



Barnes Notes on the New Testament

Philippians

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By

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Introduction

1. The situation of Philippi

PHILIPPI is mentioned in the New Testament only in the following places and connections. In Acts 16:11, 12, it is said that Paul and his fellow-travelers “loosed from Troas, came with a straight course to Samothracia and Neapolis, and from thence to Philippi.” It was at this time that the “Lord opened the heart of Lydia to attend to the things which were spoken by Paul,” and that the jailer was converted under such interesting circumstances. In Acts 20:1–6, it appears that Paul again visited Philippi after he had been to Athens and Corinth, and when on his way to Judea. From Philippi he went to Troas. In 1 Thess. 2:2, Paul alludes to the shameful treatment which he had received at Philippi, and to the fact, that having been treated in that manner at Philippi, he had passed to Thessalonica, and preached the gospel there.

Philippi received its name from Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. Before his time, its history is unknown. It is said that it was founded on the site of an old Thasian settlement, and that its former name was Crenides from the circumstance of its being surrounded by numerous rivulets and springs descending from the neighboring mountains (from κρήνη—krene, a spring). The city was also called Dathos, or Datos—Δατος; Notes, Acts 16:12. The Thasians, who inhabited the island of Thasus, lying off the coast in the Ægean sea, had been attracted to the place by the valuable mines of gold and silver which were found in that region. It was a city of Macedonia, to the north-east of Amphipolis, and nearly east of Thessalonica. It was not far from the borders of Thrace. It was about fifteen or twenty miles from the Ægean sea, in the neighborhood of Mount Pangæus, and had a small river or stream running near it which emptied into the Ægean sea. Of the size of the city when the gospel was preached there by Paul, we have no information.

This city was originally within the limits of Thrace. Philip of Macedon having turned his attention to Thrace, the situation of Crenides and Mount Pangæus naturally attracted his notice. Accordingly, he invaded this country; expelled the feeble Cotys from his throne, and then proceeded to found a new city, on the site of the old Thasian colony, which he called after his own name, Philippi. Anthon, *Class. Dic.* When Macedonia became subject to the Romans, the advantages attending the situation of Philippi induced that people to send a colony there, and it became one of most flourishing cities of the empire; comp. Acts 16:12; Pliny, iv. 10. There is a medal of this city with the following inscription. COL. JUL. AUG. PHIL.; from which it appears that there was a colony sent there by Julius Cæsar. Michaelis. The city derived considerable importance from the fact that it was a principal thoroughfare from Asia to Europe, as the great leading road from one continent to the other was in the vicinity. This road is described at length by Appian, *De Bell. Civ. L. iv. c. 105, 106.*

This city is celebrated in history from the fact that it was here that a great victory—deciding the fate of the Roman empire—was obtained by Octavianus (afterwards Augustus Cæsar) and Antony over the forces of Brutus and Cassius, by which the republican party was

completely subdued. In this battle, Cassius, who was hard pressed and defeated by Antony, and who supposed that everything was lost, slew himself in despair. Brutus deplored his loss with tears of the sincerest sorrow, calling him “the last of the Romans.” After an interval of twenty days, Brutus hazarded a second battle. Where he himself fought in person he was successful; but the army everywhere else gave way, and the battle terminated in the entire defeat of the republican party. Brutus escaped with a few friends; passed a night in a cave, and seeing that all was irretrievably lost, ordered Strato, one of his attendants, to kill him. Strato for a long time refused; but seeing Brutus resolute, he turned away his face, and held his sword, and Brutus fell upon it. The city of Philippi is often mentioned by the Byzantine writers in history. Its ruins still retain the name of Filibah. Two American missionaries visited these ruins in May, 1834. They saw the remains of what might have been the forum or market-place, where Paul and Silas were beaten (Acts 16:19); and also, the fragments of a splendid palace. The road by which Paul went from Neapolis to Philippi, they think is the same that is now travelled, as it is cut through the most difficult passes in the mountains. It is still paved throughout.

