting at the summit of the mountain path, it is not to the man who erected that seat for the weary traveller: though it is fit and right that he should be kindly thought of while we are enjoying the effect of his work, yet we are to look beyond him to a cause above him. He erected that seat, acting (as it were) for God: every mortal who does a kind and good deed, in a right spirit, is acting for God, and in God's name: and he went away when his work was done, asking of the wayfarer, putting his request on record with a pen of iron upon the stone,—that for whatever comfort and rest might be experienced there, the wayfarer might bestow his thanks in the right quarter. And St. Paul does just the same! (*A. K. H. Boyd, D.D.*)

Ver. 16. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.—*The Word of Christ*:—I. WHAT IS IT? The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. 1. Christ is their author. 2. He is their subject-matter—they testify of Him. Christ is the Word, the wisdom of God, the truth; and truth as well as grace came by Him. II. HOW SHALL WE TREAT IT? 1. Let it dwell in us. It must not be as a stranger, or a visitor, or as an acquaintance with whom we are not specially intimate, or as a friend away and seldom seen, but rather as a resident member of our family with whom we are in constant and loving communication. 2. Let it dwell in you. It is not enough that it be in our house, study, pocket, and so at hand. It must be in our heart, pervading our whole spiritual nature, directing and controlling all our life and conduct. "Thy Word have I hid in my heart." "Out of the heart are the issues of life." 3. Let it dwell in you richly, plentifully, profoundly. This implies—(1) An intimate knowledge of the truth. (2) A believing, saving experience of the truth. We should seek to understand it in its inmost compass; in all its bearings and relations, and then gladly receive it, in the love of it, into good and honest hearts (James i. 2). (*T. W. Sydnor.*) *The school of the Word*:—I. THE LESSON-BOOK. The Word of Christ, so called, because—1. He is its central theme. The beginning of the story of the race is told that the first Adam may prepare the way for the second: then the mass of the race is forgotten, and one chosen family selected because Christ was to come out of it. The songs, prophecies, teachings of the Old Testament are full of Christ, and its characters are as fragments of the perfect character of Jesus. The ethics of the book find their full manifestation in Him. The Gospels are biographies of Him, and the Epistles expositions of the truths of that biography. 2. It was originated by Christ. Some write of what they see or hear, but Christ produces the history He causes

to be recorded. He not only breathed His Spirit upon men's minds that they might write its doctrines; He produced the facts which are the basis of the doctrines. Pardon is taught; but He made the atonement by His death. Immortality is taught; but He revealed it first by His resurrection. 3. He dwells in it. Men are in quest of Christ, and seek Him in sacraments and holy things and places. But we have "not to ascend into heaven to bring Him down," &c. "The Word is nigh thee." Christ is in His Word, not as Plato in his republic or Shakespeare in his plays, but as a living and operating power. "My words are spirit, and they are life." 4. Through it He works. There is not a process of grace promised or commended that it does not promote. (1) Conviction of sin. "The entrance of Thy Word giveth light." "The Word is powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword." (2) Conversion. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." (3) Salvation from sin. "Thy Word have I hid in my heart," &c. (4) Edification. "The Word of His grace . . . is able to build you up," &c. (5) All sound Christian profit. "Is profitable for doctrine," &c.

II. THE SCHOOL. 1. The Church generally. Christ appointed the Church to teach His Word, and His Word forms the basis of her creeds, and the final authority when those creeds are questioned. It is to be exalted in her worship, commemorated in her sacraments, and proclaimed and defended in her pulpits. 2. The school of devotion; the prayer-meeting. 3. The school of experience; the class or fellowship-meeting. 4. The school of the family, where children learn theology, and the Divine character and administration, by object-lessons, by what father and mother say and do. 5. But pre-eminently is the Sunday school the school of the Word.

III. THE TEACHER. 1. His qualification. The Word is to dwell in him richly—in his tongue as its expounder; in his memory as a student; in his heart as a believer: so that when he prays he uses it, when he teaches texts come to his tongue-ends, and as he lives he illustrates it. It must so dwell in him that he will delight in it, love to quote it, go to sleep in times of storm resting upon it, and use it in the hour of death as the key to the kingdom. 2. His method. (1) Teaching; (2) admonishing; (3) translating into life. (*Bishop Vincent.*)

The indwelling of the Word.—There is nothing easier than to hear the Word with a general regard, and few things more difficult than to receive it as a principle of spiritual life. Satan hinders; cumbering with much business, diverting with trifles, or disturbing with wicked imaginations or affections. 1. **THE WORD OF CHRIST.** 1. In a special and limited sense this is the gospel, because He preached and published it. 2. In a larger sense it is both Testaments, for He is the author of both. 3. Then in listening to Bible teaching we are listening to Christ Himself. "The Word" is one of His titles, and He would have us honour it by honouring the Scriptures which testify of Him. 4. It is sometimes called the Word of the Kingdom, because it shows the way to the kingdom of grace, that we may be partakers of the kingdom of glory; "the Word of life," because the instrument of regeneration and spiritual sustentation. 5. But though necessary, how many unnecessary things are preferred before it. It is the polar star which shines out in the spiritual firmament to point you to Christ; and yet in how many instances is the glimmering taper of human reason preferred! It opens a well of life; yet many choose the broken cistern.

II. ITS DWELLING-PLACE. 1. It is to dwell. (1) This points out a contrast between a settled and vagrant life. With the mere wanderer we hold little in common: the resident is well known. As you give yourself up to the study of the sacred oracles, the mind of the Spirit becomes imparted to your own. (2) This is an allusion to God's "dwelling" in the Holy of Holies. Christ's Word is to be as the Shekinah. 2. It is to dwell within: not in the understanding merely to enlighten it, nor in the judgment to inform and convince it, but to be deeply seated and treasured up in the heart. "I will write My law in their inward parts," &c. And unless it is so written it is quite certain that we have no interest in the covenant. (1) It is to dwell there as a man dwells in his own house, which he is proud of calling his castle, and which is not as a temporary tent. "If ye continue in My Word," &c. How many there are who give it only the entertainment of a wayfaring man who obtains with difficulty a lodging for the night, and in the morning is gone. (2) In order thus to dwell it must be mixed with faith. Without faith it may produce various effects: it may make you, like Herod, "do many things," and induce you, like Felix, "to hear Paul gladly"; it may produce feelings of wonder, &c.; but it is only when received in faith that it can really profit.

III. THE MEASURE IN WHICH IT IS TO DWELL IN US. 1. Richly: not as a scanty stream, but as a full

flowing river. You are not to be content with partial views of God's truth. The whole written Word is the soul's pasturage. "All Scripture . . . is profitable." "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word," &c. 2. This requires prayerful searching, and much more than reading in haste a chapter in the morning or at night. We do not search after worldly wealth so. 3. This rich indwelling will be fruitful in (1) comfort; (2) holiness; (3) revived spiritual life. (*T. Watson, B.A.*) *The indwelling Word of Christ*:—1. This exhortation is connected with the exhortation out of which it springs (vers. 14-15); and with the outward expression in which it finds vent (ver. 16). 2. The Word of Christ is not His personal teaching merely, but the whole Bible as His present Word, affording the materials of present speech. 3. Its indwelling is personal, and is not to be evaporated, as if it referred to the Church collective (Rom. viii. 11; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. iii. 17; 2 Tim. i. 5, 14). I. LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU. 1. This implies a sense of the preciousness of Christ Himself realized by faith. (1) No one's word will be precious to you unless he is precious whose word it is. The word of one you dislike will be contemptuously rejected; the word of one who is an object of indifference will pass swiftly by you. (2) How much of the Word of Christ may be missed unless He is precious. In many parts you think that He is only dimly and distantly to be found, and even passages fullest of Him do not bring Him as speaking personally to you. But it is only as it does that that the Bible is the Word of Christ. A friend's letter is his word to me when by means of it I call him up before me in his own loved person speaking to me. Then it dwells in me. Thus, through my love to Him and His preciousness to me, Scriptures which seem to have little to do with Him may become His Word to me. 2. The preciousness of Christ's Word, as well as of Christ Himself, is essential to its dwelling in you. (1) If Christ is precious, His Word must be precious. The word of a precious friend is precious even before you know what it contains. Its very outside is welcome. But it becomes more so as you study it, and especially if it be of real value. (2) Most Christians can name a text apparently having little to do with Christ, which has become, nevertheless, one of His best remembrancers. It is connected with some marked crisis; as a whisper of consolation, a breath of pity in sinfulness, felt as the Word of Christ just then wanted. (3) The way of finding Christ all through the Bible is not merely to get it to speak of Christ, but to get Christ to speak to you about it; and so to make it all His, i.e., let it all, every bit and fragment of it, be welded into your experience, with Christ living in you the hope of glory. (4) This may be by the Spirit being given in answer to the prayer of faith. He teaches you all things as said by Christ. Do not force it to tell of Christ formally, so as to offend critics and offend ordinary readers. Take it in its plain meaning, but expect that Christ in it may have some lesson to teach; some comfort to impart; some rebuke to administer. 3. The felt preciousness of real present and living intercourse between Christ and you will cause the Word, as His, to abide in you. (1) That Word sustains the intercourse, and is for colloquial uses. You are to dwell in Christ and He in you, but communion cannot long be maintained without language. We may dream of this mutual indwelling after some vague, sleepy fashion; but if it is to be more than a dream there must be talk between us. He Himself deals with this subject (John xv. 7; xvi. 23). This can only be realized by the Comforter "bringing to remembrance whatsoever He hath said unto you." His Word, then, must be the staple of the verbal intercourse. He uses it in speaking to you, and you in speaking to Him. (2) Thus used, it will dwell. Otherwise, while whole strings of texts or chapters may be retained in the memory, and may be glibly quoted, the virtue will be gone out of them. If you would have the Word to abide in you as the precious Word of a precious Saviour, you must always turn it to account in fellowship with Him. II. RICHLY. 1. In quantity. Let the mind and soul be richly stored. Ah! how much there is of the Bible that does not dwell in you because you do not realize it as the Word of Christ; whole chapters that have not been linked to any gracious dealing of Christ. 2. In quality. (1) A rich manure is one that enriches the soil; and it dwells in the soil richly in proportion as it enriches it, turning its hard, dry sterility into fruitful mould. So let the Word of Christ dwell in you as to enrich your souls. (2) But it must be as the Word of Christ. For such is the poverty and perversity of the soil, that otherwise even the Word will, instead of enriching the soul, become partaker of its deadness, and end in being as salt which has lost its savour. The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life, making it truly the living Word of a living Christ. (3)

And how penetrating, as well as powerful, should be its virtue. It should reach to every nook of your life. 3. In correspondence to the riches of Him whose Word it is. Riches of goodness, glory, wisdom, knowledge, grace; unsearchable riches of Christ. 4. It is to dwell in you, not only as rich receivers, but dispensers. "Freely ye have received, freely give." You are to be richly productive, fruit-bearing, in faith, in good works. 5. Notice the social bearing of the precept as embedded in the context (vers. 12-15 on the one hand, and ver. 16 on the other). In either view this indwelling is not to be like a mass of dead matter crammed into a dead receptacle; as bales are packed in a warehouse, or loads of unread learning are crowded on library shelves for show. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth, the life, the hand must speak. (*R. S. Candlish, D.D.*) *Indwelling of the Word of Christ*.—I. THE WORD OF CHRIST. 1. The literal Word of Christ is one of the most wonderful things that ever has been in the world. Not from Roman rostrum, nor in terms of Greek philosophy, nor as a Jewish rabbi, but simply and naturally to simple and ordinary men wherever they could be got together, and as He spake the words seem to root themselves in the heart, and grew a living force in the life of the nation. Then came the alternative that He must keep silence or die; but He went on speaking till He said, "It is finished." Immediately on His resurrection He began to speak, and when He went away He left nothing behind Him but His Word. At that time His life and death were unknown powers, and He did not leave the least written explanation of them, nor were the Gospels in existence at the time of this Epistle; but there was the Word of Christ in its newness and energy. 2. Whether or not that Word would have lived without a literary embodiment we are not required to settle. For evidently it was Christ's purpose to condense His living speech into writings for the instruction of men. And there is clear reference here to the written as well as the spoken Word. Thus the phrase takes its most comprehensive sense—the gospel—all that is revealed of God for human salvation. 3. Manifestly all this lies solely in the Scriptures. There is authoritative Word of Christ for us nowhere else. But here the Book is all His. He has fulfilled it, explained it, inspired it, made it a living Word from first to last, that He might by His Spirit give it living and blessed applications. II. ITS INDWELLING. Yield yourselves up as sacred dwellings to be occupied with it. 1. This means that other tenants are not to remain unless in full agreement with this chief dweller. Thoughts and words of men, plans of earthly ambition, pleasures of sin—away! All thoughts are to be ruled, all cares hallowed by it, and all enjoyments made safe and good. It must be this much, or it can be nothing vital. Christ's Word in the morning, selfish prudence all through the day; Christ's Word for religious service, the word of man for the mercantile transaction; Christ's Word for sickness and death, other words for times of health and pleasure; will not do. The tenant will only occupy as sole possessor of the tenement. 2. Let it dwell. There is plenty of it to fill the wonderful house. (1) Down to the deepest base of life it will go, where passions lurk, and flowing round and through them, it will purge away what is unhallowed, leaving only wholesome forces to strengthen and perfect character. (2) Into the rooms that lie more open to common day, and more level with the world, where many busy feet come and go—where knowledge gathers her stores, prudence holds her scales, judgment records her decisions, diligence plies her tasks, acquisition counts her gains, and foresight watches the opening future; into all these the living Word will enter, and at her ingress the darkening shadow melts, the wrinkles of care are smoothed, and slippery things cease their blandishments, and injustice and unkindness hide their heads. (3) Up higher yet, where imagination lights her lamp, and invention stirs her fires, and desire bends the knee, looking upward, and hope sits watching with nothing between her and the stars. 3. Richly—in its best forms and sweetest fragrance, with all its luminous, guiding powers. Fill yourselves with it. Open all the doors, fling wide the windows. You have only to do that. You have not to make the Word; it is nigh thee in thy heart and in thy mouth if thou wilt but let it dwell in thee richly. 4. But here is more than a mere passive allowance. There is a direct appeal to the will and to the activity of the mind. The Word, abundant as it is, will not come to dwell at all without consent and careful and diligent endeavour. Much "wisdom" is needed for the due remembrance and seasonable entertainment of the various parts in order to apply it to meet the wants of life as they arise. In this every man must be his own minister. We do not need the whole Bible every day; we need it as we need corn

in the granary, as the lamps by night. There is many a passage in reserve. We glance at them to-day with only a general interest, but the day will come when they will be as thousands of gold and silver. Meantime it is a great matter to know what is daily bread for this day. (1) Am I in the dark about myself, about the world? Then it will be wise to let the Word of Christ dwell in me as a revelation. (2) Am I doubting and desponding, finding few signs of grace? Then let me remember the Word of Christ as a word of assured salvation, saving the eyes from tears, the feet from falling, and the soul from death. (3) Am I, though calmed with forgiveness, very weak, and unfit for continuing the struggle of the nobler life? Then let me take some strong promise, adapted to the need, and drink it up as a fainting man would drink a cordial until I am refreshed. (4) Am I sorrowing? Can I forget "Let not your heart be troubled." (5) Am I passing away from earth and time? More than ever do I need to take Him at His word: "I will not leave nor forsake." III. THE OUTFLOW. One of the divinest and most necessary truths is that we must give in order to have. The Word of Christ, in order to secure continuance, must be always leaving us. Go among the mountains, and you will see that it is the living stream that flows away; and where it flows the grass is green, and the flowers bloom, and the cattle drink, and the children linger to dip the foot and hear the song. Yet the spring is in no way exhausted. It is fed by the drawing sun, the condensing mountains, the bountiful clouds, the wide sea. Let your inner life, nourished by the indwelling Word, have not ostentatious and noisy, but natural and continuous expression. Its light will come to you from the land of lights. So will you draw from the infinite ocean of Divine love (see vers. 16, 17). A beautiful life; a life of poetry and heart music; a life, too, open alike to all. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) **PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS.**—I. THE PSALMS of the Old Testament have no single and universally accepted designation in the Hebrew Scriptures. They first obtained such in the Septuagint. Psalm comes from a word signifying properly a touching, and then a touching of a stringed instrument with a plectrum, and next the instrument itself, and lastly the song sung with this musical accompaniment. It was in this latest stage that the word was adopted by the Septuagint, and to this agree the ecclesiastical definitions of it. In all probability the word here and in Eph. v. 19 refers to the inspired Psalms of the Hebrew canon, and certainly designates these on all other occasions where it is met with in the New Testament, with the doubtful exception of 1 Cor. xiv. 16. The psalms, then, which the apostle would have the faithful to sing to one another are those of David, Asaph, and the other sweet singers of Israel. II. HYMNS. While the "psalm" by right of primogeniture, as at once the oldest and most venerable, occupies the foremost place, the Church of Christ does not restrict herself to such, but claims the freedom of bringing new things as well as old out of her treasure house, a new salvation demanding a new song. It was the essence of a Greek "hymn" that it should be addressed to, or be in praise of a god or a hero, *i.e.*, a deified man, as Callisthenes reminded Alexander, who, claiming hymns for himself, or suffering them to be addressed to him, implicitly accepted divine honours. In the gradual breaking down of the distinction between the human and the divine which marked the fallen days of Greece and Rome, with the usurping on the part of men of divine honours, the hymn came more and more to be applied to men; although this was not without remonstrance. When the word was assumed into the language of the Church, this essential distinction clung to it still. A "psalm" might be a *De profundis*, the story of man's deliverance, or a commemoration of mercies received; and of a "spiritual song" much the same could be said; a "hymn" must always be more or less of a *Magnificat*, a direct address of praise and glory to God. Augustine in more places than one states the essentials of a hymn. 1. It must be sung. 2. It must be praise. 3. It must be to God. But though "hymn" was a word freely adopted in the fourth century, it nowhere occurs in the early Fathers, probably because it was so steeped in heathenism, so linked with profane associations, there were so many hymns to Zeus, Hermes, Aphrodite, &c., that the early Christians shrank from it. We may confidently assume that the hymns referred to in the text were direct addresses to God, such as Luke i. 46-55, 68-79; Acts iv. 24, and that which Paul and Silas sang in the Philippian dungeon (Acts xvi. 25). How noble, how magnificent uninspired hymns could prove we have evidence in the *Te Deum*, in the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, and in many a later heritage which the Church has acquired. That the Church, brought at the time when St. Paul wrote into a new and marvellous world of realities, would be rich in these we might be sure, even if no evidence existed to this effect. Of such

evidence, however, there is abundance (Eph. v. 14; 1 Tim. iii. 16; 2 Tim. ii. 11-14). And as it was quite impossible that the Church, releasing itself from the Jewish synagogue, should fall into the same mistake as some portions of the Reformed Church, we may be sure that it adopted into liturgic use, not psalms only, but also hymns, singing them to Christ as God (Pliny, Ep. x. 96); though this we may conclude, more largely in Churches gathered out of the heathen world than in those wherein a strong Jewish element existed. III. SPIRITUAL SONGS. *Ὅδῃ* is the only word of this group which the Apocalypse knows (v. 9, xiv. 3, xv. 3). St. Paul, on the two occasions when he employs it, adds "spiritual" to it, and this, no doubt, because "Ode" by itself might mean any kind of song, as of battle, of harvest, or festal, or hymeneal, while "psalm," from its Hebrew use, and "hymn," from its Greek, did not need such qualification. The epithet thus applied does not affirm that these odes were Divinely inspired, any more than the spiritual man is an inspired man (1 Cor. iii. 1; Gal. vi. 1), but only that they were such as were composed by spiritual men, and moved in the sphere of spiritual things. How are we, then, to distinguish these from the former two. If "psalms" represent the heritage of sacred song derived by the Christian Church from the Jewish, the "hymns and spiritual songs" will cover what further in the same kind it produced out of its own bosom; but with a difference. What the hymns were we have seen; but Christian thought and feeling will soon have expanded into a wider range of poetic utterances than those in which there is a direct address to the Deity. If we turn, e.g., to Herbert's *Temple*, or Keble's *Christian Year*, there are many poems in both, which, as certainly they are not "psalms," so as little do they possess the characteristics of hymns. "Spiritual songs" these might be fitly called; even as in almost all our collections of so-called "hymns" there are not a few which by much juster title would bear this name. (*Archbishop Trench.*) *The poets of the New Testament*.—I. THE EXTENT OF THE POETIC ENDOWMENT IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCHES. That it was extensively bestowed we may conceive—1. From the frequent reference made to it (1 Cor. xiv. 26). In Corinth it was valued as a *charismata* (see also Eph. v. 19; James v. 13). 2. From the universality of the preternatural endowment. The gift of the Spirit was generally bestowed, and this would rouse the poetic faculty in all who had it, and consecrate it to sacred uses. 3. From the universality of excited feelings in the apostolic Churches. Most of those who embraced religion were subject to extraordinary excitement, and poetry is the language of excited feelings. To the unconverted this inspiration was madness or intoxication. II. ITS CHARACTER. Poetical productions have a character. They are fruitful or barren, corrupt or chaste. There is much in our great poets repugnant to our sense of propriety and which we would fain suppress; but the mere fact that these early Christian poets were under the power of the Spirit would show that their poetry must have been high and pure. There are three things which determine the value of poetry. 1. Intellectual merit. This was high with the primitive Christians. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly." Christian truth is calculated to incite the highest feelings of the soul, and these lofty emotions would find utterance in "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." The profoundest feelings of our nature can only be expressed in poetry. The highest strains of the orator are poetical. 2. Moral purity. "Admonishing one another." This implies a deep concern for each other's moral welfare. The basis of this concern is personal morality, and issued in strains that were morally improving. 3. Poetic conception. The ideas of the primitive Christians were imaginative and creative. III. ITS UTILITY. Every Divine gift is bestowed for a useful purpose. What is the use of this? 1. For personal enjoyment. The true poet lives in a creation of his own, and in the deepest solitude he communes with the infinite source of light, life, love, and beauty. "Poetry," said Coleridge, "has been to me its own exceeding great reward. It has soothed my affliction, it has endeared solitude, and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the good and beautiful in all that surrounds me." 2. As an element in public worship. Nothing adorns, enlivens, and augments the interest of public worship more than music. It secures the harmony of hearts as well as of voices. 3. It is of social utility. Poetry has exercised a powerful influence on society in all ages, for consolation, inspiration, &c. (*P. L. Davies, M.A.*) *The service of song*.—I. THE DUTY. 1. Singing is God's ordinance, binding all sorts of men (Eph. vi. 19; James v. 13; Psa. lxxvi. 1-2, xcii. 1, cxxxv. 3). This is a part of our piety, and is a most comely thing. 2. A Christian should recreate himself chiefly this way (James v. 13). God does not allow us to shoulder out this with other recreations. 3. We should sing in our houses as well

as in our Churches. (1) For daily exercise (Psa. ci. 1-2). (2) When Christians meet together (1 Cor. xiv. 26; Eph. v. 19). II. THE MANNER. 1. We should teach and admonish by singing, and that—(1) ourselves, by considering the matter. (2) Others, as ministers in appointing hymns for the congregation, or masters of the family, or when Christians meet, there should be choice of such psalms as may comfort or rebuke according to occasion (1 Cor. xiv. 26). 2. We must sing with grace. This is diversely interpreted; some understand it of the dexterity that should be used in singing; others of the comeliness, right order, reverence, or delight of the heart; others of thanksgiving. But I think that to sing with grace is to exercise the graces of the heart in singing, *i.e.*, with holy joy (Psa. ix. 2); trust in God's mercies (Psa. xiii. 5); a holy commemoration of God's benefits (Psa. xlvii. 6); yea, with the desire of our hearts that our singing may be acceptable (Psa. civ. 33-34). 3. We must sing with our hearts, not with our tongues only for ostentation. To sing with the heart is to sing with the understanding (Psa. xlvii. 7; 1 Cor. xiv. 14), with sense and feeling. Hence we are said to prepare our hearts before we sing (Psa. lvii. 7). Then we must sing earnestly and awake out of our lethargy (Psa. lvii. 8). 4. We must sing to the Lord (Eph. v. 19), both to God's glory and with a sense of His presence, and upon a holy remembrance of His blessings. III. THE USES. 1. For instruction. When we are merry to sing psalms (James v. 13), yea, to account this a heavenly melody (Eph. v. 19). 2. For reproof of such as delight in profane songs. (*N. Byfield.*) *The conditions of the service of song*:—I. Psalms, &c., must be SPIRITUAL. 1. As to the origin. As Moses, David, and others under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, composed their psalms, &c., so we, whether we sing the same or others, ought to do it under the same direction (Eph. v. 18, 19). 2. As to matter: they treat of spiritual things, relating to the glory of God and our salvation; not of secular and vain matters. II. THEY MUST BE SUNG WITH GRACE. 1. With gratitude. The word sometimes means this (1 Cor. xv. 57; 2 Cor. ii. 14). Gratitude is not improperly joined to songs; because we are moved to sing in joyous and prosperous circumstances, in which condition thankfulness is binding and necessary. 2. With gracious affability, which conveys both pleasure and utility to the hearers; so that what Horace says concerning poets may be said of these spiritual songs. "They would both profit and delight." So the word means in chap. iv. 6, and Eph. iv. 29. III. THEY MUST BE SUNG IN THE HEART, *i.e.*, from the inmost affection. And rightly is an ardent emotion required, for the action of singing declares the inward exultation of the heart. He therefore acts the hypocrite who sings with the heart asleep. Hence David not only tunes his voice to the harp, but his voice before either (Psa. lvii. 7-8). So Mary (Luke i. 46-47). Do not think one thing and sing another. IV. THEY MUST BE SUNG UNTO THE LORD. The songs of Christians ought not to aim at promoting dissoluteness or gain; but to be employed in celebrating the praises of the Redeemer. Corollaries: 1. The custom of singing is useful, and is to be adopted in the assembling of Christians, as well in public as in private. 2. It is so to be performed, that they who hear may from thence derive spiritual pleasure and edification. Therefore farewell to all nugatory, and much more to impure songs. 3. In singing it ought to be our especial care that the heart be affected; they who neglect this, may perhaps please men by an artificial sweetness of voice, but they will displease God by an odious impurity of heart. 4. What things are done for cheerfulness and relaxation of the mind by Christians, ought to be of such a kind as are agreeable to Christ and religion: we must therefore detest the madness of those who cannot be cheerful without the reproach of Christ and the ridicule of religion. (*Bp. Davenant.*) *The service of song a means of Christian edification*:—Whenever a great quickening of religious life comes, a great burst of Christian song comes with it. The mediæval Latin hymns cluster round the early pure days of the monastic orders; Luther's rough stormy hymns were as powerful as his treatises; the mystic tenderness and rapture of Charles Wesley have become the possession of the whole Church. The early hymns were of a dogmatic character. No doubt just as in many a missionary Church a hymn is found to be the best vehicle for conveying the truth, so it was in these early Churches, which were made up largely of slaves and women—both uneducated. "Singing the gospel" is a very old invention though the name be new. In these early communities Paul said, "Every one of you hath a psalm, a doctrine." If a man had some fragment of an old psalm, or some strain that had come fresh from the Christian heart, he might sing it, and his brethren would listen. We do not have

that sort of psalmody now. But what a long way we have travelled from it to a modern congregation, standing with books that they scarcely look at, and "worshipping" in a hymn which half of them do not open their mouths to sing at all, and the other half do in a voice inaudible three pews off. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) The *hymnology of the Church* has from the first been a most important element in her holy progress and means of usefulness. A large part of the Bible is poetry. Instruction thus conveyed aids the memory and makes a greater impression on the mind. How constantly did David find relief in expressing his hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows in song; and in the record of his experience how precious is the boon he has left for the instruction and encouragement of God's children in all ages. There was a special impressiveness in the use of psalms and hymns in the early Church. The first forms of literature in every country and in great national movements are for the most part in song. Thus it was in Greece; thus it was in Scotland. Facts of history, deeds of prowess, wonderful providences, are handed down in song, and are in this form better remembered and more easily preserved. In our own day, with the power of the printing press, this may not be so necessary; but when books had to be copied in MS., and books were scanty, the citation of song and psalm formed an important element of instruction. It has been said, by a well-known author, that if he were allowed to make the songs of a nation, he cared not who made the laws. The hymns of the Church have often been as the very shrine of spiritual life, for the preservation of doctrine, and the means of progress. How many cares have been relieved by some well-known hymn? How many Christians have crossed the river strong in the faith with the words of some precious stanza on their tongues which they learnt in the Sunday school? (*J. Spence, D.D.*)

Singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord.—Phrygia was proverbially a land of music. A music of wild excitement was used in the worship of Cybele, and of Salazion, the Phrygian Dionysos. Hence St. Paul might be the more anxious that Christian singing should be sweet and graceful in a Phrygian Church. For a deep feeling of anxiety on the part of a ruler in the ancient Church that sacred song should be beautiful, see the story how Ignatius brought back the melody of angels heard in vision to his Church at Antioch (Socrates, *Hist.* vi. 8). Heartfelt singing is not voiceless singing (Psa. cxi. 1). The Psalmist's praise was in his heart, but it must have been vocal also, for it was such praise as is offered in the "assembly." The three conditions of sacred song are sweetness of vocal expression, fulness of inward devotion, direction to a Divine object. These are expressed in this clause. (1) As to outward expression—"gracefully, sweetly, so as to give pleasure and be attractive." (2) As to inward devotion—"heartfelt." (3) As to the Being addressed—"to the Lord." The clue to the real meaning of the passage is to bear in mind that the apostle is speaking of singing as a Church duty, a part of the Church's corporate life, a declaration of peace among her children, and a means of edification. The recognition of sweetness and pleasingness as an element of public worship is very interesting and important. Such care for singing, again, is quite of a piece with Paul's high ideal of womanly grace and beauty in youth (1 Cor. xi. 15), priestlike dignity in age (Titus ii. 3), with his recognition of things "lovely" (Phil. iv. 3), with his appeal to primary æsthetic instincts (1 Cor. xi. 13), with his horror of "confusion" in public worship (1 Cor. xiv. 33), with the word for a grave and majestic beauty in public service expressed in that great foundation-rubric (1 Cor. xiv. 40). It shows how thoughtfully he considered local circumstances, and adapted his lessons to them. Phrygian music was apt to become the accompaniment of the passionate and unmanly wailing of Asian barbarism. As Plato says, "The Phrygian strain was adapted for sacred rites and fanatical excitement, being of almost frenzied wildness." (*Bp. Alexander.*)

Power of a hymn:—On one of the days when President Garfield lay dying at the seaside, he was a little better, and was permitted to sit by the window, while Mrs. Garfield was in the adjoining room. Love, hope, and gratitude filled her heart as she sang the hymn commencing "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah!" As the soft and plaintive notes floated into the sick chamber, the President turned his eyes up to Dr. Bliss, and asked, "Is that Crete?" "Yes," replied the doctor; "it is Mrs. Garfield." "Quick, open the door a little," anxiously responded the sick man. Dr. Bliss opened the door, and after listening a few moments Mr. Garfield exclaimed, as the large tears coursed down his sunken cheeks, "Glorious, Bliss, isn't it?" (*W. Baxendale.*)

Power of a hymn:—A little boy came to one of our city missionaries, and holding out a dirty and well-worn bit of printed paper, said, "Please, sir, father sent me to get a clean paper like that." Taking it from his hand the missionary

found it was a bill with the hymn "Just as I am" printed upon it. He looked down into the little earnest face and asked the boy where he got it, and why he wanted a clean copy. "We found it, sir, in sister's pocket after she died; and she used to sing it all the time she was sick, and loved it so much that father wanted to get a clean one to put in a frame to hang up. Won't you give us one, sir?" (*G. F. Pentecost, D.D.*) *Saved by a hymn*.—On board the ill-fated steamer *Seawanhaka* was one of the Fisk University singers. Before leaving the burning steamer and committing himself to the merciless waves, he carefully fastened upon himself and his wife life preservers. Some one cruelly dragged away that of his wife, leaving her without hope, except as she could cling to her husband. This she did, placing her hands firmly on his shoulders, and resting there until, her strength becoming exhausted, she said, "I can hold on no longer!" "Try a little longer," was the response of the wearied and agonized husband, "let us sing 'Rock of Ages.'" And as the sweet strains floated over the troubled waters, reaching the ears of the sinking and dying, little did they know, those sweet singers of Israel, whom they comforted. But, lo! as they sang, one after another of the exhausted ones were seen raising their heads above the overwhelming waves, joining with a last effort in the sweet, dying, pleading prayer, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," &c. With the song seemed to come strength; another and yet another was encouraged to renewed effort. Soon in the distance a boat was seen approaching! Could they hold out a little longer? Singing still, they tried, and soon with superhuman strength laid hold of the lifeboat, upon which they were borne in safety to land. This is no fiction; it was related by the singer himself, who said he believed Toplady's sweet "Rock of Ages" saved many another besides himself and wife. And this was only salvation from temporal death! But, methinks, from the bright world yonder the good Toplady must be rejoicing that God ever taught him to write that hymn, which has helped to save so many from eternal death, as, catching its spirit, they have learned to cast themselves alone for help on that dear "Rock of Ages,"—cleft, sinner, for them, for you, and for me, and which ever stands rent asunder that it may shelter those who utter the cry, "Let me hide myself in Thee." (*Canadian Baptist*).

Ver. 17. *Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.—Method and music, or the art of holy and happy living*.—It is always an advantage to have the laws of a kingdom as concise as possible. The amount of litigation caused by the English code is immense. In God's government the matter is plain enough—included in ten commandments, and further reduced by Christ to two. Our text is an instance of the terseness of Divine precepts. It contains a law applicable to every action, word, thought, place, circumstance in a few brief words. It is a great advantage to a mechanic to be able to carry with him a pocket rule or square. And so we have here a compendious rule in life which can never fail. I. HOLY WALKING DESCRIBED. "Whatsoever," &c. This rule applies to those who are in Christ. The unconverted require a radical change before they can carry it out. You cannot walk as a believer if you have not believed. But having begun at the beginning, and taken the step of salvation by faith, the walk has to be carried on by following this injunction, which means—1. To do all through the office and name of Christ as Mediator. (1) You are bound to offer daily praise: it must be in the name of the Lord Jesus. (2) You are to abound in prayer. His name gives power to prayer; it is not so much your earnestness and sincerity, but His blood that speaks to God. (3) You are to give Him your time and services in teaching the ignorant, &c.; they can only be acceptable in Him. (4) You are to give of your substance; if you give all your wealth, the offering presented without Christ is nothing. 2. Do all under the authority of Jesus Christ. He is your King. The business of a Christian upon earth is not an independent one; he is a steward for Christ. 3. Do all under the sanction of Christ as our example. It is an admirable course to ask, "What would Christ have done in these circumstances?" 4. Do all as to the glory of Christ. The Christian must not seek self. 5. Do all in the strength of Christ. With Him is the residue of the Spirit, and the Spirit is the believer's power. These words are a rebuke—(1) to those who do nothing in Christ's name; (2) to those who glory in the name of men, as of churches or of saints; (3) to those professors who dishonour the name under which they profess to live. We have—II. HOLY MUSIC PRESCRIBED—"Giving thanks," &c. Soldiers march to battle to trumpet and drum, &c., and it is an excellent thing when Christian men know how to sing as well as work. The best music consists in thankfulness to God.

We ought to praise Him in all things, but more particularly in the exercise of religion. Some people are so afraid of joy, that they seem to labour under the delusion that all who are devout must be unhappy. The text tells us under what aspect we should regard God when thus thanking Him. It is as a Father. **III. HOLY MOTIVES INCULCATED.** Inscribed on our hearts are reasons which must secure obedience. These are—1. Gratitude. All we have has been received from the Father through Christ. 2. The worthiness of Christ. "Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour." 3. Love. He claims our love, and He gives us His. (*G. H. Spurgeon.*) *Suggestive summary of Christian duty:*—I. **THE GUIDING LAW OF CHRISTIAN DUTY.** "Do all in the name," &c. In Christ is—1. The purest motive to duty. Motive originates and governs action, and makes it good or bad. It is only in Christ we find the holiest and purest motive; in Him love takes the place of selfishness (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). 2. The noblest pattern of duty. 3. The highest end of duty. He is the goal towards which all actions tend. There is no higher name for it—"is above every name." 4. The final authority of duty. II. **ITS UNIVERSAL OBLIGATION**—"Whatsoever ye do," &c. There must be—1. A recognition of Christ in everything. 2. Absolute dependence on Christ at all times. 3. Supreme devotion to Christ. III. **ITS UNVARYING SPIRIT**—"Giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." Lessons: 1. The name of Christ is the greatest power in the universe. 2. All duty gathers its significance and blessedness from its relation to Christ. 3. A thankful spirit is happy in enterprise, brave in difficulties, and patient in reverses. (*G. Barlow.*) *Godly living:*—This was applied to the "elect of God" v. 12. This is the title given by the apostle to Christians. A course of action is appointed for them to carry out. I. **WHAT IS TO BE DONE?** "Do all." The "all" refers to every act of religious life. There is to be—(1) Humbleness of mind; (2) longsuffering; (3) meekness; above all (4) charity. The word of Christ must dwell richly in the heart (see previous verse). II. **HOW IT IS TO BE CARRIED OUT**—"In the name of the Lord Jesus." This implies three things. 1. By the authority of Christ (Acts iii. 6). 2. For the sake of Christ (Mark ix. 41). 3. For the glory of Christ (Acts xv. 26). (*Preacher's Analyst.*) *The motive power of a holy life:*—This is one of the bold sweeping statements of Scripture. However extraordinary and extravagant, it is in keeping with the whole spirit of Christianity. Unlike other religions, that of Christ admits of no compromises. It will have all or nothing, the first place or none. The author of nature and the author of Christianity give tokens of being one and the same, in that their principles are alike simple, universal, imperious, inexorable. In both is the same quiet exertion of power, the same calm majesty of law, and the laws of each can never be trifled with with impunity. The law of gravity does not admit of dispute, neither does the law that eternal life is to be found through the Son of God. Observe—I. **THE EXTREME BREADTH AND LOFTY SPIRIT OF CHRISTIAN DUTY.** "Whatsoever," &c. These words cover the whole sphere of Christian activity. Our words, thoughts, desires, labours, &c., are to be under the habitual influence of a sacred and sanctifying power which lies lurking in the name of the Lord Jesus. There are one or two simple explanations which show that there is no real extravagance in this large demand. 1. If the Christian law is just another name for the law of truth, love, and holiness, it is quite clear that we shall never get out of the range of that law, neither in this world nor the next. Not more certainly does the law of gravity reach from world to world than does this law prevail wherever intelligence exists. 2. If religion consists in entering the service of a God who looks not on the outward appearance but on the heart, that religion will be the only true one which produces right dispositions towards Him of faithfulness in all things, the smallest as well as the biggest. The spirit we are of determines the character of our actions whether they are holy or unholy. The life of the saint and of the sinner are made up very much of the same commonplace duties, and in all that is patent to the world there may be little difference between them: but the spirit by which they are actuated constitutes a gulf between them as wide as that which divides light and darkness, heaven and hell. 3. It were well for the Church and the world if we recognized more clearly this breadth of Christian duty. There is no act, however little, which Christ does not see and touch, and which may not tend as much to His honour as the songs of the Seraphim; there is no affection, talent, energy on which He does not put His hand and say, "That is mine," and which may not be transformed into a worship as sincere as that of the communion: no step we can take in life over which He does not watch, and which may not be made a step on the road that brings us nearer Him; no time here or hereafter when it will not be a delightful duty to "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." This

round world may therefore become to us a temple, and this little life a song of praise.