2. The establishment of the church in Philippi

Philippi was the first place in Europe where the gospel was preached; and this fact invests the place with more interest and importance than it derives from the battle fought there. The gospel was first preached here, in very interesting circumstances, by Paul and Silas. Paul had been called by a remarkable vision (Acts 16:9) to go into Macedonia, and the first place where he preached was Philippi—having made his way, as his custom was, directly to the capital. The first person to whom he preached was Lydia, a seller of purple, from Thyatira, in Asia Minor. She was converted, and received Paul and Silas into her house, and entertained them hospitably. In consequence of Paul’s casting out an evil spirit from a “damsel possessed of a spirit of divination,” by which the hope of gain by those who kept her in their employ was destroyed, the populace was excited, and Paul and Silas were thrown into the inner prison, and their feet were made fast in the stocks. Here, at midnight, God interposed in a remarkable manner. An earthquake shook the prison; their bonds were loosened; the doors of the prison were thrown open, and their keeper, who before had treated them with peculiar severity, was converted, and all his family were baptized. It was in such solemn circumstances that the gospel was first introduced into Europe. After the tumult, and the conversion of the jailer, Paul was honorably released, and soon left the city; Acts 16:40. He subsequently visited Macedonia before his imprisonment, at Rome, and doubtless went to Philippi (Acts 20:1, 2). It is supposed, that after his first imprisonment at Rome, he was released and again visited the churches which he had founded. In this epistle (chap. 1:25, 26; 2:24) he expresses a confident hope that he would be released, and would be permitted to see them again; and there is a probability that his wishes in regard to this were accomplished; see Intro. to 2 Timothy.

3. The time when the epistle was written

It is evident that this epistle was written from Rome. This appears, (1.) because it was composed when Paul was in “bonds” (chap. 1:13, 14); (2.) because circumstances are suggested, such as to leave no doubt that the imprisonment was at Rome; thus in chap. 1:13, he says that his “bonds were manifested in all the palace;” a phrase which would naturally suggest the idea of the

Roman capitol; and, in chap. 4:22, he says, “all the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar’s household.” It is further evident that it was after he had been imprisoned for a considerable time, and, probably, not long before his release. This appears from the following circumstances: (1.) The apostle had been a prisoner so long in Rome, that the character which he had manifested in his trials had contributed considerably to the success of the gospel; chap. 1:12–14. His bonds, he says, were manifest “in all the palace;” and many of the brethren had become increasingly bold by his “bonds,” and had taken occasion to preach the gospel without fear. (2.) The account given of Epaphroditus imports that, when Paul wrote this epistle, he had been a considerable time at Rome. He was with Paul in Rome, and had been sick there. The Philippians had received an account of his sickness, and he had again been informed how much they had been affected with the intelligence of his illness; chap. 2:25, 26. The passing and repassing of this intelligence, Dr. Paley remarks, must have occupied considerable time, and must have all taken place during Paul’s residence at Rome. (3.) After a residence at Rome, thus proved to have been of considerable duration, Paul, at the time of writing this epistle, regards the decision of his destiny as at hand. He anticipates that the matter would soon be determined; chap. 2:23. “Him therefore (Timothy) I hope to send presently, so soon as I see how it will go with me.” He had some expectation that he might be released, and be permitted to visit them again; chap. 2:24. “I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly;” comp. chap. 1:25, 27. Yet he was not absolutely certain how it would go with him, and though, in one place, he speaks with great confidence that he would be released (chap. 1:25), yet in another he suggests the possibility that he might be put to death; chap. 2:17. “Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.” These circumstances concur to fix the time of writing the epistle to the period at which the imprisonment in Rome was about to terminate. From Acts 28:30, we learn that Paul was in Rome “two whole years;” and it was during the latter part of this period that the epistle was written. It is commonly agreed, therefore, that it was written about A. D. 61 or 62. Hug (Intro.) places it at the end of the year 61, or the beginning of the year 62; Lardner, at the close of the year 62. It is evident that it was written before the great conflagration at Rome in the time of Nero (A. D. 64); for it is hardly credible that Paul would have omitted a reference to such an event, if it had occurred. It is certain, from the persecution of the Christians which followed that event, that he would not have been likely to have represented his condition to be so favorable as he has done in this epistle. He could hardly have looked then for a release.

4. The design and character of the epistle

The object of the epistle is apparent. It was sent by Epaphroditus (chap. 2:25), who appears to have been a resident at Philippi, and a member of the church there, to express the thanks of the apostle for the favors which they had conferred on him, and to comfort them with the hope that he might be soon set at liberty. Epaphroditus had been sent by the Philippians to convey their benefactions to him in the time of his imprisonment; chap. 4:18. While at Rome, he had been taken ill; chap. 2:26, 27. On his recovery, Paul deemed it proper that he should return at once to Philippi. It was natural that he should give them some information about his condition and prospects. A considerable part of the epistle, therefore, is occupied in giving an account of

the effects of his imprisonment in promoting the spread of the gospel, and of his own feelings in the circumstances in which he then was. He was not yet certain what the result of his imprisonment would be (chap. 1:20); but he was prepared either to live or to die, chap. 1:23. He wished to live only that he might be useful to others; and, supposing that he might be made useful, he had some expectation that he might be released from his bonds.

There is, perhaps, no one of the epistles of the apostle Paul which is so tender, and which abounds so much with expressions of kindness, as this. In relation to other churches, he was often under the necessity of using the language of reproof. The prevalence of some error, as in the churches of Galatia; the existence of divisions and strife's, or some aggravated case requiring discipline, or some gross irregularity, as in the church at Corinth; frequently demanded the language of severity. But, in the church at Philippi, there was scarcely anything which required rebuke; there was very much that demanded commendation and gratitude. Their conduct towards him, and their general deportment, had been exemplary, generous, noble. They had evinced for him the tenderest regard in his troubles; providing for his wants, sending a special messenger to supply him when no other opportunity occurred (chap. 4:10), and sympathizing with him in his trials; and they had, in the order, peace, and harmony of the church, eminently adorned the doctrine of the Savior. The language of the apostle, therefore, throughout the epistle, is of the most affectionate character—such as a benevolent heart would always choose to employ, and such as must have been exceedingly grateful to them. Paul never hesitated to use the language of commendation where it was deserved, as he never shrank from reproof where it was merited; and he appears to have regarded the one as a matter of duty as much as the other. We are to remember, too, the circumstances of Paul, and to ask what kind of an epistle an affectionate and grateful spiritual father would be likely to write to a much-beloved flock, when he felt that he was about to die; and we shall find that this is just such an epistle as we should suppose such a man would write. It breathes the spirit of a ripe Christian, whose piety was mellowing for the harvest; of one who felt that he was not far from heaven, and might soon “be with Christ.” Though there was some expectation of a release, yet his situation was such as led him to look death in the face. He was lying under heavy accusations; he had no hope of justice from his own countrymen; the character of the sovereign, Nero, was not such as to inspire him with great confidence of having justice done; and it is possible that the fires of persecution had already begun to burn. At the mercy of such a man as Nero; a prisoner; among strangers, and with death staring him in the face, it is natural to suppose that there would be a peculiar solemnity, tenderness, pathos, and ardor of affection, breathing through the entire epistle. Such is the fact; and in none of the writings of Paul are these qualities more apparent than in this letter to the Philippians. He expresses his grateful remembrance of all their kindness; he evinces a tender regard for their welfare; and he pours forth the full-flowing language of gratitude, and utters a father's feelings toward them by tender and kind admonitions. It is important to remember these circumstances in the interpretation of this epistle. It breathes the language of a father, rather than the authority of an apostle; the entreaties of a tender friend, rather than the commands of one in authority. It expresses the affections of a man who felt that he might be near death, and who tenderly loved them; and it will be, to all ages, a model of affectionate counsel and advice.

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians

Chapter 1: Analysis of the Chapter

This chapter embraces the following points:—

I. The salutation to the church, ver. 1, 2.

II. In ver. 3–8, the apostle expresses his gratitude for the evidence which they had given of love to God, and for their fidelity in the gospel from the time when it was first proclaimed among them. He says that he was confident that this would continue, and that God, who had so mercifully imparted grace to them to be faithful, would do it to the end.

III. He expresses the earnest hope that they might abound more and more in knowledge, and be without offence to the day of Christ; ver. 9–11.