II. THE MOTIVE POWER OF A HOLY LIFE. The stress lies on "the name of the Lord Jesus." 1. All the apparent extravagance of the injunction vanishes when we lay our hands on the secret of the Divine life. In the realm of spirit as of matter when we see a great result we know that behind it is a great cause; and we may search the world and we shall not find a power over human hearts comparable with that which lies in this name. What combination of forces has cut so deep a groove across the world? One or two of the world's heroes and sages have won wide admiration and respect, but who has laid his hand on so many hearts and touched for good so many lives? Bad as the world is, what is good in it is due to Christ. Even now the good is gaining the victory, and the King is Christ. Blot out that name and you blot out the best part of history, all that is purest in morals, elevating in literature, gentle in manners, merciful in laws. Time weakens other forces, but it adds vigour to this. 2. There is no need to enter into the various component elements which go to make up this moral force. What He was and did for us, and above all what He now is and does, explains it. One phrase holds it all—"He died for me." In Jesus we have not a man dead long ago, but a living Saviour and King ever near us, bearing the one name by which we may be saved. It is His presence by His Spirit in the hearts of His people which is the motive power of their holy life. "The love of Christ constraineth us." **III. THE SACREDNESS OF COMMON LIFE AND LABOUR.** The key-note of this chapter is that religion is a life in Christ, so all-pervading and all-permeating this life that it hallows everything. 1. One of the leading peculiarities of the religion of Jesus is that it virtually annihilated the distinction between the secular and the sacred. As it overstepped all barriers of climate, colour, and race to call men brethren, so it passed over all barriers of priestly function to make all men holy, and so all men are now made priests unto God. 2. What God hath joined together let no man put asunder; and He has wedded religion and life. That is no religion which we cannot carry with us wherever we go; into our pleasures and sorrows, our business and closets. (*J. Macgregor, D.D.*) *Things sacred and things secular* :—It is one of the most precious effects of Christianity that it gives interest and dignity to commonplace life. Think how it would bear on the obscure toilers of Ephesus, Corinth, or Rome. Artizan, labourer, soldier, slave, would learn the truth that God cared for him, and designed him for a glorious destiny. It is through Christ that life is worthy of the name of life. The distinction between things secular and things sacred has wrought unspeakable mischief. Involves one rule of life for the person in holy orders, and another for the man who has not received a religious vocation. The monk or the nun is a "religious;" if any be not a priest, or monk, or nun, that person need not be so religious. It is a detestable, an irreligious distinction. **I. IT IS A DISTINCTION WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN UTTERLY FOREIGN TO THE MIND OF AN EARLY CHRISTIAN, AND IS QUITE OPPOSED TO THE SPIRIT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.** Christ, therein revealed, has laid hold upon the whole of life. He has consecrated what we call secular employments by Himself engaging in them. Possible to eat and drink to the glory of God. **II. THIS DISTINCTION IS BAD, BECAUSE IT VANISHES ON NEARER OBSERVATION.** We find it perfectly impossible to draw a sharp line. Art, science, politics, business, everyday duty, instead of being detached from religion, have such intimate relations with it that they are, or may be, and ought to be, themselves essentially religious. A bad sermon on the text, "Behold I stand at the door and knock," is (it would seem) sacred; but to paint the well-known picture illustrating same text was secular. To write hymns sacred. Then was it a sacred or a secular work to write "Paradise Lost," Wordsworth's "Excursion," or Cowper's "Task"? Surely, too, all great music is most truly religious. Again, is it a sacred or a secular work when a young girl, under a deep sense of duty, consecrates her life to attendance upon a suffering mother? Contrariwise, consider what are generally classed as sacred works—praying, preaching, administering sacraments, visiting the sick. How intensely secular they may become! How mean and perfunctory the spirit in which they may be performed! How easily may their motive come to be that so well expressed in Bible words—"Put me into one of the priest's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread." **III. THIS DISTINCTION IS RADICALLY IRRATIONAL.** Implies that all things are not of God. Churches are, but not houses we live in. Clergymen, but not men of other professions and employments. Sunday, but not other six days. But Christ claimed the world for Himself and His Father, in the sense that He claimed everything in the world. Factories and railways, camps and courts of law, mansions, museums, and picture-galleries, to say nothing of the world of trees, and rivers, and birds, and flowers, form part of the

world which belongs to Him, the Heir of all things. This is the only religious view of life. IV. **SEEK, THEN, TO MAKE YOUR WHOLE LIFE RELIGIOUS.** Pure religion is when the sense of God's love, of the vastness of His claims, of the breadth of His commandments, so works through the life as to make it one organic whole, and when the poor unworthy distinction of secular and sacred is forgotten; when what is most religious is most human, and what is commonest is ennobled and justified by the grace which flows from "Christ our Life." (*J. A. Jacob, D.D.*) *Doing all in the name of Christ*.—I. **WHAT THIS IS.** 1. To go to God through Him (John xv. 3, 16; xvi. 23-26). 2. To do all by His authority (Matt. xviii. 18-20, xxviii. 18-20; 1 Tim. vi. 15). 3. To do all by His strength (Acts iv. 6-7, 10; 1 Sam. xvii. 45; Phil. iv. 13; 2 Cor. xii. 9). Without Him we can do nothing, with Him everything (1 Cor. xv. 10). 4. For His glory (1 Cor. x. 31; John v. 23; Rev. v. 12, 13). 5. To live a life of faith for a supply of all things for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1, 2, 3; John xvi. 23). 6. To walk in the religion of the Lord Jesus (Micah iv. 5; 2 Tim. ii. 19; Matt. x. 22; Luke xxi. 17; Rev. ii. 3, 13). 7. To follow His example (Matt. xvi. 24; 1 John ii. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 21-23). II. **WHY WE ARE TO DO IT.** 1. Because all we are, have, or can do, is of Christ (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23). (1) All grace and strength (1 Cor. i. 30). (2) Adoption (Eph. i. 5). (3) Reconciliation with God (2 Cor. v. 18). (4) All our actual supplies (Phil. iv. 19). 2. Because the Father has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name (Phil. ii. 8-10). Therefore we must all honour the Son as the Father (John v. 23). 3. Because we cannot be accepted but by Him (Eph. i. 6; Heb. xiii. 15, v. 1). 4. Because all that comes from God to us must be by His hand. III. **HOW WE MAY DO IT.** 1. We must be supposed to be in Christ first (John xv. 4-5). 2. Supposing this we must exercise faith upon Him, and have constant recourse to Him, in all that we do for the supplies of His grace and Spirit (1 Pet. ii. 20, v. 7; John xvi. 16, xvi. 23, 26). 3. We must live in close communion with Jesus in the use of all His ordinances (Zech. iv. 12). 4. We must exercise our thoughts much upon Him, and be much taken up with Him in the course of our lives (Psa. lxxiii. 23). IV. **SOME USES.** 1. It is not in our power to act as we please, or for our own ends (Rom. xiv. 7-8). 2. The impiety of those who invoke Christ's name on their wicked courses. 3. We cannot expect God's blessing on anything not done in Christ's name. (*H. Wilkinson, D.D.*) *Doing all to the Lord Jesus*.—All have felt at times a painful void after absorption in active duty. There has been nothing sinful, on the contrary the work, it may be, has been sacred, undertaken with prayer, and been for the good of man and the glory of God, and yet there is no satisfaction. I. **WHERE IS THE EVIL IN THIS?** It is that we are slow to learn in act what we know in our souls, that we can do nothing good without God. We take it for granted and so forget it. 1. As to ordinary matters men, *e.g.*, think it unlikely they will die to-day because they have lived safely through so many dangers, and take it for granted that their food will nourish them because it has always done so. Where, then, is there any room for dependence on God even with prayer for protection and blessing, since the feeling assumes that they will be granted without any prayer at all. 2. As to deeds of grace. It is well, as people's devotions now are, if Christians really prayed to God to carry them through the trials of the day, as really believing that for this they needed the special help of God. How many, if they pray at all, hope to do right and escape flagrant wrong almost through the intention of doing or not doing, and think that if they call upon God in some general way things will not be much amiss with them. 3. As to daily life. Many Christians seem to think that in the daily deeds and words of life they either cannot or else must sin, and that these two are much the same. What people hate is being in earnest at all, and so they do not wish to pray for the grace of God lest they should have to be at the pains of using it. So they are ready to think that they cannot help themselves, that they must fall into sins of infirmity, and thus they cast their faults on God, or they look upon them as no great faults at all, and so they act as though they could not sin. And apart from these who learns, in the midst of his conscious and acknowledged besetting sin, to ask for the grace of God? The angry, sinful word again and again escapes, and the thought of God at best but follows it. II. **THE REMEDY.** "Whatsoever ye do," &c., as one bearing His name, in the might of His name, and to its glory. Refer all things to Him. Let Him be the beginning from whom all flows, the end in whom all are gathered, our aim, our reward. Have Him before thee as the pattern whom thou art to copy; the Redeemer in whom is thy strength, the Master and Friend whom thou art to serve and please, thy Creator and thy heaven. 1. But can, one will say, all the little acts

of life be done to Him? Were it not almost an indignity to bring them in reference to His great Majesty? On the contrary, great love shows itself most in little acts. Nothing is too small to be done for one deeply loved, and nothing but deep love will do unweariedly all little things to please whom it loves. Little things are the very instances of acceptable service in Scripture. It says not, "Give your bodies to be burned for the glory of God," but, "Whether ye eat or drink," &c. 2. How, then, can they be done? Do them as thou wouldst if thou sawest God by thee, with prayer that they may be done aright. He eats and drinks to the glory of God, who does so not for pleasure, but for strength for God's service; He sleeps to God's glory, who rests in Christ, hoping to rise to do Him honour; he does his daily task to the glory of God who plies it under the eye of God, and does it or not as and how he thinks God would have it done or not. 3. How can we do both at once without distraction—study, speak, or do and think of Christ at the same time? Will not work be done carelessly? Be thine own judge? Hast thou ever deeply loved parent, bride, husband, or child? Didst thou find that thou toiledst for them less diligently because thou thoughtest of and toiledst for them? Or hast thou done anything for man's praise, feeling that the eye whose praise thou prizedst was upon thee? Was this a hindrance? Nay, a good and a spur which quickened every nerve. And who looks down upon us? Our Father, our Friend and Brother, who came down from heaven and suffered for us, is ready to help and reward us. And shall not such love quicken us to do all things better. Does it not give strength to self-denial to take up our cross after Jesus? gladness to almsgiving to give to Jesus? cast a holy reverence round a sick room when we minister to Jesus? impart sweetness to teaching children that in them we receive Jesus? When thou hast learned to do all things to Jesus, it will shed pleasure over all dull things, softness over hard things, peace over trial. It will make contradiction sweet, to bear it meekly with Jesus; poverty, honourable to be poor with Jesus; toil, gladness to labour for Jesus. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *Common work in the name of Jesus*:—Wherever we are called to work we must dedicate the labours of our hands or our brain to God, doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Solomon was called to build the temple of the Lord, but every man who is an honest worker, who does his best in the place where heaven has put him, is building up a temple, holy, acceptable to God. The Minister of State in his cabinet, labouring to do right and caring nothing for popularity; and the little servant-maid in the kitchen, who scorns to tell a lie, or neglect her daily duties, are both in their respective stations working for God, doing their duty. None but pure gold may receive the special goldsmith's mark, none but true, honest work can bear the mark of the Lord Jesus. (*H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.*) *Every-day religion*:—Plato had a fable which I have now nearly forgotten, but it ran something like this: He said spirits of the other world came back to this world to find a body and find a sphere of work. One spirit came and took the body of a king and did his work. Another spirit came and took the body of a poet and did his work. After a while Ulysses came, and he said, "Why, all the fine bodies are taken, and all the grand work is taken. There is nothing left for me." And some one replied, "Ah! the best one has been left for you." Ulysses said, "What's that?" And the reply was, "The body of a common man, doing a common work, and for a common reward." A good fable for the world, and just as good a fable for the Church. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do it to the glory of God." (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *The essence of piety*:—I begin to see that religion consists not so much in joyous feelings as in a constant exercise of devotedness to God, and in laying ourselves out for the good of others. (*D. Stewart.*) *The all-pervasiveness of religion*:—Religion is one of the colours of life which mingles most intimately with all the other colours of the palette. It is that which lends them their appearance of depth, and the best of their brilliance. If by a subtle process it is taken away, all become tarnished and discoloured. (*W. Mallock.*) *The acceptable prayer*:—As a petition to the Queen can only reach her through the hands of a minister, so we can only approach God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ. All our prayer and praises must be offered in the name of the Lord Jesus. Very many of those prayers are like letters with no name and address upon them, which never reach their destination. What is it that makes our public services in church so frequently cold and spiritless? Why is it that some of us look on church-going as an irksome task, and the hours spent in God's house as the most wearisome of our lives? The reason is simply this, that their services are being offered in the wrong name. One offers it in his own name, he is sacrificing to selfishness;

another offers it in the name of fashion, another in the name of respectability, but there can be no reality in our services unless offered in the name of Christ.

(H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.)

Consistency and gratitude.—I. "WHATSOEVER YE DO IN WORD OR DEED," &c. 1. Paul here clearly gives to Christ the whole of life. The conceptions, affections, and resolutions of the soul refer to words and works as being the principles and motives of them. For it is impossible that they should be in the name of Christ except our understandings and will so address them. The Spirit moves all, and upon this the difference between man's actions depends. It is this that gives them the right and title they have in Christian morality. Works that are the same as to external action are good in one and bad in another. The aims of an ambitious man and of a true believer have no external difference, yet if you examine the inward springs of both, you will find one a piece of vanity, the other a fruit of charity. 2. The rule is short and easy, but of almost infinite use. As a little square serves an artificer to design and mark out a multitude of lines, and to correct those that are amiss, so by this little rule there is no human action respecting which we cannot ascertain whether it is right or wrong; nor is there any part of our lives which this rule is not capable of guiding and forming to perfection. 3. Specifically the name of Christ is the rule. (1) As the name of God signifies the Hebrew word by which the Lord distinguishes Himself, so Jesus is sometimes taken for the name which was given by express Divine command. But it is not thus taken here as if Paul simply intended that in our actions and discourses we should always intermix the word Jesus, or at least preface it. (2) The name of God is taken for the power, authority, and will of God (Dent. xviii. 19; 2 Kings ii. 24; Psa. xx. 7, lxxxix. 16, 24; 1 Sam. xvii. 45; 2 Chron. xiv. 11). So in like manner the name of Jesus (Acts iv. 7; Matt. vii. 22, xxiv. 5, xviii. 20). So the apostle means—(a) That we refer all to His glory. (b) That we act according to His will. (c) That we live in entire confidence in and dependence upon Him. 4. By this (1) Paul banishes from our mind all unfruitful works of darkness, it being evident that we can do nothing that is opposed to His will. (2) He perfects and enlivens those of our works which of themselves are commanded of God, engrafting on them the true motive and directing them to the true end. (3) He sacrifices those which are in their nature indifferent; e.g., if this rule is observed in eating and drinking, acts indifferent in their nature, (a) the sacred name will purge them of the excess of intemperance on the one hand, and the foolish scruples of superstition on the other. (b) Being referred to the glory of God, from indifferent they become holy and acceptable to God. 3. We must not so take the precept as if we were obliged in every act and word to raise our thoughts directly to Christ. It is sufficient that we frequently and ordinarily make this application of mind. But it is necessary that we have this deposition so formed in our hearts, that when circumstances allow us to think of Christ our souls may lean that way as being habituated to it. II. GIVING THANKS UNTO GOD AND THE FATHER BY HIM. These words may be taken as an independent precept (Eph. v. 20) or a reason for the preceding rule, a title under which we ought to do all things in the name of Christ, so that our whole life may be an act of gratitude through Christ, which is to be preferred. 1. Thanksgiving is one of the most necessary and universal offices of a Christian. Remember what we are to God through creation, providence, and grace. 2. God the Father is the proper object of gratitude as the first principle of action, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit. 3. By Jesus this gratitude is to be rendered. (1) He is the channel by which all God's goodness is poured upon us. (2) Our thanks cannot be grateful to the Father except addressed and presented by Christ. Application: 1. For the confirmation of faith. (1) We have a proof of the divinity of Christ. The faithful neither rejoice, nor speak, nor act, but in the name of God—but here it is required that our whole life be referred to the name of Christ. It must therefore be concluded that He is not a creature, but very God. (2) Is it not an outrage to require that saints should share this honour with Christ as Rome does? (Acts iv. 12; 1 Cor. i. 12). 2. For the instruction of our faith. (1) If we would be truly Christians, we must have Christ continually before us as the pole star, the rule of our whole life. (2) How many of us fall short of this. (J. Daillé.) *The reality of religion*.—I. CHRISTIANITY IS A REALITY, AND DEALS WITH REALITIES. 1. If it could be shown that its requirements were unreal, its statements exaggerated, its views of attainment unreasonable, it would lose immensely in its character for truth and its power for good. 2. Here we may fall into opposite mistakes. (1) We may take the sayings of Scripture strictly to the letter, set them down as exaggerated, and above our

capacities. This is the way with worldly people. They admire the gospel, but never think of realizing it. It is to them a mere night of stars to wonder and gaze at, not a sun to light them to their daily work, and warm their hearts with love. (2) Some religious people, like the former, strain the Bible to its literal meaning, and then require that meaning in full, and thus lead to the same point, and encourage indolence and unbelief. (3) Owing to a mixture of these we find Christian precept and practice widely sundered. And so men satisfy themselves with being Christian hearers and heathen liver, without the least suspicion of inconsistency. 3. Owing to this enormous abuses have sprung up under the shadow of the Church. A large proportion of the infidelity of the working classes is due to this unreal teaching. A strained and exaggerated view of religion has been put before them, alien from their habits of thought, and by no means supported by the example of its professors. II. THE TEXT IS A REMEDY FOR UNREALITY IN RELIGION. 1. Observe the extent of this saying. It is plain that it must propose some motive and rule which shall touch daily life at every point. (1) Nothing is more common than a man with a powerful motive which rules his whole life—gain, ambition, love of family, science, art, victory, the exercise of an energetic nature. But whatever it be, reality is its necessary condition. There are of course many visionaries, men pursuing objects which have no real existence, but to them they are not unreal. (2) Observe how such motives act. (a) As to their inward influence on the man himself. Are they evermore in his view and present to his thoughts? Or is not their influence for the most part rather a constraining power of which he is unconscious, rather than a stimulus carried on by conscious effort? Take a man whose motives is the advancement of himself or his family. Such an object is consciously present when he chooses to reflect on it, but day by day in the toil and struggle he is not ever thinking of it, but he is pursuing it. The labourer working under the useful light and genial warmth does not lose his time and dazzle his sight in gazing on the sun, but plies his arm with his eye fixed on his work, and so uses for its intended purpose the light God has bestowed. (b) They are seldom loudly professed, so seldom that a man professing loudly a given motive arouses suspicion that he is acting on some other, and only using this as a blind. Here, as in nature, the deepest is the stillest; but by this very stillness all who are observant know its depth. Whatever mystery a man makes of his object in life, spectators generally arrive at correct conclusions. 2. Recur to the motive of the text. (1) There is a wide difference between persons who pursue objects which only appear real to them, and those whose objects are absolutely real. In the case of the former pursuit will lead away from, in the case of the latter it will lead to, the truth. It is not necessary that a motive should be based on reality to be all-constraining, but it is in order that it may be a worthy motive for an intelligent being. (2) The facts implied in the name, "The Lord Jesus," rest upon evidence as strong as can possibly be alleged for anything. The belief in Christ is not only the unavoidable conclusion of a sound mind from evidence, but the only satisfactory way to account for the state of the world in which we find ourselves. (3) But based on reality it must also be real to me, or it cannot be my motive. It must have points of contact with every part of my life. Has it these points? Not if our Lord be a mere teacher. Mere precepts cannot touch us at all points, or constrain us to do all things in a teacher's name. But our Lord, being God, became man, bore our sins and carried our sorrows, grew up through our life, and tasted death for every man. Take any life, in any condition or time, and there is help and hope for it in Jesus. (4) Now suppose a man embrace Jesus as his Saviour—let Christ's love become the acknowledged fact of His life, then it will become a constraining motive, and will not be contented with influencing some of his faculties, employing some of his time; from the nature of things it must have all—Christ is mine, and I am His, and whatever I do, spiritual or secular, business or recreation, I must do all in His name. (5) There are certain solemn times when this great motive is and must be expressly recognized; but when the whole man is possessed with the love of Christ, the whole ordinary being follows the direction of the central impulse. The Christian at his daily task is not ever pondering spiritual truths. He would be a bad workman and a bad Christian if he were. (6) Such deep constraining motive is not usually displayed before men; but its existence is not easily concealed. If a man be a Christian, men will take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus. (Dean Alford.) *Christian ends lend grandeur to human life*:—He who lives for the glory of God has an end in view which lends dignity to the man and to his life. Bring common iron

into proper contact with the magnet, it will borrow the strange attractive virtue, and itself become magnetic. The merest crystal fragment, that has been flung out into the field and trampled on the ground, shines like a diamond when sunbeams stoop to kiss it. And who has not seen the dullest rain-cloud, when it turned its weeping face to the sun, change into glory, and, in the bow that spans it, present to the eyes of age and infancy, alike of the philosopher who studies, and of the simple joyous child who runs to catch it, the most brilliant and beautiful phenomenon in nature? Thus, from what they look at and come in contact with, common things acquire uncommon glory. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The name of Jesus set in work*:—Those old saints of the Middle Ages, how dearly they loved to set the name of Jesus forth everywhere, by all means, in every curious work of art: not merely of Church art, mind you, but of household and domestic furniture. Go, for example, into many of the farms round here, and notice the fire-dogs that stand in the yawning chimney: how they are wrought at the sides into those most blessed of all letters, the I.H.C., by which our dear Lord is set forth. Nothing so mean that it was thought unworthy of this monogram; nothing so glorious that it was considered unfit to have that excelling glory added thereto. There they taught us the great lesson—"Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus." Yes, silver and gold and gems conspired together to mark out this name on the paten, or the chalice, or the shrine; the manufacturer of Limoges worked it out in his enamel; in the monastery potteries they burnt it in on their tiles; in convents they embroidered it on chasuble and cope; in the glorious windows of churches the light came in, sanctified, as it were, and hallowed by the name of the True Light; . . . the poor peasant was encouraged, with his clasp knife, to consecrate his house by carving the same name on the hutch of his door or the barge-boards of his roof; the name of salvation could not be out of place among the dwellings of those who looked to be saved; the name which to adore will be the work of eternity, could never be out of place for the meditation and the worship of earth. (*Dr. Neale.*)

Ver. 18.-iv. 1. Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands.—*The Christian family*:—1. In the family, Christianity has signally displayed its power of refining, ennobling and sanctifying earthly relationships. Domestic life as seen in Christian homes is a purely Christian creation, and would have been a new revelation at Colossæ as it is in many a mission field to-day. 2. Domestic happiness and family Christianity are made up of very homely elements. One duty is prescribed here for one member of each of the three family groups, and varying forms of another for the other. The wife, child, servant, are to obey; the husband to love, the father to show his love in gentle considerateness, the master to yield his servants their dues. Like some perfume distilled from common flowers which grow on every bank, the domestic piety which makes home a house of God and a gate of heaven, is prepared from these two simples—obedience and love. **I. THE RECIPROCAL DUTIES OF WIVES AND HUSBANDS.** 1. The Christian ideal of the wife's duty has for its centre subjection. (1) Some will smile at that as a survival of a barbarous theory of marriage; but turn to Ephesians v. 22-33, and you will find that marriage is regarded from a high and sacred point of view. To Paul all earthly relationships were moulded after patterns of things in the heavens. What the Church's subjection to Christ is, such is the wife's to the husband, a subjection of which love is the very soul. As in the loving obedience of the believing soul to Christ, the wife submits not because she has found a master, but because her heart has found its rest. Thus everything harsh and degrading disappears. It is a joy to serve where the heart is engaged, and that is eminently true of the feminine nature. For its full satisfaction a woman's heart needs to look up, and to serve where it loves. In this nobler, purer, more unselfish love, as much as in physical constitution, is laid the foundation of the Divine ideal of marriage. (2) The subjection is limited by "We must obey God rather than man," and there are cases in which on the principle of "Tools to those who can use them," the rule falls to the wife as the stronger character. Popular sarcasm, however, shows this to be contrary to the true ideal. And then woman's intellectual and moral qualities render it wise for a man to take her counsel. But all such considerations are consistent with apostolic teaching. 2. What of the husband's duty? He is to love. (1) Because he loves he is not to be harsh. He is to be as patient and self-sacrificing as Christ, that he may bless and help. That solemn example lifts the whole emotion and carries the lesson that man's love is to evoke the woman's subjection, just as in the heavenly pattern Christ's love melts and moves human wills to glad obedience which is liberty.

(2) Where there is such love there will be no tenacious adherence to rights. Love uttering a wish speaks music to love listening, and love obeying the wish is free and a queen. 3. The young are to remember that the nobleness and heart repose of their whole lives may be made or marred by marriage, and to take heed where they fix their affections. If a man and woman love and marry in the Lord, He will be in the midst, a third who will make them one, and that threefold cord will not be quickly broken. II. THE RECIPROCAL DUTIES OF CHILDREN AND PARENTS—Obedience and gentle authority. 1. The injunction to children is laconic and universal. (1) The only limitation is when God's command is contradicted. (2) The enforcement is that it is "well pleasing in the Lord." To all who can appreciate the beauty of goodness is filial obedience beautiful. In Ephesians it is regarded as "right" appealing to the natural conscience. (3) The idea of a father's power and a child's obedience has been much softened by Christianity, but rather from the greater prominence given to love, than from the limitation given to obedience. There is now great laxity in reaction from the too great severity of past times. Many causes lead to this. Children are better educated than their parents, and a sense of inferiority often makes a parent hesitate to command, as well as a misplaced tenderness makes him hesitate to forbid. But it is unkind to place on young shoulders "the weight of too much liberty." Consult your children less, command them more. (4) And as to children, here is the one thing God would have you do, and which is moreover pleasing to those whose approbation is worth having, and will save many a sting of conscience now which may tingle again when all too late. Remember Dr. Johnson standing bareheaded in Lichfield market-place, in remorseful remembrance of boyish disobedience. 2. The law for parents is addressed to fathers, partly because mothers have less need of it and partly because fathers are the head of the household. (1) How do parents provoke their children? By unreasonable commands, by capricious jerks at the bridle alternating with capricious dropping of the reins altogether, ungovernable tempers, frequent rebukes and sparing praise. And what follows? "Wrath," as Ephesians has it, and then apathy. "I cannot please, whatever I do," leads to a rankling sense of injustice and then to recklessness, "it is useless to try." Paul's theory of the training of children is connected with his central doctrine, that love is the life of service, and faith the parent of righteousness. When a child loves and trusts, he will obey. Children's obedience must be fed on love and praise. (2) So parents are to let the sunshine of their smile ripen their children's love to fruit of obedience, and remember that frost in spring scatters the blossoms or the grass. Many a father drives his child into evil by keeping him at a distance. He should make his boy a companion and a playmate, and try to keep him nearer to himself than to any one else; then his opinions will be an oracle, and his lightest wish a law. (3) Parents would do well, too, to remember Eph. vi. 4, and Deut. vi. 6-7, and not relegate religious instruction to others. Children drift away from a faith which their parents do not care enough about to teach. III. THE RECIPROCAL DUTIES OF MASTERS AND SERVANTS. Obedience and justice. 1. These servants are slaves. Paul recognized that "sum of all villainies," but his gospel had principles which cut up slavery by the roots. Christ and His apostles did not war against it nor against any existing institutions—"First make the tree good," &c. Mould men, and the men will mould institutions. And so slavery has died in all Christian lands now. But the principles laid down here are applicable to all forms of service. 2. Note the extent of the servant's obedience. (1) "In all things," the limit again being God's command, but inward completeness is insisted on, "not with eye service," &c. We have a proverb about the worth of the master's eye, which bears witness that the same fault clings to hired service, and thus darkens into theft. All scamped work, all productions which are got up to look better than they are, all fussy parade of diligence when under inspection and slackness afterwards are transfigured here, "But in singleness of heart," &c., with undivided motive, which is the antithesis and cure for "eye service"—and "fearing God," which is opposed to "pleasing men." (2) Then follows the positive injunction, lifting obedience to an earthly master into a religious duty, and transfiguring the slave's lot. This evokes new powers, and renewed consecration. (3) The stimulus of a great hope is added. Whatever their earthly masters failed to give them, if they are Christ's they will be treated as sons and receive the son's portion. Christ remains in no man's debt. (4) The last word is a warning against neglect of duty. The wrongdoer will receive retribution, but it does not warrant an inferior's breach of moral law. Two blacks do not make a white—a lesson to oppressed peoples and their

champions. 3. Masters are bidden to give their slaves what is equitable. A startling injunction respecting those who were chattels and not persons. (1) The apostle does not define what is just and equal. The main thing was to drive home the conviction that there are duties owing to slaves and employés. We are far from a satisfactory discharge of these yet, but everybody admits the principle—and we have mainly to thank Christianity for that. Paul does not say, "Give them what is kind and patronizing." Charity likes to come in and supplies wants which would never have been felt had there been equity. (2) The duty of masters is enforced by the fact that they have a Master who is to be their pattern. Give your servants what you expect and need to get from Christ. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Husbands and wives*:—The duty of the latter is put first, because obedience is more difficult and distasteful than love, and because the love of the husband largely depends on the subjection of the wife. I. As to wives. 1. The proposition that wives ought to be subject to their husbands. (1) In general this subjection is a Divine disposition whereby the more imperfect are subordinate to the more perfect, in order to their government and preservation. Without this, neither natural affairs, nor political societies, nor even the world could subsist. From whence follow—(a) The author of creatures would not have them confounded through disorder (1 Cor. xiv. 13). (b) It is not the mark of a base but of a generous mind to be subject to his superiors. "Every man in proportion to his depravity bears a ruler with rude impatience." (c) Those who shake off the yoke of due subjection are blind to their own interests. "Obedience is the mother of prosperity." (2) In particular this subjection consists in—(a) The internal act of the heart and the acknowledgment of the mind (Eph. v. 33; 1 Pet. iii. 6). (b) Conformity of manners and affections. As a mirror adorned with gems and skilfully polished is nothing unless it express a true likeness of the person looking into it; so a wife, however endowed and beautiful, is nothing unless she render herself conformable to the manners of her husband (1 Cor. vii. 37). (c) Performance of wifely duties—conjugal love (Gen. ii. 18; Titus ii. 4; Prov. xxii. 12)—care of the children and the house (Titus ii. 4-5). The Egyptian women had no shoes, that they might learn to keep at home. (3) The reasons for this subjection. (a) The Divine appointment (Gen. iii. 16). (b) The natural imperfection of the woman (1 Pet. iii. 7). (c) The order of creation. Woman was created after, out of, and for man (1 Cor. xi. 8-9). (d) The transgression of the woman (1 Tim. ii. 14). (2) The disadvantage of refusing this subjection. The violation of natural order everywhere is productive of disastrous disturbances. (4) The hindrances to this subjection. (a) Pride, which makes the wife disesteem her husband as unworthy to command her. To obviate this evil let her remember that her husband's dignity and her own inferiority are not to be estimated from virtues, figure, nobility, or riches; but from Divine ordination; that pride is of the devil, who, as he incited Eve, instills the same poison into her daughters. (b) Defect of love. She studies not to please her husband who is displeased with him. This evil will be avoided if parents would not compel their daughters to odious nuptials (Gen. xxiv. 57-58); if women would beware of marrying for honour and riches; and if after marriage they would avoid all occasions of offence. (c) Foolish vanities, such as an immoderate desire of appearing in public, extravagance in dress, &c. 2. The limitation of the proposition—"As it is fit in the Lord;" as far as God permits, and as far as it is befitting women who are in the Lord. The occasion of this arose from the circumstance that many believing women were united to unbelieving husbands. If their husbands should strive to compel them to idolatrous worship they must resist (Acts v. 29). The foundation for this is that all authority is derived from God and subordinate to Him. From whence it follows—(1) That thus wives render a submission grateful to God Himself. (2) That the wife is bound to be a companion of her husband in everything but sin. (3) That it is impious to choose a husband who is likely to persuade his wife to do such things as are not fit in the Lord. II. As to HUSBANDS. 1. The precept enjoining love. (1) The affection of love itself is required. This gives the heart to the thing loved, which is the most precious gift, and that in which all else is given. (2) This affection will express itself (a) In living at home, delighted with the wife's presence and company, and not seeking others in preference (Prov. v. 18-19). This effect we see in Christ's love toward His Church (Matt. xxviii. 20). (b) In direction and instruction in all those things which relate to this life and the next (1 Cor. xiv. 35), because both are partners in earthly things and heirs together of the grace of life (1 Pet. iii. 7). (c) Provision of all necessary things, in imitation of Christ's care of His Church. He who neglects this, subjects himself to heavy censure (1 Tim. v. 8). (3) In order

to perform this duty let a man beware of marrying—(a) By the eyes alone, *i.e.*, choosing for mere external beauty. Love which rests on such an unstable foundation cannot be firm and constant. (b) By the fingers, *i.e.*, choosing for money. The man who does this seeks not a wife but a money porter, and after he has laid his claws on the money, he regards not of a straw the porter. 2. The injunction forbidding bitterness. Plutarch says, "They who sacrificed at the rites of Juno, took out the gall of the victim, signifying by the ceremony that it was not fit that bile and bitterness should enter into the married state." The bitterness here prohibited shows itself—(1) In the affections. Without saying or doing anything injurious a husband embittered against his wife can make her life exceedingly bitter. That this is to be avoided we gather (a) from the precept itself, which admits of no exception. As a wife is bound to obey her husband in spite of his many imperfections, so the husband is bound to love the wife notwithstanding hers. (b) From the example of Christ (Eph. v. 29). (2) In words. A tender mind is wounded no less by bitter words, than the body is by sharp weapons. (3) In actions. God gave not Eve to Adam as a slave but as a companion and helpmeet. This tyranny is exercised (a) when the wife is removed from domestic rule and degraded to the rank of a maid, even perhaps subjected to one of them. (Prov. xxi. 27; Titus ii. 5). (b) When things pertaining to her dignity or necessity are denied. (c) When she is treated with cruelty. (*Bp. Davenant.*) *Relative duties—husbands and wives:*—The root of all society is the family. (Gen. ii. 18; Psa. lxxviii. 6). The real strength and virtue of a nation consist to a great extent in the purity of family ties; and in this, more than anything else socially, has the religion of Christ blessed the world. Of the domestic institution, conjugal life and love are the very element and fountain (Eph. v. 25–33; Titus ii. 4–5; 1 Peter iii. 1–7). I. THE DUTY OF THE WIFE. 1. The subjection is not that of a drudge or slave, to be ruled by force. It means that in the home, as everywhere else, "order is heaven's first law." If there is to be peace and happiness in the home there must not be two co-ordinate authorities. The husband is to be the head—band—the strength and bond of the family. The submission required of a wife involves—(1) A sense of dependence. In many things this is unavoidable, she being the weaker vessel, and created in a condition of dependence (1 Cor. xi. 8–9). When she tried to lead her husband and undertook to govern, the issue was disastrous for both. This dependence is touchingly illustrated in the social sympathy for, and Divine promises to widows, because she is deprived of her earthly prop and stay. (2) A feeling of deference. "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord." Many husbands, it may be said, do not deserve this, and the wife may sometimes take advantage of a husband's weakness for his good. If a woman has married a man she cannot respect, she may have herself to blame; but his weakness does not exempt her from the duty of honouring him as her husband. If he abdicate his position, she may be obliged to take the lead, yet the true wife will strive to do it in such a way as not to wound him. (3) A spirit of devotedness. It is beautiful to see a loving wife clinging hopefully and prayerfully to a bad husband. Just as forbidding is it to hear a wife complaining all round the parish. A good wife will care for her husband's comfort and character as her own; and when he is harassed will do her best to make him forget his anxieties (Prov. xxxi. 10–12). 2. The reason for this injunction—"as it is fit in the Lord." It is God's will that it should be so, and also the dictate of common sense. Where there are two wills seeking for mastery there will be wrangling and bitterness. But the wife is not a slave to do the bidding of a taskmaster, losing in a mechanical obedience the sense of responsibility. No! she may not do wrong to please her husband. Her own relation to God will determine the standard of right and limit of duty. How much has a Christian wife in her power! By submission she may gain conquests for Christ, and commend the Lord whom she supremely loves. II. THE DUTY OF THE HUSBAND. The sum and fountain of all other duties is love. 1. Positively—"love your wives." 1. Paul does not say as the complement of submission, "Rule your wives wisely, keep them in their position." The rule of love is sweet and easily borne. Either side is, perhaps, apt to forget its own special obligation: the wife is not so likely to forget her love as her subjection, nor the husband his authority as his love. But he will most surely and fully receive the acknowledgment due to him who truly loves; and she will be most tenderly loved who shows most heartily deference. Let the love which won the youthful bride be continued and augmented. 2. This love must be manifested. It is too often taken as a matter of course. Contact with the world often deadens the susceptibilities, and love is left to care for

itself and struggle for a precarious existence. But the wife craves for love, and a tone of tenderness will make her soul brighter for days amid the manifold cares of home. It is one thing to be silly in the expression of a rapturous fondness and quite another to be manly in the exhibition of a sincere affection. If a man is not ashamed of being married he ought not to be ashamed of showing his love, in, e.g., preferring his wife's society, in seeking to please her, in taking an interest in those things which specially occupy her thought. And she has a right to expect it amidst the monotony of her household cares. 2. Negatively—"Be not bitter against them." It is possible to have a general sentiment of affection and yet to be bitter. This spirit is grossly wrong in a Christian man to the woman who has given up all for him. It may be exhibited in surly silence as well as in sharp words. There will be need of forbearance on both sides. Some homes, alas, are in a state of chronic conflict. He commands imperiously; she resists proudly. Some men are pleasant and genial abroad, but churlish at home. Marriage is left us as a wreck saved from Paradise; according to our spirit and conduct it will be either a reminder of "paradise lost," or a help towards "paradise regained" (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Wife: meaning of the word*:—It literally means a weaver. The wife is the person who weaves. Before our great factories arose, one of the great employments in every house was the fabrication of clothing; every family made its own. The wool was spun into thread by the girls, who were therefore called "spinsters"; the thread was woven by their mother, who was accordingly called the weaver or the wife; and another remnant of this old truth we discover in the word heirloom, applied to any old piece of furniture which has come down to us from our ancestors, and which, though it may be a chair or bed, shows that a loom was once the most important piece of furniture in the house. Thus in the word wife is wrapped up a hint of earnest, indoor, stay-at-home occupations, as being fitted for her who bears this name. *Qualities of a wife*:—A good wife should be like three things; which three things she should not be like. 1. She should be like a snail, to keep within her own house; but she should not be like the snail to carry all she has upon her back. 2. She should be like an echo, to speak when spoken to; but she should not be like an echo, always to have the last word. 3. She should be like a town clock, always to keep time and regularity; but she should not be like a town clock, speak so loud that all the town may hear her. (*Old writer.*) *The value of submissiveness in wives*:—A pleasure-loving husband boasted of the good temper of his wife; and a wager was laid that she would rise at midnight and give the company a supper with perfect cheerfulness. It was put to the test, and the boast of the husband was found true. One of the company thus addressed the lady, "Madam, your civility fills us with surprise. Our unreasonable visit is in consequence of a wager which we have certainly lost. As you cannot approve of our conduct, give me leave to ask what can possibly induce you to behave with so much kindness to us?" "Sir," she replied, "When I married, my husband and myself were both unconverted. It has pleased God to call me out of that dangerous condition. My husband continues in it. I tremble for his future, and therefore try to make his present as comfortable as possible." "I thank you for the warning, my dear," said her husband, "by the grace of God I will change my conduct." From that time he became another man. (*E. Foster.*) *A considerate wife*:—When Mr. Disraeli retired from office he was offered an earldom. He declined it with the intimation that if there was any reward thought to be deserved, he wished it to be conferred upon his wife, to whom he attributed all his success. His wife therefore became Viscountess Beaconsfield. On the day, long before this, when he was to unfold the Budget, he entered the carriage absorbed in thought, his wife quietly taking her seat beside him. In getting in, her finger was caught by the door, which shutting upon it held it so fast that she could not withdraw it. Fearful of driving figures and arguments from his head, she uttered no cry nor made any movement until they reached the House; nor did Disraeli hear of it till long after. All that evening the faithful wife sat in the gallery, that her husband's quick eye might not miss her from it, bearing her pain like a martyr, and like a woman who loves. (*Ibid.*) *Husband: meaning of the word*:—It means literally "the band of the house," the support of it, the person who keeps it together, as a band keeps together a sheaf of corn. There are many married men who are not husbands, because they are not bands of the house. In many cases the wife is the husband, who by her prudence and economy keeps the house together. The man who by his dissolute habits strips his house of all comfort, is only a husband in a legal sense. He is not a houseband; instead of keeping things together he scatters them. (*Ibid.*)