IV. In ver. 12–21, he states to them what had been the effect of his imprisonment in Rome—presuming that it would be grateful intelligence to them that even his imprisonment had been overruled for the spread of the gospel. His trials, he says, had been the means of the extension of the knowledge of Christ even in the palace, and many Christians had been emboldened by his sufferings to increased diligence in making known the truth. Some indeed, he says, preached Christ from unworthy motives, and with a view to increase his affliction, but in the great fact that Christ was preached, he says, he rejoiced. Forgetting himself and any injury which they might design to do to him, he could sincerely rejoice that the gospel was proclaimed—no matter by whom or with what motives. The whole affair he trusted would be made conducive to his salvation. Christ was the great end and aim of his life; and if he were made known everything else was of minor importance.

V. The mention of the fact (ver. 21) that his great aim in living was “Christ,” leads him to advert to the probability that he might soon be with him; ver. 22–26. So great was his wish to be with him, that he would hardly know which to choose—whether to die at once, or to live and to make him known to others. Believing, however, that his life might be still useful to them, he had an expectation of considerable confidence that his life would be spared, and that he would be released.

VI. The chapter closes, ver. 27–30, with an earnest exhortation that they would live as became the gospel of Christ. Whatever might befall him—whether he should be permitted to see them, or should hear of them, he entreated that he might know that they were living as became the gospel. They were not to be afraid of their adversaries; and if called to suffer, they were to remember that “it was given” them not only to believe on the Redeemer, but also to suffer in his cause.

1. Paul and Timotheus. Paul frequently unites some person with him in his epistles; see Notes on 1 Cor. 1:1. It is clear from this, that Timothy was with Paul at Rome. Why he was there is unknown. It is evident that he was not there as a prisoner with Paul, and the probability is, that he was one of the friends who had gone to Rome with a view to show his sympathy with him in his sufferings; comp. Notes on 2 Tim. 4:9. There was special propriety in the fact that Timothy was joined with the apostle in writing the epistle, for he was with him when the church was founded, and doubtless felt a deep interest in its welfare; Acts 16. Timothy had remained in Macedonia after Paul went to Athens, and it is not improbable that he had visited them afterwards.

The servants of Jesus Christ; Notes, Rom. 1:1.

To all the saints in Christ Jesus. The common appellation given to the church, denoting that it was holy; Notes, Rom. 1:7.

With the bishops. *σὺν ἐπισκόποις*; see Notes, Acts 20:28. The word here used occurs in the New Testament only in the following places: Acts 20:28, translated overseers; and Phil 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:25, in each of which places it is rendered bishop. The word properly means an inspector, overseer, or guardian, and was given to the ministers of the gospel because they exercised this care over the churches, or were appointed to oversee their interests. It is a term, therefore, which might be given to any of the officers of the churches, and was originally equivalent to the term presbyter. It is evidently used in this sense here. It cannot be used to denote a diocesan bishop; or a bishop having the care of the churches in a large district of country, and of a superior rank to other ministers of the gospel, for the word is here used in the plural number, and it is in the highest degree improbable that there were dioceses in Philippi. It is clear, moreover, that they were the only officers of the church there except “deacons;” and the persons referred to, therefore, must have been those who were invested simply with the pastoral office. Thus Jerome, one of the early Fathers, says, respecting the word bishop: “A presbyter is the same as a bishop. And until there arose divisions in religion, churches were governed by a common counsel of presbyters. But afterwards, it was everywhere decreed, that one person, elected from the presbyters, should be placed over the others.” “Philippi,” says he, “is a single city of Macedonia; and certainly, there could not have been several like these who are now called bishops, at one time in the same city. But as, at that time, they called the same bishops whom they called presbyters also, the apostle spoke indifferently of bishops as of presbyters.” Annotations on the Epistle to Titus, as quoted by Dr. Woods on Episcopacy, p. 63.