Husband's love:—Tiberius Gracchus, the Roman, finding two snakes in his bed, and consulting with the soothsayers, was told that one of them must be killed; yet, if he killed the male, he himself would die shortly; if the female, his wife would die. His love to his wife, Cornelia, was so great, that he killed the male, saith Plutarch, and died quickly. (*G. Swinnock, M.A.*) *A wife not loved too much:*—Rowland Hill often felt much grieved at the false reports which were circulated of many of his sayings, especially those respecting his publicly mentioning Mrs. Hill. His attentions to her till the close of life were of the most gentlemanly and affectionate kind. The high view he entertained of her may be seen from the following fact:—A friend having informed Mr. Hill of the sudden death of a lady, the wife of a minister, remarked, "I am afraid our dear minister loved his wife too well, and the Lord in wisdom has removed her." "What, sir?" replied Mr. Hill, with the deepest feeling, "can a man love a good wife too much? Impossible, sir, unless he can love her better than Christ loves the Church." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Husband's love reciprocated:*—Xenophon relates, that when Cyrus had taken captive a young prince of Armenia, together with his beautiful and blooming wife, of whom he was remarkably fond, they were brought before the tribunal of Cyrus to receive their sentence. The warrior inquired of the prince what he would give to be reinstated in his kingdom, and he replied that he valued his crown and his liberty at a very low rate; but if the noble conqueror would restore his beloved wife to her former dignity and possessions, he would willingly pay his life for the purchase. The prisoners were dismissed, to enjoy their freedom and former honours; and each was lavish in praises of the conqueror. "And you," said the prince, addressing his wife, "what think you of Cyrus?" "I did not observe him," she replied. "Not observe him!" exclaimed her husband; "upon whom, then, was your attention fixed?" "Upon that dear and generous man," she replied, "who declared his readiness to purchase my liberty at the expense of his life." (*Christian Age.*) *The influence of a wife:*—The tear of a loving girl, says an old book, is like a dewdrop on a rose; but one on the cheek of a wife is a drop of poison to her husband. Try to appear cheerful and contented, and your husband will be so, and when you have made him happy, you will become so, not in appearance but in reality. The skill required is not so great. Nothing flatters a man so much as the happiness of his wife: he is always proud of himself as the source of it. (*J. Moser.*) *A wife's influence:*—As I was conversing with a pious old man, I inquired what were the means of his conversion. For a moment he paused. I perceived I had touched a tender string. Tears gushed from his eyes, while, with deep emotion, he replied, "My wife was brought to God some years before myself. I persecuted and abused her because of her religion. She, however, returned nothing but kindness, constantly manifesting an anxiety to promote my comfort and happiness; and it was her amiable conduct, when suffering ill treatment from me, that first sent the arrows of conviction to my soul." (*N. Y. Observer.*)

Vers. 20-21. Children, obey your parents in all things.—*The mutual offices of parents and children:*—Among all those mutual offices by which society is preserved those incumbent on parents and children are the most important. If a man neglect his children or misgovern them, how will he duly treat other dependants? Or if a child shake off the parental yoke, how will he bear that of a master or prince? Whereas a good child in the house is likely to be a good subject in the state, and a good father will prove a good master and magistrate (1 Tim. iii. 4-5). **I. THE DUTY OF CHILDREN.** 1. Those addressed are of either sex. Daughters, therefore, must not urge their weakness, nor sons their strength, as a reason why obedience should be dispensed with. Nor must time or fortune, for children, of whatever age or rank, are unalterably their father's and mother's (Gen. xlv. 29). 2. The duty is obedience: which includes the "honour" prescribed by the law. But the term is used to show us that this honour is not a vain respect, and to condemn hypocritical obsequiousness (Matt. xxi. 30). 3. The extent of the duty is universal. This is natural, and would have been literal but for sin. Now, however, exceptions must be introduced (Eph. vi. 1), and obedience in things not "well pleasing to the Lord" is prohibited. If a father should command his son to be an idolater, or to kill or hate his neighbour, or forbid him to embrace the service of God, obedience would be criminal (Luke xiv. 26; Matt. x. 37). But children are to obey—(1) In those things which are conformable to the Divine

will—in which case God's law has an additional sanction—viz., parental authority, and disobedience involves, therefore, double guilt. (2) In things indifferent. I wish that fathers would confine themselves to what is human, yet if they command anything not repugnant to God's law, however harsh, it must be obeyed. (3) Whence it appears how dangerous and contrary to the Word of God is the doctrine of Rome, which enfranchises children from this authority, daughters at twelve and sons at fourteen, giving them liberty, in spite of their parents, to enter a cloister. This directly contradicts Numb. xxx. 3-8; Matt. xv. 4-6. 4. The enforcement. The apostle might have urged the justice of the thing itself, gratitude prompting it; or from nature, which has engraven this law on animals; or from the custom of all nations, who have authorized the veneration of parents as of sacred persons, and made piety at once Divine worship and filial obedience. But he alleges nothing but the sole will of God. That this is well pleasing to God is seen—(1) From His commandment. (2) The promise annexed. (3) The punishments threatened (Deut. xxi. 18; Ex. xxi. 17; Levit. xx. 9; Prov. xx. 20, xxx. 17). (4) His Fatherly relation (Mal. i. 6). II. THE DUTIES OF PARENTS. 1. The provocation forbidden is an ill effect of the abuse of parental authority. Fathers provoke their children—(1) When they deny them a suitable maintenance (1 Tim. v. 8). (2) When they give them inhuman or unrighteous commands (1 Sam. xx. 34; Matt. xiv. 8). (3) When without necessity they compel them to perform sordid actions. (4) When they assail them with irritating or angry words (1 Sam. xx. 30). (5) When they chastise them beyond measure or desert (2 Sam. vii. 14). 2. To dissuade fathers from this fault, the apostle shows the evil it produces. Nothing more dejects the heart of a child than undue rigour. (1) It saddens him when in the countenance and actions of that person to whom he should be most dear he sees nothing but aversion. (2) It intimidates and deprives him of all courage for a good undertaking; for, finding himself ill-treated by his father, what can he hope for from others. (3) Some get hardened, and fall by degrees into desperate impiety. (*J. Daillé.*) *The obligations of parents and children:*—I. THE DUTY OF CHILDREN. 1. The duty itself contains four things. (1) Reverence (Levit. xix. 3, 20; Heb. xii. 9). (a) With respect to speech, that it be agreeable to the relation, graced with humility and modesty, giving them honourable titles, pleasing answers, respectful requests. (b) With respect to behaviour. Rude and haughty looks cannot comport with this duty. (2) Obedience. (a) Attending to their instructions. (b) Executing their commands. (c) Depending on their counsels—as regards a calling in life, and marriage. (d) Following their examples. (3) Pious regards. (a) With respect to their benevolence towards us. (b) With respect to their claims when in indigence, in infirmity, or dead. (4) Submission. (a) To their admonitions. (b) To their corrections. 2. The extent of the duty. We cannot imagine that this is so universal and absolute as obedience to God. He is the only absolute lawgiver (James iv. 12), and when parental claims conflict with His, we are absolved from our obedience. Hence we find Acrotatus commended among the ancients because, when his parents had required of him to do an unjust thing, he answered, “I know you are willing I should do that which is just, for so you taught me to do; I will therefore do what you desire, but not what you bid.” 3. The reason for the duty: because it is well pleasing to the Lord. The supreme authority of our heavenly Father makes any duties He requires highly reasonable; and in pleasing God you please your parents and yourself too, for you must needs be happy when God and you are pleased (Psa. xix. 11; Eph. vi. 1). II. THE OFFICE OF PARENTS. They are not to irritate their children, but, by parity of reasoning, to so comport themselves in good government as to secure their children's honour. Let us look, then, at this positive side of the matter. 1. The more general parental duties. (1) Prayer for all necessary things, but more particularly that they may be God's children. (2) Good behaviour (Prov. xx. 7; iii. 22). 2. More particular. (1) Sustenance. (2) Education (Eph. vi. 4; Prov. xxii. 6). (3) Disposal into some fit employment and marriage. III. THE MEANS OF MANAGING THE DUTIES OF BOTH RELATIONS. 1. To children. (1) Be thoroughly sensible of the mischief of disobedience, and the benefit of obedience. (2) Remove all tendencies to the dishonour of parents, and set a value on their instructions. (3) Perform all with sincerity and impartiality to both parents. (4) Set about your filial duties willingly and readily. (5) Persevere in all, whatever temptations you meet with. 2. To parents. (1) Be sure you keep up the life and power of godliness in your domestic practice. (2) Maintain your parental authority, and assert the dignity of your relation, yet

with love and mildness. (3) Sweeten all with expressions of endearment, to insinuate the more into their affections, but still with Christian prudence. (4) Endeavour to carry it with all evenness and impartiality to every child, according to a rational proportion. (*Richard Adams, A.M.*) *The duties of parents and children*:—God hath set the solitary in families. The domestic constitution is the type of all governments. If discipline is neglected in the home, it is rarely that the loss is made up afterwards. Coleridge has said: "If you bring up your children in a way which puts them out of sympathy with the religious feelings of the nation in which they live, the chances are that they will ultimately turn out ruffians or fanatics, and one as likely as the other." Lord Bacon observes that fathers have most comfort of the good proof of their sons; but the mothers have most discomfort of their ill proof. It is therefore of vital importance that the reciprocal duties of parents and children should be faithfully and diligently observed. I. THE DUTY OF THE CHILD TO THE PARENT IS TO OBEY. 1. This obedience is universal. "In all things." The law commands: "Honour thy father," &c., and the most signal way is to obey. Parents have the wisdom of experience, and know the dangers that threaten their children, and are in a position to offer judicious counsel. Filial obedience should be prompt, cheerful, self-denying, uniform; not dilatory and reluctant. 2. This obedience is qualified and limited by the Divine approval. II. THE DUTY OF THE PARENT TO THE CHILD IS TO RULE. 1. The parent is not to rule in a spirit of exasperating severity. An excessive severity is as baneful as an excessive indulgence. 2. To rule in a spirit of exasperating severity tends only to dishearten. A certain writer has significantly said: "What if God should place in your hand a diamond, and tell you to inscribe on it a sentence which should be read at the last day, and shown there as an index of your own thoughts and feelings? What care, what caution, would you exercise in the selection. Now this is what God has done. He has placed before you the immortal minds of your children, more imperishable than the diamond, on which you are about to inscribe every day and every hour, by your instruction, by your spirit, or by your example, something that will remain and be exhibited for or against you at the judgment day!" Lessons: 1. To rule wisely we must first learn to obey. 2. Disobedience is the essence of all sin. 3. That government is the most effective that tempers justice with mercy. (*G. Barlow.*) *Children entreated to obey their parents*:—I. WHY YOU SHOULD OBEY. 1. Because it is your duty. (1) God commands it, and He is so good that we ought to obey Him, and so great that He will not allow disobedience to go unpunished. (2) Your parents command it, to whom you owe your all of earthly happiness. 2. Because it is your interest. Neither God nor your parents would wish it if it were not for your good. (1) It will secure for you God's blessing, whereas disobedience will bring down His curse. Remember Hophni and Phinehas, and Absalom. (2) It will make you cheerful and happy in your minds, whereas disobedience makes you sullen and disagreeable to yourselves as well as others. (3) It promotes your daily improvement. Disobey, and your evil dispositions will become daily more tyrannical. (4) It makes others love you: but no one likes a disobedient child. (5) It is most favourable to conversion, but the contrary almost precludes the hope of it. 3. Because you have the perfect pattern of our Lord to urge you to obey. II. HOW YOU SHOULD OBEY. 1. Religiously. With a regard to what pleases God, and not what pleases self or parents so much. 2. Heartily and sincerely, as opposed to that hypocritical obedience which some children yield when their parents are in sight, because they are afraid of the consequences. 3. Completely. It is of no use for children to obey in some things and disobey in others; to do half what their parents command, and leave half undone. 4. Instantly, without waiting to ask the reason, or promising to obey at some future time. 5. Cheerfully. There is an obedience of the hand, but a disobedience of the heart. 6. Always. Not simply till you go to business, or are of age, or married. "Despise not thy mother when she is old." (*B. W. Noel, M.A.*) *Obedience of children*:—The commander of the *Orient*, before the Battle of the Nile, placed his son, Cassabianca, thirteen years of age, on certain duty, to stay at his post till relieved by his father's order. Soon after the father was slain. The boy held his post in the midst of fearful carnage, ignorant of his father's fate; and while the sailors were deserting the burning and sinking ship, he cried, "Father, may I go?" The permission did not come, and there he stood at his post and perished. (*E. Foster.*) *Obedience to a master*:—The Hon. Thomas H. Benton was for many years a United States senator. When making a speech in New York

once, he turned to the ladies present, and spoke about his mother in this way: "My mother asked me never to use tobacco, and I have never touched it from that day to this. She asked me never to gamble, and I never learned to gamble. When I was seven years old she asked me not to drink. I made a resolution of total abstinence. That resolution I have never broken. And now, whatever honour I may have gained, I owe it to my mother." (*King's Highway*.)

The rarity of obedience:—A tradesman advertised for a boy to assist in his shop, and go on errands. A few hours after the morning papers were circulated he had his shop thronged with all kinds of boys. Not knowing which to choose he advertised again: "Wanted, to assist in a shop, a boy who obeys his mother." Only two boys ventured to apply for the situation. (*J. Bate*.)

Safety of obedience:—A pointsman in Prussia was at the junction of two lines of railway, his lever in hand for a train that was signalled. The engine was within a few seconds of reaching the embankment, when the man, on turning his head, perceived his little boy playing on the rails on the line the train was to pass over. "Lie down!" he shouted to the child, but as to himself, he remained at his post. The train passed safely on its way. The father rushed forward expecting to take up a corpse, but what was his joy on finding that the boy had at once obeyed his order! He had lain down, and the whole train passed over him without injury. The next day the king sent for the man, and attached to his breast the medal for civil courage.

Disobedience regretted:—When I was a boy, and a little reckless, my mother used to say to me, "De Witt, you will be sorry for this when I am gone." I remember just how she looked, with her cap and spectacles. I remember just how she sat with the Bible on her lap. I laughed the admonition off, but she never said a truer thing in all her life. I have been sorry for it ever since. (*T. De W. Talmage, D.D.*)

Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged.—*The treatment that discourages piety*:—Discouraged, Paul means, in good. His language is addressed to fathers, for he seems to have had in view the case of advanced children; and yet the language is equally applicable to the case of mothers and very little children. Children are discouraged and hardened to good—

I. BY TOO MUCH PROHIBITION. There is a monotony of continuous prohibition which is really awful. It does not stop with ten, like the words of Sinai, but keeps up the thunder from day to day. All commandments, of course, in such a strain come to sound very much alike, and as they are all equally annoying, the child learns to hate them all. The study should be rather to forbid as few things as possible, and then soundly to enforce what is forbidden.

II. BY UNFEELING AND ABSOLUTE GOVERNMENT. If a Christian father is felt to be a tyrant, he will seem to his child to be a tyrant in God's name, and that will be enough to create a sullen prejudice against all sacred things. Nor is the case improved when the child is cowed into fear of such a parent, and thus reduced to submission. There is a beautiful courage in a child's approach to God; but if his courage even toward his father is broken down, he will only shrink from God with a greater fear.

III. BY AN OVER-EXACTING MANNER AND A DIFFICULTY IN BEING PLEASED. Children love approbation, and are specially disappointed when they fail of it in their meritorious endeavours, and especially when they are blamed for a trivial defect which, had they known, they would have avoided. But some parents appear to think it a matter of faithfulness to be not easily pleased, lest the children should have loose impressions of duty. They do not consider how they would fare if God should treat them in the same manner. But what can win a child to attempt to please God when His earthly representative is so difficult to please?

IV. BY HOLDING DISPLEASURE TOO LONG, AND YIELDING WITH TOO GREAT DIFFICULTY. It is right when children have done wrong to make them feel your displeasure; but that should not take the manner of a grudge, and hold on after repentance. On the contrary, there should be a hastening towards the child like the prodigal's father, otherwise repentance will be turned into a sullen aversion, and into a feeling that there is the same heavy tariff of displeasure to be paid when he would turn towards God.

V. BY HASTY AND FALSE ACCUSATIONS. When good intentions are rated low, and children are put under the ban of dishonour, they are very likely to show that they are no better than they are taken to be. To batter self-respect is the surest way to break every natural charm of virtue and religion. The effect is scarcely better where acknowledged faults are exaggerated and set off by colours of derision. It will do for a parent to be severely just, but exaggerated justice is injustice, and more terribly so when it assumes the Christian

name. VI. BY KEEPING CHILDREN IN A CONTINUAL TORMENT OF SUPPRESSION. We have no right to be anxious anywhere; it is unbelief which trust in God should set at rest. And we have less right to be, in that it destroys the comfort of others. Only to be in a room with an anxious person is enough to make one positively unhappy. What, then, is the woe put upon a hapless little one who is shut up day by day to the fearing look and deprecating whine, and supercautious keeping of a nervously anxious mother. Nothing will so dreadfully overcast the sky of childhood as the weather this makes. It worries the child in every putting forth and play lest he should be hurt, and takes him away from every contact with the great world's occasions that would school him for manhood. And then, since the child will most certainly learn how little reason there was for this eternal distress, he is sure to be issued finally in a feeling of confirmed disrespect. No, there must be a certain courage in maternity and the religion of it. The child must be wisely trusted to danger, and shown how to conquer it. VII. BY GIVING THEM TESTS OF CHARACTER THAT ARE INAPPROPRIATE TO THEIR AGE. A child loses his temper, and the conclusion forthwith sprung upon him is that he has a bad heart. Whereupon he is reluctant to pray, as if the wrong were conclusive against him. But how would the father or mother fare if tested by the same rule? So, if the child evinces a desire to play on Sunday, has not the father, who has outgrown play, occupied himself even in church with his secular schemes? If a child is wholly perverse, it will not discourage him to tell him of it; but if he wants to be good, he should be shown how ready God is to help him and to forgive his faults. VIII. BY THE HOLDING ALOOF SYSTEM BY WHICH CHILDREN ARE DENIED A RECOGNITION OF THEIR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP. The child giving evidence, however beautiful, of his piety, is still kept back from the Lord's table, for the simple defect of years. As if years were a Scriptural evidence of grace. No plan could be devised for the discouragement of piety in children more certain in its object. They are only mocked and tantalized by their baptism itself. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*)

Vers. 22-25. **Servants, obey in all things your masters.**—*Servants and masters* :— I. A PRECEPT OF OBEDIENCE. 1. The occasion of this precept seems to spring from the circumstance that converted servants thought themselves exempt from servitude. The error had some colour. If masters embraced Christianity with their slaves it seemed unjust to hold them in bondage; and if masters still adhered to paganism, what right had they, the servants of Satan, over those who were now Christ's free men? 2. The precept involves—(1) Humility in receiving the commands of another. (2) Alacrity in executing them. (3) Universality "in all things" lawful and honest. He that is lord of the flesh must not command contrary to the Lord of the Spirit (Matt. x. 25). 3. Instructions. (1) Christianity does not subvert political order, such as depriving heathen masters of their legitimate authority over Christian servants. Therefore those err who think all authority to be opposed to evangelical liberty, and papists who have it that the authority of a king over subjects is dissolved by heresy. (2) Christianity frees from the yoke of human servitude that which is the best and most excellent thing in man, viz., the spirit and conscience (Gal. v. 1). They therefore err who would rule the consciences of men either by ecclesiastical or physical force. (3) Christians ought to obey even the unjust commands of their masters (1 Pet. ii. 18). II. THE MANNER OF OBEYING. 1. Negatively. (1) Not with eyeservice—a disease familiar to servants—obedience under the eye (Luke xii. 45). (2) As men-pleasers—the cause of the disease. As comedians who act in order to please that they may obtain benefit do not mount the stage unless people are looking on, so men-pleasers move not a hand unless their masters are there to behold and applaud. 2. Positively. The remedies for the disease. (1) Singleness of heart, which is opposed to deceitful eye-service. He who serves his master to the eye seems to have two hearts; one dutiful, which excites to obedience in the master's presence; the other undutiful, which impels to idleness in the master's absence. But he who obeys with singleness of heart has one heart alone and ever the same, which moves to duty irrespective of his master's presence or absence. (2) Fearing God. As the study of deceitful pleasing can produce nothing but eye-service, so the fear of God produces simplicity and sincerity. He who fears man alone will be changeable, inasmuch as it is excited by presence and allayed by absence; but the fear of God is constant because He is always present. (3) From the heart. (a) Not compulsorily and unwillingly. We do anything heartily when the mind rejoices in what the hand does. On the contrary, when the mind murmurs, although the outward act may be performed, yet it is

done from the body rather than from the mind. (b) Benevolence of spirit towards the commander of the work (Eph. vi. 7). No one obeys better than he who renders obedience from love. (4) As to the Lord. As those who serve the Lord more especially than men. Because—(a) They who obey are more servants of Christ than of earthly masters. Earthly masters buy their servants' bodies with silver and gold; Christ redeems both soul and body with His blood for perpetual liberty. (b) They obey earthly masters only at the appointment of Christ, and Him through them His stewards. (c) Christ commands them to obey their masters. III. INCENTIVES TO OBEDIENCE. 1. The promise. (1) The Bestower of the reward. The apostle rightly would have those servants expect a reward from Christ. For earthly masters give food and clothing to slaves as due in common with beasts. They are consoled, therefore, by the fact that they have a heavenly Master who will not suffer them to be destitute of a reward. (2) The quality of the reward. "Reward" and "inheritance" seem incongruous; the first being paid to labourers, the latter given to children. The celestial reward is called hire or wages, not because merited, but because of the resemblance in some sense between the two. (a) As hire is only given to workmen, so the heavenly kingdom is not given to the indolent. (b) As hire is not given until work is finished, so heaven is not bestowed until life is ended. But the heavenly reward is unlike hire—(a) in that it is given, not according to the merit of the workman, but from the grace and liberality of the bestower (Luke xvii. 10); (b) in that it is not proportioned to labours bestowed, for finite has no proportion to infinite. 2. The confirmation of the promise. "Ye serve the Lord Christ" (Matt. xxv. 40-45). All works of obedience are rendered to Christ because commanded by Him. 3. Corollaries. (1) No service is dishonourable since all is rendered to Christ. (2) No honour screens a wicked man from disgrace since he serves an infamous master. (3) They who, being placed under the rule of others, are unwilling to serve, are rebels against Christ (1 Sam. viii. 7). (4) We ought not to obey any who is opposed to the will of Christ. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *The duties of servants*:—I. THE DUTY OF A SERVANT IS TO OBEY HIS MASTER IN ALL THINGS RELATING TO HIS STATE OF SERVITUDE. There is nothing degrading in service. It is the employment of angels, and is ennobled by the example of Christ. To obey in all things is not pleasant or easy; but the Christian servant will strive to accomplish the task. He consults not his own but his master's will, nay, time. But his employer is only according to the flesh, and has no power over the spirit; nor is he to command anything forbidden by God. II. THE SERVANT'S DUTY IS TO BE DISCHARGED IN A SPIRIT OF SINCERITY. 1. Free from duplicity. From the treatment he received the slave was tempted to be diligent in the presence of his master, but indolent and reckless in his absence. Christianity has elevated man from slavery, and provided him with the highest motives to moral action. 2. It is to be done in the fear of God. "Fearing God"—the one Lord as contrasted with the master according to the flesh. The Christian servant has a conscience to satisfy. The fear of the Lord is the holiest motive power in all acceptable service. He who serves man as he seeks to serve God will take care that the Divine and human interests do not collide. III. THE SERVANT IS TO ACT FROM THE LOFTIEST RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE. 1. In every duty God is to be recognized. "And whatsoever ye do, do it as to the Lord, and not unto men." This will give a moral dignity to the most menial employment, and exalt the common drudgery of toil into a means of religious refreshment. 2. In every duty the best powers should be exercised. "Do it heartily." If the heart be engaged, it will put into operation the best powers of the whole man. No work is well done when the heart is not in it. IV. FAITHFUL SERVICE WILL MEET WITH A GLORIOUS REWARD (ver. 24). V. EVERY ACT OF INJUSTICE WILL MEET WITH IMPARTIAL RETRIBUTION (ver. 25). Some regard the wrong-doer referred to in this verse as the servant who defrauds the master of his service; others, as the master who defrauds the servant of his just recompense. But the words announce a general principle which is equally applicable to both. The philosophers of Greece taught, and the laws of Rome assumed, that the slave was a chattel, and that as a chattel, he had no rights. The New Testament shows that between both there is a reciprocity of duties and of penalties. The injustice done in the world, whether by master or by servant, shall be impartially redressed, and the injured one vindicated at the day of final retribution. (*G. Barlow.*) *Loving service is true service*:—To lead a discouraged people to the Holy War is as difficult as for Xerxes' commanders to conduct the Persian troops to battle against the Greeks. The vassals of the great king were driven to the conflict by whips and sticks, for they were afraid to fight: do you wonder that they were defeated? A

Church that needs constant exhorting and compelling accomplishes nothing. The Greeks had no need of blows and threats, for each man was a lion, and courted the encounter, however great the odds against him. Each Spartan fought *con amore*; he was never more at home than when contending for the altars and for the hearths of his country. We want Christian men of this same sort, who have faith in their principles, faith in the doctrines of grace, faith in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; and who therefore contend earnestly for the faith in these days when piety is mocked at from the pulpit, and the gospel is sneered at by professional preachers. We need men who love the truth, to whom it is dear as their lives; men into whose hearts the old doctrine is burned by the hand of God's Spirit through a deep experience of its necessity and of its power. We need no more of those who will parrot what they are taught, but we want men who will speak what they know. Oh, for a troop of men like John Knox, heroes of the martyr and covenanter stock! Then would Jehovah of hosts have a people to serve Him who would be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *Faithfulness in work*:—A carpenter was once asked why he troubled to finish off a magistrate's bench so carefully? His reply was, "I can't do otherwise; besides, I may have to sit on it one of these days." (H. D. Machay.)

Ver. 23. **Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord.**—*Servants of Christ*:—The apostle was speaking to slaves, who must have felt their condition to be irksome and degrading, but he applies a principle which altogether transforms it. They are to feel and act as servants of Christ. This principle is of far-reaching application. We are to serve Christ by discharging all the duties of life so as to please Him. This suggests a train of thought which has a special suitableness to young men. Note then the things which are essential to the realization of this lofty ideal of Christian service. I. THERE MUST BE A FULL SURRENDER OF THE WHOLE BEING TO CHRIST. "No man can serve two masters." "He that is not with Me is against Me." Alas! how many act as though they had made a bargain with Christ; that part of their nature should be given to Him, and part retained for the world and self. In certain circumstances they seem devout and earnest believers, in others frivolous and worldly. Such a course is dishonouring to Christ, and injurious to their own souls. There are families in which the children having been asked to do something, refuse or delay; then a struggle ensues, involving discomfort to both parents and children. In others the first intimation is followed by prompt obedience. In the one case is love, order, and happiness; in the other the reverse. Why? In the one case the children had learned to obey, in the other they had not. So some of God's children have not learned to surrender their wills utterly to Him; hence every act of obedience involves a struggle; but some have learnt to make the struggle once for all, and are now happy in that service which is perfect freedom. II. STRIVE TO BE EFFICIENT IN YOUR WORLDLY CALLING. "Whatsoever," whether the work of master or servant, prince or peasant, "do it as to the Lord." When we can recognize Christ as our Master, and our work as rendered to Him, it should make us faithful servants, whoever may be our immediate employer. Unfortunately this has not been always acted on, and religion has been regarded as a disqualification for efficient service. A lad once said, when urged to decision, "I would like to learn my business before being converted, for I notice that the pious men in my father's employ are not generally good workmen." I want you to wipe out this reproach, and try to excel in everything for the sake of Christ—whether in school, workshop, or counting-house, &c. The influence of Christian character and effort is greatly enhanced when connected with superiority in business. A working man who had recently come to reside in a northern village, was asked, as he was strolling in the fields one Sunday, to attend a cottage service where the speaker was going to preach. The invitation was rudely declined, and on mentioning the matter to an acquaintance who came up immediately, he was asked if he knew who the preacher was. "No." "Why that is Thompson, the best foreman in the district." "Oh, indeed, I have often heard of Thompson's work; I will go and hear him preach." He did so and became a new man. III. STRIVE TO ACQUIRE MENTAL CULTURE AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST. 1. It will open to you many avenues of enjoyment. 2. It will enable you to discover riches and beauty in the Divine word which would otherwise be concealed. 3. It will help to keep you free from the religious crochets by which the Christian life is now weakened and disfigured. 4. It will give you greater power to serve Christ. Edward Irving had in his Glasgow congregation the wife of a shoemaker, who was

a determined infidel. Irving visited him day after day without producing any impression. But one day he sat down beside him and began talking about his work and the material he was then handling. The man became interested, for he found that the minister knew as much about his trade as he did himself. Next Sunday he went to church, and when taunted by his former companions, replied, "Mr. Irving is no fool, he kens leather." IV. HAVE SOME SPECIAL WORK TO DO FOR CHRIST. The field of Christian usefulness is wide, and there can be no difficulty in finding suitable work. To help you in this—1. Be regular and faithful in your devotions. 2. Try to do every day something simply for Christ's sake—repress your temper, speak to some friend about salvation, practise some self-denial, for Christ's sake, and with the help of the Spirit. Conclusion: Are you serving Christ or Satan? You must be one or the other. (*G. D. Macgregor.*) *Do all for God*:—1. When we remember that our destiny is to live with Christ and glorified beings, and that any work that does not fit us for that is a great imperfection, it is alarming at first sight to note that the great bulk of our occupations are of the earth, earthy. All professions and trades are for the purpose of supplying defects in the existing order, and, therefore, when that order is no more, and is superseded by one in which there are no defects, the occupations of this life must necessarily die a natural death. Is there not, then, something which seems inappropriate in the circumstance that all this short life should be taken up in doing what has no reference to eternity, and will be swept away like so much litter? 2. It was just this feeling that gave rise to Monasticism. Men assumed that eternity would be given up to prayer and praise; these, therefore, must be the earthly occupations of religious men. Let us not rail at their mistake, for it is a common assumption that a secular pursuit is an obstacle to a religious mind. Hence a seriously disposed young man is pointed out as destined for the Church. 3. As the pushing of a false theory to its extreme point is one method of showing its fallacy, imagine it to be God's will that all Christians should have a directly spiritual pursuit. What then? The system of society is brought to a dead-lock. Take away the variety of callings, reduce all to that of the monk, and civilization is undermined and we revert to barbarism. This assuredly cannot be the will of Him who has implanted in us the instincts which develop into civilization. 4. But if this cannot be the will of God, then it must be His will that this man should ply some humble craft; that this other should have the duties of a large estate; that a third should go to the desk; a fourth minister to the sick; a fifth fight the battles of his country. Now if this be the case the greatest harm is done when a man thrusts himself out from his proper vocation. Each man's wisdom and happiness must lie in doing the work God has given him. So thought St. Paul. He did not urge his converts to join him in his missionary journeys, but to abide in his calling with God. 5. "With God." This wraps up the secret of which we are in search, how we may serve God in our daily business. How can this be done? By throwing into the work a pure and holy intention. Intention is to our actions what the soul is to the body. As the soul, not the body, makes us moral agents, so motive gives action a moral character. To kill a man, of malice prepense, is murder; but to kill him by accident is no sin at all. A good work, such as prayer, becomes hypocrisy if done for the praise of men. 6. Now the great bulk of life's work is done with no intention whatever of serving God. (1) The intention of some in their work is simply to gain a livelihood: a perfectly innocent and even good motive, but not spiritual and such as redeems the work from earthiness. (2) Others labour with a view of gaining eminence. The effects of work done in this spirit, if it does not meet with success, are sad to witness. (3) Others mainly work from energy of mind. They would be miserable if idle; but that work has of course no spiritual character. (4) Another class work from the high and elevating motive of duty; but if the intention have no reference to God's appointment it has no more spirituality than might have been found in the mind of Cicero or Seneca. (5) A great mass of human activity has no intention at all, and so runs to waste from a spiritual point of view. Multitudes work mechanically, and by the same instinct of routine as a horse in a mill. But man is surely made for something nobler than to work by mere force of habit. 7. Now what is the true motive which lifts up the humblest duties into a higher atmosphere? This—"Whatsoever ye do," &c. The primary reference is to the duties of slaves, the lowest imaginable. The *a fortiori* inference is this, that if the drudgery of a slave admits of such a consecration, much more does any nobler form of business. No man after this can say, "My duties are so very commonplace that they cannot have a religious dignity and value." 8.

Practical counsels. (1) Before you go to your task fix it in your mind that all lawful pursuits are departments of God's harvest-field in which He has called Christians to labour. (2) Pursue your own calling with the conscious intention of furthering His work and will. (3) Then put your hand to it bravely, keeping before you the main aim of pleasing Him with diligence and zeal. (4) Imagine Jesus surveying your work as He will do it at the last day, and strive that there may be no flaw in it. (*Dean Goulburn.*) *Working*.—Were I to ask, "What was the purpose for which you were sent into the world," I should get a variety of replies. But the right answer would be, To work. So the Bible tells us, and Providence and the world around. Work is not an evil, but a good. There is work in heaven. Adam unfallen was a working man. If there had been no sin the world would not have been a world of idleness. And what is true of us is true of all God's creatures. Take water; it never stands still. Take horses, or even the birds, how soon they have to work for a living. Our text tells us how to work and for whom to work. Take then its instruction as a guide for—

I. SCHOOL WORK. Many wish there were no such thing. This is foolish, for schools make all the difference between us and heathens. How hard it is for a man to get on in life who has had a poor education. School work is hard, but it will be made all the lighter if done heartily and to the Lord; and then there would be no need for the coaxing and bribing and threatening that are so common.

II. HOME WORK. Young people should make themselves useful at home, and not expect that everybody should be attending upon them. Home work is an important part of the training for after life; and there is nothing in it beneath the dignity of any girl. And what a comfort it would make you, and what a saving you might be to mother's cares. And the reason it is repulsive is because you do not take to it in a right spirit. Throw heart in it, and it will soon be enjoyable.

III. BUSINESS WORK. Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well—the work even of a message-boy, crossing sweeper, or shoe-black. It is often when people are busy at their work that God comes with a blessing. Moses, Gideon, Elisha, the shepherds, the apostles were all called when at their work. Is yours humble? You can exalt it by taking it as Christ's, and by doing it with all your heart.

IV. SOUL WORK. This is done more for us than by us. And yet we have to "work out" what God works in. This will have to be done heartily and unto the Lord, or literally not at all. We have to escape—which surely involves earnestness—to Jesus.

V. CHRISTIAN WORK. Every work is Christian if done for Christ, but there is work more especially done for Him. When a little girl's mother comes to visit her at school, she wants to introduce all her friends to her. Your work is to introduce them to Jesus. You need not be a missionary to do this. (*J. H. Wilson, M.A.*) "Not unto men".—It is related that when Phidias, the great sculptor who carved statues for one of the temples of antiquity, was labouring with minute fidelity upon the hair on the back of the head of one of the historic figures which was to be elevated from the pavement to the very apex of the building, or placed along the frieze, some one expostulated with him, saying, "Why do you take such great pains with the hair? It is never to be seen." His simple reply was, "The gods will see it." So he laboured thoroughly in the minutest things, not for the eyes of men but for the eyes of the gods. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*)

Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ.—*Christian Socialism*.—Christianity, though altogether opposed to those levelling theories which disaffected men industriously broach, places the highest and the lowest on a par in the competition for eternity. Christianity is the best upholder of the distinctions in society; and he can have read his Bible to little purpose who does not see the appointment of God that there should be rich and poor in the world, master and servant; who does not perceive that want of loyalty is want of religion, and that there is no more direct rebellion against the Creator than resistance to any constituted authority, or the endeavour to bring round that boasted equality in which all shall have the same rights, or to speak more truly, in which none shall have any. But if Christianity makes it sinful to repine against servitude, it gives a dignity to the servant who would still remain in servitude. It tells the servant, that if faithful here, he may rank with his master hereafter, even though the employment of the master has been the advancement of Christ's cause on earth. And oh! it should be a surprisingly cheerful thing to those who have to wear away life in the meanest occupations, that, as immortal beings, they are not one jot disadvantaged by their temporal position, but they make as much progress in the Christian race as those placed at the very highest summit in the Christian office. (*Ibid.*) *Living for*

Christ.—I. **UNITY OF PURPOSE IS NECESSARY.** 1. For the development of character. 2. For success in life. Glory, self-interest, benevolence, each gives unity and force, whereas a man without any such governing principle becomes weak; and it is only by making one object predominant and seeking that object that great results are achieved. II. **THAT WHICH GIVES UNITY TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS CHRIST.**

1. He is the unifying principle of Christian theology. 2. Of the inward life of the Christian. 3. Of his outward and active life. We have an illustration of this in Paul, in his theology, experience, and work. Negatively he did not seek wealth or honour, either as his main or subordinate object. He simply sought the glory of Christ. III. **THE GLORY OF CHRIST SHOULD BE OUR AIM.** 1. Because it is our duty. This is the highest thing we can do. Whatever else we do will, in the end, be regarded as nothing. 2. Our inward holiness and happiness will thereby be best advanced. 3. Only thus can we be really useful. Thus only do we associate ourselves with the saints and angels. The extension of Christ's kingdom is the only thing worth living for. 4. Christ has died for you, redeemed you. You are not your own but His. Serve Him, then, under the constraint of His love. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*)

The perfect service.—It would be truthful to say that all "serve the Lord Christ." Some against their will—Pharisees, Pilate, Judas, &c. Some unconsciously—all who spread the true refinement of art, the researches of science, the charities of philanthropy. But Paul is not now speaking to such, but "to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colossæ." And these words indicate about the life service of all true Christians. I. **ITS MOTIVE.** The constraint is "for Christ's sake." Such motive is—1. Deep enough. It has its hands on all the hidden springs of purpose and love. 2. Abiding enough. To please others who may change or die, or please self, which is fickle and disappointing, cannot ensure the prolonged service men can render to the eternal and unchanging Christ. II. **ITS PATTERN.** In some warfare the commander says, "Go"; in this He says, "Follow Me." "He was in all points tempted," &c. "He has left us an example." III. **ITS HELP.** The fishers after their night of bootless toil, Peter walking on the waves, Paul receiving grace to endure a hidden sorrow, are specimens of men needing and receiving help from Christ. IV. **ITS COMPREHENSIVENESS.** It includes all circumstances, whether of artizan or statesman; all ages, whether of child or patriarch; of all spheres, whether of the inward or outward life. "Whatsoever ye do." V. **ITS CONSUMMATION.** It has now the approval of conscience and the Master; it will ultimately receive "the reward of the inheritance." (*U. R. Thomas.*)

The service of Christ is—I. **HONOURABLE service.** We serve the Lord Christ—King of kings, and Lord of lords. The servants of royalty are nobles; so we are kings and priests unto God. II. **REASONABLE service.** The master had a claim upon the slave as his property won in war or purchased by money. We have been bought with a price. Christ has a right based upon His service of love; we should respond with gratitude. III. **ENTIRE service.** The slave was his master's altogether—self, family, belongings, &c. So Christ claims all we are and all we have—time, money, secularities, and not merely Sabbaths, worship, &c. IV. **HAPPY service.** Sometimes the road is rough, but the motive for treading it makes it smooth, and the companionship of Him we love relieves its tedium and lightens its darkness. V. **EASY service.** "Take My yoke upon you . . . and ye shall find rest." Love is the magic power which makes what is irksome pleasurable. VI. **THE SERVICE OF FRIENDSHIP** (John xv. 15). It is the badge of true Christian discipleship—not creeds, professions, sentiments, &c. VII. **LUCRATIVE service.** 1. It is its own reward here. 2. It has an exceeding great reward by and by. (*A. C. Price, B.A.*) *How difficulties in Christ's service are overcome*.—Sometimes when a man's limb has been broken, and long weeks of rest are necessary in order that the fractured bones may reunite, there is danger lest the limb should become permanently contracted; so as soon as it is safe to do so, the patient is ordered to exercise the limb. At first the exercise gives acute pain, but after awhile, as vigour and strength return to the limb, in the thrill of health that he feels, the man forgets the pain and is glad. Now sin has dislocated man's moral nature, and though by grace it may have been reset, still God's wise exercise of it is exceedingly painful; but then this exercise begets spiritual health, and that health sends such a thrill of pleasure through the soul that the very act of obedience to, and service of, Christ, gains strength to obey and serve; and with increasing strength difficulty after difficulty disappears, pain goes, pleasure comes, and the Christian is master of his work, and delights in it. (*Ibid.*) *What makes Christ's service easy and pleasant*.—That huge piece of timber which lies there in that quiet creek, from which the tide has

receded, leaving it dry and immovable in the sand; try to shift it, and it is only with the utmost difficulty that you can do so. But wait till the tide comes in, and the waters flow around it. Make the attempt now, and with what comparative ease you accomplish it! Even so there are ten thousand things in the way of duty laid upon us by God which, so long as the heart is unrenewed, seem hard and burdensome, but all of which yield when once the love of Christ has once entered and filled the heart, are cheerfully taken up and done with ease and joy to the Loved One. A little child had given to her by a friend a bunch of ripe, beautiful grapes. Just as she was about to eat them her mother said, "My child, will you give me those grapes?" The little one looked at the grapes and then at the mother whom she loved; and then after a pause, as the mother's love came rushing with full tide into her heart, and overmastering every other feeling, she flung the grapes into her mother's lap, and with a kiss surrendered them all (Matt. xviii. 3). The love of Christ makes sacrifice easy and delightful. (*Ibid.*) *The ruling motive of Christ's servants*.—You cannot serve two masters—you must serve one or other. If your work is first with you, and your fee second, work is your master, and the Lord of work, who is God. But if your fee is first with you, and your work second, fee is your master, and the lord of fee, who is the devil; and not only the devil, but the lowest of devils—"the least erected fiend that fell." So there you have it in brief terms—work first, you are God's servants; fee first, you are the fiend's. And it makes a difference, now and ever, believe me, whether you serve Him who has on His vesture and thigh written, "King of kings," and whose service is perfect freedom; and him on whose vesture and thigh is written, "Slave of slaves," and whose service is perfect slavery. (*John Ruskin.*) *The sure reward of Christ's servants*.—When Calvin was banished from ungrateful Geneva, he said, "Most assuredly if I had merely served man, this would have been a poor recompense; but it is my happiness that I have served Him who never fails to reward His servants to the full extent of His promise." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *All for Jesus*.—The gospel does not barely supply us with directions, but furnishes us with reasons and power for obedience. The apostle knew that the conditions of believers are various, and therefore laid down distinct precepts for masters and servants, &c., but proposed a common motive for all. Our translation is in the indicative and states the fact—"Ye serve the Lord Christ." Is that so? If not, the original will bear rendering in the imperative—"Serve ye the Lord Christ." What an exaltation for a slave of Satan to become a servant of Christ. "Thy gentleness hath made me great." It is a greater honour to serve Christ in the most menial capacity than to occupy the throne of the Cæsars. To serve us He laid aside His glorious array and girt Him with the garments of a servant. In our turn let us serve Him alone and for ever. Ye serve the Lord Christ—I. IN THE COMMON ACTS OF LIFE. The fact that the text was addressed to the lowest is instructive. He does not address this choice saying to masters, preachers, deacons, magistrates, or persons of influence, but to slaves. He goes to the kitchen, the field, &c., to his toiling brethren. If the poor slave should serve Jesus how much more ought I? 1. Those who are in a low estate serve the Lord Christ. (1) By a quiet acquiescence in the arrangement of Providence which has placed them where they are. While the race is as it is some must serve. When a man can say, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content," that is obedience and the service of Christ. (2) By exercising the graces of the Spirit in the discharge of our calling. An honest, trustworthy servant is a standing evidence of the power of religion, and preaches in the nursery, workshop, and many places where a preacher would not be admitted, a silent but effective sermon. This was how the gospel spread in Rome. (3) By displaying the joy of the Lord in our service. Many have been won to Christ by the cheerfulness of poor Christians. It was so in Paul's day. The Christian slave would not join in the jollity of the heathen festivals, but whenever any one was in trouble he was the cheerful comforter. (4) By performing the common acts of life as unto Christ's self. To the man of God nothing is secular, everything is sacred. "What God hath cleansed, that call thou not common." 2. This view of things—(1) Ennobles life. The bondsman is henceforth free; he serves not man but God. (2) Cheers the darkest shades. (3) Ensures a reward. (4) Should stimulate zeal. If you serve the Lord Christ, serve Him well. If you had work to do for Her Majesty you would try to do your best. II. IN RELIGIOUS ACTIONS. Every professor should have something to do for Christ. It would be well if our Church discipline permitted us to turn out every drone. They are of little use in honey making and are at the bottom of all quarrels. But all who work are not

necessarily serving Christ. 1. Some serve in a legal spirit. This spirit has a measure of power in it, as the lash drives the slave. But Christians are free and should serve Christ from gratitude and not from fear. 2. Some in a spirit of formality, as a part of the general routine of their existence. It is the proper thing to go to a place of worship, to give their guinea, &c. Christ is not served by such mechanical working. 3. Some in a party spirit, who serve not Christ but their own denomination, and who would almost be vexed at Christ being honoured by any other sect. 4. Some out of the ambition to be thought useful. Our parents or friends wish us to be active in the Church, and therefore we do it. 5. We must rise above all this. What we do we must do for the Master alone. III. IN SPECIAL ACTS DONE TO HIMSELF. We desire not only to aid our friend in his projects, but to do something for him himself. So we want to do something, personally, for our Divine Benefactor. 1. We can adore Him. We may be doing nothing for our fellows while thus occupied, but Jesus is dearer to us than the whole race. And as we adore Him in secret so we should extol Him in public. 2. We should pray for Him. "Prayer shall be made for Him continually." It is delightful to pray for sinners and for saints, but there should be special prayer for the extension of Christ's kingdom, that He may see the travail of His soul. 3. There should be much communion with Him. "If any man serve Me let him follow Me, and where I am there shall also My servant be." To be near Him is one of the essentials of service. Let no day pass without a word with Jesus. You are His spouse—can you live without a loving word from your husband? 4. You should sit at His feet and learn of Him, studying His Word. Martha prepared a feast for Christ and did well, but Jesus gave Mary the preference. 5. You must obey Him. "If ye love Me keep My commandments," not simply build chapels, &c. 6. You must be willing to bear reproach for His sake. 7. Care for His Church. "Lovest thou Me?—feed My sheep." If you cannot serve with your tongue you can feed the hungry, clothe the naked, &c. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these," &c. 8. Bestow upon Him little wastefulnesses of love—breaking alabaster boxes of very precious ointment on Him. Think of something now and then that you could not justify in prudence. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 25. He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done.—

I. PUNISHMENT THREATENED. 1. To masters. (1) Imperious masters wrong their servants. (a) By defrauding them of their clothing, food, or wages. (b) By imposing labours beyond their strength. (c) By afflicting them with reproaches and unjust stripes, for all of which see Exod. v. (2) For these wrongs servants are not to rise against their masters in anger, nor leave their tasks through idleness: God will see due punishment done as He did to the Egyptian oppressors. 2. To servants. (1) Contumacious-servants wrong their masters as far as they do not pay them due obedience and reverence; and deceitful and slothful servants because they do not yield due submission, or do so without sincerity. (2) These shall be punished for their dishonesty by God the Avenger and Judge (2 Kings v.). 3. Instructions to both. (1) In all sin it is determined by God that punishment shall be inflicted. What, then, can it profit to have avoided the avenging hand of men, and to fall into the hands of the living God? (2) Earthly masters, however powerful, cannot with impunity trample on their dependants, for they are subject to God, and must render an account before His tribunal. (3) Those who are wronged must not revenge, but leave that to God. II. AN OBJECTION ANTICIPATED. 1. Masters might object, Who shall call us to account? Slaves were accounted as nothing. According to the lawyers no wrong could be done to them. But in case of arraignment, by power and bribery it was easy to secure acquittal. The apostle affirmed that in the final court there was a judge who recognized the rights of slaves and who was not to be terrified by power, nor turned aside by favour or bribes (Job xxxiv. 19). 2. Servants might object, If we neglect the duties of our wretched bondage surely the merciful God will not punish us. Paul denies that God can favour the poor more than the rich (Exod. xxiii. 3; Levit. xix. 15). 3. Instructions. (1) Not only the wrongs done to the great, but those to the small have God alike for their avenger. (2) It behoves those who act for God on earth to imitate this Divine justice. A judge should be a sanctuary for all impartially. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *Retribution in this life:*—Herod the Great, the slayer of the innocents, and first persecutor of Christianity, was overwhelmed with agonizing physical disease; and his numerous family was extinct in a hundred years. Pilate, who condemned Christ, was soon after expelled from office and committed suicide.

Nero, after slaying thousands of Christians, attempted to take his own life; but failing through cowardice, called others to his aid. The persecutor Domitian was murdered by his own people. So it was with Caius, Severus, and Heliogabalus. Scarcely one of the prominent persecutors of the Church escaped signal retribution. Claudius was eaten of worms. Decius, Gallus, Aurelian, Maximin all died violent deaths. Maximinus put out the eyes of thousands of subjects, and himself died of a fearful disease of the eyes. Valens, who caused fourscore presbyters to be sent to sea in a ship and burnt alive, was himself defeated by the Goths, fled to a cottage which was fired, and he perished in the flames. (*E. Foster.*) *The certainty of future retribution*:—As you stood some stormy day upon a sea cliff, and marked the giant billow rise from the deep to rush on with foaming crest, and throw itself thundering on the trembling shore, did you ever fancy that you could stay its course, and hurl it back into the depths of the ocean? Did you ever stand beneath the leaden, lowering cloud, and mark the lightning's leap as it shot and flashed, dazzling athwart the gloom, and think that you could grasp the bolt, and change its path? Still more vain and foolish his thought, who fancies that he can arrest or turn aside the purpose of God. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The Divine justice*:—Justice in general is the giving every one their due. In God it is that attribute whereby He disposeth all things according to the rule of equity (Deut. xxxii. 4; Psa. xi. 5), and rendereth to every man according to his works without respect of persons (Psa. lxi. 12; Job xxxiv. 11, 19; Cant. vi. 6-7). God is positively or affirmatively just (Zeph. iii. 5); He is eminently the Just One (Acts vii. 52); He is superlatively most just (Job xxxiv. 17). Wilt thou condemn Him who is most just? or, as some read it, justice—justice without the least tincture, mixture, or shadow of injustice. He giveth to all their due, without fear of evil. He standeth in awe of none for their power or greatness. His day of vengeance is against the cedars of Lebanon and the oaks of Bashan, and all the high mountains (Isa. ii. 13-14), without hope of gain. Men are unjust for bribes (Hosea iv. 14); but riches prevail not in the day of His wrath (Prov. xi. 4; Ezek. vii. 19). He is no taker of gifts (2 Chron. xix. 7), and without respect to any in their honours or outward excellencies (Jer. xxii. 24). He will not pluck the signet from His hand in the day of His justice. Israel were a people near to Him (Deut. iv. 7; Psa. cxlviii. 14), yet He doth not spare them when they rebel against Him (Psa. lxxiv. 1-3; xlv. 10-14; Jer. vii. 12). Adam and the angels were great and excellent beings, yet when they sinned He made them suffer. He accepteth not the persons of princes nor regardeth the rich more than the poor (Job xxxiv. 19). Men may do justly, God must do justly. (*G. Swinnoek.*) *Wrong-doing returns upon the sinner*:—Do you remember that poem of Southey's about Sir Ralph the Rover? On the east of Scotland, near Arbroath, in the old days, a good man had placed a float with a bell attached on the dangerous Inchcape Rock, so that the mariners hearing it might keep away. This Sir Ralph the Rover, in a moment of devilry, cut away both float and bell. It was a cruel thing to do. Years passed. Sir Ralph roamed over many parts of the world. In the end he returned to Scotland. As he neared the coast a storm arose. Where was he? Where was the ship drifting? Oh that he knew where he was! Oh that he could hear the bell on the Inchcape Rock! But years ago, in his sinful folly, he, with his own hands, had cut it away. Hark! to that grating sound heard amid the storm, felt amid the breakers; the ship is struck; the rock penetrates her, she goes to pieces, and with curses of rage and despair, the sinner's sin has found him out; he sinks to rise no more until the great day of judgment. (*G. Litling, LL.B.*)

CHAPTER IV.

VER. 1. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal.—I. THE DUTY OF MASTERS. They are not required to abdicate their mastership, but to exercise it as a service for Christ. 1. Justice has reference to servants as workers. They are to receive fair remuneration. The price of labour is generally regulated by supply and demand. This is a maxim of political economy. Wages cannot be fixed by fancy and philanthropy. If I can get work done for 6s. a

day, why should I give 7s.? Still, there is great scope for the exercise of religion. Servants may be ignorant of the market price of labour, and it is unrighteous to take advantage of it. It might be difficult on the grounds of political economy to say that the squire or farmer should give more than 10s. or 12s. a week when he can get abundance of labour at that price, but it is not difficult to see how this would not satisfy a Christian master. It is surely wrong to show more care for the horses which draw the plough than for the man who holds it. The man who has found out the lowest price at which some starving needlewoman will do "slop" work, the mistress who makes a workhouse girl her drudge for a mere pittance, may do what they think is just; but hardly if a Christian. 2. Equal involves equality as well as equity, and has in it the element of reciprocity. (1) If by the energy and skill of his operatives an employer is greatly benefitted, should all the profits be his? Is it right after a series of successful years, when a reaction sets in, to close a factory and send the hands adrift? Some employers have kept on, and been rewarded with attachment and devotion. (2) Servants should be treated as having like feelings and sensibilities with their masters. They ought not to be, as in many cases they are, treated as destitute of feeling. (3) Nor must it be forgotten that they have characters to be cultivated, and much depends on your example and treatment. It is not to be expected that they will give their best efforts for those who are reckless in their habits and indifferent to just claims. "Like master, like man." (4) Servants have souls to be saved. A clergyman waited on the principals of a large city house and asked for facilities to attend to the spiritual good of the employees. He was promptly told that the firm had nothing to do with their souls. Happily Christian employers are now waking up to their responsibility (John xiii. 13-15). II. THE MOTIVE BY WHICH THIS IS ENFORCED—"Knowing," &c. The servant is required to serve his master as if he were serving Christ, and the master is to use his authority as if he too were serving Christ. Many masters hold the responsibility of servants, and yet ignore their own. Nothing is more displeasing to God than this (Job xxxi. 13-15). The issues of the great day depend on our conduct towards each other. What we have done to the poorest Christ will regard as having been done to Himself. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Master and man:—* Observe—1. The first step towards righteousness between master and man, mistress and maid, is to respect the relation. 2. Every human being has a right to himself, consistent with the rights of others. When he sells himself, hands or brains, for honourable ends, he is to be respected. The cook makes as respectable sale of her arts in the kitchen as the owner of the real estate in renting a house. Here is safety. The poorest creature you employ never contracted to sell self-respect. 3. The strong, moreover, should bear the infirmities of the weak. 4. You may be conscience to your servants. What are the servants, for the most part? Grown-up children. They ape you; talk large, as you do at times; try to dress like you. You are your servant's example—the keeper of his conscience. You pray every morning for your wife, your children, your property, clear down to the fence at the rear of the lot behind the stable, but never for Jack in the stable. 5. There should be a reciprocity of interest felt between a Christian master and his man. Nothing in social life has been more admirable than the magnificent loyalty of old servants. Read of it in the armour-bearers of Hebrew kings, the squires of days of chivalry. After faithful years he, the old servant, tried and true, did the honours of the castle, and set the turret pennant for great festivals. He spread the plates, and made the feast ready in oaken halls; he conducted fair and brave to their chambers. On errands of knightly valour, he accompanied his lord; he carried the helmet, the shield, the gauntlets, the armour all, and bore the banner of the house; he gave the battle-cry, and when, borne down, his liege would fall, the old servant bore him from the field; and so he won the right to wear golden spurs—no longer a servant, but a knight of the line. In comparison with this shining loyalty of a barbarous age, how pitiful the frequent bickerings and mutual hurt of Christian times. An old family servant, after ten years, comes to look upon your home as her home—all she has in this world. She has clung to you in five movings, and knew just where everything belonged. She knows your ways, moods, likes and dislikes. She has had her flare-ups, and you forgave and said nothing; in return, she has seen flare-ups above her floor, and said nothing. She's been sick, and you waited for her recovery—how she thanked you; and that winter you were all sick she paid you back with interest. She prefers you to the savings bank. She has known Master Charley from birth, and has nigh spoiled him; and that other one down in Greenwood she remembers, and surprises you

by saying, "This is the 15th of May, the day he died." God bless you, good creature. She has wept in the doorway at three of your funerals; she has laughed in the doorway at two household marriages; and how she boasts of her cake. You leave everything in her hands and go on long journeys; you return and find all safe, and exclaim, "God bless her; she shall stay with us until she goes on that long, long journey." All this is possible. But it is only possible to those who carry Christ's rule everywhere, even the rule of this text. Brethren, let us treat all artisans, serving tradesmen, labourers, and workers as we wish Christ to treat us, till the time when He shall "call us no longer servants, but friends." (*Emory J. Haynes.*) *Masters deal unequally many ways.*—1. When they require inconvenient things; for though the servant must obey, yet the master sins in requiring unequal things. 2. When they impose more work than they have strength to do. 3. When they turn them away when they are sick; for it is equal that as thou hast had their labour when they were well, so thou shouldest keep them when they are sick. 4. When they restrain them of liberty for their souls. If thou have the work of their bodies, it is equal that thou take care for their souls; and if they serve thee six days, it is very equal thou shouldest proclaim liberty to them to do God's work on the Sabbath day. 5. When they restrain and withhold their meat and wages. 6. When they send them out of their service empty, after many years' bondage, and not provide that they may have some means to live afterwards. 7. When they hear every word that men say of their servants (*Eccles. vii. 23*). 8. When they bring up their servants delicately (*Prov. xxvii. 23*). 9. When they leave the whole care of their earthly business to their servants, and fail to know the state of them for themselves (*Prov. xxvii. 23*). (*N. Byfield.*)

Ver. 2. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.—We are here instructed to pray with—I. **EARNEST PERSEVERANCE.** 1. The word rendered "continue" means to apply with ardour and assiduity to any difficult and laborious thing until you shall have brought it to the wished-for end, and obtained the victory. Two things, therefore, are involved—(1) Earnestness, or intention of mind, which is necessary, because (a) occasions for prayer are such as ought to excite the mind seriously and with the whole strength. The magnitude of our intention is wont to correspond with the magnitude of the business in hand. To seek the good things of God perfunctorily. What is this but to mock God? (b) Dead and sleepy prayers from a mind wandering or benumbed neither reach heaven nor move God to hear. Our prayer is a messenger between God and us; but if the messenger loiters or falls asleep, he will neither reach his destination nor effect his business. "With what effrontery," says Cyprian, "dost thou require to be heard of God, when thou dost not thyself hear thy own voice." (c) The heart inflamed with this spiritual heat grows soft, and is dilated, and becomes more apt and capable for receiving the Divine gifts. (d) The saints in Scripture thus prayed. Jacob (*Gen. xxxii. 28*), Moses, the psalmists (*James v. 1*). (2) Assiduity or frequency (*Luke xviii. 1*; *1 Thess. v. 17*). Not that we are to be ever on our knees, but that the desire of prayer is never laid aside either by weariness of expectation or despair of obtaining it, and that God should be frequently pleaded with. Inducements to this. (a) We have constant causes for prayer—the blessings we have, the blessings we want, and the evils we suffer. (b) Constancy is the most effectual means of obtaining what we seek (*Luke xviii.*; *Matt. xv.*). (c) This perseverance greatly contributes to the declaring, increasing, and strengthening of our faith (*Psa. v. 3*). 2. Instructions. (1) Regarding intention. (a) Whereas we are exhorted to fervour, we must conclude that we are so frigid and torpid as to need a monitor to arouse us (*Matt. xxvi. 40*). (b) We need the Spirit of prayer (*Rom. viii. 2*). (c) Prayers that are not understood are of little moment, which condemns those of the Papists in an unknown tongue. Paul condemns them (*1 Cor. xiv. 16*). Augustine says: "The people ought to understand the prayers of their priests, that they may have their attention fixed upon God by a common feeling." Even Roman theologians have condemned them. Parisiensis says: "It is reckoned among the follies of that messenger (*i.e.*, prayer) that he neither cares nor thinks of those concerns except this alone, that he offers a petition to God, and is altogether ignorant of what it contains, and what is sought by it. And these things are manifest in all those praying persons who mutter with their lips alone, understanding nothing whatever of those things which the words of their prayers signify." And Cajetan confesses "that it is better for the edification of the Church," and founds it on *1 Cor. xiv.* (2) Regarding perseverance. (a) We

must take care not to be drawn away from prayer by pleasure, business, &c. For if you out the nerves you leave the whole body without motion and strength; so if you set aside prayer, the nerve of the soul, you maim the man and deprive him of spiritual motion. (b) The misery of the ungodly; who, as they are void of faith and love, cannot pray except for form's sake, and what is more miserable than to be out off from the fountain of blessedness? Conversely we learn the blessedness of the godly. II. WATCHFULNESS. 1. Nightly vigils. (1) The Christians of the apostle's times, on account of their enemies, were often compelled to nocturnal assemblies (Acts xii. 12; xx. 7). The custom was continued long after the need of it had ceased; but was subsequently abandoned because of abuses. Hence the sermons of the fathers on the vigils of the Nativity, Easter, the Martyrs, &c. (2) Besides these public vigils, holy men sometimes spent sleepless nights in private devotion (Psa. xxii. 2, lxxvii. 6; Acts xvi. 25; Matt. xxvi. 38-39; 2 Cor. vi. 5).

2. The vigils of the mind. The mind is watchful when no ways asleep in sin and worldly things, but always lively. To this we are called by Christ (Mark xiii. 35-36; Rev. iii. 2, xvi. 15); by Paul (1 Cor. xvi. 13; 1 Thess. v. 6); by Peter (1 Pet. v. 8). 3. Instructions. Hence is inferred (1) the sottishness of our age: we sleep at prayers in the open day; our fathers spent whole nights in prayer. (2) Our impiety and vanity: for vigils among us are scarcely destined to anything but folly or wickedness. (3) Then he raises his voice to God in vain who sleeps in his life. (4) The prayers of the ungodly are dreams, recited while the heart is asleep in sin. III. THANKSGIVING. 1. Petitioners should be grateful for blessings already granted. Aristotle wisely observed: "A return is required to preserve friendship," but we can return to God nothing but gratitude (Psa. cxvi. 12). 2. Thanks are due for things (1) deferred: for they are delayed only till a more advantageous time, and that we may esteem them more when bestowed. (2) Denied; because God knew they would be hurtful, and those useful which we deprecated. 3. Hence we are taught (1) that men are more prone to ask or complain than to be thankful. (2) That ungrateful men are not fit to pray. (3) That good and evil must not be measured by our sense, but left to the judgment of God our Father, who will always send us the best things (1 Thess. v. 18). (*Bishop Davenant.*)

Prayer:—I. CONTINUE. Let not your intercessions be as the morning cloud. How prevalent we are in adversity; but what about prosperity? 1. The duty on the part of (1) convinced sinners. Pray on till the blessing comes. (2) Saints—not only for temporal blessings, but for more faith, holiness, usefulness. The more we pray the riper will be our graces. (3) Churches. Pentecost, as every great revival, was preceded by persevering prayer. 2. This duty need not interfere with others—our business, e.g. Prayer to the neglect of business was sternly condemned by Paul in the case of the Thessalonians. You may not always be in the exercise, but you may always be in the spirit of prayer. If not always shooting your arrows up to heaven, keep your bow well strung. 3. Reasons for this duty. (1) God will answer. "Ask, and ye shall receive"—not always at once, but in God's time; pray till that comes. (2) The world will be blessed. Continue, then, to pray till Christ become the universal King. (3) Souls shall be saved. (4) Satan's castle shall be destroyed—not with one blow of the battering-ram, however. But batter away till it falls. II. WATCH. 1. For you will be drowsy if you watch not. How many men and Churches are asleep in prayer because they do not watch. 2. For as soon as you begin to pray enemies will commence to attack. No one was ever in earnest without finding that the devil was in earnest too. 3. Watch while you pray for propitious events which may help you in the answer to your prayer. We cannot make the wind blow, but we can spread the sails; and when the Spirit comes we may be ready. 4. Watch for fresh arguments for prayer. Heaven's gate is not to be stormed by one weapon, but by many. 5. Watch for the answers. When you post a letter to your friend you watch for the answer. III. GIVE THANKS. We should not go to God as mournful beings who plead piteously with a hard master who loves not to give. When you give a penny to a beggar you like to see him smile, and you give at the next application because of previous gratitude. So go to God with a thankful mind. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Some qualities of prayer*:—With the Scriptures as our guide we cannot question the obligation or value of prayer. The qualities here spoken of are—I. STEADFASTNESS (R. V.) (Acts i. 14; xii. 5). The word means earnest adherence and attention, whether to a person or a thing. How weary we grow of prayer! How glad some formal worshippers are when the benediction is pronounced. This is a word against—I.

Neglectors of God's worship. 2. Forgetters of private devotion. II. WATCHFULNESS (Eph. vi. 18). 1. Against wandering thoughts. 2. Against unbelief. 3. Against dulness and heaviness. III. THANKFULNESS. St. Paul's idea of this duty may be gathered from the fact that the word he here employs, although rare elsewhere, is found thirty-seven times in his writings, and is often joined to prayer. To be always asking and never thanking cannot be right. Whenever we pray we must utter thanks. (*Family Churchman.*) *Continuance in prayer*:—Anglers, though they have fished many hours and caught nothing, do not therefore break their rod and line, but draw out the hook and look at their bait, which, it may be, was fallen off or not well hung on, and mend it, and then throw it in again. So when thou hast been earnest in thy prayers, and yet received no answer, reflect upon them; consider whether something were not amiss either in thy preparation or thy manner or thy petition. It is possible thou mightest desire stones instead of bread, or forget to deliver thy petition to the only Master of requests, the Lord Jesus, that He might present them to the Father. No wonder, then, thou hast failed. Be diligent to find out the fault, amend it, and then fall to work again with confidence that thou wilt not labour in vain. The archer, if he shoot once, and again, and miss the mark, considereth whether he did not shoot too high or too low, or too much on the right or the left, and then taketh the same arrow again, only reformeth his former error, and winneth the wager. (*G. Swinnoek, M.A.*) *The necessity of persevering prayer*:—In the black country of England you who have travelled will have observed fires which never in your recollection have been quenched. I believe there are some which have been kept burning for more than fifty years, both night and day, every day in the year. They are never allowed to go out, because we are informed that the manufacturers would find it amazingly expensive again to get the furnace to its needed red heat. Indeed, the blast furnace, I suppose, would all but ruin the proprietor if it were allowed to go out once every week; he would probably never get it up to its right heat until the time came for letting the fire out again. Now, as with these tremendous furnaces which must burn every day, or else they will be useless, they must be kept burning, or else it will be hard to get them up to the proper heat, so ought it to be in all the Churches of God; they should be as flaming fires both night and day; chaldron after chaldron of the coal of earnestness should be put to the furnace; all the fuel of earnestness which can be gathered from the hearts of men should be cast upon the burning pile. The heavens should be always red with the glorious illumination, and then, then might you expect to see the Church prospering in her Divine business, and hard hearts melted before the fire of the Spirit. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The value of constant prayer*:—There should run through all our lives the music of continual prayer, heard beneath all our varying occupations like some prolonged deep bass note, that bears up and gives dignity to the lighter melody that rises and falls and changes above it, like the spray on the crest of a great wave. Our lives will then be noble, and grave, and woven into a harmonious unity, when they are based upon continual communion with, continual desire after, and continual submission to, God. If they are not, they will be worth nothing, and will come to nothing. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The power of constant prayer*:—Some time ago, on the coast of the Isle of Wight, a woman thought she heard, in the midst of the howling tempest, the voice of a man. She listened; it was repeated; she strained her ear again, and she caught, amid the crack of the blast and the thundering of the winds, another cry for help. She ran at once to the beachmen, who launched their boat, and some three poor mariners who were clinging to the mast were saved. Had that cry been but once, and not again, either she might have doubted as to whether she had heard it at all, or else she would have drawn the melancholy conclusion that they had been swept into the watery waste, and that help would have come too late. So when a man prays but once, either we may think that he cries not at all, or else that his desires are swallowed up in the wild waste of his sins, and he himself is sucked down into the vortex of destruction. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Watchfulness in prayer*:—Watch thereunto; as a sentinel suspecting the approach of an enemy; as a watchman guarding the city during the darkness of the night; as a physician attending all the symptoms of a disease; as the keeper of a prison watching an insidious and treacherous criminal. Our hearts need all this care; spiritual enemies are near; the darkness of the soul exposes it to danger; the disease of sin requires a watchful treatment; and the unparalleled deceitfulness of the affections can never safely be trusted for a moment. No; we must watch before prayer in order to dismiss the world from

our thoughts, to gather up our minds in God, and to implore the Holy Spirit's help. We must watch during prayer; to guard against distraction, against the incursions of evil thoughts, against wanderings of mind, and decay of fervour in our supplications. We must watch after prayer, in order that we may act consistently with what we have been imploring of Almighty God, wait His time for answering us, and not lose the visitations of grace; for with God are the moments of life, of mercy, of enlargement, and of gracious consolation. (*Bishop D. Wilson.*) *The need of watchfulness*:—In riding along the south coast of England you may have noticed the old Martello towers in constant succession very near to each other. They are the result of an old scheme of protecting our coast from our ancient enemies. It was supposed that as soon as ever a French ship was seen in the distance the beacon would be fired at the Martello tower, and then, across old England, wherever her sons dwelt, there would flash the fiery signal news that the enemy was at hand, and every man would seize the weapon that was next to him to dash the invader from the shore. Now, we need that the Church of Christ should be guarded with Martello towers of sacred watchers, who shall day and night look out for the attack of the enemy. For the enemy will come; if he come not when we are prayerless, he will surely come when we are prayerful. He will show the cloven hoof as soon as ever we show the bended knee. If our motto be "Prayer," his watchword will be "Fierce attack." Watch, then, while ye continue in prayer. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Thanksgiving*:—Every prayer should be blended with gratitude, without the perfume of which, the incense of devotion lacks one element of fragrance. The sense of need, or the consciousness of sin, may evoke "strong crying and tears," but the completest prayer rises confident from a grateful heart, which weaves memory into hope, and asks much because it has received much. A true recognition of the lovingkindness of the past has much to do with making our communion sweet, our desires believing, our submission cheerful. Thankfulness is the feather that wings the arrow of prayer—the height from which our souls rise most easily to the sky. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *A day of thanksgiving*:—I have heard that in New England, after the Puritans had settled there a long while, they used to have very often a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer, till they had so many days of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, that at last a good senator proposed that they should change it for once, and have a day of thanksgiving. It is of little use to be always fasting; we ought sometimes to give thanks for mercies received. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 3-4. Withal praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance.—*The people's prayer and the minister's work*:—I. THE PERSONS FOR WHOM WE MUST PRAY. "For us," Paul, Timothy, &c. 1. Observe in general (1) That we ought to pray not for ourselves alone, but for others. (2) That to get a large heart in prayer, and perseverance in its practice, we must endeavour to help others by prayer. (3) That Christians should desire the prayers of others, as carnal men make use of their friends to get wealth, offices, &c. 2. Learn in particular (1) That the greatest in the Church need the prayers of the meanest. (2) That in hearing prayer God is no acceptor of persons. He is as willing to hear the Colossians' prayers for Paul as Paul's for the Colossians. (3) That Churches should pray for their own ministers. (4) That Christians should pray for all ministers. Paul does not desire their prayers for himself alone. Such a desire in some might evidence spiritual pride and envy. II. THE THINGS TO BE PRAYED FOR. 1. That a door of utterance may be opened. (1) This comprehends—(a) Liberty to preach the gospel. (b) Opportunity. (c) Preaching power. (d) Courage to rebuke sin, and declare all God's counsel without fear of any man. (e) Success: such utterance as will open the door into the heart. (2) Whence learn what makes a happy pastor: not wealth, popularity, &c., but liberty, &c. This taxes—(a) Dumb ministers that utter nothing. (b) Fantastical ministers who preach their own vanities, speaking only pleasing things. (c) Idle ministers who preach not all God's counsels in season and out. (d) Cold ministers. (3) Note the fact that Paul was in prison, yet he sought not liberty for himself, but for the gospel. Be thankful then for freedom in both senses, and labour to prevent those things which stop the mouths of God's ministers. These are—(a) Ignorance and sin in ministers themselves. Polluted lips are no lips for utterance. The lips of preachers should be touched with knowledge, zeal, and mortification. (b) The sins of the people (*Ezek. iii. 24-27*). (c) The violence of persecution (*1 Cor. xvi. 9*; *1 Thess. iii. 2*). (d) Discouragement and fear (*1 Cor. xvi. 9, 12*; *Heb. xiii. 17*). (e) Human wisdom which destroys the profit of the

hearer and the power of the preacher. 2. That God may open it. (1) The hearts of the best ministers are shut until God opens them and dispenses the gift. (2) 'Tis God only that opens to men the door of utterance. He "creates the fruit of the lips to be peace": "He opens and no man shuts." If He gives liberty who can restrain! III. THE END FOR WHICH THE THINGS ARE ASKED. That the mystery of Christ may be manifested. 1. The mystery. (1) To whom is the gospel a mystery? (a) To the Gentiles: that there should be a Saviour. (b) To the Jews: that salvation should be in a carpenter's son. (c) To the Papists: that He should be the only Saviour. (d) To heretics: that He should be a Divine human Saviour. (e) To the carnal man: that He should be a Saviour in particular to him. (f) To the godly man: that He should be such a Saviour. (2) How is it a mystery? Because of the hiding of it—(a) In the breast of God from all eternity. (b) In the shadows and types of the ceremonial law. (c) In the treasury of the Scriptures. (d) In the person, obedience, and passion of Christ. (e) In the hearts of Christians. (3) Why is it a mystery to wicked men? Through—(a) The veil of their ignorance. (b) Custom in sin and pleasure, &c. (c) Judicial blindness. (4) Is it a mystery? Then it should teach us—(a) To esteem God's ministers as its dispensers (1 Cor. iv. 2). (b) To strive by all means to gain the open knowledge of this secret (Eph. i. 8-9); but because every vessel is not meet to bear this measure we should get a pure conscience to carry this mystery of faith in (1 Tim. iii. 9). (c) To account this the highest blessedness (Matt. xiii. 11). 2. Its manifestation: clear sound preaching. (1) It is not enough to preach, we must preach as becometh this mystery. (a) With power (1 Thess. i. 5). (b) With instance and all watchfulness (2 Tim. iv. 2-5), (c) With patience and constancy (1 Cor. iv. 9; 2 Cor. vi. 4). (d) With assurance (2 Cor. iv. 13). (e) With all willingness (1 Cor. ix. 16-17). (f) With all faithfulness (1 Cor. iv. 2). (g) With all zeal, knowing the terror of the Lord (2 Cor. v. 11; 1 Thess. ii. 12). (h) With all holy behaviour (1 Thess. ii. 11). (2) The people must also hear, as becometh the mystery of Christ, with attention, patience, reverence, sincerity, hunger, and fruitfulness. (*N. Byfield.*) *Ministers dependent on the prayers of the people:*—There is much criticism bestowed upon preachers, much of canvassing of their doctrines, much readiness in imagining that they are swerving from what is orthodox and sound, much complaining that they are not simple enough or too simple, not profound enough, or not practical enough, or not interesting enough, or not searching enough; but is there much of prayer that God would guide them into the knowledge of truth, and put into their mouths the messages most appropriate to the several classes of hearers? Indeed, we say not this in order to exculpate the minister, as though he were not himself answerable for erroneous or defective ministrations; but, probably, in most cases, the blame is at least to be divided, and as a general rule the parish or district which has derived least good from its pastor, is the parish or district which has offered the least prayer for its pastor. Whilst a congregation is murmuring that its teacher never seems to get beyond the first elements of truth, there is, perhaps, scarcely one of its members who makes it a point of conscience frequently to ask God to open to that teacher the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; whilst the pews are occupied with fears and suspicions that something unsound or even heretical has found way into the pulpit, there is hardly one of the hearers who offers his daily supplications that God would keep the instructor from being carried about by the winds of false doctrine. What marvel, then, if there is but little progress in spiritual things, and the public ministrations of the Word seem instrumental to the converting and confirming but few? The hands even of Moses felt, when not sustained by Aaron and Ur; and even St. Paul leant on converts at Colossæ, when hoping to be honoured in making converts at Rome. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Revival through prayer:*—A once popular minister gradually lost his influence and congregation. The blame was laid entirely upon him. Some of his Church officials went to talk with him on the subject. He replied: "I am quite sensible of all you say, for I feel it to be true; and the reason of it is, I have lost my prayer-book." He explained: "Once my preaching was acceptable, many were edified by it, and numbers were added to the Church, which was then in a prosperous state. But we were then a praying people. Prayer was restrained, and the present condition of things followed. Let us return to the same means, and the same results may be expected." They acted upon this suggestion, and, in a short time, the minister was as popular as he had ever been, and the Church was again in a flourishing state. The great apostle felt the necessity of co-operative sympathy and prayer (Rom. xv. 30; 2 Thess. iii. 1). (*G. Barlow.*) *The door of utterance* was a door for the Word to pass through

(1 Cor. xvi. 9; 2 Cor. ii. 12). In the rush and press of thought the fettered gospel seems to be identified with the apostle "in bonds." The Word is a captive with him. They are to pray therefore that God would open before him a door that the imprisoned Word may pass through and speed onward (2 Tim. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 1). (*Bishop Alexander.*) *Doors shut and open*.—The door of utterance was closed and barred, as it were, upon the apostle by his imprisonment. It had previously remained open for a series of years (Rom. xv. 19). Now he was an ambassador in bonds. Thus, in every age of the Church, the door is at times shut to the dissemination of the gospel by the obstacles which the world and Satan raise; by the persecution and imprisonment or banishment of the faithful missionary or minister; by strong prejudices excited in men's minds, as in India years ago, so that they will allow no opening for the gospel; by a prevalent spirit of infidelity, as during the first French revolution; by a failure of means in religious societies; by heresies and tendencies to popery for a time prevailing; and by the rapid deaths of eminent missionaries and ministers. Then again the door is opened from time to time by the mercy of God; as when Paul was liberated from prison and allowed again to prosecute for a few years his evangelical labours; as, in other ages and places, when persecutions cease, and the civil magistrate protects the true religion; when the heathen and Mahomedan nations are placed under the sway, or brought into contact with Protestant Christian powers; when heresies and leanings towards popery are checked; when faithful men are raised up, qualified, and placed in important situations of service; when translations of the Scriptures are made and widely diffused; when kings and princes are touched with grace, and take an active interest in the spread of the gospel, as Frederick the Wise of Saxony, at the period of the Reformation, and when a spirit of inquiry, like that among the noble Beraens, is excited, to "search the Scriptures daily to see whether the things" brought to their knowledge are indeed so. But the door of utterance also includes God's giving scope to the preaching of the gospel by removing external hindrances; His granting to ministers by His Spirit suitable gifts and graces for discharging their office; and His vouchsafing by the same Spirit efficacy to their word that it may enter the hearts of the hearers. What a vast field of intercessory prayer is here presented! (*Bishop D. Wilson.*) *For which I am also in bonds*.—St. Paul was an ambassador for Christ. According to the law of nations, there is a sacredness about the person of an ambassador, which is never violated unless by the desperate or the barbarous. Let one country send an ambassador to another, with the hope of adjusting points in litigation between the two, and though the proposed terms may be utterly repudiated, and nothing but a war of extermination will satisfy the people to whom the embassy is come, yet is the ambassador commonly treated with every mark of respect; his office is a sufficient guarantee for his personal safety, and until he have been honourably dismissed and scrupulously escorted, no steps can be taken against the nation whose representative he is. And if in any case a different course is pursued—if the people ill-use the ambassador, depriving him of liberty, and yet more of life, there is an indignant exclamation throughout the civilized world; a hundred provinces are ready to make common cause with a nation so deeply injured in the person of its representative, and the tribe which has done the wrong is immediately as though placed under sentence of outlawry. Or, to take a more pertinent case. Suppose a revolt to have occurred in one of the provinces of an empire. The king is loth to proceed to extremities, and therefore sends an ambassador with proffers and terms of reconciliation. But the rebels, though they cannot disprove his credentials, nor doubt his authority, not satisfied with contemptuously rejecting his offers, cast him into prison and bind him with chains. Now, tell us, what a feeling of indignation would pervade a whole country, and how like a watchword, in which every class of the community joined, there would pass through the land the cry, "An ambassador in bonds!" "An ambassador in bonds!"—why, this is St. Paul's account of himself in the text. He is an ambassador of Christ to publish the gospel, "for which," says he, "I am in bonds." He gives the description without comment, as though sufficient by itself, and by its strangeness, to arrest the most unthinking. (*H. Melvill, D.D.*) *Prayer for ministers*.—The Rev. Solomon Stoddard, the predecessor of the far-famed President Edwards, was engaged by his people on an emergency. They soon found themselves disappointed, for he gave no indications of a renewed and serious mind. In this difficulty their resource was prayer. They agreed to set apart a day for special fasting and prayer, in reference to their pastor. Many of the persons meeting for this purpose had necessarily to pass the door of the minister. Mr. Stoddard hailed

a plain man whom he knew, and addressed him, "What is all this? What is doing to-day?" The reply was, "The people, sir, are all meeting to pray for your conversion." It sank into his heart. He exclaimed to himself, "Then it is time I prayed for myself!" He was not seen that day. He was seeking in solitude what they were asking in company; and, "while they were yet speaking," they were heard and answered. The pastor gave unquestionable evidence of the change; he laboured amongst a beloved and devoted people for nearly half a century, and was, for that period, deservedly ranked among the most able and useful of Christian ministers.