And deacons. On the appointment of deacons, and their duty, see Notes on Acts 6:1. The word deacons does not occur before this place in the common version of the New Testament, though the Greek word here rendered deacon frequently occurs. It is rendered minister and ministers in Matt. 20:26; Mark 10:43; Rom. 13:4; 15:8. 1 Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor. 3:6; 6:4; 11:15, 23; Gal. 2:17; Eph. 3:7; 6:21; Col. 1:7, 23, 25; 4:7; 1 Tim. 4:6; servant and servants, Matt. 22:13; 23:11; Mark 9:25; John 2:5, 9; 12:26; Rom. 16:1; and deacon or deacons, Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8, 12. The word properly means servants, and is then applied to the ministers of the gospel as being the servants of Christ, and of the churches. Hence it came especially to denote those who had charge of the alms of the church, and who were the overseers of the sick and the poor. In this

sense the word is probably used in the passage before us, as the officers here referred to were distinct in some way from the bishops. The apostle here mentions but two orders of ministers in the church at Philippi, and this account is of great importance in its bearing on the question about the way in which Christian churches were at first organized, and about the officers which existed in them. In regard to this we may remark, (1.) that but two orders of ministers are mentioned. This is undeniable, whatever rank they may have held. (2.) There is no intimation whatever that a minister like a prelatial bishop had ever been appointed there, and that the incumbent of the office was absent, or that the office was now vacant. If the bishop was absent, as Bloomfield and others suppose, it is remarkable that no allusion is made to him, and that Paul should have left the impression that there were in fact but two “orders” there. If there were a prelate there, why did not Paul refer to him with affectionate salutation? Why does he refer to the two other “orders of clergy” without the slightest allusion to the man who was set over them as “superior in ministerial rank and power?” Was Paul jealous of this prelate? But if they had a prelate, and the see was then vacant, why is there no reference to this fact? Why no condolence at their loss? Why no prayer that God would send them a man to enter into the vacant diocese? It is a mere assumption to suppose, as the friends of prelacy often do, that they had a prelatial bishop, but that he was then absent. But even granting this, it is an inquiry which has never been answered, why Paul did not make some reference to this fact, and ask their prayers for the absent prelate. (3.) The church was organized by the apostle Paul himself, and there can be no doubt that it was organized on the “truly primitive and apostolic plan.” (4.) The church at Philippi was in the center of a large territory; was the capital of Macedonia, and was not likely to be placed in subjection to the diocesan of another region. (5.) It was surrounded by other churches, as we have express mention of the church at Thessalonica, and the preaching of the gospel at Berea, Acts 17. (6.) There is more than one bishop mentioned as connected with the church at Philippi. But these could not have been bishops of the Episcopal or prelatial order. If Episcopalians choose to say that they were prelates, then it follows (a) that there was a plurality of such persons in the same diocese, the same city, and the same church—which is contrary to the fundamental idea of Episcopacy. It follows also (b) that there was entirely wanting in the church at Philippi what the Episcopalians call the “second order” of clergy; that a church was organized by the apostles defective in one of the essential grades, with a body of prelates without presbyters—that is, an order of men of “superior” rank designated to exercise jurisdiction over “priests” who had no existence. If there were such presbyters or “priests” there, why did not Paul name them? If their office was one that was contemplated in the church, and was then vacant, how did this happen? And if this were so, why is there no allusion to so remarkable a fact? (7.) It follows, therefore, that in this church there were but two orders of officers; and further that it is right and proper to apply the term bishop to the ordinary ministers of the churches. As no mention is made of a prelate; as there are but two orders of men mentioned to whom the care of the church was entrusted, it follows that there was one church at least organized by the apostles without any prelate. (8.) The same thing may be observed in regard to the distinction between “teaching” elders and “ruling” elders. No such distinction is referred to here; and however useful such an office as that of ruling elder may be, and certain as it is, that such an office existed in some of the primitive churches, yet here is one church where no such officer is found, and this fact proves that such an officer is not essential to the Christian church.

2. Grace be unto you, &c.; see Note, Rom. 1:7.

3. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Marg., mention. The Greek word means, recollection, remembrance. But this recollection may have been suggested either by his own reflections on what he had seen, or by what he had heard of them by others, or by the favors which they conferred on him reminding him of them. The meaning is, that as often as he thought on them, from whatever cause, he had occasion of thankfulness. He says that he thanked his God, intimating that the conduct of the Philippians was a proof of the favor of God to him; that is, he regarded their piety as one of the tokens of the favor of God to his own soul—for in producing that piety he had been mainly instrumental.

4. Always. There is much emphasis in the expressions which are here used. Paul labors to show them that he never forgot them; that he always remembered them in his prayers.

In every prayer of mine. This was a proof of particular and special affection, that while there were so many objects demanding his prayers, and so many other churches which he had founded, he never forgot them. The person or object that we remember in every prayer must be very dear to the heart.

For you all. Not for the church in general, but for the individual member. “He industriously repeats the word all, that he might show that he loved them all equally well, and that he might the more successfully excite them to the manifestation of the same love and benevolence.”—Wetstein.

Making request with joy. With joy at your consistent walk and benevolent lives—mingling thanksgiving with my prayers in view of your holy walk.

5. For your fellowship in the gospel. “For your liberality towards me, a preacher of the gospel.”—Wetstein. There has been, however, no little difference of opinion about the meaning of this phrase. Many—as Doddridge, Koppe, and others—suppose it refers to the fact that they participated in the blessings of the gospel from the first day that he preached it until the time when he wrote this epistle. Others suppose that it refers to their constancy in the Christian faith. Others—as Pierce, Michaelis, Wetstein, Bloomfield, and Storr—suppose it refers to their liberality in contributing to the support of the gospel; to their participating with others, or sharing what they had in common with others, for the maintenance of the gospel. That this is the true sense seems apparent, (1.) because it accords with the scope of the epistle, and what the apostle elsewhere says of their benefactions. He speaks particularly of their liberality, and indeed this was one of the principal occasions of his writing the epistle; chap. 4:10–12, 15–18. (2.) It accords with a frequent meaning of the word rendered fellowship—κοινωνία. It denotes that which is in common; that of which we participate with others, communion, fellowship; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:16; Philem. 6; then it means communication, distribution, contribution; Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 9:13. That it cannot mean “accession to the gospel” as has been supposed (see Rob. Lex.), is apparent from what he adds—“from the first day until now.” The fellowship must have been something constant, and continually manifest—and the general meaning is, that in relation to the gospel—to its support, and privileges, and spirit, they all shared in common. They felt a common

interest in everything that pertained to it, and they showed this in every suitable way, and especially in ministering to the wants of those who were appointed to preach it.

From the first day. The time when it was first preached to them. They had been constant. This is honorable testimony. It is much to say of a church or of an individual Christian, that they have been constant and uniform in the requirements of the gospel. Alas, of how few can this be said! On these verses (3–5) we may remark, (1.) That one of the highest joys which a minister of the gospel can have, is that furnished by the holy walk of the people to whom he has ministered; comp. 3 John 4. It is joy like that of a farmer when he sees his fields whiten for a rich harvest; like that of a teacher in the good conduct and rapid progress of his scholars; like that of a parent in the virtue, success, and piety of his sons. Yet it is superior to all that. The interests are higher and more important; the results are more far-reaching and pure; and the joy is more disinterested. Probably there is nowhere else on earth any happiness so pure, elevated, consoling, and rich, as that of a pastor in the piety, peace, benevolence, and growing zeal of his people. (2.) It is right to commend Christians when they do well. Paul never hesitated to do this, and never supposed that it would do injury. Flattery would injure—but Paul never flattered. Commendation or praise, in order to do good, and not to injure, should be (a) the simple statement of the truth; (b) it should be without exaggeration; (c) it should be connected with an equal readiness to rebuke when wrong; to admonish when in error, and to counsel when one goes astray. Constant fault-finding, scolding, or fretfulness, does no good in a family, a school, or a church. The tendency is to dishearten, irritate, and discourage. To commend a child when he does well, may be as important, and as much a duty, as to rebuke him when he does ill. God is as careful to commend his people when they do well, as he is to rebuke them when they do wrong—and that parent, teacher, or pastor, has much mistaken the path of wisdom, who supposes it to be his duty always to find fault. In this world there is nothing that goes so far in promoting happiness as a willingness to be pleased rather than displeased; to be satisfied rather than dissatisfied with the conduct of others. (3.) Our absent friends should be remembered in our prayers. On our knees before God is the best place to remember them. We know not their condition. If they are sick, we cannot minister to their wants; if in danger, we cannot run to their relief; if tempted, we cannot counsel them. But God, who is with them, can do all this; and it is an inestimable privilege thus to be permitted to commend them to his holy care and keeping. Besides, it is a duty to do it. It is one way—and the best way—to repay their kindness. A child may always be repaying the kindness of absent parents by supplicating the divine blessing on them each morning; and a brother may strengthen and continue his love for a sister, and in part repay her tender love, by seeking, when far away, the divine favor to be bestowed on her.