Vers. 5-6. **Walk in wisdom towards them that are without.**—*The wise conduct of life*:—The conduct of life is to be regulated—I. ACCORDING TO THE DICTATES OF THE HIGHEST WISDOM. 1. Religion is a life. "Walk." 2. Religion is a life shaped and controlled by the highest wisdom. "Walk in wisdom." 3. Religion is a life that should be instructive to the irreligious. "Toward them that are without." 4. Religion is a life that impels the seizure of every opportunity for good-doing. "Redeeming the time"—buying up the opportunities. Opportunity is the flower of time which blooms for a moment and is gone for ever. II. BY JUDICIOUS SPEECH. 1. Christian speech should be gracious. "Let your speech be always with grace." 2. Christian speech should be piquant. "Seasoned with salt." 3. Christian speech should be practical. "That ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." (*G. Barlow.*) *Christian worldly wisdom*:—The Church sojourns for the most part amidst people of another profession. Whole nations have shut the door against Christ. In so-called Christian nations vast multitudes are non-Christian. Even in private families there is this partition. Hence the apostle having regulated the duties of Christians among themselves now points out those toward aliens. I. OUR CONVERSATION WITH THOSE WHO ARE WITHOUT IN GENERAL. 1. We are to walk wisely; not that we are to walk foolishly amongst ourselves. But as when a soldier is in an enemy's country he stands much more on his guard, and as we use more ceremony towards strangers than friends; so we are to be more careful before the world than the Church. (1) The end in view is to win them to Christ, or to prevent, at least, their taking offence at religion when in our accidental encounters or our deliberate designs. In our converse as civil subjects with foreigners it would not be suffered us to attempt to withdraw them from their allegiance, but as subjects of Christ our main duty is to rescue the slaves of Satan the common enemy. (2) In pursuing this end the diversity of the persons has to be carefully considered, their different conditions and capacities. The same things do not suit all, and all are not averse to religion, and while there are those who are of a furious disposition, there are those who are sweet and tractable. The Master (Matt. vii. 6) urges this wise discrimination, and intimates the disastrous consequences of the want of it, which experience also confirms. But we are to love all alike, while we treat them differently (Matt. v. 44). (3) The choice of means. (a) Christian wisdom excludes all actions contrary to piety, which are quite contrary to the end in view as well as offensive to God, conscience, and our neighbour, repelling from instead of attracting men to Christ (2 Sam. xii. 14; Rom. ii. 23-24; 1 Tim. vi. 1; 2 Cor. vi. 3; Titus ii. 10). (b) We owe those that are without not only abstinence from evil, but the performance of what is good (Rom. xiii. 7-8). God forbid that we should ever allow the conceit that it is lawful to break promises with them or deceive them. God will not be served with unrighteousness and treachery. Dues must be rendered too, not from fear, but for conscience sake. (c) But we are not only to yield what they can rightly claim, but humanity, courtesy, assistance, as often as, and even before they ask, and thus imitate Him who blesses both the just and the unjust. Account any one your neighbour, even if a Samaritan or pagan. By this at least you will prevent him calumniating your religion. (d) We must accommodate ourselves as far as piety will admit; not needlessly opposing them, nay, willingly yielding our rights and conforming ourselves to their wills in things indifferent, that they may see that our piety is not founded on capriciousness (1 Cor. ix. 19-22; cf. 2 Cor. vi. 14-15). (e) We must also avoid all actions or speeches likely to annoy. 2. Redeeming the time contains the utility and fruit of this wise demeanour (Dan. ii. 8; Eph. v. 15-16). As a wise mariner when the wind arises, and the waters threaten, and the presages of a tempest appear, hauls in his sails and prepares for the storm, then, accommodating himself to the violence of the waves, lets drive a little, not daring to bear up full against it, all to gain time and redeem himself by such care and conduct out of so sad and angry a season; so Paul would have us

use the same industry to ward off the blows which are menaced by the unfavourable disposition towards us of those without. II. THE QUALITIES IN PARTICULAR WHICH OUR SPEECH OUGHT TO HAVE IN THAT CONVERSE. "Let your speech," &c. 1. This is necessary (1 Pet. iii. 15). This is the most tender part of our converse with men, and should be managed with the greatest exactness. An answer here is capable of amending or impairing the condition of a whole Christian people. Wise and moderate discourse has sometimes averted or stayed persecution; whereas indiscreet, although true, speech has mightily troubled the peace of the Church. How needful, then, that our speech should be with grace. 2. The qualities. (1) Truth is presupposed (Eph. iv. 25). (2) Grace is not rhetorical embellishment, but speech without gall, venom, and virulency, and so managed as not to offend. (3) Well salted, *i.e.*, seasoned with prudence; for as salt dries meat and eats out the moisture and putrid humour, leaving a sharpness pleasing to the taste, so Christian prudence works out all that is noxious from speech and tempers it in such a manner that the vigour it leaves pleases the spirit. 3. The use—that it may appear that we know how to answer every one. (1) Paul's calling our discourses an answering intimates that we should not speak without judgment and deliberation. (2) We ought to diversify our speech according to the difference of persons. The dispositions of some require firmness and freedom, those of others tenderness. (*J. Daillé.*) *The wise and winsome walk*:—Christ's mission was to outsiders: so was His commission to His disciples. This holds good now. Every one who enters the Church enters not only into a peculiar relation with Christ, but with the world also. "Let your light so shine," &c. Outsiders watch us sharply, and Christ intended they should. The Christian is the only Bible the great majority ever look at; then we ought to live as to require no commentary to explain us. We are doorkeepers to the way of life not to block the way but to let others in. I. WALK WISELY. 1. So as not to give the lie to our professions. We tell the unconverted that Christianity will make them cheerful under trials; do we fret under them? We talk about patience; do we lose temper under the first provocation? In the prayer-meeting we pray as though religion were the one thing needful: are social ambition or money-grabbing the chief end of our lives outside? If in walking through an orchard we pick up a fair-looking apple, but on putting our teeth to it find it sour, we fling it away; so we are known by our fruits. Very few are made infidels by pernicious books, but many are by inconsistent Christians. On the other hand, a noble, godly life is the most convincing of sermons. 2. We can never win outsiders by compromising with them. The people of the world do not expect us to live as they do; and when we surrender our principles they are secretly disgusted. To draw men out of a pit we must have a firm, strong foothold or they will draw us in. He who walks closest to Christ will have most converting power. 3. The subject has a vital connection with direct efforts for the conversion of men. "He that is wise winneth souls." How little commonsense many employ in trying to bring their children, scholars, or friends to the Saviour. A father asks people to pray for his boy, and then treats him so as to harden him. Some people badger their children with ill-timed or tempered talk about their souls. And yet nothing requires more tact and gentleness. If we want to water a flower we do not dash a pailful over it, but sprinkle it. God does not send His Spirit as a waterspout, but as rain. Paul was consumed with zeal, yet showed wonderful sagacity in adaptation. II. WATCH FOR OPPORTUNITIES. "Redeeming the time." Chances must be sought for putting in the right word, and when God sends it we must make the most of it. We must go on the principle of now or never. This will make us eager to embrace opportunities; and in turn we must urge the undecided to embrace Christ at once. Every act of kindness to the unconverted will help us. (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) *Godly walk in evil company*:—Though evil men are not to be the subjects of the Christian's choice, yet he must sometimes fall into their company or go out of the world (1 Cor. v. 10). Civil commerce with them is lawful, though friendship be sinful. Christianity must help us as a glass window to let in the light but keep out the rain. The apostle gives us a special precept for our pious carriage among ungodly men. I. THE QUALIFICATION OF THE ACT—"Walk wisely." He who walketh according to the rule of the Word is a wise walker (Job xxviii. 28; Psa. cxix. 1; Gal. vi. 16). We must walk by precept, not by pattern: he may be a good courtier but a bad Christian who suits his conduct to his company. If, like musicians, we play no lessons but what the company calls for, our music will be jarring in the ears of God (Gal. i. 10). II. THE SPECIFICATION OF THE SUBJECT. Wicked men are said to be without. 1. Because

visible without the Church (1 Cor. v. 12-13). 2. Really without God and Christ (Eph. ii. 12). 3. Eventually without heaven (Rev. xxii. 15; Luke xiii. 25). III. **MOTIVES FOR CAUTION.** 1. Evil company is infectious (Psa. cvi. 35). 2. See that when compelled to mingle with it that thou get good from it: let it show thee the importance of wisdom and watchfulness. IV. **RULES FOR CONDUCT.** 1. Keep thyself unspotted from sin. Wicked men, as dyers and painters, are besmeared themselves and besmear others. The saint should resemble the carbuncle, which being cast in the fire, shines all the brighter. Rust will fret into the hardest steel, but not into the emerald. Thy duty is, as clothes well dyed, to keep thy colour in all weathers; and, as a good constitution, to retain thy health in the most unwholesome vapours. 2. Do not needlessly expose thyself to suffering. Christ did not commit himself to the Jews, because He knew their hearts. Set a watch before thy tongue lest it prove thy sepulchre (Eccles. iii. 7; Amos v. 13). Thy care must be always to own Christ, but as thy policy should not eat up thy zeal neither should thy zeal thy wisdom. Zeal to a Christian is like the high wind filling the sails of a ship, which unless it be ballasted with discretion doth but the sooner overturn it. 3. Be sure thou dost not deny Christ and disown thy profession. Though it behoveth thee to walk wisely, because sinners lie in wait to destroy thy life, yet be careful not to walk wickedly, for sin lieth in wait to destroy thy soul. The light of religion ought not to be carried in a dark lantern, and only shown when interest permits (Matt. x. 33; 2 Kings xvii. 41; Neh. xiii. 24). 4. Labour to get some good by such as are evil. A gracious person may improve the vilest sinner's company to his own spiritual profit. (1) Let thy zeal be more inflamed (Psa. cxix. 39, 127). (2) Let thy heart be more enlarged in thankfulness that Christ hath saved thee. (3) Thy care and watchfulness should be increased. The falls of others should be sea-marks for warning to avoid those rocks and shallows if thou wouldest avoid shipwreck (1 Cor. x. 6, 16). 5. Endeavour their reformation. Thy duty as a good physician is to loathe the noisome disease, but to pity and strive to recover the patient. Thy Father doth good to all; remember thou art His son and copy Him. Christ never sat at table with sinners but He made better cheer than He found. Be not discouraged at the weakness of thy gifts, but consider that the event depends upon Him who set thee at work, and that it is all one to Him whether thou hast great, small, or no means. A fly may hinder an elephant from sleeping. A little boat may land a man on a large continent. Endeavour to reform them. (1) By wholesome counsel. There is a special art in baiting the hook aright, so as thou mayest take sinners ere they are aware (2 Cor. xii. 16). When amongst moral men commend morality, yet discover its insufficiency, and so cause them to run to Christ for help (Matt. v. 20). When amongst the profane bring in wisely an instance of God's judgments. Sometimes conversation on earthly subjects may be turned by degrees into heavenly. Do they ask, "What news?" After prudent preface say that thou canst tell them good news from a far country—Christ Jesus came to save sinners. Do they ask how such and such do? Acquaint them of their worldly welfare, and, if convenient, of the health of their soul. Do they ask the price of commodities? Raise their heart to the wine and milk to be had without money, &c. This is true alchemy and will turn all to gold. See our Lord's example (Matt. xv. 20; John iv. 21, vi. 25-27). (2) By thy gracious carriage in their company. A Christian is God's jewel (Mal. iii. 17), and should always cast a radiancy before the eyes of others (Phil. ii. 15; Titus ii. 7, 8); 1 Pet. iii. 15, 16). Grace powerfully but silently opposes wickedness, and forces reverence from its bitterest enemies. The righteousness of Noah condemned the old world; the holiness of John gained respect from Herod; the sanctity of the three worthies triumphed in the conscience of Nebuchadnezzar, and the innocence of Daniel in the soul of Darius (1 Pet. ii. 11-12). (3) By faithful reprehension; but—(a) Be sure the thing thou reprovest be a sin. Some show much heat but little holiness in making a great stir about nothing (Josh. xxii. 16; Sam. ii). It is dangerous to apply medicines on the bare supposition of sickness. Then, again, he that reproveth the deed will do more harm than good if he is not able to convince the doer (Titus i. 9; Job vi. 25). Mistaken or misapplied arguments seldom reprove any but the arguer, and him they always reprove. (b) Reprove seriously. Reproof is an edged tool and must not be jested with. Cold reproofs are like the noise of cannons a great way off. He that reproveth sin merrily and makes the company laugh will destroy the sinner instead of his sin. Some men shoot their reprehensions, like pellets through a pipe, with no more strength than would kill a sparrow. He that would hit the mark must draw his arrow of reproof home. The hammer of the word

breaks not the heart if it be laid lightly on. Be the reproof never so gracious, and the plaster never so good, it will be ineffectual if not applied to the patient himself (2 Sam. xii. 7; Acts ii. 36-37). (c) Reprove seasonably. It is not necessary and convenient at all seasons. The best medicine will be thrown away if given at an unfit time. A fool will always be talking, but a wise man will keep a word for afterward (Prov. xxix.). Small fish are twitched up with the violence of a sudden pull, when the like action would break the line whereon a great one hangs. Fabius conquered by delaying, but Cæsar overcame by expedition. (d) Reprove prudently (Prov. xxv. 12). Every mountebank is not fit for this office. Have respect to the quality of the person. Superiors must be amended by exhortation, equals by friendly admonition, inferiors by gentle reproof. Have respect also to the disposition of the offender. Some in their fainting fits are recovered easily with sprinkling cold water on their faces, others must be rubbed hard. Some men are like briars, and have to be handled gently; others, like nettles, have to be dealt with roughly (Jude 22, 23). The sturdy oak will not be so easily bent as the gentle willow. Respect also is to be had to faults. Wise physicians will distinguish between a pimple and a plague sore. Who would give so great a blow to kill a fly as to kill an ox? (e) Reprove compassionately. The iron of Asher's shoes were dipped in oil. Reproofs should be as ointments gently rubbed in by the warm fire of love. The reprover should have a lion's stout heart if he would be faithful, and a lady's soft hand, or he is not likely to be successful. He that would gather fruit must pluck the bough gently towards him; if too hard he may break it. 6. Mourn for the sins thou canst not amend (Psa. cxix. 135; 2 Pet. ii. 8). (*G. Swinnoek, M.A.*) *The duties of those within to those without*:—Those who are within are those who have "fled for refuge" to Christ, and are within the fold, the fortress, the ark. Men who sit safe within while the storm howls, may simply think with selfish complacency of those exposed to its fierceness. The phrase may express spiritual pride and even contempt. All close corporations tend to generate dislike and scorn of outsiders, and the Church has had its own share of such feeling; but there is no trace of anything of the sort here. Rather is there pathos and pity in the world, and a recognition that their sad condition gives these outsiders a claim on Christian men, who are bound to go out to their help to bring them in. Precisely because they are "without" do those within owe them a wise walk, that "if any will not hear the Word, they may without the Word be won." We owe them such a walk as may tend to bring them in, and if our walk does not seem to them very attractive, small wonder if they prefer to remain where they are. Let us take care lest instead of being door-keepers to the house of the Lord, to beckon passers-by and draw them in, we block the doorway, and keep them from seeing the wonders within. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christian deportment towards unbelievers*:—"Toward them that are without," whatever their conduct, appearance, profession, we must "walk in wisdom." They may be within the circle of our acquaintance, and of our own household. While we feel that between us and the fellow Christian who was but yesterday a stranger a bond stronger than death, between us and the object of our warmest human love there is a wall of separation. To such and all "without"—I. DO YOUR DUTY—your daily duty, especially in little things, faithfully. Do what is right for you as a man; and what is right for you as a man is doubly right for you as a Christian. And you are doubly in the wrong if you as a Christian man are not scrupulously honest, if you give way to rudeness, irritability, vulgarity, selfishness. II. LOVE THEM—not simply their souls. We do not read of God and Christ loving people's souls. God loved the world; Christ tasted death for every man. Be human. There is no opposition between manhood and holiness. The Holy One revealed Himself to sinners as the Son of Man, one of themselves: and this was the secret of His power. III. BE NATURAL—yourselves. Do not have a Christian face and voice taking the place of your own. Speak plainly. Christians are often charged with affectation. Unnaturalness does not come from having too much religion, but from not having enough. What could be more natural than the words and ways of Christ? IV. BE TRUE—not simply do not tell lies, but be transparent. Let men be able to see through you, to perceive that there is no guile, no hidden motives, that while you profess to love God supremely you are not loving something else more than God. V. BE HUMBLE. Christ was meek and lowly of heart"; and what ought we to be? Be humble under a sense of your sinfulness, and under the weight of God's mercies. Do not try to impress others with your superiority, or you will make the contrary impression. VI. BE HOLY. Avoid the least appearance of evil. Let it be seen from your conduct that your religion

is not a matter of theory, emotion, talk, but a matter of fact. Remember what Peter says to wives who have unbelieving husbands. A young man was asked, "Under whose preaching were you converted?" "Under my aunt's practice," was the reply. VII. BE HAPPY. If there is sunshine on your countenances others will believe that the Sun of Righteousness is in your hearts. But if we speak about that Sun and they never see anything but darkness and gloom they will not believe. VIII. BE KIND. Do not simply love them; show it in common or rather uncommon kindness. Treat men as Christ treated you. He never put on airs. Remember how he treated Zaccheus, the woman of Samaria, &c. (*A. Monod, D.D.*) *The wisdom of kindness as a means of conversion:*—There was an infidel who was dangerously ill, and a colporteur went to see him. The man would not receive him, and asked him never to come again. The colporteur, after a few words, left the house, but he noticed that the man was very poor. There seemed to be none of the things necessary to health about his home. What did the colporteur do? He did not go and write an address about charity, but he went to the grocer's and he sent provisions to the man. A little time after, he went again. He was well received. The man said, "If you please, sir, was it you who sent those provisions?" "Well, yes, it was; but do not let us talk about that." "It was very kind of you. I treated you with so much discourtesy, and you were so good to me! My unbelieving friends, who profess to love me, have not done anything for me, but here you have sent me these provisions. Please read me something out of your Book." He read to him, and visited him again and again. Before that man died he was brought to a knowledge of Christ. The work had been begun by an act of kindness. Pastor Funcke, of Bremen, went to see a working-man, whom he describes as a tall, strong man, with a red beard, living in a miserable little place, up a flight of rickety stairs. The man would not listen to him at all, but flew into a passion, saying, "I don't want to hear anything about your God. I don't believe there is a God." Then, clenching his fist, he said, "This is my god!" and bringing it down on the table with a thump, he added: "If ever I find you on these premises again, I will put my god into your face!" The pastor went away, but a few days later, hearing that the man was out of employment, he busied himself in finding a situation for him. By-and-by the man heard of this. He went to him and said, "Is it true, sir, that you took the trouble to find me this employment?" "Why, yes, it is true." "Well," he said, "all Christians are not hypocrites!" That was, to him, a discovery, it seems. He invited the pastor to his house, and listened to him. "And now," says Mr. Funcke, "he, his wife, and children, are amongst the best of my church members, and theirs is one of the happiest homes in the parish." Surely, this was "walking in wisdom toward them that are without." Now I will give you a fact of another kind, that will, perhaps, meet some of our own difficulties. It was told me by the sister of the young man of whom I am about to speak. He had a pious father. They lived in a large town. One day he asked his father if he might go to the theatre. As he was no longer a mere boy, of course the father could not prevent him from going. "You know I disapprove of these things," he said; "I think it will do you harm; but, of course, I cannot forbid you to go." Well, the young man felt rather uncomfortable; however, he went. He came home late (it was a winter night), just expecting to grope his way to his room. But he found a lighted lamp, a bright fire, and something warm to eat and drink. His father did not wait for him, and that was also wise; it would have seemed as if he had watched for his return to lecture him. No; but he had made ready a welcome for him. What effect did that have? It had the effect of drawing that son's heart toward his father more than anything else could have done, and of greatly diminishing, to say the least of it, his taste for the theatre. This much I know, that he became a faithful disciple of Christ, and was about to enter the ministry, when God took him to Himself, several years ago. (*Ibid.*) **Redeeming the time.** Take a lesson from—I. THE MERCHANT. How he redeems the time; by wise employment of capital, by sedulous attention to his business, by sagacious plans, watchfulness for openings, and correct balancing of his affairs from time to time. Here is an example for the Christian, who should augment and employ his spiritual capital of gifts and graces, by industry, intelligence, and self-denial, and know exactly how his soul stands with God. II. THE FARMER. Note his knowledge and thrifty management of his stock and crops. How carefully he prepares the ground at the proper season, then sows the seed, then removes all obstructions from the soil, reaps and garners the harvest, and finally seeks the best

market to sell it in. Where would the farmer be but for his constant and habitual redemption of time. The Christian should act like him in regard to the Divine seed-wheat in his own mind or that of others (Eccles. xi. 6; Isa. xxxii. 20; Psa. cxxvi. 6). III. THE STUDENT, PHILOSOPHER, AND STATESMAN. No man ever rose to eminence who did not wisely employ his time. The student economizes every moment and never tires in his researches. The philosopher tests by science and reason the mysteries of nature, omitting no opportunity or detail. And thus the statesman studies the complicated problems of politics and provides for their solution in season and out. And so the Christian student, the eyes of whose understanding are opened, ponders Divine truth. The Christian philosopher here learns the origin, nature, and end of all things. And the Christian, being a statesman, too, feeds on schemes of advancement for the kingdom of God. But in each capacity he needs to redeem the time; and if any day passes without embracing some opportunity for learning new truth, or doing some fresh good, he should feel with that Roman Emperor who said, "I have lost a day." (*J. G. Angley, M.A.*)

Redeeming the time:—The wheels of nature are not made to roll backward; everything presses on towards eternity; from the birth of time, an impetuous current has set in, which bears all the sons of men towards that interminable ocean. Meanwhile, heaven is attracting to itself whatever is congenial to its nature, is enriching itself by the spoils of earth, and collecting within its capacious bosom whatever is pure, permanent, and Divine, leaving nothing for the last fire to consume but the objects and the slaves of concupiscence; while everything which grace has prepared and beautified shall be gathered, from the ruins of the world, to adorn the eternal city, "which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Let us obey the voice that calls us thither, let us seek the things that are above, and no longer cleave to a world which must shortly perish, and which we must shortly quit, while we neglect to prepare for that in which we are invited to dwell for ever. (*Robert Hall.*)

The redemption of time:—I. THE IMPORTANCE OF TIME. This may be inferred from the names given it in Scripture—"The day of salvation," "The acceptable year of the Lord," "An appointed time." It is the season in which alone the business of religion can be transacted. Those advise badly who say "there is time enough yet," for who knows what a day may bring forth. It may be longer or shorter, but the day of salvation, like any other, is limited, and must soon come to an end. II. THE RAPIDITY OF THE FLIGHT OF TIME. "Time and tide wait for no man." The little we have on hand is all we have, and even this short space is hurrying on so fast that to catch it is like dipping your hand in a running stream which glides through the fingers that would detain it. The Egyptians represented it as a serpent creeping on silently and gliding away imperceptibly. And yet there are those who act as though it had no assignable limit. III. THE LARGE PORTION OF OUR TIME LOST. The season of boyhood—much of which was wasted in indolence; the season of youth—much of which was simply dissipated; the season of riper years—how much of that is being lost in the pursuit of shadows. Some mispend time because they have no proper object to engage their attention. How many fashionable people there are who are quite at a loss what to make of themselves. Others lose much time in mere delays and in expecting what will never come. IV. THE BEST MEANS OF REDEEMING IT. 1. Misspend no more. Treasure up scraps of time. He who is prodigal of a minute spends far above his estate. 2. Rise early. 3. Husband your time well during the day. (*T. Watson, B.A.*)

The redemption of time:—1. What is time? (1) Measured duration. Hours, days, &c., are measured by periodical revolutions. (2) Successive duration—past, present, to come. (3) Limited duration. Time was not, began, will cease. 2. Time is distinguished from eternity—which is absolute duration, without measure, &c. 3. But time in the text is rather special seasons and opportunities. 4. To redeem (1) in the common notion is to recover by some valuable consideration what has been forfeited—property, liberty, yea, our souls, by the precious blood of Christ. This cannot apply to time, because no consideration can recover the smallest portion of it when once gone. (2) In a moral sense we may redeem it by a careful, prayerful, religious improvement of what remains. Time ought to be improved because—I. ITS VALUE IS INEXPRESSIBLE. We argue the worth of it—1. From the great business of it. (1) As regards self. Were man a mere animated piece of flesh and blood he would have some plausibility for saying "Let us eat and drink," &c. But he is a rational, immortal, and accountable being, and the great business of time is to get ready for eternity. It is not

necessary that we should be rich, great, honourable; but it is necessary that we should be saved. "What shall it profit," &c. (2) But we are not alone, and therefore our great business is not only to get but to do good; not only to work out our own salvation, but to promote that of others. 2. From the price of time. When man sinned all was lost, time included, but the forfeited blessing comes back through the death of Christ. 3. From the manner in which providence allots us time. Common things may be obtained in large quantities. Not so things that are precious—a grain of gold, *e.g.* So time is not dealt out in large portions. No man receives a year at once, only a moment. How should that moment, then, be improved. 4. Shall we consult the wise, great, and good on this subject. Moses (Psa. xc.): Solomon, "Remember now thy Creator; Christ, "I must work," &c.; that Pagan prince who, when a day had passed without a good deed, exclaimed, "I have lost a day." 5. Ask death-beds. "Doctor," said a dying man, "the whole of my estate for half-an-hour," but no, the whole of his estate could not purchase half a moment. 6. Travel to the regions of sorrow and despair. How would they hail a second probation! They had time, they abused it; their time is gone. 7. Travel to the mansions of light. The spirits of just men made perfect are there, because they redeemed the time for the purpose of preparing for eternity.

II. THE DURATION OF TIME IS SHORT. 1. How frequently we express ourselves incorrectly on this subject. A man who has been unwell for a few weeks says he has been ill a long time. But no portion of time is long in reference to eternity. There is some comparison between an atom and the globe, because the globe only contains so many atoms, but there can be no comparison between the little atom of time and unmeasurable eternity. 2. If time be short comparatively, what is the time of our life. "The time is short." How short. Before the flood some lived nearly one thousand years. After the flood there was a reduction. By the time of Moses the period was seventy or eighty. How few reach even that now. A friend of mine once ascertained the average age of persons buried in a country church-yard; it was fourteen years. Our life is but "a step between us and death"; "a hand-breadth"; "a weaver's shuttle"; "grass"; "a vapour." Then we have not a moment to waste. III. MUCH OF OUR SHORT TIME HAS ELAPSED. 1. The morning of life has gone with many of us. Prize the morning of life, young people! It is the best part of the day. If it be wasted we have but little hope of subsequent periods. "In the morning sow thy seed." When it was morning with many of us how impatient we were to have it noon and be men. 2. Noon has come and gone, and it seems only yesterday that we were young. 3. Some are in the evening, the last mile-stone is in view, the taper must soon expire, and the hour-glass run out. A man may regain lost health, wealth, friends, but never time. Then how we ought to redeem what remains. IV. WHAT REMAINS IS UNCERTAIN. We can ascertain how much has been expended, not what is left. The rich fool talked of years. God did not talk of a single day. "This night." How numerous are sudden deaths. "Lord, teach us to number our days." V. NOTHING CAN COMPENSATE FOR THE LOSS OF TIME. A wise man will part with nothing except for its value, yet many part with time for nothing. 1. For folly, vanity, vice—time-consumers, time-killers. 2. For any kind of amusement-seeking customers to take it off their hands. 3. For business, at the expense of the true riches. 4. For honour, at the expense of heaven's patent of nobility. But none of us are absolutely bankrupt. Time remains—redeem it. VI. GOD HAS MADE ETERNITY TO DEPEND ON TIME. What an awful thing, then, to live. "Infinite joy or endless woe attends on every breath." (*Robert Newton, D.D.*) *The merchandise of time*:—The word here translated "redeem" literally means to purchase in the market, and is quite different from the theological term, which means to re-purchase. Time is thus presented to us as a precious commodity. I. THE OBLIGATIONS TO THE PRACTICE OF MAKING MERCHANDISE OF TIME. 1. On the mode in which we employ our time our everlasting destiny depends. One of the plainest principles of commerce is that any commodity is desirable in proportion to the returns it is capable of securing. The same principle applies here. The everlasting consequences which flow from it give to time transcendent value. Were it not for these we might say, "Let us eat and drink," &c. Just as a merchant, then, is most anxious about a profitable bargain so ought we to be about redeeming the time. 2. Time is short and uncertain. In commerce the rarity of an article enhances its value, and should any doubt exist as to another opportunity for procuring it the merchant is proportionally anxious to obtain it without delay. Had we for certain a considerable period to live in our neglect might be excused; but as it is we are bad spiritual

merchants if we fail to redeem the time. 3. Unless you check the progress of sin now it will become every day more difficult, and eventually become impossible. What merchant would allow an unprofitable line of business to lengthen out as men do the life of sin. He stops promptly, lest by delay all chance of retrieving his fortune should be gone. II. DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLYING WITH THE EXHORTATION.

1. Have a plan or system for the distribution of time. Every man of business knows the importance of pre-arrangement and method. How much more so is this on which hang such infinite issues. In your plan set aside time for devotion. 2. Beware of those things which rob you of the best portion of it. (1) Idleness. (2) Undue devotion to matters of subordinate importance. (3) Overdone amusements. 3. Watch for and improve those occasions in which you can best promote not only your own eternal interests but those of others, and particularly of your family. 4. Accustom yourselves to serious and impartial self-examination. Take stock as men of business do. (*P. Grant*.) *The right use of time*:—If this year is to be more valuable than the last, we must more carefully attend to the use of our time.

I. WHEN to use time rightly. 1. Now. The present moment is a king in disguise. 2. While it is ours. The past is a memory; the future, an undivided inheritance.

3. The present is the only moment which can be used. II. HOW to use time rightly. 1. By a circumspect walk. 2. By wisdom in its employment. 3. By helpful recreation. Avoid the two extremes of overwork and no work. 4. By the redemption of every fleeting moment. Take care of the seconds, and the hours will take care of themselves. Devote it all to God. III. WHY should we use time rightly? 1. Because of its value. The destiny of eternity hangs upon a moment of time. 2. The time is short. 3. When lost it can never be redeemed. 4. All that we have to do must be done quickly. 5. We shall have to account for our time. IV. LESSONS: 1. We shall make the most of time, if we work in it with zeal and diligence. 2. We should see to it that we are unreplicable in its use and in our work and recreation. 3. We should seek out, and not merely wait for, time in which to benefit others, or reprove the evils of our day. John the Baptist reproveth Herod at the cost of his head; Jesus freely gave Himself for us all, and the disciples devoted their whole lifetime to teaching, preaching, exhorting, and re-proving. 4. We should learn to be more faithful in the use of the present, because so much of the past has run to waste. 5. Avoid procrastination and building air-castles. 6. Daily examine what use you have made of your time. V. ILLUSTRATIVE

SCRIPTURES. Eccles. viii. 5, ix. 10, xii. 1; Rom. xii. 11; 1 Cor. vii. 29; 2 Cor. vi. 2; Gal. vi. 10; Eph. vi. 13; Col. iv. 5; James iv. 13-15; 1 Peter i. 17; Rev. xxii. 20. (*L. O. Thompson*.) *The value of time*:—The value set on time by the Duke of Wellington was one of his most marked characteristics. He once wrote to Dr. Hutton for information as to the scientific acquirements of a young officer who had been under his instructions. The doctor thought he could not do less than answer the question verbally, and made an appointment accordingly. Directly the Duke saw him he said, "I am obliged to you, doctor, for the trouble you have taken. Is—fit for the post?" Clearing his throat Dr. Hutton began, "No man more so; I can—"

"That's quite sufficient," said Wellington, "I know how valuable your time is: mine just now is equally so. I will not detain you any longer. Good-morning." On another occasion he made an appointment with a civic dignitary who was five minutes late, and on finding the Duke watch in hand and very angry, pleaded, "It is only five minutes, your grace." "Only five minutes!" he replied, "five minutes unpunctuality would have before now lost me a battle." Next time the magnate took care, as he thought, to be on the safe side. When the Duke appeared he greeted him rather triumphantly. "You see, your grace, I was five minutes before you this time." "Shows how little you know time's value," said the old Field-Marshal, "I am here to the moment. I cannot afford to waste five minutes."

The value of a minister's time:—An American clergyman in the early part of his ministry, being in London, called upon the late Matthew Wilks. He received him with courtesy, and entered into conversation, which was kept up briskly, till the most important religious intelligence in possession of each was imparted. Suddenly there was a pause; it was broken by Mr. Wilks. "Have you anything more to communicate?" "No, nothing of special interest." "Any further inquiries to make?" "None." "Then you must leave me; I have my Master's business to attend to. Good-morning." "Here," says the minister, "I received a lesson on the impropriety of intrusion, and the most manly method of preventing it." (*W. Baxendale*.) *Wesley's economy of time*:—The diligence of Mr. Wesley in redeeming time has often been noticed; but it is scarcely possible for those who were not

intimate with him to have a just idea of his faithfulness in this respect. In many things he was gentle and easy to be entreated; in this, decided and inexorable. One day his chaise was delayed beyond the appointed time. He had put up his papers and left the apartment. While waiting at the door he was heard to say, "I have lost ten minutes for ever." (*Ibid.*) *Improve the moments*:—If we were to see a woodman felling eight large trees in a forest every week, or four hundred every year, we should some of us say, "What a pity!" yet in one large steam sawing-mill, visited by Mr. Mayhew, that was just the number employed to make lucifer matches, 1,123,200,000 matches were made in one year out of the above 400 trees! This may remind one of the remark of Howe, "What a folly it is to dread the thought of throwing away one's life at once, and yet to have no regard for throwing it away by parcels and piecemeal!" (*Bowes.*)

Ver. 6. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.—I. THE EXHORTATION. 1. What: Your speech. (1) It is not sufficient to order our life and actions well unless we at the same time regulate our words (James i. 26). (2) Not only is there danger of guilt and damnation from wicked actions, but from wicked speeches (James iii. 8; Prov. xviii. 21). (3) It is the mark of a perfect Christian to manage his discourse rightly (James iii. 2). 2. How long: always. Whenever we speak we must speak as we ought. Hence they are to be reproved who only speak soberly before grave men, or in affliction. While in their banquets, or private conversation, they regard it as a privilege to talk obscurely or foolishly. 3. In what manner: with grace as it were seasoned with salt, *i.e.*, with religious prudence flowing from the Holy Spirit, which first directs the heart, then the tongue. (1) As salt extracts noxious humours and banishes putrescency from meat, so the grace of wisdom represses idle language, and represses wicked and impure (Eph. iv. 20.) (2) As salt is helpful to digestion, so wisdom is suited to edification (Eccles. xii. 10.) 4. Instructions: (1) No discourse of Christians ought to be insipid; but that is deemed as unsavoury which is either hurtful or unprofitable. (2) It is not sufficient to season our speech with any kind of salt, but we must do it with the salt of wisdom. The salt of satirical virulence must be discarded, and that of jocularly be used sparingly. (3) They are altogether destitute of this salt who blab out words—(a) corrupting the mind by heresy and doubt; (b) corrupting the heart by obscure or irreligious sayings. For it is the office of salt to restrain not to promote corruption. II. THE AMPLIFICATION. 1. The fountain of sound speech: knowledge drawn from the Word of God, laid up in the speaker's mind. "That ye may know." 2. Its use—"that it may be answered to every man as it is fit," *i.e.*, (1) To unbelievers requiring a reason of our faith, constantly and prudently, lest we expose religion to ridicule. (2) To heretics impugning the faith, vigorously and bravely to maintain religion. (3) To the ignorant, that we may impart saving knowledge. (4) To the afflicted, that we may minister comfort. 3. Corollaries: (1) All Christians must endeavour to obtain that knowledge of Divine things which may guide them to render a reason for their faith (1 Pet. iii. 15; 2 Cor. viii. 7). (2) Hence the wickedness and folly of Romanists who would take away the salt of the Divine Word from the people. (*Bp. Davenant.*) *Gracious speech*:—I. THE PRECEPT deals with the properties of speech. 1. Graciousness. (1) In respect to the cause good words are gracious. (a) Because they flow from the free grace of God without our merit, for we do not deserve to be trusted with a single good word. Reason yields us conceits, and nature an instrument to speak by, but it is the God of nature by His free grace that gives us good words. (b) Our words ought to proceed from some grace of God in the heart, as from knowledge, faith, joy, love, sorrow, fear, &c., and in this sense, when on the tongue, they carry the name of the fountain whence they flow. (2) In respect of the subject: the matter we talk of must be good, words of instruction, comfort, faith, hope, &c., and all seasoned by the daily memory and mention of God's grace to us in Christ (Psa. xl. 11.) (3) In respect of the effect: such as tend to build up and minister grace to the hearers (Eph. iv. 29). (a) Fair words. (b) Inoffensive words and not railing, bitter, slanderous, blasphemous, or filthy: no, nor even such jesting words as irritate, disgrace, and bite. (c) Seasonable words (Prov. xv. 23). (d) Wholesome words (Eph. iv. 29). 2. Powdered with salt. The reference is to the salt of sacrifice, and the salt of preservation. (1) It is implied that there are corrupt words which want seasoning. (a) The talk of the covetous is of mammon. (b) Epicures talk of sports and pleasures. (c) The superstitious of the signs of heaven, &c. (d) The wrathful of vengeance. (e) The ambitious of their pros-

pects. (2) Christians must season this corruption. (a) There is the salt of doctrine, whereby those who have it become the salt of the earth. (b) The salt of mortification, which every Christian must have in himself. (c) The salt of discretion (James iii. 2). II. THE END OF THE PRECEPT—"That ye may know how to answer." Observe, in general, that by speaking well we learn to speak well; and that the soundest knowledge is experimental. He knows not how to answer that practice himself, no matter how many arguments he may have in his head. To answer does not always mean to reply, but sometimes to continue to speak (Matt. xi. 25). 1. As to answering unbelievers. Notice—(1) True grace is sure to be opposed; let therefore every Christian expect it, and be prepared for it. (2) Every Christian ought to answer for the truth wherever and by whomsoever, opposed. (3) It is not easy to answer well, therefore note the requisities—(a) Deliberation and understanding of the matter. (b) Prayer (Prov. xvi. 1; Habak ii. 1). (c) Faith in God's favour and promise (Matt. x. 19; Psa. cxix. 41-42). (d) Discretion concerning time, place, occasion, persons (Prov. xxv. 11; xxvi. 4, 6). (e) Patience. (f) Humility. (g) A good conscience (1 Pet. 15, 16). 2. As to answering believers, observe that—(1) Christians should propound their doubts one to another. (2) Strong Christians should help the weak with instruction and arguments (Rom. ii. 19). (3) However hard all answers should be gracious, seasonable, and profitable. (4) Custom in gracious speech breeds, by God's blessing, an ability to give sound judgment, advice, and resolution of doubts. It is not wit, learning, or authority, that breeds this. (*N. Byfield.*) *The right use of speech*:—When we consider the importance of speech, the ease with which we speak, and the pleasure we derive from this faculty, no wonder so much labour has been taken to improve it. Hundreds of rhetoricians have giving rules respecting "the art of speaking well." But that is really a Christian grace. Christianity alone lays down the fundamental rules of good speaking, and puts us in the way of doing most good with the talent of speech. I. THE PRECEPT shows—1. The character of Christian converse. It must be gracious. (1) Good words flow from grace no less than good deeds. When God gave you a new heart He gave you a new tongue. Words are the pictures of thought, and "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." When grace is in the heart means will be employed to forward the work of grace in others (Psa. lxi. 16). (2) Speech is always to be with grace, not now and then. How many Christians there are whose words at times are all they ought to be, and at others the reverse. 2. Its properties—"seasoned with salt." (1) Salt is an article of food, so our conversation should be morally and intellectually nutritive. (3) Salt gives a relish to ordinary food. How helpful may converse be in making the dry monotones of life and the hard fare of affliction palatable. (3) Salt preserves, and so should speech preserve the family, neighbourhood, country. How many a family, society, nation, have been preserved from corruption by the wise counsels of a father, citizen, statesman. (4) Salt heals (2 Kings ii. 21), and so a few gracious words of meekness have healed the most serious breaches. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." II. THE END AND USE OF THE PRECEPT—"That ye may know," &c. How much wisdom is needed for this. Many a good man has done much mischief for want of prudence here; by ill-timed zeal, dogmatism, offensive statement of truth, wrangling discussion. For the better ordering of speech—1. Consider the end of it. Speech was not given to man for God's sake. He can tell the meaning of the heart without words; nor for our own sakes—it is unnecessary for the perception of individual wants; but for the benefit of others. Recollect, then, when you open your lips that it should be for the good of those who hear you. 2. Meditate before speaking. "If you think twice before you speak once, you will speak twice the better for it." 3. Be moderate in speech. It is evident by the design of providence that the faculty of speech should be used less than most others. We have but one tongue, but two ears, two eyes, &c. "Let thy words be few." "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak." "A fool is known by the multitude of words." The weakest minds are often the most garrulous; they unconsciously make up in number of words what they lack in wisdom; whereas the wisest try to say much in few words. There is far the most depth where there is least noise. (*T. Watson, B.A.*) *Conversation*:—I. BY SPEECH WITH GRACE the apostle does not mean what is so often miscalled religious conversation. This is good in fit time and place, and to proper persons. But it is distasteful and injurious when obtruded unseasonably; worthless when it runs into perplexing technicalities; offensive when it degenerates into unmeaning cant; mischievous when it feeds the habit of morbid introspection. But there is

a grace which, blending with speech, on all sorts of subjects and occasions, may make the whole intercourse of life religious. Our Saviour at Bethany would not talk with His friends only on God and heaven, but about their earthly concerns and friends; yet there was that in all His words which indicated Him as the Holy One of God. The traits of grace which should mark the conversations of Christians are—1. Truth. The Christian has, of course, put away lying; yet there are excellent persons who are careless as to exact and literal truth, on whose lips a surmise takes the place of a fact, and who, while they would not for their right hand make a lie for themselves, are not equally scrupulous about lies made by others, or those which grow from tongue to tongue. Yet there is no deviation from truth which may not either do mischief to others, or reflect on him who gives it currency. How few confine themselves to what they know! There are so many things outside this limit which give zest to social intercourse; while literal speech is so jejune and dull. Yet speech thus weighed may save from fearful complicity in evil. 2. Sincerity—(1) in the expression of opinions. On many subjects on which the clear utterance of all who think soberly would be as efficient in demolishing the wrong and establishing the right as Joshua's trumpet blast, good men pause to listen when they ought to speak, or speak ambiguously so that their words may seem to favour the winning side. Hence public opinion on subjects of prime importance is manufactured by those interested in the wrong. No moral force is so mighty as outspoken Christian opinion. It is a trust, therefore, for the common good, and should be used—(2) In the expression of feeling. Silence or sincerity should be the alternative. Bad feeling ought not to be uttered, but while it rankles in the heart it ought not to be forced into hypocritical utterance. Let the artifice which gives truth-like expression to the proper feelings we do not feel be exchanged into the endeavour to suppress in our hearts all we should blush to utter. But every genuine emotion demands and merits unconstrained expression. Admiration, enthusiasm, love of beauty, all kindly sympathies, by natural and hearty utterance gain strength, and bless those who speak and those who hear; while he who keeps right feelings under a perpetual restraint becomes the cold and passionless clod he tries to seem. 3. Kindness. (1) The tongue is the chief instrument of and hindrance to charity. What is charity without it? It is only the very abject that can enjoy mere alms, and what is coldly or chidingly given starves and chills the soul while it feeds and warms the body: whereas there are words which bless even the poor more than gifts, by imparting inspiration and awakening hope. (2) In ordinary social life, too, kind speech is demanded beyond all other forms of kindness. More unhappiness is caused through unkind speech than through all else combined. What beneficent agency can be compared with that of him or her in whose ears all scandal lies buried, and whose lips are hollowed for gentle ministries of encouragement and refinement. (3) It is not enough that we pull up all roots of bitterness from the heart. There is not a little of unkind speech that is not meant to be so. The fibres of human feeling are tremulously sensitive to our unskilled touch. 4. Modesty. "In honour preferring one another" is a rule for conversation. The opinionativeness which always knows it is right and everybody else wrong; self-assertion, the ambition for effect barely tolerable in genius are disgusting in mediocrity. Mutual instruction and entertainment are the chief uses of conversation, and these ends are defeated when one assumes as his the right to be an oracle. 5. Reverence. When the tone of reverence is low, there is a vicious tendency to introduce sacred things to give raciness to an anecdote, or to point a jest. But when the natural track of conversation leads near the oracles of God, there should always be in our speech that which corresponds to the taking off of the shoes of our feet on holy ground. II. SPEECH SEASONED WITH SALT, *i.e.*, not insipid, as talk is that is only negatively good. 1. Its importance. It is frequently lack of salt that has brought religious conversation into disrepute. The more grace there is in the words the more salt do they need to make them palatable, and to render them worthy of themes so high. In the intercourse of daily life there is a willingness merely to fill up the time with a continuous flow of words, no matter with how little wit or sense or even freshness. But the Christian should regard the capacity for conversation as a talent to be employed for precious uses. More than anything else it makes home attractive, gives a charm to society, and counteracts, when well employed, the charm of vicious society. 2. Its cultivation. In order to talk well (1) we must not enter into conversation lazily and listlessly. It is not thus that we engage in other recreations, the best of which are only varied employments. (2) We need to train ourselves and should

keep ourselves abreast of current topics, and so exercise our minds upon them that we may not reproduce the hackneyed commonplaces of the press and street. (3) We need to read much and well with a view of being conversant with what everybody is ready to talk about, and to have our own speciality from which we can contribute to the common stock of knowledge. (4) Then as to conversational power there is the widest difference between him who moves ever as in a blind study, and him who goes through life with his eyes and ears wide open. The incidents of a walk through crowded streets or country lanes, the treasured experiences of distant travel, the curious information gleaned from transient fellow-wayfarers, the contents of an old book may add largely to one's materials for pleasant and appetising conversation. (5) We must throw ourselves unreservedly into social intercourse instead of keeping up our own insulated trains of thought, listening by snatches, and answering at haphazard. If we want to meditate let it be in solitude. If we talk, that is our work for the time being, and let us put our best into it. If the theme be grave, let it have our ripest thoughts in well-weighted utterance; if gay, let us contribute what we can of mirth. III. But with the salt never forget the grace. Not mere amusement is the Christian's aim, but edification, *i.e.*, building up the social edifice with its substantial foundation, frame, and walls of solid principle, with its firm fretwork and tracery that shall lack no element of beauty. There are occasions on which he must speak directly in defence of the truth and plead his Master's cause, and sometimes deal out rebuke. But there are more numerous occasions when, with a heart always loyal, he can serve the cause of virtue much more efficiently by talking on common subjects in a Christian way, and by dropping unostentatiously, ever and anon, a word in season that may be a seed-thought for a spiritual harvest. (A. P. Peabody, D.D.) *Christ's truth in relation to our daily conversation*.—I. THE LARGE SPACE WHICH WORDS OCCUPY IN HUMAN LIFE. 1. On account of their number. Great part of human life is passed in talking. How many millions of words are uttered in the course of a long human life. 2. On account of their consequences. There are many things which are very easy to do, but the effects of which will last for ages. It is easy to sow an acorn, it is soon done; but the growth of the acorn is not soon done; it becomes an oak, which will defy the tempests of a thousand years. The conflagration of Chicago was very soon done. II. THE IMPORTANCE OF SPECIAL SELF-EXAMINATION IN REFERENCE TO OUR WORDS. III. EARNEST LISTENING TO THE DIVINE VOICES, THE CURE FOR VAIN SPEECH AND THE SOURCE OF GRACIOUS SPEECH. 1. The cure for vain speech. St. James says, "Be ye swift to hear, slow to speak." 2. The source of gracious speech. IV. OUR WORDS ARE NOT TO BE ALL ABOUT RELIGION, BUT TO BE PERVADED BY THE SPIRIT OF RELIGION. V. OUR CONVERSATION BEING THUS SEASONED, WE SHALL KNOW HOW WE OUGHT TO ANSWER EVERY MAN. (R. Abercrombie, M.A.) *Speech seasoned with salt*.—That does not mean the "Attic salt of wit." There is nothing more wearisome than the talk of men who are always trying to be piquant and brilliant. Such speech is like a "pillar of salt," it sparkles, but is cold, and has points that wound, and it tastes bitter. That is not what Paul recommends. I. SALT WAS USED IN SACRIFICE. Let the sacrificial salt be applied to all our words, *i.e.*, let all we say be offered to God, "a sacrifice of praise to God continually." II. SALT PRESERVES. Put into your speech what will keep it from rotting. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." Frivolous talk, dreary gossip, ill-natured, idle, to say nothing of foul and wicked words, will be silenced when your speech is seasoned with salt. III. SALT GIVES SAVOUR TO FOOD. Do not deal in insipid generalities, but suit your words to your hearers, "that ye may know," &c. Speech that fits close to the characteristics and wants of the people to whom it is spoken is sure to be interesting, but that which does not will for them be insipid. Commonplaces that hit full against the hearer will be no commonplaces to him, and the most brilliant words that do not meet his minds or needs will to him be tasteless "as the white of an egg." Individual peculiarities, then, must determine the wise way of approach to each man, and there will be a wide variety of methods. Paul's language to the wild hill tribes of Lycaonia was not the same as to the cultivated, curious crowd on Mars Hill, and his sermons in the synagogues have a different tone from his reasonings before Felix. IV. SALT HAS TO BE RUBBED IN if it is to do any good. Preaching to a congregation has its own place and value; but private and personal talk, honestly and wisely done, will effect more than the most eloquent preaching. Better to drill the seeds, dropping them one by one into the little pits made for their reception, than to sow them broadcast. (A. Maclaren, D.D.) *Seasoning a letter*.—

I have read of a lady who, writing to a young man in the navy, thought, "Shall I close this as anybody would, or shall I say a word for my Master?" and, lifting up her heart for a moment, she wrote, telling him that his constant change of scene and place was an apt illustration of the Word, "Here we have no continuing city," and asked if he could say, "I seek one to come." Trembling she folded it, and sent it off. Back came the answer: "Thank you so much for those kind words. I am an orphan, and no one has spoken to me like that since my mother died, long years ago." The arrow, shot at venture, hit home, and the young man shortly after rejoiced in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace.

A word spoken in season:—A clergyman sailing up the Hudson River in a sloop, some forty years since, was pained by the profaneness of a young man. Seeking a favourable opportunity, he told him he had wounded his feelings by speaking against his best friend—the Saviour. The young man showed no relents, and at one of the landings left the boat. Seven years after, as this clergyman went to the General Assembly at Philadelphia, a young minister accosted him, saying he thought he remembered his countenance, and asked him if he was not on board a sloop on the Hudson River, seven years before, with a profane young man. "I," said he, "am that young man. After I left the sloop I thought I had injured both you and your Saviour. I was led to Him for mercy, and I felt that I must preach His love to others. I am now in the ministry, and have come as a representative to this Assembly." (*British Workman.*)

Salt:—Do not mistake vinegar for oil, or pepper for salt. "Seasoned with salt." Let it be tasteful and savoury. I read, quite lately, a most striking incident, showing the power of grace seasoned with salt in speaking a timely word to one that was without. An officer in your army was led to help a lady who was an earnest worker among soldiers. One evening, after helping at a soldiers' tea, he came to her, evidently much excited, and said, "I have almost made up my mind that I will never come here again." She expressed, of course, her regret, and asked what had happened. "Oh, So-and-so has been at me about coming here as I do, and being such a card-player as I am. But I can't give up my cards; that I shall never do." "Oh," said the lady, "I am sorry that you have been spoken to in that way. You can't give up your cards. I should never ask you to do that. Why, it is all you have got. You must have something." Well, that was "grace seasoned with salt," for it brought him to himself. He saw that if that card-playing was taken from him he had nothing left; and he had no rest until the love of Jesus had delivered him from the love of the world. (*A. Monod, D.D.*)

A turn in the talk:—I shall never forget the way a thirsty individual once begged of me on Clapham Common. I saw him with a very large truck in which he was carrying a very small parcel, and I wondered why he had not put the parcel in his pocket and left the machine at home. I said, "It looks odd to see so large a truck for so small a load." He stopped, and, looking me seriously in the face, he said, "Yes, sir, it is a very odd thing; but do you know I have met with an odder thing than that this very day. I have been about working and sweating all this 'ere blessed day, and till now I haven't met a single gentleman that looked as if he'd give me a pint of beer till I saw you." I considered that turn in the conversation very neatly managed; and we, with a far better subject upon our minds, ought to be equally able to introduce the topic on which our heart is set. There was an ease in the man's manner which I envied, for I did not find it quite so simple a matter to introduce my own topic to his notice; yet if I had been thinking as much about how I could do him good as he had upon how to obtain a drink, I feel sure I should have succeeded in reaching my point. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Wise words spoken in reason:—Travelling by diligence from Geneva to Dôle with a Roman Catholic, I said to him, simply, "I should like to speak to you about your soul, but I don't know how to go about it." "Well, sir, go on," said the man, heartily. I continued, or rather we continued, and, on leaving him, I had the happiness of hearing him thank God for having made some one speak to him of salvation, and he begged me to send him a Bible. In general, I have found that if one commences a conversation of this kind with kindness and politeness, one will be always listened to. This is, besides, the only way to succeed. (*G. Malan.*)

Religion in conversation:—"What awakened you?" said a Christian minister on one occasion to a young friend. "It was what you said to me one evening coming out of the lecture-room. As you took me by the hand, you said, 'Mary, one thing is needful.' You said nothing else, and passed on; but I could not forget it." It was a word spoken in the Spirit, and the Lord accompanied it with saving power. The sculptor, Bacon, being an earnest Christian, used to

seek opportunities of introducing religion into his conversation. On one of these occasions, the lady he addressed, said, "As to that, my religion is to fear God, and keep His commandments; so we will talk no more on such matters." Bacon replied, "But, madam, you will recollect it is said, 'they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.'" (*J. F. B. Tinling.*)

Vers. 7-11. All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you.—Christian commendations and salutations:—"What is in a name!" Nothing, is the ordinary reply, but there may be much. The names of Solomon, Alexander, Napoleon, and Paul are associated with important events in history. Each is a record, and stirs up admiration, desire, dislike, or sorrow as the case may be. If the names of great men interest us, those of the good men who shared the labours of St. Paul may also do so. Those labours are more important than the conquests of captains and the speculations of philosophers. Note—I. **THE VALUE OF CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP.** True friendship will—I. Show a kindly interest in the welfare of its objects. Paul had such an interest in the Colossians and *vice versâ*. 2. Mutual interest will lead to reciprocal communications. Paul could not go to Colossæ so he sent Tychicus and Onesimus to inform them of himself and the affairs of Christ's kingdom, to comfort them and bring back a report. 3. Distance and difficulty will not be allowed to stand in the way. Colossæ was far off and Paul was in prison, but both were surmounted. 4. Written messages will not be allowed to supersede personal communications when the latter are practicable. So Paul sent his Epistle by trusted friends who were charged also with verbal communications, better spoken than written. II. **THE PROPRIETY OF CHRISTIAN COMMENDATIONS.** In naming the two messengers he speaks of them in high terms, but not in the style of fulsome eulogy. 1. Tychicus is (1) "a beloved brother" which indicates his relation to the Church. (2) "Faithful minister," or attendant, which indicates his relation to the Apostle as a trusty helper. (3) "Fellow servant in the Lord," which indicates his relation to Christ—a coadjutor of the apostle in the service of the same Master. 2. Onesimus, the whilom runaway slave, is now a faithful and beloved brother—a commendation which would secure for him the welcome that he sorely needed. 3. The spirit of this commendation should be cultivated. The true ground of honour is not in a man's social standing, but in his moral worth and relation to Christ. III. **THE FORCE OF CHRISTIAN SALUTATIONS.** 1. Christianity sanctifies the commonest things. How common for us to send our respects to some friend through the letter of another. "Give him my kind regards," &c. We have only to think of St. Paul as here using the expressions equivalent in his day. Little did these good men think that their simple expressions of affection would be handed down to prove the sympathy and the unity of the Church throughout the world and time. 2. The saluting brethren were Jews, which would show to the Gentile Church that they had learned what the apostle would teach them, not to call anything that God had cleansed common or unclean. IV. **THE SOLACE OF CHRISTIAN CO-OPERATION.** 1. Loneliness is very depressing, but the apostle was spared this. 2. Co-operation in labour divides its burden and ensures success. 3. Unity in Christian toil brings the greatest in touch with the humblest, and gives the humblest a share in the glory of the greatest. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Side lights on Church life in the early times:*—A straw will indicate the direction of a current: a bit of glass will reveal a star; a kick of the foot may discover a treasure; a word, a look, an involuntary movement will disclose the leading tendency of an individual character; so, on the crowded stage of life it is not always gigantic and public scenes that are most instructive, but rather trivial, undesigned incidents unnoticed by an ordinary observer. We learn—I. **CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY.** 1. As fostering mutual interest in tidings concerning the work of God. The apostle, though in prison and separated from the Colossians, does not abate anything of his interest in their welfare. 2. As a source of encouragement and strength in the Christian life. "That he might know your estate and comfort your heart." II. **CHRISTIAN COMMENDATION** (ver. 7). The apostle speaks of his two messengers in a way calculated to ensure their favourable reception by the Colossians, and a respectful attention to their message. III. **CHRISTIAN COURTESY.** Those who sent their salutations were of the circumcision. The Christian spirit triumphed over their prejudices, and their greeting would be all the more valued as an expression of their personal esteem, their brotherly affection, and their oneness in Christ. That courtesy is most refined, graceful, gentle, and acceptable that springs from a Christian spirit. IV. **CHRISTIAN HELPFULNESS** (ver. 11). How consoling is the

sympathy and co-operation of a faithful few. (G. Barlow.) *The sympathetic spirit.* I. OUT OF A COMMON FAITH IN CHRIST SPRINGS A COMMON SYMPATHY. Here is a man who never saw the Colossians writing to them as a mother might write to her son. Epaphras, not he, had brought them to Christ, yet he loves them as much as though they had been his own children in the faith. This arose out of the simple fact that they both believed in a common Saviour. And as it was with them it should be with us. Man is a social being, and there are many points in his nature which are sympathetic. There are intellectual affinities and moral affinities; besides which there are extra grounds of sympathy. But apart from blood relationships there is no sphere in which the sympathetic spirit works so mightily as in the Christian Church. The same faith incites us believers of the nineteenth century as incited those of the first. Our faith was theirs; their sympathy should be ours. II. CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY WILL SEEK AND FIND OUTLET AND MANIFESTATION. 1. Paul's heart is touched with sympathy; how can he show it. He is a prisoner. It is true he clings to the hope of revisiting Asia, but sympathy does not like delays. And as he cannot go himself he sends Tychicus as his deputy. Here, as in other things, "Where there's a will there's a way." 2. Where there is genuine sympathy the best way for its manifestation will somehow open up. That was the case here. Tychicus was an Asiatic (Acts xx. 4), and was therefore a convenient messenger. Perhaps he had offered himself for the mission. And besides, Onesimus had to go to Colossæ to his master. III. CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY IS HARD TO SATISFY. When it is at full heat it does not ask how little, but how much it may do. The letter itself indicates the deepest thought and care for their welfare; but this is not enough. Tychicus and Onesimus must be bearers of oral messages of comfort. You manifest sympathy as you run down a steep hill. When once you set off you must go on; only there is this difference, when the foot of the hill is reached you stop, but in the path of love there is no stopping. IV. THE SYMPATHETIC SPIRIT WILL AS A RULE ACT WISELY. The messenger in this case was the best who could have been selected. 1. He was "the beloved brother" (Eph. vi. 21); a brother who had a large heart, and who, consequently, had insinuated himself into the good graces of his fellow Christians. He was a favourite among them, they all liked him, and so he was just the man to send. 2. He was "a faithful minister." The apostle speaks from personal experience. Tychicus had taken care of Paul, and was therefore a tried man. His conscience was as large as his heart; his kindness was not at the expense of his justice. Faithfulness was needed at Colossæ as much as kindness, for Paul had a great conflict about that Church. 3. "A fellow servant." Whoever went to Colossæ must be armed with authority, and therefore Paul places the messenger on the same footing as himself. V. THE SYMPATHETIC SPIRIT IS BOTH CONTAGIOUS AND INFECTIOUS. Some things are contagious which are not infectious; sympathy is both. Tychicus and Onesimus caught it; it was conveyed to the distant Colossians. I can touch my neighbour and make him sympathetic too, *i.e.*, if there be any affinity between us; and I can also send its electric current to my friend thousands of miles away. It can be transmitted by the simplest implement—a pen. VI. THE SYMPATHETIC SPIRIT NEVER FAILS. It is a form of charity. It is like the sun—only let it shine on, and as it shines stronger and stronger, the hard frost will relax its deadly grasp, winter will disappear, and spring with its flowers and music will come. VII. WE CAN ALL ACQUIRE THE SYMPATHETIC SPIRIT. There is nothing to show that Tychicus was a great man. He was not an apostle, but he had a large warm heart. If we cannot render Christ head service we can heart service. (A. Scott.) *Tychicus and Onesimus, the letter bearers:*—I. TYCHICUS. 1. The man and his mission. He was probably one of the fruits of the apostle's residence in Ephesus. On his way to Jerusalem after the riot he was joined by seven friends. Tychicus was one of the two from Asia; the other was Trophimus, whom we know to have been an Ephesian (Acts xxi. 29), as Tychicus probably was. This was about 58 A.D. Then came an interval of three or four years, and then the apostle is in Rome. Whether Tychicus was with him all the time we do not know, but these verses, written A.D. 62 or 63, imply a considerable period of service. He is now sent to Colossæ. The same words are employed about him in the contemporaneous letter to the Ephesians. Evidently, then, he carried both letters on the same journey, and one reason was that he was a native of the province, and probably of Ephesus. "You go, Tychicus. It is your home; they all know you." The most careful students now think that the Ephesian Epistle was meant to go the round of the Churches of Asia Minor, beginning with Ephesus. If that be so Tychicus would necessarily come to Laodicea,

which was only a few miles from Colossæ, and so could conveniently deliver this Epistle. After this we get two more glimpses of the man; one in the Epistle to Titus, when the apostle intended to despatch him to Crete, and the last in 2 Tim. iv. 2 (A.D. 67). "Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus," as if he had said, "Now go home, my friend! You have been a faithful servant for ten years. I need you no more. Take my blessing. God be with you!" So they parted—he that was for death to die! and he that was for life, to live and treasure the memory of Paul for the rest of his days. 2. His character and work. (1) As for his personal godliness and goodness, he is "a beloved brother," as are all who love Christ. (2) He was "a faithful minister" or personal attendant. Paul always seems to have had one or two such about him. Probably he was no great hand at managing affairs, and needed a plain common-sense nature to act as secretary and factotum. Men of genius, and men devoted to some great cause, want some person to fill such a homely office. Common sense, willingness to be troubled with small secular details, and hearty love for the chief, and desire to spare him, were the qualifications. Such probably was Tychicus—no orator, thinker, organizer, but a plain soul who did not shrink from rough work if it would help the cause. (3) He was "a fellow-servant in the Lord." As if he had said, "Do not suppose there is much difference between us. We have both, as I have been reminding you, a common Master." The delicacy of the term thus given to the commendation is a beautiful indication of Paul's chivalrous nature. No wonder that such a soul bound men like Tychicus to him. 3. Lessons. (1) Small things done for Christ are great. In some powerful engine there is a little screw, and if it drop out the huge piston cannot rise nor the huge crank turn. There is a great rudder that steers an iron-clad. It moves on a "pintle" a few inches long. If that bit of iron were gone what would be the use of the ship. There is an old jingle about losing a shoe for the want of a nail, a horse for want of a shoe, a man for want of a horse, a battle for want of a man, a kingdom for loss of a battle. The intervening links may be left out—and the nail and the kingdom brought together. What is the use of writing letters if you cannot get them delivered? It takes both Paul and Tychicus to get the letter into the hands of the Colossians. (2) The sacredness of secular work done for Christ. When Tychicus is caring for Paul, his work is "in the Lord." The distinction between sacred and secular, like that of great and small, disappears from work done for and in Jesus. All done for the same God is the same in essence, for it is all worship. (3) Fleeting things done for Christ are eternal. How astonished Tychicus would have been if anybody had told him that those two precious letters in his scrip would outlast all the pomp of the city, and that his name, because written in them, would be known to the end of time all over the world. (a) They are eternal in Christ's memory, however they may fall from man's remembrance. (b) They are perpetual in their consequences. True, no man's contribution to the sum of righteousness can very long be traced, any more than the rain-drop that refreshed the harebell can be traced in a burn, or river, or sea; but it is there. The Colossian Church, with its sisters, is gone; but Christian men all over the world owe something to Tychicus' care. Paul meant to teach a handful of obscure believers; he has edified a world. (4) As the reward is given not to the outward deed, but to the motive which settles its value, all work done from the same motive is alike in reward, however different in form. Paul in the front, Tychicus in the rear, shall share alike at last. "He that receiveth a prophet," &c. II. ONESIMUS. 1. The man and his character. He is the same as we read of in Philemon. He had been a good-for-nothing servant, and apparently had robbed his master and then fled to Rome. Somehow or other he had found Paul, and Paul's master had found him. And now he goes back to his owner. With beautiful considerateness the apostle unites him with Tychicus, and refers the Church to him as an authority. But with sensitive regard he omits the "fellow-slave," which might have hurt, but he cannot leave out the "faithful," because Onesimus had been eminently unfaithful. There is no reference to his flight, &c. The Church has nothing to do with these, only Philemon. 2. Lessons. (1) The transforming power of Christianity. Slaves had well-known vices of which Onesimus had his full share. Think of him as he left Colossæ; and think of him as he went back Paul's trusted representative. What had happened? Nothing but this—the message had come to him. "Onesimus! Christ has died for thee and lives to bless thee. Believest thou this?" And he believed. It had changed his whole being. He is a living illustration of Paul's teaching. He is dead with Christ to his old self; he lives with Christ a new life. The gospel can do that. Nothing else can. The

gospel despairs of none; none are beyond its power. (2) The power the gospel has of binding men into a true brotherhood. We can scarcely picture to ourselves the gulf which separated master from slave; Christianity gathered both into one family. All true union must be based on oneness in Christ. The world must recognize that "One is your Master," before it comes to believe that "All ye are brethren." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Tychicus* was a native of proconsular Asia (*Acts xx. 4*), and perhaps of Ephesus (*2 Tim. iv. 12*). He is found with St. Paul at three different epochs in his life. 1. He accompanied him when on his way eastward at the close of the third missionary journey, A.D. 58 (*Acts xx. 4*), and probably, like Trophimus (*Acts xxi. 29*), went with him to Jerusalem. It is probable that Tychicus, together with others mentioned among Paul's numerous retinue on this occasion, was a delegate appointed by his own Church according to the apostle's injunctions (*1 Cor. xvi. 3-4*), to bear the contributions of his brethren to the poor Christians of Judæa; and, if so, he may possibly be the person commended as "the brother," &c. (*2 Cor. viii. 18*). 2. We find Tychicus again in St. Paul's company here, probably towards the end of the first Roman captivity, A.D. 62, 63. 3. Once more at the close of St. Paul's life (about A.D. 67) he appears again to have associated himself with the apostle (*Tit. iii. 12*; *2 Tim. iv. 12*). Tychicus is not so common a name as some others, but it is found occasionally in inscriptions which belong to Asia Minor, and persons bearing it are commemorated on coins (*Bp. Lightfoot*.) *Value of a comforter*:—But so have I seen the sun kiss the frozen earth, which was bound up with the images of death, and the colder breath of the north; and then the waters break from their enclosures, and melt with joy, and run in useful channels; and the flies do rise again from their little graves in walls, and dance a while in the air, to tell that there is joy within, and that the great Mother of creatures will open the stock of her new refreshment, become useful to mankind, and sing praises to her Redeemer. So is the heart of a sorrowful man under the discourses of a wise comforter. He breaks from the despairs of the grave, and the fetters and chains of sorrow; he blesses God, and he blesses thee, and he feels his life returning; for to be miserable is death, but nothing is life but to be comforted. And God is pleased with no music from below so much as in the thanksgiving songs of relieved widows, of supported orphans, of rejoicing and comforted and thankful persons. (*Bp. Taylor*.)

Ver. 9. With Onesimus a faithful and beloved brother who is one of you.—I.

THE PERSON. Onesimus teaches us—1. To despise no one for his former misdeeds after he has come to his right mind. This Onesimus was once contemptible, useless, and a runaway slave, but after his conversion he was thought worthy by the chiefest apostle of a mission of great honour. They therefore sin grievously who reproach the truly converted for their former evils, than to congratulate them on their new nature. God estimates men not by what they have put off, but by what they have put on (*Ezek. xviii. 22*). **II. HIS COMMENDATION.** 1. He is a faithful brother, *i.e.*, not only a Christian, but a genuine one; for many who have assumed the name have denied the thing (*Gal. ii. 4*; *2 Tim. iii. 2-4*). Hence we may observe—(1) We should endeavour to answer to our name and profession; for to be called a Christian, faithful, &c., and not be so, is to be loaded with false titles and dishonourable (*Rev. iii. 1*). (2) They are to be loved by all the pious, and to be embraced with both arms who are faithful in their Christian profession and special vocation. (3) Nothing is more dangerous than those perfidious brethren who feign religion while they despise it (*2 Cor. xi. 26*). 2. He was loved warmly by Paul, who was not accustomed to receive any into intimate friendship except they were worthy. Therefore the apostle wished them to infer that Onesimus deserved to be beloved by them. (1) It is a sign of a good Christian to be dear to his pastor. (2) It becomes a prudent minister to embrace the most pious with peculiar affection (*Phil. iv. 1*). (3) It ought to be the care of all believers to be beloved by their pastors. 3. He was one of themselves. Although this was not much in his praise, it made him acceptable, for what is our own is wont to be prized more than what is not. (1) It is proper to treat, then, with peculiar affection those who are of the same blood, country, society, as ourselves. (2) It is contemptible to neglect our own, and to extol the distant at the expense of the near (*Mark xiii. 57*). **III. HIS MISSION.** To make known what was going on with the apostle and at Rome. Tychicus was also entrusted with the same, but in adding Onesimus he provided two witnesses that the thing might be established. (*Bishop Davenant*.) *Onesimus* was a native, or certainly an inhabitant, of Colossæ, since Paul refers to him as "one of you."

This confirms the presumption which his name affords that he was a Gentile. Slaves were numerous in Phrygia, and the very name Phrygian was almost synonymous with that of slave. Hence it happened that in writing to the Colossians (iii. 22-iv. 1) Paul had to instruct them concerning the duties of servants and masters towards each other. Onesimus was one of this unfortunate class of persons, who escaped from his master and fled to Rome, where in the midst of its vast population he could hope to be concealed, and to baffle the efforts which were so often made in such cases for retaking the fugitive. Whether he had any other motive for the flight than the natural love of liberty we have not the means of deciding. It has been generally supposed that he had committed some offence, as theft or embezzlement, and feared the punishment of his guilt (Philemon 18). Though it may be doubted whether Onesimus heard the gospel for the first time in Rome, it is beyond question that he was led to embrace the gospel there through the apostle's instrumentality (Philemon 10). As there were believers in Phrygia when the apostle passed through the region on his third missionary journey (Acts xviii. 23), and as Onesimus belonged to a Christian household (Philemon 2), it is not improbable that he knew something of Christian doctrine before he went to Rome. How long a time elapsed between his escape and his conversion we cannot decide. After the latter event, however, the most happy and friendly relations sprang up between the teacher and the disciple. The situation of the apostle must have made him keenly alive to the sympathies of Christian friendship, and dependent upon others for various services. Onesimus appears to have supplied this want in an eminent degree. He won entirely the apostle's heart, and made himself so useful that Paul wished to keep him, and yielded him up only in obedience to that sensitive regard for the feelings and rights of others of which his conduct on this occasion was a conspicuous example. The traditional notices of Onesimus are not of great value. Some of the later fathers assert that Onesimus was set free and became Bishop of Beroë, and that he made his way to Rome again and died a martyr under Nero. (*H. B. Hackett, D.D.*) *The excellence of faithfulness*:—A year ago last summer I visited Yellowstone Park. I had read a great deal of the geysers, and seen pictures of them, but now it was my privilege to see them rise grandly and proudly in dizzy heights, then fall in graceful spray. They had great names given them. Some were called "The Wonderful," "The Monarch," others "The Lion" and "The Lioness," but you never can depend on their regularity of action. A traveller may visit them and wait around four or five days without witnessing a performance, getting only labour for his pains, though you cannot tell when they will play. When they do they are very beautiful. But there is one geyser, named the "Old Faithful," that is not so large, and doesn't make such a grand display, but you can always depend on it. It plays at certain times, and never fails. If you are there at 1 o'clock, or five minutes before, you will see the water shoot up at a height of 60 or 70 feet. At 1.55 it will play again, not rising at such height as the other geysers, nor making such a roaring noise, but you can depend on it. It always comes to time, and never fails in a performance. I at once respected that geyser. It was faithful in its performance and sure. That is the key to a successful life. (*A. Little.*)

Vers. 10-11. *Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner, saluteth you.*—*The salutations*:—**I. THE DUTY OF SALUTATION.** The Greek word signifies either to embrace, as we are accustomed to do one who has been long absent, or to salute by word of mouth or letter. This salutation is the auspicious prayer of health and happiness from God the Author of all good. That this duty is not to be neglected by the Christian appears—1. From the command of Christ (Matt. x. 12). 2. From the uniform example of St. Paul. 3. From its manifold utility. For such a habit (1) not only expresses the mutual happiness which ought to flourish among Christians, but promotes it. (2) When flowing from a heart purified by faith and inflamed by love, brings down the wished-for blessing. **II. INFERENCES AND LESSONS.** Observe—1. That the external duties of humanity, of which salutation is one, are diligently to be performed by pious men. Augustine says, "If any one should not salute him whom he may meet, he will not be accounted a man by the traveller, but a post." 2. That they are to be performed not only in conformity with custom, but from love and pure charity. For he incurs the guilt of hypocrisy who salutes him whom he does not wish health and prosperity. So Judas saluted Christ (Matt. xxvi. 49). 3. That they sin who would have this duty of Christian charity to serve their pride and ambition. So the Pharisees loved salutations in the market places. 4. That

they act basely who instead of saluting perform an act of adulation. (*Bishop Davenant*.) *Aristarchus* was a Thessalonian, and so perhaps one of Paul's early European converts (*Acts xx. 4*). He was a Jew, but like so many of his brethren of the dispersion, bore a Greek name. He was with Paul in Ephesus at the time of the riot, and was one of the two whom the excited mob dragged into the theatre to the peril of their lives. We next find him a member of the deputation which joined Paul on his voyage to Jerusalem. He was in Palestine with Paul, and sailed with him thence (*Acts xxvii. 2*). Probably he went home to Thessalonica at some point of the journey, rejoining Paul subsequently. At any rate, here he is standing by Paul and enthusiastically devoted to his work. He receives here an honourable and remarkable title, "my fellow-prisoner." Now it is to be noted that in the Epistle to Philemon, where almost all these names reappear, it is not *Aristarchus* but *Epaphras* who is honoured by this epithet, and that interchange has been explained by a supposition that Paul's friends took it in turn to keep him company, and were allowed to live with him on condition of submitting to the same restrictions and military guardianship. There is no positive evidence in favour of this, but it is not improbable, and helps to give an interesting glimpse of Paul's prison life, and of the loyal devotion which surrounded him. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Marcus*—the John Mark of the Acts. He was once the subject of a sharp contention between Paul and Barnabas, which issued in the separation of these good men (*Acts xv. 37-39*). On a missionary tour previous to that painful occasion, Mark had left them, perhaps unhandsonably (*Acts xiii. 13*); and Paul, to indicate his sense of Mark's conduct, refused to take him with them on a subsequent occasion. Barnabas, being a near kinsman, may have been prejudiced in favour of his relative. What were the commands regarding him which the Colossians had already received it is in vain for us to conjecture. Mark evidently contemplated a journey which would lead him to Colossæ, and the Colossians are here enjoined to give him a cordial reception. The apostle thereby intimates the restoration of Mark to his full confidence. The cloud under which his character for zeal had lain seems to have quite passed away. A single error, even in one engaged in the public ministry, is not enough to warrant the entire withdrawal of confidence. But why this mention of Mark in relation to a Church with which he had no special connection? It was at Perga in Pamphylia that Mark left the apostle, and as Colossæ was not far away from the sphere of the subsequent labours of the missionaries, Mark's defection and Paul's displeasure could not fail to be generally known. It was beautiful and proper, therefore, that having in the interval seen reason to receive Mark again into favour, the apostle should make this change known, and give the Churches of Phrygia a charge to receive him with due confidence and cordiality as a faithful evangelist for Christ. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Jesus which is called Justus*.—How startling to come across that name borne by this obscure Christian! How it helps us to feel the humble manhood of Christ, by showing us that many another Jewish boy bore the same name: common and undistinguished then, though too holy to be given to any since. His surname *Justus*, may perhaps, like the same name given to James, hint his rigorous adherence to Judaism, and so may indicate that like Paul himself, he came from the strictest sect of their religion into the large liberty in which he now rejoiced. He seems to have been of no importance in the Church, for his name is the only one in this context which does not re-appear in Philemon, and we never hear of him again. A strange fate his! to be made immortal by three words, and because he wanted to send a loving message to Colossæ! Why men have striven and schemed and broken their hearts, and flung away their lives to grasp the bubble of posthumous fame; and how easily this good "Jesus which is called Justus" has got it! He has his name written for ever on the world's memory, and he very likely never knew it, and does not know it, and was never a bit the better for it! What a satire on "the last infirmity of noble minds!" (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Who are of the circumcision*.—These three men, the only three Jewish Christians in Rome who had the least sympathy with Paul and his work, give us in their isolation a vivid illustration of the antagonism which he had to face from that portion of the Early Church. The bulk of the Palestinian Jewish Christians held that the Gentiles must pass through Judaism on their road to Christianity, and as the champion of Gentile liberty Paul was worried and hindered by them all his life. They had next to no missionary zeal, but they followed him and made mischief wherever they could. If we can fancy some modern sect that sends out no missionaries of its own, but delights to come in where better men have forced a passage, and upset their work by preaching their own crotchets, we get

precisely the thing which dogged St. Paul. There was evidently a considerable body of these men in Rome. They preached Christ of "envy and strife," and only these three were large-hearted enough to take their stand by his side. It was a brave thing to do. Only those who have lived in an atmosphere of misconception can understand what a cordial the clasp of a hand or the word of sympathy is. These men were like the old soldier who clapped Luther on the shoulder on his way to the Diet of Worms with "Little monk! little monk! you are about to make a nobler stand to-day than we in all our battles have ever done. If your cause is just, and you are sure of it, go forward in God's name, and fear nothing." But the best comfort Paul could have had was help in his work. He did not go about the world whimpering for sympathy. He was much too strong a man for that. He wanted men to come down into the trench with him, and shovel and wheel there till they had made in the desert a highway for the King. This is what these men did, and so were a comfort to him. He uses a half medical term, which, perhaps, he had caught from the physician at his elbow, which we might perhaps parallel by saying they had been a cordial to him—like a refreshing draught to a weary man, or some whiff of pure air stealing into a close chamber and lifting the curls from some hot brow. The true cordial for a true worker is that others get into the traces and pull by his side. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Fellow-workers.—*Co-operation in work for Christ*:—Jesus sent out His disciples by twos, for He knew that each would cheer his fellow. Service is usually best in companionships: he who works altogether alone will be in his temper either too high or too low, censorious or desponding. Two are better far than one; they not only accomplish twice the work, as we might have expected, but they frequently multiply their power seven times by their co-operation. Happy are those wedded souls whose life of love to their Lord and one another is like the cluster on the staff, which they joyfully bear along! Happy those Christian companions who share each other's joys and sorrows, and so pass onward to the skies knit together as one man. Communication enriches, reticence impoverishes. Communion is strength, solitude is weakness. Alone, the fine old beech yields to the blast, and lies prone upon the sward; in the forest, supporting each other, the trees laugh at the hurricane. The sheep of Jesus flock together; the social element is the genius of Christianity. To find a brother is to find a pearl of great price; to retain a friend is to treasure up the purest gold. Between two upon a staff we find happiness. The monastic or hermit death-life is not our Master's *beau idéal*, but holy companionship is His chosen means for affording us help in service and advance in joy. (*Ibid.*)

The power of combination:—The house martin (*Chelidon urbica*), our common summer visitor to all parts of Europe, seems quite to understand that combination is strength. These birds possess some sort of intelligence with each other which enables them to combine their efforts to effect some desired purpose. Dupont de Nemours says—"I once saw a martin which had unfortunately, I know not how, caught its foot in the running knot of a thread, the other end of which was attached to a gutter of the Collège des Quatre Nations. Its strength being exhausted, it hung and cried at the end of the thread, which it raised sometimes by trying to fly away. All the martins of the great basin between the bridge of the Tuilleries and the Pont Neuf, and perhaps from a still greater distance, collected to the number of several thousands. They formed a cloud, all emitting cries of alarm and pity. After much hesitation and a tumultuous consultation, one of them invented a mode of delivering their companion, made the others understand it, and commenced its execution. All those that were within reach came in turn, as if running at the ring, and gave a peck to the thread in passing. These blows, all directed upon the same point, succeeded each other every second, or even still more frequently. Half an hour of this work was sufficient to cut through the thread, and set the captive at liberty." No union of men for a common purpose could more completely illustrate the truth that combination is strength. (*Scientific Illustrations.*)

Value of a faithful friend:—One of the company despatched a servant for a lute, and on its being brought it had lost tune, as happens to these instruments when exposed to the changes of the atmosphere. While he was tightening the strings, Gotthold's thoughts ran thus, "What is sweeter than a well-tuned lute, and what more delightful than a faithful friend who can cheer us in sorrow with affectionate discourse? Nothing, however, is sooner untuned than a lute, and nothing is more fickle than a friend. The tone of the one changes with the weather, that of the other with fortune. With a clear sky and a bright sun you will have friends in plenty; but let fortune frown and the firmament be overcast, then they will prove like the strings of the lute, of which you tighten

ten before you find one which will bear the tension or keep the pitch." *How Christians may comfort others*.—When this church was being built I became acquainted with one of the carpenters—a plain man—who worked upon it, and I had many chats with him afterwards. That day, being a Christian (sometimes I am not one), when I met him, as he came down the street, I stopped and spoke to him, and shook hands with him. And giving me, as I noticed, a peculiar look, and keeping hold of my hand, he said, "Now, sir, you do not know how much good this does me." "What?" said I. "Well, your speaking to me and shaking hands with me." Said he, "I shall go home to-night, and say to my wife, 'I met Mr. Beecher to-day.' 'Ah!' she will say, 'what did he say?' and the children will look up too. And I will tell them, 'He stopped me and shook hands with me, and asked if I was getting along well.' And they will talk about that for a week. You have no idea how much good it does a plain man to be noticed, and to be made to feel that he is not a nobody." (H. W. Beecher.)

Vers. 12-13. *Epaphras, who is one of you.*—*The sympathy of Christianity*.—

1. If you think of Christianity as a great thought, a transcendental doctrine, a grand conception, you are right; and if you think the preacher is called upon to speak the language of earth in the accent of heaven and expound celestial mysteries, you are right. But this is not all. A man who would describe the present scene as all firmament would be wrong; but a man who omitted the firmament from a landscape would be a fool. It is the sky in a landscape painting that often first attracts attention. There could be no landscape were there no sky. So with this great Christian truth: it is firmamental, but it is the sky out of which our landscape comes—the immeasurable, out of which our units and definite lines are given to us. Christianity is not only the highest metaphysic, it is the most absolute practical teaching and sympathy. 2. What have these personal salutations to do in the Bible? When the apostle began this great letter, he seemed to strike a grand key, and to call the universe to hear. He speaks of One who is the "image of the invisible God," &c. That is grand music. Let that organ roll out its rhythmic thunders, and while they charm us make us solemn; but here at the end he begins to talk about Aristarchus, &c. Is he out of tune at last? Does the anthem die off into a mean piping, or is there still sweet music in it, encompassing, not shaking, the high heavens, but making the household glad, filling every room of it with sacred glees. 3. The more Christianity is understood the more will manhood go up in value. Christianity takes us all in charge—women, poor people, the sick. It goes to the merchant and says: "I have seen to-day many poor, sick ones, who want kindly treatment and practical sympathy, and you must give it. Any religion that talks so about men and to men is presumptively a true religion. Christianity has a message from every man to every other man. I. "Epaphras, who is one of you." 1. Being a native of Colossæ he carries it in his heart to Rome. The idea of the Church is domestic. We do not realize that. Our idea of it is approximation without identity, proximity without sympathy, a hebdomadal meeting and a week-long parting, a cold "how do?" without answer being waited for. The poor, simple soul thought you meant it, and was just about to tell you how he did when you jumped into your chariot and drove off. Christ's idea was that of a house, and Paul that of a family—"in whom the whole family," &c. See how these Christians love one another. They have a great respect for one another, a marvellous respect, an official respect; but the old apostolic unity and downright warm love—where is it? And echo answers where? 2. "One of you," though not at home. We think that going from home deprives a man of his proper belongings in the Church. A young man leaves us and goes to New Zealand. Is he no longer one of us? The poor lad's heart ached when the "good-bye" was forced out of him; but now that he is fifteen thousand miles away we say, "He once belonged to us." We want a warmer language and a more affectionate fellowship in God. How large a Church would be if we interpreted its membership in this way, that a man who is in a far-off city is still one of us, and still claims us, wonders what hymns we are singing, and what the text is. We are in danger of degrading the church into a meeting-house, a place of casual association, and of cutting off all those fine living bonds which ought to be independent of time and place, which make Rome Colossæ and Colossæ Rome, every land a home, and every Christian a brother. II. A SERVANT OF CHRIST. 1. Are you fond of titles? This is the one the King will give you. It is select, and yet might be universal. Let the noblest envy you. Other titles are sounds, sometimes sounds and fury,

signifying nothing. But this signifies to be the slave of Him "who though He was rich," &c. 2. What are the signs by which a servant of Christ is known? Those who are skilled in such things can go through a picture gallery and say, "This picture is after So-and-so." There is a manner that can be but feebly imitated by the most skilful hands. So you cannot mistake a man who has been with Christ. In the early days there were those who took knowledge of disciples that they had been with Jesus. You have been in a garden of spices; I know it; you bring the fragrance with you. You have seen some solemn sight; I know it; vulgarity is ironed out of your face, and it is transfigured. You have heard strange music, and all the meaner elements have been taken out of you. You have been with Christ, and I know it by the tenderness and simplicity of your speech, by the diligence of your service, by the lavishness of your liberality. III. "SALUTETH YOU." That would not do now. I get letters from Christian friends that I would not send to a day labourer whom I had never seen in my life before. They are too correct to be true, too proper to be good. IV. "ALWAYS LABOURING FEVERENTLY FOR YOU IN PRAYER." 1. I do not know that Epaphras was an eloquent preacher, but he was mighty in intercession. He threw his arms around his native Church, and toiled in prayer for them till his brow was bedewed as with agony, and his whole face lighted up with saintly expectation that he might see the descending blessing. That I can do for my friends. I may not be able to write elaborate letters, but I can pray for them. That you can do for me. 2. What did Epaphras pray for? "That ye may stand perfect—like a ship in full gale." Let that be my posture; no harsh, bitter wind striking me in the face, and making my sea-faring difficult, but a great favouring gale, bearing me onward, all sail set, towards the will of God. (J. Parker, D.D.) *The ministry of Epaphras*:—I. His object: that the Colossians might "stand perfect," &c. The will of God has reference—1. To our perfection in the knowledge of revealed truth. The Bible is a revelation of God's will with respect to us, and is able to make us wise unto salvation. Why has God put it before us but that we should study it. Our Lord reproved His disciples because of their want of due attention to His teaching, and the Hebrews are rebuked for their want of proficiency, and are exhorted to go on to perfection. This perfect knowledge is necessary—(1) To religious usefulness. (2) To progressive and entire sanctification. "Sanctify them through Thy truth." 2. To our salvation from sin. This must be complete before we can enter heaven; but provision is made in the blood "which cleanseth from all sin," and in the grace of the Spirit who "sanctifies wholly." 3. To the graces of the Spirit. (1) Faith. This admits of degrees. There is the weak faith of "babes"; the strong faith of "young men"; the ripe faith of "fathers," when it is perfect. (2) Love. This admits of degrees. I may have a sincere love for God, and yet not love Him "with all my heart"; a sincere love of man, and yet not as myself. But the love set forth in Scripture is "perfect love." (3) Hope. All Christians have this, but not all in an equal degree. It is not every believer who can say with John, "Even so; come, Lord Jesus." That is, however, the "full assurance of hope" for which we should all strive. (4) The passive graces, such as patience, which is to "have her perfect work that ye may be perfect," &c. 4. To our actual conduct in the world. Christ's religion is a practical religion (Titus ii. 11–12), and is to assume a perfect form (Heb. xiii. 20–21). To bring up His people to this standard God has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee." 5. To our stability and perseverance. Epaphras is anxious not only that the Colossians should be perfect in their conformity to the Divine will, but that they should "stand" in that state to the end of life. It is the end which crowns the work. It is not he who runs well for a season, but he who continues to the end, to whom the promise of life is given. II. THE MEANS OF SECURING THIS OBJECT—Prayer. From this we learn—1. That Christians can only be brought to this high standard by God's grace and blessing. Had they been able of themselves, prayer would have been presumptuous. We do not ask God to do for us what we can do for ourselves. But we never can be made Christians but by God—and God can make perfect Christians; and the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit must not be limited. 2. That prayer is available with God for obtaining needful grace. There are some who restrict the power of prayer to its subjective influence. If this were true, prayer for others would be of no avail. I might pray for one whom I love, and my prayer might exercise my benevolent feelings, but the person for whom I pray will receive no benefit. Away with so God-dishonouring a notion. Some of you, perhaps, have near relatives across the sea. Take encouragement. God's arm of power and mercy can reach them. Bring their cases before

Him. (1) Notice the earnestness and importunity of his prayer. True prayer is a labour. We ought in prayer to labour for a just apprehension of the Divine character, of the mediation of Christ, of the import of the promises. (2) Notice the connection of prayer with this object—the fulfilment of God's will. The glory of God is dear to every pious heart. Our Lord, therefore, taught us to pray, "Thy will be done," &c. 3. That the honour of true religion is connected with the perfection of Christian character. The world judges of Christians by their conduct. 4. That the welfare of Christians is connected with their perfection of character. Spiritual as well as bodily happiness depends on the state of the health. (*T. Jackson.*)

Labouring fervently for you in prayers.—*Prayer the noblest form of work*.—1. Prayer is religion in action, and is the noblest kind of human exertion. It is the one department of action in which man realizes the highest privilege and capacities of his being. And in doing this he is enriched and ennobled almost indefinitely. 2. That this view of prayer is not universal is notorious. It is thought an excellent thing for clergymen, recluses, sentimentalists, and women and children generally; that it has its uses as a form of desultory occupation, an outlet for feeling, a means of discipline, but altogether less worthy of the energies of a thinking man than hard work in study or business. 3. In response to this let those speak who have really prayed. They sometimes describe prayer with Jacob, as a wrestling together with an unseen power, which may last even to the break of day (Gen. xxxii. 24), or with Paul, as a concerted struggle (Rom. xv. 30). They have their eyes fixed on the Great Intercessor in Gethsemane (Luke xxii. 44). Importunity is of the essence of successful prayer (Luke xi. 8; xviii. 5; Matt. xv. 27-28; Mark vii. 28-29); and importunity means not dreaminess, but sustained work, and of an energetic character (Matt. xi. 12). Bishop Hamilton, of Salisbury, once said that "no man was likely to do much good in prayer who did not begin by looking upon it in the light of a work, to be prepared for and persevered in with all the earnestness which we bring to bear on subjects which are the most interesting and necessary." This will appear if we take an act of prayer to pieces. To pray is—I. To PUT THE UNDERSTANDING IN MOTION, and to direct it upon the highest object to which it can address itself. How overwhelming are the truths which pass before us—a boundless Power, an eternal Existence. Then the substance of the petition, its motives, the issues which depend on its being granted or refused present themselves to the mind, as does the Intercessor who presents our prayers. II. To PUT THE AFFECTIONS IN MOTION. The object of prayer is the uncreated Love, and to be in His presence is to be conscious of heart expansion; and when the matter of prayer is blessing for others and not for self, all the best emotions and sentiments are called into play (Matt. xv. 8; 1 John iii. 21-22). III. To PUT THE WILL IN MOTION, just as decidedly as we do when we sit down to read hard, or to walk up a steep hill against time (John ix. 31; Matt. vii. 21; James iv. 7-8; all of which imply that prayer in which the will is not engaged is worthless. That sovereign power does not merely impel us to make the first necessary mental effort, but enters most penetratingly and vitally into the very action of prayer itself (Gen. xxxii. 26). These three ingredients of prayer are ingredients in all real work, whether of the brains or the hands. The difference is that in prayer they are more equally balanced. Study may in time become intellectual habit, which scarcely demands any effort of will; handiwork may in time become so mechanical as to require little or no guidance from thought; each may exist without the co-operation of the affections. Not so prayer. It is always the joint act of the will and the understanding, impelled by the affections; and when either will or intelligence is wanting, prayer at once ceases to be itself, by degenerating into a barren, intellectual exercise, or into a mechanical and unspiritual routine. (*Canon Liddon.*)

Fervent labour in prayer.—The word here used signifies to strive, or wrestle, as those do who strive for mastery; it notes the vehemency and fervency of this man's prayers for the Colossians. As the wrestlers do bend and writhe and stretch and strain every joint of their bodies, so did Epaphras every joint of his soul that he might be victorious with God upon the Colossians' account. So Jacob when alone with God (Gen. xxxii. 24-27; Hos. xii. 4-5) wrestles and weeps, and weeps and wrestles; he holds his hold, and will not let God go, till as a Prince he has prevailed. (*T. Brooks.*)

The value of intercessory prayer.—This was no passing wish, sentimental desire, transient emotion. The burden of Epaphras' heart was the good of the Church, and in proportion to the fervency of his affection was the importunity of his petition. There may be no help more needed, no succour more sure, than that obtained through prayer. Who can tell what good may

come to the wilful and wayward boy far away at sea, or in some distant land, from the unceasing intercessions of his mother, wrestling for him with God? You have a dear friend in sorrow at a distance. You cannot reach him to comfort him, but you can reach him by prayer more effectively than if you could see him face to face. Many a time has God's work revived, and rich spiritual blessing come to a congregation, through the earnest supplication of some obscure member. We do not ourselves know all that we owe to the prayers of others. There are circumstances in which we can do nothing but pray for those in whom we are deeply interested. Especially is it so with pastors. Some may seem ready to faint in the conflict; some fair blossoms of spiritual promise may be going up as dust; some often warned and entreated may be becoming more callous, or on the point of making shipwreck of faith, &c.; what can be done for such? The mightiest resource is persevering prayer. It is God alone whose help is all powerful, and this prayer can secure. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The power of prayer*:—A spoonful of water sets a hydraulic press in motion, and brings into operation a force of tons' weight; so a drop of prayer at one end may move an influence at the other which is omnipotent. (*A. MacLaren, D.D.*) *That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God*.—*Standing in perfectness*.—1. There is no kind of qualification to this, no hint that Paul thought that Epaphras was asking with an extravagant expectation. They were no sham prayers; struggles after impossible attainments, but those that he and Paul thought might be realized. Such prayers are in conflict with modern notions, which regard perfection as beyond the range of practical Christianity. 2. What made Epaphras believe that he might ask this? (1) Paul's teaching. "We pray for this, even your perfection." "That we may present every man perfect." (2) Christ's words, "Be ye perfect," &c. 3. Was this an attainment to be expected in this life or the next? In this. Paul wrote that he had not attained, &c., but he appealed to the Philippians on the supposition that he and they were perfect. And so Christ teaches us to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," i.e., perfectly. There is no difficulty here. It is our duty to be entirely conformed to the will of God, and yet see a point beyond our highest attainments, and say, "We must reach that also." Let us consider the purpose of these prayers. I. **NEGATIVELY**. 1. It is not that full knowledge and obedience may be achieved at once. This is impossible under the conditions imposed by the flesh, and both will be progressive under heavenly conditions. But we are to act according to our several ability. A child in the alphabet class must not be expected to do the work of the higher forms, either in the school of nature or of grace. It is enough that each does thoroughly what is allotted to it. An infant is perfect, but not in the same sense as a man. So it is in the kingdom of God. 2. It is not that temptation will be absent. Both Paul and Christ were fiercely tempted. 3. It is not that there will be an unbroken flow of joy and peace. No person is capable of being continuously under the same emotions, and alternations of joy and gloom make no difference to our spiritual standing, so long as under both we abide in God. There were changes of feeling in Paul and Christ. II. **POSITIVELY**. It is that we may do the will of God as far as we know it. We are not to ordain an impossible standard. Our King distributes to us a variety of talents. Hence the young act differently from the old; men from women; sickly from healthy, and yet in each the love of God may be perfected, viz., in the keeping of His commandments. And these commandments have a wonderful variety, and relate to secular as well as spiritual employments, since all life by the Christian is devoted to God. Do you say that this is an easy kind of perfection? Try it—Or that it is inconspicuous? True, so was Christ's generally. Only on occasions did His divinity flash forth. 2. It is that we may use the means for our fulfilling the will of God perfectly. Epaphras laboured in prayers, which denotes the power from which we are to derive our ability. We must go to God and He will supply all our need: in faith in His faithfulness who has promised, "who also will do it," even sanctify us wholly. (*D. G. Watt, M.A.*) *Christian perfection*.—A Christian may be said to be perfect in respect—I. Of the cause or fountain of holiness; so good gifts are said to be perfect (James i. 17), as they are from God. II. Of consecration (Heb. i. 10; v. 9). Christ was perfect because set apart to a perfect calling which He fulfilled perfectly. III. Of acceptance, not in respect of operation, the Lord accounting our confession of imperfection for perfection. IV. Of parts, though not in respect of degrees; he is perfect in that he hath holiness in every part, though not in such measure. Thus to be perfect is to be sanctified throughout. V. **COMPARATIVELY**, not positively. A Christian that makes conscience

of all his ways, and can love his enemies, is perfect (Matt. v. 48), in comparison of carnal men, that follow the swing of their own corruptions and affections. VI. Of TRUTH, though not in respect of absoluteness. Thus he is perfect, because he desires and endeavours after perfection, though in act he attains it not. VII. Of MEN or common estimation, and so he is perfect that is unrebukable. VIII. Of THE END, and so he may be said to be perfect—1. In intention, because he sets perfection as a mark to shoot at (Phil. iii.). 2. In respect of duration, because he holds out to the end. 3. In respect of accomplishment, because he finisheth what he undertaketh in godliness, or mortification, he doth it not by halves, or in some parts of it, for so to perfect is translated to finish (Acts xx. 24; John iv. 34, xvii. 4). (N. Byfield.) *All the will of God*:—There are people who would be content to do some part of what God wills, provided they might be excused the rest; as, for example, to believe the truth which God has revealed, but not to do the good works which He has commanded; or to exercise some of them, but utterly fail in others: as they who live fair with men, but remain in impiety, and in the profession of error; or those, on the contrary, who make profession of error; or those, again, who make open profession of the pure service of God, but spare not either the goods or honour of their neighbours; or who, abstaining from one vice, license themselves to others; who are chaste, but covetous; or liberal and beneficial to the poor, but corrupt and incontinent. This partition is unjust, injurious to God, impossible in truth, and incompatible with the nature of the things themselves. (J. Daillé.) *He hath a great zeal for you*.—*The nature of zeal*:—Zeal is an intense earnestness for the accomplishment of its object. It is defined in our latest dictionary as a passionate ardour in the pursuit and accomplishment of it. It is not, therefore, a great excitement of feeling, mere demonstrative warmth of expression, mere quickness of the motion, but something far more deep and enduring. It is a working, practical energy; a power which may be directed to things indifferent, good or bad. (E. Garbett, M.A.) *Fervent zeal*:—A little before his death Gregory Thaumaturgus made a strict inquiry whether there were any persons in the city and neighbourhood still strangers to Christianity. Being told there were about seventeen in all, he sighed, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, appealed to God how much it troubled him that any of his fellow-townsmen should still remain unacquainted with salvation. (Milner.) It is said of Holy Bradford, preaching, reading, and prayer, was his whole life. "I rejoice," said Bishop Jewel, "that my body is exhausted in the labours of my holy calling." . . . "Let racks, fires, pulleys, and all manner of torments come, so I may win Christ," said Ignatius. (Watson.) Reimerius, their adversary, declares "that a certain Waldensian heretic, with a view of turning a person from the Cafaolic faith (for such he calls the Romish errors), swam over a river in the night, and in the winter, to come to him, and to teach him the novel doctrines." (Milner.) *Laodicea* (see on chap. ii. 1). *Hierapolis*.—On the north side of the valley of Lycus, opposite to the sloping hills which mark the site of Laodicea, is a broad level terrace jutting out from the mountain side, and overhanging the plain with almost precipitous sides. On this plateau are scattered the vast ruins of Hierapolis. It is here that the remarkable physical features which distinguish the valley display themselves in the fullest perfection. Over the steep cliffs which support the plateau of the city tumble cascades of pure white stone, the deposit of calcareous matter from the streams which, after traversing this upper level, are precipitated over the ledge into the plain beneath, and assume the most fantastic shapes in their descent. At one time overhanging in cornices fringed with stalactites, at another hollowed out into basins or broken up with ridges, they mark the site of the city at a distance, glistening on the mountain side like foaming cataracts frozen in the fall. Like Laodicea, Hierapolis was at this time an important and a growing city, though not like Laodicea, holding Metropolitan rank. Besides the trade in dyed wools, which it shared in common with the neighbouring towns, it had a source of wealth peculiar to itself. The streams to which the scenery owes its remarkable features are endowed with valuable medicinal qualities, while at the same time they are so copious that the ancient city is described as full of self-made baths. An inscription still legible celebrates their virtues, "Hail, fairest soil in all broad Asia's realm; hail, golden city, nymph Divine, bedecked with flowing rills, thy jewels," and Esculapius and Hygeia appear on still extant coins. To the ancient magnificence of Hierapolis its ruins bear ample testimony. A city which combined the pursuit of health and gaiety had fitly chosen as its patron deity Apollo, the god alike of medicine and festivity, here worshipped as "Archegetes," the founder.

But more important, as illustrating its religious temper, is the fact, that there was a spot called the Plutonium, a hot well or spring, from whose hot mouth issued a fatal memphitic vapour, from the effects of which the mutilated priests of Cybele alone, so it was believed, were free. Indeed this city appears to have been a chief centre of the passionate mystical devotion of ancient Phrygia. But in addition to this religious rites were borrowed from other parts of the East, more especially from Egypt. By the multitude of her temples Hierapolis established her right to the title of the "sacred city" which she bore. Though, at this time, we have no record of her famous citizens, such as graced the annals of Laodicea, yet a generation or two later she numbered among her sons one nobler far than the rhetoricians, sophists, millionaires, and princes, of whom her neighbour could boast. The lame slave, Epictetus, the loftiest of heathen moralists, must have been growing up to manhood when the first rumours of the gospel reached his native city. Did any chance throw him across the path of Epaphras, or of St. Paul? We should be glad to think that the greatest of Christian and the greatest of heathen preachers met together face to face. Such a meeting would solve more than one riddle, and explain some strange coincidences in their writings. Drawn by trade, and by its charms as a gay watering-place, a very considerable colony of Jews settled down in Hierapolis, which gave point to a Talmudic complaint, "The wines and baths of Phrygia have separated the ten tribes from Israel." After the destruction of Jerusalem one of the chief settlements of the Christian dispersion was here, which explains how the Phrygian Churches assumed such a prominence in the ecclesiastical history of the second century. Here settled Philip of Bethsaida, the early friend and fellow-townsmen of St. John, who took up his abode in Ephesus, and the first apostle who held communication with the Gentiles (John xii. 20). Here he died and was buried; and here, after his decease, lived his two virgin daughters, from whom Papias heard several stories of the first preachers of the gospel, which he transmitted to posterity in his work. Papias was, probably, a native of Hierapolis, of which he afterwards became bishop. He was succeeded by Abercius, and Abercius by the great controversialist and apologist, Claudius Apollinaris, and presided at a council in this city at which Montanism was condemned. At a later date the influence of both Hierapolis and Laodicea declined. They take no great part in the great controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries. Among their bishops there is not one who has left his mark on history. They take only a silent part in the great councils, and more than once wavered in their allegiance to the orthodox faith. (*Bishop Lightfoot.*)

Ver. 14. Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.—*Luke the beloved physician*:—At the moment of the transition of Christianity from Asia to Europe Luke was enrolled among St. Paul's companions. We ascertain this by a change of a pronoun—"they" (Acts xvi. 6), "we" (Acts xvi. 10). The same language is continued in the narration of what took place at Philippi, and so Luke is very pointedly associated with this neighbourhood. But again we lose sight of the expression from the time Paul quits Macedonia, and we do not discern any trace of it till Paul is in Macedonia again (Acts xx. 5, 6). From this time he appears to have been in close companionship with the apostle, and to have gone with him to Rome (Acts xxviii. 16; Philemon 24; Col. iv. 14). A baseless tradition says that he was a painter; and yet in one sense it is most true. In the Acts, besides many minor portraits, we have a full-length picture of the great apostle, without which we could not have fully known St. Paul, and one drawn by the hand of a friend. We see how thoroughly the biographer sinks and forgets himself, revealing his ardent and steady friendship and modesty. But much more is made known to us concerning St. Luke through what is said of him by St. Paul. He speaks of him not merely as his "fellow labourer," but also as "the beloved physician." The mere fact that his profession is specified is full of interest. There are only two other such cases in the record which we have of the companions of our apostle. "Demetrius, the silversmith" (Acts xix. 24), though his conduct had much to do with a very important passage of St. Paul's career, can hardly be said to have been one of his companions: and of "Alexander the coppersmith," or "Zenas the lawyer" (2 Tim. iv. 14; Titus iii. 13), we know little. Lydia, "the seller of purple" (Acts xvi. 14), was probably brought to Philippi, and thus within the sacred circle of apostolic companionship, by the exigencies of her trade—while of Aquila and Priscilla, who were "tent-makers," we are distinctly told that Paul "abode with them, because he was of the same craft" (Acts xviii. 3). Similarly, there can

hardly be a doubt that St. Luke's professional life was the occasion of his coming into close contact with St. Paul. Physicians were men of high education, and this would establish an easy link of connection with one who, besides other great qualifications for his work, was a man of literary culture. But there is a strong probability that a deeper union between the two men subsisted than that of intellectual tastes. St. Paul had been suffering from serious illness in Galatia (Gal. iv. 13), and very soon afterwards St. Luke appears with him at Troas. During subsequent years they were frequently associated in the closest manner, and we have the best reasons for believing that the apostle's health was delicate. What so natural as to suppose that the first acquaintance at Troas was marked by the exercise of St. Luke's professional skill, and that the same skill was on many subsequent occasions available for the alleviation of suffering and fatigue? How entirely this explains the peculiar warmth and definiteness of the allusion here! We must carefully observe, too, that it is not merely St. Luke's medical knowledge which St. Paul mentions, but that he calls him "beloved" in connection with this characteristic. There seems to be evidently here the sense of personal gratitude for benefits received. It is natural to attempt to trace out some indications in St. Luke's writings of the fact that he was a physician. Thus it is in his Gospel alone, in the record of that first sermon at Nazareth, that we find the prominent mention of the "healing" of both mind and body as a characteristic of the Saviour's mission; and here only, at the close of that sermon, have we the quoting of that pointed proverb—"Physician, heal thyself" (Luke iv. 18, 23). With this may be classed a phrase which is unique in this Gospel, in the account of what took place soon afterwards—"The power of the Lord was present to heal them" (Luke v. 17). So again, we have, twice repeated, in this Gospel, a peculiar phrase having reference to recovery from sickness: "There went virtue out of Him and healed them all:" "Somebody hath touched Me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me" (Luke vi. 19; viii. 46). But, above all, we must notice what is almost an amusing corroboration of the view concerning the existence of this professional feeling in St. Luke's Gospel. In the account which the other evangelist gives of the woman healed a reflection seems to be thrown on the skill of the physicians (Mark v. 26); whereas St. Luke casts no imputation on the skill of those who belonged to his own profession (Luke viii. 43). Similarly we trace indications of the physician's mind in the mention of technical details and in the use of appropriate medical terms. In the account of the healing of Peter's wife's mother when St. Luke describes the fever as a "great" fever, and speaks of Jesus as "standing over" the patient, he is really using technical forms of expression; while still by the words, "He rebuked the fever," he is careful to mark the miraculous nature of the cure (Luke iv. 38, 39). In the Acts the writer has an evident tendency to dwell on symptoms; and this is a true mark of the medical mind. Thus, in relating the case of the lame man at the temple gate, it is not merely the fact of the recovery which is stated, but it is said that "the feet and ankle bones received strength;" and it is added further, as if to mark the stages of the recovery, that "he stood up and walked" (Acts iii. 7, 8). So the stages of the blindness of Elymas at Paphos are indicated, and the symptoms of the case, as well as the mere fact of the loss of sight, when it is said that, on the utterance of St. Paul's stern anathema, "there fell on him a mist and a darkness, and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand" (Acts xiii. 11). The last instance may be furnished by the record of St. Paul's stay in Malta, after the shipwreck. A miraculous cure was worked there on the father of Publius, "the chief man of the island," who was suffering from dysentery in an aggravated form; and the language which St. Luke applies to the patient is as exact and appropriate as if he himself had been called in to treat the case professionally (Acts xxviii. 8). (Dean Howson.)

Luke the beloved physician.—Note—I. THE CONGRUITY BETWEEN LUKE'S PROFESSION AND THE RELIGION OF WHICH HE HAD BECOME THE POSSESSOR.

1. The predominating characteristic of Christianity among the religions of the world is its humanity. It brings relief to the physical ills which curse the race. Christ acted as the Great Physician. "The works that I do shall ye do also." Where the gospel comes the laws of health and the healing art receive attention such as cannot be found among heathens. In the palmiest days of Greece these matters were terribly neglected. 2. The requirements and tendencies of Christianity involve attention to what is the physician's peculiar care. Physical well-being is essential to vigour of mind, healthy affections, pure morals, both in the individual and in the community. Diseased nervous conditions render the practice

of some Christian virtues well-nigh impossible. II. THE ADAPTATION OF THE GOSPEL TO THE LEARNED AND RICH, AS WELL AS TO THE POOR AND ILLITERATE. Religion in the ancient world was often a luxury for the well-to-do. The glory of the Saviour's ministry and its novelty was, "To the poor the gospel is preached." There is no room in it for despising culture. Dependence was placed, not upon the wild outburst of fanaticism or the erratic movements of ignorance, but upon the calm energy of disciplined intelligence. Paul was himself a scholar of rare attainments, as was Moses in the older economy, as also was Luke. Their mark on Christianity is the deepest, their influence the strongest. Crude, misshapen theologies are the product, not of the educated, but of smatterers. Luke was a physician when he believed the gospel. 1. The rich and scientific need its grace as much as the poorest and most illiterate. Its revelations make special demands upon the reason of the wise. 2. Luke's example shows us that cultivated intelligence does not find it impossible to assent either to the evidences or the doctrines of Christianity.

III. HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF PROFESSIONAL GODLINESS. Luke practised as a physician and preached as an evangelist. For long the healing art was in the hands of ecclesiastics. Modern division of labour has dissociated them. But the two can work together and work into each other's hands. But as the physician has to be with men under the darkest shadows of their lives and in the deepest depths, how essential that the spirit of their work should be the spirit of the Man of Sorrows. Luke was Paul's beloved friend. It is a calamity when the physician is unworthy of such a confidence on the part of an apostle. Luke's faithful consistency is full of practical admonition. Being dead he yet speaks. Faith in Christ Jesus, the Physician of souls, is the only but all-sufficient means of salvation. So Luke, the beloved physician, teaches. (*The Preacher's Monthly.*) *Religion and the medical profession.*—I. THE DEFERENCE SHOWN TO MEDICAL SCIENCE. Medicine has always occupied a conspicuous place among the sciences. It has to do with that which intimately concerns us. Our nature is not what it was as it came from the hand of God. Sin has turned this world into a vast lazaret-house. No individual ultimately escapes. Naturally men have sought amelioration, and their cry has always been met. Even the most savage tribes have "medicine men." So high was the estimate put on this act that it was regarded as akin to the supernatural and was chiefly in the hands of the priesthood. Among the Egyptians the knowledge of medicine was a profound secret, and in Greece it was carefully concealed and transmitted from father to son by the priests of Æsculapius, to whom belonged Hippocrates. Although medicine has ceased to be a secret it has lost nothing of its hold on the respect and confidence of mankind. As in religion men speak lightly of the profession, but as soon as a man, however sceptical, is sick he sends for the doctor. And no profession, except that which deals with the healing of the soul, has more claims on our gratitude. When the body is racked with pain or parched with fever the physician comes as a minister of mercy, and without the boon which he brings what is the value of all other earthly blessings. The banquet is spread in vain for the man who has no appetite, and riches, friends, &c., avail nothing.

II. THE BENEVOLENCE OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION. Their labours are not the most remunerative. Compared with commerce the returns are meagre; yet what deserves ampler remuneration, not only on account of the benefits conferred, but because of the exhaustive character of the work. The merchant is always sure of his evenings and Sundays; the doctor never. And people make allowances when other men fail to keep their engagements, but no excuse is allowed the doctor. Serving all classes self-sacrificingly he is eminently the benefactor of the poor. III. THE RELIGIOUS DRAWBACKS OF THE PROFESSION. 1. It might seem that no class could be more favourably situated for having the claims of religion enforced upon them. With the *memento mori* ever before him how can the doctor forget that he, too, must die. Familiarity breeds contempt, however, here as elsewhere, or if not, it blunts the edge of providential appeals. 2. Then, again, there is the temptation to materialism into which so many medical men fall. Scientific research has to do with matter alone, and is incapable of discovering the soul; but that does not prove there is no soul, which scientists too often assume.

IV. THE RELIGIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROFESSION. Obligation is proportioned to opportunity in doing good. Who has such power over the confidence and the affections as the doctor? With what eagerness are his visits expected, and how much better does a patient often feel simply because the doctor has been. But how immeasurably would the happy effects of his visits be enhanced if he combined with his proper office that of physician for the soul. Words of encourage-

ment and consolation would be of more value because less professional than those of the minister, and what could be more imitative of the example of the Great Physician. He comes, too, just at the time for making a religious impression. In health men are callous, but sickness brings home subjects of momentous importance. (*J. Leyburn, D.D.*) *The importance of religion to the study and practice of medicine*:—(To medical students.) This science is a most pleasing and important study. Its object is the prevention and cure of disease. Next to the health of a man's soul is the health of his body. Without this enjoyment and usefulness is impaired and suffering brought on society in general. A great many men have and are engaged in it, and no class is more worthy of our respect. Witness their gratuitous attention to the poor and at hospitals, their remonstrances against the evils which infest the community. I. ILLUSTRATE THE SENTIMENT IN THE CHARACTER OF LUKE. He was a native of Antioch in Syria, where he probably studied at its famous university. Some say that he was a pupil of Galen, but the dates seem to disprove this. 1. His practice as a physician is not stated, whether large or small, but "the beloved physician" implies much to Paul and perhaps many others. He was beloved—(1) As a physician. How valuable to Paul to have a companion who understood medicine! How often did he require attention through stripes, bruises, ill-health, and exhausted energies. (2) As a friend. A man whose mind was cultivated by science and who could write those elegant dedications to Theophilus, and the books of which they are the prefaces, must have been very congenial to a mind like Paul's. (3) As a helper. The healing art has been always a powerful help to the gospel. The physician can get a word in where the clergyman cannot. 2. Note the importance of religion to him as a physician. (1) It gave him a decided character. He chose to leave his residence and practice to travel, not for pleasure or in the interests of science, but with a persecuted missionary to propagate the gospel. We are not all called to follow this example, but it shows how piety enables a man to prize real excellence, choose and do the greatest good, and not to be ashamed of God when it is fashionable to deny Him. (2) It made him useful. He, like his Master, was cast among the diseased. Miracles were not always necessary, hence Christ was sparing of them. He that cures the body does well; he that cures the soul does better; he that cures both does best. The name of Luke the "beloved physician" is admired, but Luke the evangelist all nations shall bless. II. PROVE THE SENTIMENT IN RESPECT TO YOURSELVES. Religion is important. 1. To prepare you for study. You of all men require a peaceful, not a torturing, conscience; a mind at rest, not driven to and fro with the speculations of every religious adventurer. The religion of Christ gives this. 2. To accompany scientific investigations. You have to study the noblest work of God. That religion accelerates this study is proved by David (Psa. cxxxix.) and Solomon (Eccles. xii.). Here is a knowledge of anatomy in its most beautiful form. How can you investigate this without right views of God? Wisdom, power, and goodness display themselves in every exhibition of the human body. And that science should lead to materialism is astounding. 3. To aid usefulness in practice. Patients are often dependent for their recovery on the state of their mind. Disease is aggravated by anxiety, murmuring, and irreligious views of God. If without the formality of a clerical visit you can soothe the mind and drop into it a Divine promise, how vastly your usefulness will be augmented. And besides, there will be cases which no medicine can reach. What will you do then if you are not qualified by religion to be a physician for the mind? 4. To exalt the character. The man who reverences God and promotes the highest interests of others may be sneered at by infidels and profligates, and perhaps looked down upon by other members of his profession; but ask the public what they think of such a man. But, better still, such a man will stand well in the estimation of God. 5. To promote your own happiness. (*J. Sherman.*) Demas (Philemon 24), perhaps Demetrius. Is the curt mention of this man contrasted with the full affectionate recognition of St. Luke the cloud no bigger than a man's hand which prepares us for the subsequent darkness that hangs over him? (2 Tim. iv. 10.) (*Bishop Alexander.*) We know no more about him except the melancholy record, "Demas hath forsaken me," &c. Perhaps he was a Thessalonian, and went home. His love of the world was his reason for abandoning Paul. Probably it was on the side of danger that the world tempted him. He was a coward, and preferred a whole skin to a clear conscience. In immediate connection with the record of his desertion we read, "At my first answer, no man stood by me, but all men forsook me." As the same word is used, probably Demas was one of those

timid friends whose courage was not equal to standing by Paul when he thrust his head into the lion's mouth. Let us not be too hard on a constancy that warped in so fierce a heat. He may not have been an apostate Christian, though he was a faithless friend. Perhaps, away in Thessalonica, he repented him of his evil, and perhaps Paul and Demas met again before the throne, and there clasped inseparable hands. Let us not judge a man of whom we know so little, but take to ourselves the lesson of humility and self-distrust. That world that was too strong for Demas will be too strong for us if we front it in our own strength. It is ubiquitous, working on us everywhere, and always like the pressure of the atmosphere upon our bodies. Its might will crush us, unless we can climb to, and dwell on, the heights of communion with God, where pressure is diminished. It acted on Demas through his fears. It acts on us through our ambitions, affections, and desires. So, seeing that miserable wreck of Christian constancy, and considering ourselves lest we also be tempted, let us not judge another, but look at home. There is more than enough there to make profound self-distrust our truest wisdom, and to teach us to pray, "Hold thou me up and I shall be safe." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Luke and Demas.—These two names in juxtaposition and subsequent separation suggest—I. THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP. 1. Society is divided into many classes. Men are bound together by similarity of pursuit, taste, attainment. The basis of their union may be pecuniary equality, political agreement, or common occupation. But such friendships are temporary, being based on what is temporary. A man's circumstances may alter, his tastes change; easy then for friends to be sundered. The poor basis of worldly friendship may resist the sapping waters of change. But this is the exception; hence we say, "What devotion!" Self-interest may bind men together, and even a common consciousness of wrong. But let self be imperilled, and where is the cohesion then? 2. The basis of Christian friendship is common love to a common Lord. "A new commandment give I unto you that ye love one another, as I have loved you." There is the measure and the motive. The coolness of some professors shows how they lack the spirit of Christ. As we are in Him, and imbued with His spirit, shall we be one in Him. In the primitive Church men of different ranks and pursuits, &c., "continued in the apostles' . . . fellowship." And then Paul, a man of large intelligence, wide learning, good family, &c.—just the man to hold others aloof—after the heavenly vision, gathered into his friendship Luke the physician, Onesimus the runaway slave, and Demas. Beautiful his friendship with men of less degree. And when he writes to distant brethren he says, "Luke, I shall mention your name, and Demas, yours." II. COMMON CHRISTIAN LABOUR IS A CEMENTING FORCE IN CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP. In writing to Philemon, Paul shows the thing which bound them together. Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers. Paul had an utter impatience of idleness. He had not only the faculty of industry, but of setting others to work. And whoever co-operated with him, however humble, received the title of "fellow-worker." 1. Luke was such; and was very valuable to the oft-afflicted apostle as—(1) A physician. Invaluable everywhere, especially so in prison, the sedentary life of which told upon the apostle's never stalwart frame. But Luke was with him with his physic and his words, "doing good like medicine." (2) As a congenial fellow-traveller and helper in missionary work. (3) The hand that could wield a lancet could also use a skilful pen, and by his Gospel and Acts he has laid the Church under perpetual obligations. 2. What of Demas? What he could do is not written. But he did something. He was no idler. Paul calls him a fellow-worker. He was no Luke, but as there are diversities of gifts, so he had his special line, as has every one. 3. Common labour will draw us together. From the general down to the drummer-boy, all in an army, when the battle is expected, feel knit together, for they have a common enemy; and when the enemy is vanquished, they rejoice in a common victory. Let all Christians unite against evil and for God, and that will unite all hearts. III. WORLDLINESS IS THE DISINTEGRATING FORCE IN CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP. Pleasant is our first brief view of Demas—sharer of work and affection with Luke. Later on Paul writes, "Demas forsook me . . . only Luke is with me." Paul can ill spare a friend now, for "the time of his departure is at hand." On his release from prison Paul had two or three years of Christian labour. Did Demas go with him? Again Paul is cast into a Roman cell. Still Demas is his friend; but only for a while. How much of sincerity mingled with this man's profession of Christ? Did he leave under temptation? Was he recovered? It is worthy of note that in the three times he is mentioned there is no honourable

epithet attached to his name. Was Paul in doubt of him? Did his quick eye detect in him an ambitious spirit, or a love of ease, or a hunger for human approbation? He went to Thessalonica. Did his pagan parents seduce him back to idolatry? Or had some heathen beauty captivated and drawn his love from that which ought to have been supreme? Was he ever recovered? Let us hope so; although tradition says he became a heathen priest, and was struck dead with lightning while officiating at the altar. Whatever his end, worldliness was his immediate ruin. Many are the modern confirmatory instances. Many once Christian workers are now idlers. Shall the queen's soldier turn deserter because of his difficulties or comrades? Loyalty to queen and country forbid. Shall the Christian's duty be less binding? God help us to stay with Luke, and not desert with Demas. What did he gain? What is that gain to him now? (*G. T. Coster.*) How strikingly these two contrasted characters bring out—I. THE POSSIBILITY OF MEN BEING EXPOSED TO THE SAME INFLUENCES, AND YET ENDING FAR AWAY FROM EACH OTHER! They set out from the same point, and travelled side by side, subject to the same training, in contact with the magnetic attraction of Paul's personality, and at the end they are wide as the poles asunder. Starting from the same level, one line inclines ever so little upwards, the other imperceptibly downwards. Pursue them far enough, and there is room for the whole solar system in the space between them. So two children trained at one mother's knee, subjects of the same prayers, with the same good influence upon both, may grow up, one to break a mother's heart and to disgrace a father's name, and the other to walk in the way of godliness and to serve the God of his fathers. Circumstances are mighty; but the use we make of circumstances lies with ourselves. As we trim our sails and set our rudder, the same breeze will take us in opposite directions. We are the architects and builders of our own characters, and may so use the most unfavourable influences as to wholesomely harden our natures thereby, and we may so misuse the most favourable as only thereby to increase our blameworthiness for wasted opportunities. II. We are reminded, too, from these two men who stand before us like a double star—one bright, one dark—that NO LOFTINESS OF CHRISTIAN POSITION NOR LENGTH OF CHRISTIAN PROFESSION IS A GUARANTEE AGAINST FALLING AND APOSTASY. As we read in another book, for which also the Church has to thank a prison cell—the place where so many of its precious possessions have been written—there is a backway to the pit from the gate of the Celestial City. Demas had stood high in the Church, and had been admitted to the close intimacy of the apostle, was evidently no raw novice, and yet the world could drag him back from so eminent a place in which he had long stood. "Let him that thinketh he standeth," &c. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Ver. 15. Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas.—*Early Church life*:—I. THE BRETHREN AT LAODICEA. This salutation teaches us—I. That brotherly love should flourish among all Christians. The philosophers of old said that "a wise man was a friend to a wise man, although unknown"; but we may say that a Christian is a brother, although unknown; yea, he is more united than any natural brother (*Acts iv. 32*). 2. This brotherly love is not only declared by words, but by services, as often as brethren, even they who live in remote churches, need our assistance. For to salute one by word as a brother, and not to promote the welfare of a brother, is the work of derision rather than of love. II. THE CHURCH WHICH WAS IN THE HOUSE OF NYMPHAS. Either the assembly of Christians meeting there or his private family, which, for its piety, merited the name of Church. There is no harm in understanding it in both senses. 1. Every collection of believers, although, on account of its smallness, may be included in the walls of a private house, and although, on account of their enemies, they meet in nocturnal assemblies, is a true Church, a member of the Church Universal. 2. The Papists therefore err who acknowledge no Church unless that which has the sovereignty, and is ever before the eyes of the world, for sometimes through persecution the Church cannot move in the public sight at all (*Rev. xiii. 6*). So when the Arians ruled, Athanasius and the orthodox were compelled to retire into corners. 3. It is the duty of every head of a family so to train his children and servants that his house may deservedly obtain the name of a church (*Gen. xviii. 19; Josh. xxiv. 15*), and those who neglect this are unworthy of the name of Christians. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *The Church in the house*:—In that the apostle calls this household a Church, we may note that a religious and well-ordered family is as it were a little Church. Now, do we learn from hence that our houses are

Churches? Then these things will follow. 1. That God's worship and piety must be set up in them. How can they be Churches of God if God be not served in them? 2. All must be done there in order, and quietness, and silence, for so it is or should be in the Church. 3. Evil persons that are incorrigible must not dwell there, but must be cast out (Psa. ci.). 4. The husband or master of the family must dwell there as a man of knowledge, and wives, children, and servants must obey as the Church doth Christ. Conclusion: 1. Are our families Churches? Why, then, religious families are in a happy case, for then God Himself will dwell there; so as a stranger coming to such places may say, as Jacob did of Bethel, "Surely God is in this place." 2. Should our families be Churches? Oh, then, woe unto the world of profane households. (*N. Byfield.*) *The Church in the house of Nymphas*:—We read that Priscilla and Aquila had such both in their house at Rome (Rom. xvi. 5) and in Ephesus (1 Cor. xvi. 19), and that Philemon had one in his house at Colossæ. This may have been the families, or small congregations meeting in these houses. The expression gives us a glimpse of the primitive elasticity of Church order and fluidity of ecclesiastical language. The word Church had not yet been fixed to its present technical sense. There was but one Church in Laodicea, and yet within it was this little Church—an *imperium in imperio*—as if the word had not yet come to mean more than an assembly, and as if all the arrangements of order and worship of later days were undreamed of yet. The life was there, but the forms which were to grow out of the life, and to protect it sometimes, and to stifle it often, were only beginning to show themselves, and were certainly not yet felt to be forms. If the Church in the house of Nymphas consisted of—

I. HIS OWN FAMILY AND DEPENDENTS, it stands for us as a lesson of what every family which has a Christian man or woman at its head ought to be. Little knowledge of so-called Christian households is needed to be sure that domestic religion is woefully neglected to-day. Family worship and instruction are disused, one fears, in many homes, the heads of which can remember both in their fathers' houses; and the unspoken atmosphere of religion does not fill the house with its aroma as it ought to do. If a Christian householder have not "a Church in his house," the family union is tending to become "a synagogue of Satan." A like suggestion may be made if this Church—

II. INCLUDED MORE THAN FAMILY AND DEPENDENTS. It is a miserable thing when social intercourse plays freely round every other subject, and taboos all mention of religion; when Christian people choose society for worldly advantages, and for every reason under heaven—sometimes a long way under—except those of a common faith, and of the desire to increase it. It is not needful to lay down extravagant, impracticable restrictions, by insisting that we should limit our society to religious men, or our conversation to religious subjects. But it is a bad sign when our associates are chosen for every other reason but their religion, and when our talk flows copiously on all other subjects, and becomes a constrained dribble when religion comes to be spoken of. Let us strive to carry about with us an influence which shall permeate all social intercourse, and make it, if not directly religious, yet never antagonistic to religion, and always capable of passing easily and naturally into the highest regions. Our godly forefathers used to carve texts over their doors. Let us do the same in another fashion, so that all who cross our threshold may feel that they have come into a Christian household, where cheerful godliness sweetens and brightens the sanctities of home. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Church duties at home*:—Two Christians met on a Monday morning. Both were parents. As was natural, the conversation turned upon the services of the previous day. The first speaker opened by saying, "We had a sermon from our minister last night on the religious instruction of children. Why didn't you come and hear it?" "Because," said the other, "I was at home doing it!" (*Christian Treasury.*) *Home example*:—It was a source of much trouble to some fishes to see a number of lobsters swimming backwards instead of forwards. They therefore called a meeting; and it was determined to open a class for their instruction, which was done, and a number of young lobsters came, for the fishes gravely argued that if they commenced with the young ones, as they grew up they would learn to swim aright. At first they did very well; but afterwards, when they returned home, and saw their fathers and mothers swimming in the old way, they soon forgot their lessons. So many a child well taught at school is drifted backwards by a bad home influence. (*Bible Class Magazine.*) *The Church anywhere*:—The Church of Jesus Christ is found wherever He is known, served, and adored according to His gospel: within the enclosure of the walls of a house, or in the very caverns of mountains,

and coverts of the wilderness, whither the Holy Spirit expressly foretells us that the spouse of the Lamb shall be sometimes constrained to retire. (*J. Dailé.*) *A prayerless home*.—I shall never forget the impression made upon me during the first year of my ministry by a mechanic whom I had visited, and on whom I urged the paramount duty of family prayer. One day he entered my study, and bursting into tears, said, "You remember that girl, sir; she was my only child. She died suddenly this morning. She has gone, I hope, to God. But if so, she can tell Him what now breaks my heart—that she never heard a prayer in her father's house or from her father's lips! Oh that she were with me but one day again!" (*Norman Macleod.*)

Ver. 16. When this Epistle is read among you, cause it to be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans.—I. THE APOSTLE WISHED HIS EPISTLE TO BE READ IN THE WHOLE CHURCH. Hence observe—1. That the sacred Scriptures were not written for the clergy, but for all Christian people, and that the ordinary reading of the Scriptures obtained in the primitive Church (1 Thess. v. 27). And that this was in a language understood by the people is plain from Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and other fathers. 2. That they do err who deny that the reading of the Scriptures conduces to the edification of a Christian people unless there be an exposition by the preacher. This is not to detract from the utility or necessity of preaching. Nevertheless, we assert with the Psalmist (Psa. xix. 7). II. HE ORDERED THEM TO COMMUNICATE THIS EPISTLE TO THE LAODICEANS. 1. Because the doctrine of the Epistle is general, and on that account was not to be reserved for the private use of the Church, but to be communicated to the whole Church of God, but first to their nearest neighbours, who, having read the autograph, could take copies of them and scatter them abroad. 2. Because Laodicea was infected with the same error as Colossæ. Observe, then, that among all the Churches of God, and especially neighbouring ones, there ought to be a communication of spiritual benefits, so that if one Church should have anything that might contribute to the edification of another, it should not grudge to impart it. (*Bishop Davenant.*) *The Epistles a common means of edification*.—The first Churches were edified by the mutual interchange of apostolical Epistles, and by the public reading of them. An Epistle sent to one Church became in reality the common property of all the Churches, and this fact led, at no very long period, to the formation of the canon of the New Testament. These Epistles were eagerly sought after, frequently copied, and devoutly cherished, so that complete collections of them were made. They were carefully distinguished from other writings, and, by the voice of the Churches, to them exclusively was accorded a place in the sacred canon. In this arrangement the wisdom of God was providentially manifested. By such use of the Holy Scripture the first Christians were nourished in their faith, and built up in the love and hope of the gospel. Healthful religion from that time to this, and, indeed, previously, under the Jewish economy, has been connected with a free, frequent, and devout use of Holy Scripture. This alone, by the blessing of God, can preserve the purity and living power of a Church. Shut out the Word of God, and superstition and spiritual death will creep in. It is by the use of the unadulterated "milk of the Word" that the disciples are to grow (1 Pet. ii. 2). It is the "engrafted Word" which saves (James i. 21). It is through the comfort of the Scriptures that we have hope (Rom. xv. 4). And all Scripture is profitable (2 Tim. iii. 16–17). (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *General reading of Scripture allowed*.—Nothing is more condemnatory of the practice of Rome than this plain unequivocal command. Yet Romanists prohibit the general perusal of the Scriptures, and read only small portions, and these in an unknown tongue, in public worship. St. Paul orders his entire Epistle to be read publicly. But if one Epistle, then all Epistles are equally required to be read. The Old Testament was, as we know, constantly recited in the Jewish synagogues, as is manifest by the case of our Lord at Nazareth and St. Paul at Antioch (Acts xiii. 15); and in the face of the apostle's command respecting his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, Romanism sets up its prohibitions. Can we wonder that all evils and superstitions should follow; that the invocation of saints, the worship of images, the adoration of the Virgin, and the veneration of altars, tombs, and relics should supersede the mediation of Christ; and that a multitude of uncommanded ceremonies and abstinences, and a whole torrent of will-worship, should follow in the train? (*Bishop D. Wilson.*) *The Epistle from Laodicea*.—The connection forbids us to suppose that this means a letter by the Laodiceans. Both letters are plainly,

Pauline Epistles, and the latter is said to be "from Laodicea," simply because the Colossians were to procure it from that place. The "from" does not imply authorship, but transmission. What, then, has become of that letter? Is it lost? So say some; but a more probable opinion is that it is the Epistle we know as that to the Ephesians. Very weighty authorities omit the words "In Ephesus" in verse 1 of that Epistle. The conjecture is a reasonable one that the letter was intended for a circle of Churches, and had originally no place named in the superscription, just as we might issue circulars "To the Church in _____," leaving a blank to be filled in with different names. This conjecture is strengthened by the marked absence of personal references in the letter, which, in that respect, forms a striking contrast to Colossians, which it so strongly resembles in other particulars. Probably, therefore, Tychicus had both letters put into his hands for delivery. The circular would go first to Ephesus, as the most important Church in Asia, and thence would be carried by him to one community after another, till he reached Laodicea, from which he would come further up the valley to Colossæ, bringing both letters with him. The Colossians are not told to get the letter from Laodicea, but to be sure they read it. Tychicus would see that it came to them; their business was to see that they marked, learned, and inwardly digested it. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Ver. 17. And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry.—Often men who were once faithful grow negligent in the ministry. 1. Sometimes from discouragements from their people, either because they profit not, or because they weary their teachers. 2. Sometimes this comes from the corruption of their own natures; they grow soon weary of God's work, or, having taken more work to do than they are sufficient for, they grow to neglect all; or they are drawn away with the love of the world. 3. Sometimes God Himself for the wickedness of their lives casts a barrenness upon their hearts, and blasteth their gifts. In this exhortation four things may be noted. I. Who is HE THAT IS EXHORTED? "Say to Archippus." This teaches us that—1. The sinner must be told of his sin (Lev. xix. 17). 2. Such as offend publicly must be told of it publicly. 3. Ministers as well as others may be rebuked, though some clergymen are so sore and so proud, that they may not be touched; and many times it is a just judgment of God that no man should rebuke them. No man's learning or greatness of place can so protect them, but that they may be told of their faults; it is too commonly known they can sin as well as others; why, then, should they not be rebuked as well as others? 4. The people may put their teachers in mind of their faults; as they ought to encourage them in well-doing, so may they admonish them for what is evil. 5. Ministers must be told of their faults by their people with great reverence, and heedfulness, and wisdom, according to that direction: "Rebuke not an elder, but exhort him as a father." 6. They must say it to him, not say it of him. Ministers ought not to be traduced behind their backs. 7. He doth not threaten him if he do not, which implies he hoped their exhortation would speed; certainly it is a great praise to profit by admonition. II. THE MATTER CHARGED UPON HIM. "Take heed to thy ministry." Note—1. Consideration, a weighing and meditation of the greatness of the function, of the dignity of it, and the duty also, with the accounts he must make to God and His high calling and the great price of souls, &c. 2. Divers of the worthy qualities of a minister, as care, attendance, watchfulness, aptness to teach, and divide the word aright; discretion, to give every one his portion; diligence, gentleness, in not marring the doctrine with passion; patience to endure the work and labour of his ministry, &c. 3. Caution, and so ministers must take heed both of (1) what is within them of their own divinations, of idleness, of the objections of their own flesh, and the temptations of the devil. (2) Without them they must take heed of the new errors that will daily rise; of the sins of the people, with all the methods of Satan in devising, committing, or defending of sin, of men's fancies; and for persons, they must take heed of hypocrites, and open adversaries, domestical vipers, and foreign foes, false brethren, and professed idolaters. III. THE REASON BY WHICH IT IS URGED. "Which thou hast received in the Lord." 1. Because it is God's free grace that he is chosen to be a minister (Rom. v. 1). 2. Because he is inwardly called and qualified by God. 3. Because he received his outward authority, though from men, yet by direction and warrant of God's Word. 4. Because he receives it for the Lord—that is to God's glory, and the furtherance of His kingdom, over the mystical body of Christ. The use is threefold. First, the people should therefore learn to seek their ministers of God. Secondly, ministers should hence learn not

to be proud, for they received their ministry of God; it was His gift, not their deserts; not idle, for they are to do God's work. Thirdly, ministers may hence gather their own safety notwithstanding the oppositions of the world, that God that called them will perfect them. IV. To FULFIL IT. 1. By constancy, holding out in it to the end, to go on, and not look back when they are at plough. 2. By faithful performance of it with a due respect of all the charge they have received of God, thus to fulfil it is to show the people all the counsel of God; it is to rebuke all sorts of sins and sinners; it is faithfully to do every kind of work that belongs to their ministry whether public or private. (*N. Byfield.*) *The ministry of Archippus*:—It is probable that Archippus was a young pastor recently appointed to the Church at Laodicea. Already signs of slackened zeal began to appear, which afterwards culminated in the state of lukewarmness for which this Church was denounced (Rev. iii. 19). The condition of preacher and people react upon each other; the Church takes its colour from, and communicates it to its pastor. Hence the apostle, well knowing the perils surrounding the inexperienced Archippus, sends to him this timely warning to take heed to his ministry. He is reminded of—**I. THE DIRECT AUTHORITY OF THE MINISTRY.** "In the Lord."

II. THE IMPLIED DANGERS OF THE MINISTRY. "Take heed." **III. THE IMPERATIVE PERSONAL DEMANDS OF THE MINISTRY.** "That thou fulfil it." (*G. Barlow.*) *Archippus and his ministry*:—A sharp message that, and especially sharp as being sent through others. If this Archippus were a member of the Church at Colossæ, it is remarkable that Paul should not have spoken to him directly, as he did to Euodia and Syntyche (Phil. iv. 2). But it is by no means certain that he was. He is named in the Epistle to Philemon in such immediate connection with the latter and his wife Apphia, that he has been supposed to be their son. At all events, he was intimately associated with the Church in the house of Philemon, who, as we know, was a Colossian. But, on the other hand, the difficulty referred to, and the fact that the whole section is concerned with Laodicea, points to the conclusion that Archippus, though perhaps a native and even resident at Colossæ had his ministry in connection with a neighbouring Church. But what does it matter where he worked? Not very much perhaps; and yet one cannot but read this grave exhortation to a man who was evidently getting languid and negligent, without remembering what we hear about Laodicea and its angel when next we meet it. It is not impossible that Archippus may have received the message more awful than Paul's. "Because thou art neither hot nor cold," &c. Be that as it may—**I. EACH OF US HAS A MINISTRY, or sphere of service.** We may fill it full, with earnest devotion and patient heroism, as some expanding gas fills out the silken round of its containing vessel, or we may breathe into it only enough to occupy a little portion, while all the rest hangs empty and flaccid. **II. A SACRED MOTIVE ENHANCES THE OBLIGATION.** We have received it "in the Lord." In union with Him it has been laid upon us. No earthly hand has imposed it, nor does it arise from mere earthly relationships. **III. THERE MUST BE DILIGENT WATCHFULNESS TO FULFIL OUR MINISTRY.** 1. We have to take heed to our service, reflect upon it, its extent, nature, imperativeness, the manner of discharging it, and the means of fitting us for it. We have to keep it before us. Unless we are absorbed in it, we shall not fulfil it. 2. We have to take heed to ourselves, ever feeling our weakness and the strong antagonisms in our own natures which hinder our discharge of the plainest and most imperative duties. 3. Let us remember, too, that if we begin, like Archippus, to be a little languid and perfunctory in our work, we may end where the Church at Laodicea ended. (*A. MacLaren, D.D.*)

The Christian ministry:—**I. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IS A SOLEMN AND RESPONSIBLE TRUST.** 1. It is Divine in its bestowal. "Received in the Lord." 2. It is personal in its responsibility. "Which thou hast received." 3. It involves the communication of good to others. "Ministry." 4. It has a special aspect of importance for the individual minister. "The Ministry." **II. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY DEMANDS UNSWERVING FIDELITY IN ACCOMPLISHING ITS LOFTY MISSION.** "That thou fulfil it." 1. Divine truth must be clearly apprehended and profoundly realized. 2. The whole truth must be declared. 3. The declaration of truth must be full and courageous. **III. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IS SURROUNDED BY PECULIAR PERILS.** "Take heed." A shrewd and ever wakeful vigilance is needed against—1. The stealthy encroachments of error. 2. The pernicious influences of the world. 3. The subtle temptations to unfaithfulness. (*G. Barlow.*) *Ministers must look to Christ their Master for direction*:—At the battle of Lake Erie, when, in the sweeping havoc which was sometimes made, a number of men were shot away from

around a gun, the survivors looked silently around to Perry, and then stepped into their places. When he looked at the poor fellows who lay wounded and weltering on the deck, he always found their faces turned towards him, and their eyes fixed on his countenance. In the midst of trials and labours the minister should keep his eyes on the great Leader, Christ.

Ver. 18. **The salutation of me, Paul.**—*Words of farewell.*—Last words have in them a nameless touch of pathos. They linger in the memory as a loved, familiar presence, soothe life's sorrows, and exert upon the soul a strange fascination. As the years rush by, how rich in meaning do the words of dying lips become, as when Cæsar said, sadly: "And thou, Brutus!" or when John Quincy Adams said: "This is the last of earth;" or Mirabeau's frantic cry for "Music," after a life of discord; or George Washington's calm statement: "It is well;" or Wesley's triumphant utterance: "The best of all is, God is with us!" And these closing words of the high-souled apostle, written from his prison, in the prospect of threatened death, carry with them a significance and tenderness which will be felt wherever this Epistle is read. I. A PERSONALLY INSCRIBED SALUTATION. The rest of the Epistle was dictated by the apostle to an amanuensis. He adds his own salutation not only as an expression of his love, but also as a mark of the authenticity of the document. It were worthy of the pencil of genius to portray the noble prisoner, whose right hand was linked to the left of his military jailor, tracing with tremulous fingers the final words to those for whose sake he was in bonds! How would the hand-writing of such a man be prized and venerated, and with what holy eagerness would his words be read and pondered! II. A TOUCHING REMINDER. "Remember my bonds." The apostle was in prison, not for any offence against the laws of God or man, but for the sake of the gospel. The Church of Christ in all ages has had abundant reason to remember with gratitude and praise the bonds of the great apostle, not only for the stimulating example of holy patience and dignified submission displayed under trying circumstances, but for his unspeakably precious literary work. The Epistle begins and ends with blessing; and between these two extremes lies a body of truth which has dispensed blessings to thousands, and is destined to bless thousands more. The benediction is short, but instinct with life, and laden with Divine beneficence. Grace is inclusive of all the good God can bestow, or man receive. Lessons: 1. Praise God for a well-authenticated Bible. 2. Praise God for the teachings of a suffering life. 3. Praise God for His boundless grace. (*G. Barlow.*) **Remember my bonds.**—*Chains.*—Being bound by a chain, Paul had to employ a secretary, and then at the close of the letter he would raise his own manacled hand, and add a few words of loving salutation. Under these circumstances his writing would be awkward and ill-formed. He looks at the MS. He sees his friend's work so neat, and his own writing disfiguring the MS. "What will the Colossians think of this? They may regard it as an indication of carelessness. I will tell them the reason—my bonds. They will not misunderstand now." This is a small circumstance, but there is this in it: If the great apostle needed consideration, and had something which spoiled the perfection of his work, and which, being remembered, accounted for the imperfection, may it not be true of others also? We have all a chain of some kind. I. HOW MANY CHAINS THERE ARE THAT NEED TO BE REMEMBERED. 1. Temperament often hinders men from being and doing what others expect of them. Some are impulsive, others slow; some are irritable, others placid; some must work spasmodically, others are dogged; some are sanguine, others despondent. You see all this in the family circle, where you make allowance. You see it in the Church; remember it there. 2. The bondage of education, i.e., the training of a lifetime, leads to misunderstandings. One man has had a rough, and another a gentle, bringing up. They meet as brethren—the one hearty, the other reserved. The one thinks the other rude; the other thinks his brother cold. Yet both are equally friendly and loyal. What they want is to remember one another's bonds. 3. Family ties are sometimes bonds. How many live in unsympathetic homes which restrain their better impulses, and act as a clog to their activities. How many have claims upon them of which others know nothing, and which make them appear parsimonious. 4. What a chain, too, is some forgiven sin. It hinders men from taking positions which others in ignorance would thrust upon them. Just such a sin barred David from building the Temple. There is a sense in which we should forget a man's past—in kindness; but there are times when we should remember it in love. It will thus account for much that is

unaccountable. II. HOW IMPORTANT IT IS THAT THESE BONDS SHOULD BE REMEMBERED. When a man is appointed to do some work in a public observatory, he is set to take some well-ascertained observations, that any deviation on his part from the average vision may be ascertained. And this deviation is called his "personal difference," and is allowed for. If forgotten it would make his work useless. Something like this should be done by Christians. Allowance should be made for each man's "personal difference." Our brother's chain should be remembered. 1. In justice to him. Otherwise we shall deem him less worthy than he is. 2. In justice to ourselves and to our faith. We cannot but believe more fully in the Saviour if we measure His influence, which we cannot do if we misjudge our brother. 3. In justice to the cause of Christ. So long as we forget our neighbour's chain we shall misunderstand him, and so be unable to co-operate with him in Christian work.

III. THERE IS A RIGHT AND A WRONG SIDE TO THIS MEMORY. 1. Remember your brother's chain and this will make you more charitable in your judgments. 2. Remember only your own and it will make you petulant and sensitive. 3. Forget your own chain, then, but never that of others. (*J. Ogle.*) *The limitations of life:—*

We have all our bonds and feel fettered somehow. Continually we discover that the realization of our aspirations, or the attainment of our purposes, is marred by some chain, even as the penmanship of Paul was made angular and irregular by his bonds. Thus we are each carrying about with us a chain, of which, so long as we are working within its limits, we may be largely unconscious, but which brings us to a stand the moment we have gone to its farthest length. The business man is bound to his counting-house by a cord which neither his God nor his conscience will allow him to break. The invalid is held down to her couch, and her devoted nurse is kept continually at the bedside of the sick one by a cord, which is not the less real because it is invisible, or the less powerful because its strands consist of love. The mother, wherever she goes, feels tugging at her heart the silken string that ties her to the cradle. The poor man is hampered by his poverty, and the servant has his service of God in some sort conditioned and qualified by the duties which he owes to his earthly master. We may find a few things suggested which may reconcile us to our bonds. I. THE APOSTLE'S BONDS WERE NO DISGRACE TO HIM.

1. His chain was the trophy of principle, and was more ornamental to him than the bracelets of our fashionable ladies are to them. He could not blame his own folly or wickedness for his present condition. It came to him when he was in the way of duty, and the consciousness of that was a support and solace to him all through. 2. But it is quite similar with our providential limitations. There is no disgrace in poverty or in sickness, provided only we have not brought it upon ourselves by our iniquity. The business man has no need to be ashamed of his attention to his counting-house. The mother cannot think that she is disgraced by the little ones that fill the nursery with their glee. And if there be anywhere on earth the human incarnation of that angel who ministered to our Lord in His anguish, it is to be found in the devoted nurse who tends the fevered sufferer. Let us not condemn ourselves if, because we are unavoidably called to the discharge of such duties, we cannot give ourselves to work in some department of Church activity. 3. But the tendency of much that is said nowadays is to make one dissatisfied with himself if he be not engaged in some ecclesiastical work. It is good to realize Wesley's idea, "all at work, and always at work." But I have known a gentle heart well-nigh broken because a minister as good as declared that those who did not engage in a certain kind of work, were unworthy to be called Christians. But that quiet one was every day doing a kind of service for Christ which required far more self-denial, and one which she could not have neglected without sin. But the service of suffering is as well pleasing to God as is that of working. Holiness comes out in suffering as well as in working. And so, provided we maintain holiness within the limits of our chain, it is no disgrace to us that we cannot go beyond them. II. PAUL'S BONDS DID NOT PREVENT HIM FROM BEING USEFUL. 1. No doubt Paul was sometimes saddened by the thought that his long imprisonment had kept him from missionary work, and yet in the long run he became convinced that his chain had really advanced the cause of Christ (Phil. i. 12-13). (1) The soldier to whom he was chained was changed every four hours, so by embracing the opportunity of conversing with each of his guards Paul became instrumental in the conversion of many soldiers, and introduced the leaven of Christianity into the Roman army. "My bonds in Christ are manifest throughout the praetorian guard, and in all other places." He came into contact with the lowest and the highest of the people, and was blessed in the salvation not only of the runaway slave Onesimus,

but also of some of the inmates of Cæsar's household. (2) It was at this time that he wrote his letters to the Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon; and who may estimate the results these Epistles have produced and are producing. Thus Paul was laid aside from personal activity for a time, in order that, through these letters, he might work for all time. 2. There is much in all this to stimulate and encourage us. How much the business man might accomplish for the Lord, if he were only to do with those who are brought into contact with him what Paul did with his soldier guardians! And is there on this earth any sanctuary so blessed as the sick chamber, where the pulpit is a couch of suffering, and the preacher is a patient, loving, gentle one who tries to bear all for Christ? It may seem a great hardship to the mother that she is kept by family cares from taking a share in any departments of active benevolence. But wait until that bright-eyed boy has grown up to be a godly man, or it may be a useful minister, and then she will have the satisfaction of knowing that the influence of her training is telling through him upon thousands of hearts. We never lose in the long run, even in the matter of usefulness, by giving ourselves to the nearest work, and to which we seem bound by a chain we cannot and dare not break. Another person can do as well in a mission school, but who, save she, can be a mother to her children. In the day of final apocalypse few things will surprise us more than the benefits which have sprung from the labours of some humble Christian who thought that she was doing nothing. Courage, then! You may be fettered, but He whom you serve is not bound. III. PAUL'S BONDS DID NOT MAR HIS HAPPINESS. When he was in the prison of Philippi he "sang praises unto God," and we cannot but feel that he was speaking his own experience in his injunctions to that Church (Phil. iv. 4-8). Nor is this all. In the Epistles of his first imprisonment there is an elevation of thought and a glad-some spirit which we hardly discover in any other. In any case his chain had not bound his heart. In the days of superstition men wore charms about them under the belief that they would thereby ensure themselves against disease. But no mere external appliance can keep sorrow from the soul. We must have Christ within to charm misery away. He "giveth songs in the night." It is an easy thing to sing in the day of health and prosperity; but only Christ can make us sing in want and bondage. IV. PAUL'S BONDS DID NOT LESSEN HIS REWARD. Opportunity is the measure of responsibility. He who sat over against the treasury pronounced the noblest eulogy over her who had cast into it the smallest coin—because in estimating her merit He "remembered her bonds." He knew that her heart was larger than her means, and that she was lamenting all the time that she had not more to give. So He will give the same kindly consideration to the different providential hindrances with which we have to contend; and haply they, who through their lives have been regretting that they have done so little, may hear the unexpected encomium, "He hath done what he could," "He hath done more than they all." We are thoughtlessly apt to connect reward with activity; Christ has connected it with character, and that is indicated and strengthened by suffering and patience as well as work. Consciousness of limitation may make a man painfully conscious of the imperfections of the little he is able to do. "It is not all I once planned to do. It was in my heart to make it much better! Master! Remember my bonds!" And the appeal will not be made in vain, for the reply will come: "Well done! enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Bonds worn for Christ*:—We should not forget that we, too, are in some sort "the prisoners of the Lord Jesus Christ," and ought to wear our bonds patiently in remembrance of Him. I saw lately in a sketch of the philosopher Morse, a simple incident that may help here to illustrate my meaning. In his early painting days, Morse went into the studio of Benjamin West, with whom he was a special favourite. That great artist was then engaged upon his famous picture of Christ Rejected, and after carefully examining his visitor's hands, he said to him, "Let me tie you with this cord, and place you there while I paint in the hands of the Saviour." So he stood still until the work was done, bound, as it were, in the Saviour's stead. I can fancy that a strange thrill would pass through Morse's breast as he thought of being, in any lowliest manner, identified thus directly with the Lord. But that was only in a picture. In the sternly real life of every day, however, we are each in some way bound by a chain in the Redeemer's stead, as representing Him on earth; let us see to it, therefore, that we wear it as meekly and as bravely as He wore that wherewith for our sakes He was fastened to the licitor's stake. Thus again we come to that cross whereon for us the Saviour died, and find in it a motive strong enough to induce us to bear anything, or do anything. (*Ibid.*) *Bonds no hindrance to happiness*:—

As I was writing there broke upon my ears the song of a canary bird hanging in the room overhead. Its trilling notes were not a whit less joyous than those which I have often heard rained down from the infinite expanse of heaven by the little skylark of my native land. In spite of its cage that tiny warbler sings, and when its young mistress goes to speak to it, there is a flutter of joy in its wings, as with ruffled neck and chattering gladness it leaps to bid her welcome. So let us accept our bonds, whether of poverty, or weakness, or duty, as the bird accepts its cage. You may cage the bird, but you cannot cage its song. No more can you confine or restrain the joy of the heart which, accepting its condition, sees God in it and greets Him from it. To fret at our circumstances will not improve them; but it will make us worse ourselves. On the other hand, the way to get the most happiness out of life is to carry Christ continually in our hearts. (*Ibid.*)

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