6. Being confident. This is strong language. It means to be fully and firmly persuaded or convinced; Part. Mid., voice from *πειθω*—to persuade; comp. Luke 16:31. “Neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead;” that is, they would not be convinced; Acts 17:4; Heb. 11:13; Acts 28:24. It means here that Paul was entirely convinced of the truth of what he said. It is the language of a man who had no doubt on the subject.

That he which hath begun a good work in you. The “good work” here referred to, can be no other than religion, or true piety. This is called the work of God; the work of the Lord; or the

work of Christ; John 6:29; comp. 1 Cor. 15:58; 16:10; Phil. 2:30. Paul affirms here that that work was begun by God. It was not by their own agency or will; comp. Notes on John 1:13. It was on the fact that it was begun by God, that he based his firm conviction that it would be permanent. Had it been the agency of man, he would have had no such conviction, for nothing that man does to-day can lay the foundation of a certain conviction that he will do the same thing to-morrow. If the perseverance of the Christian depended wholly on himself, therefore, there could be no sure evidence that he would ever reach heaven.

Will perform it. Marg., "Or, finish" The Greek word—ἐπιτελέσει—means that he would carry it forward to completion; he would perfect it. It is an intensive form of the word, meaning that it would be carried through to the end. It occurs in the following places: Luke 13:32, "I do cures;" Rom. 15:28, "when I have performed this;" 2 Cor. 7:1, "perfecting holiness;" 8:6, "so he would also finish in you;" 11, "perform the doing of it;" Gal. 3:3, "are ye now made perfect by the flesh;" Heb. 8:5, "when he was about to make the tabernacle;" Heb. 9:6, "accomplishing this service;" and 1 Pet. 5:9, "are accomplished in your brethren." The word occurs nowhere else; and here means that God would carry on the work which he had begun to completion. He would not leave it unfinished. It would not be commenced and then abandoned. This would or could be "performed" or "finished" only (1.) by keeping them from falling from grace, and (2.) by their ultimate entire perfection.

Until the day of Jesus Christ. The day when Christ shall so manifest himself as to be the great attractive object, or the day when he shall appear to glorify himself, so that it may be said emphatically to be his day. That day is often called "his day," or "the day of the Lord," because it will be the day of his triumph and glory. It refers here to the day when the Lord Jesus will appear to receive his people to himself—the day of judgment. We may remark on this verse, that Paul believed in the perseverance of saints. It would be impossible to express a stronger conviction of the truth of that doctrine than he has done here. Language could not be clearer, and nothing can be more unequivocal than the declaration of his opinion that where God has begun a good work in the soul, it will not be finally lost. The ground of this belief he has not stated in full, but has merely hinted at it. It is based on the fact that God had begun the good work. That ground of belief is something like the following. (1.) It is in God alone. It is not in man in any sense. No reliance is to be placed on man in keeping himself. He is too weak; too changeable; too ready to be led astray; too much disposed to yield to temptation. (2.) The reliance, therefore, is on God; and the evidence that the renewed man will be kept is this: (a) God began the work of grace in the soul. (b) He had a design in it. It was deliberate, and intentional. It was not by chance or hap-hazard. It was because he had some object that was worthy of his interposition. (c) There is no reason why he should begin such a work and then abandon it. It cannot be because he has no power to complete it, or because there are more enemies to be overcome than he had supposed; or because there are difficulties which he did not foresee; or because it is not desirable that the work should be completed. Why then should he abandon it? (d) God abandons nothing that he undertakes. There are no unfinished worlds or systems; no half-made and forsaken works of his hands. There is no evidence in his works of change of plan, or of having forsaken what he began from disgust, or disappointment, or want of power to complete them. Why should

there be in the salvation of the soul? (e) He has promised to keep the renewed soul to eternal life; see John 10:27, 28, 29; Heb. 6:17–20; comp. Rom. 8:29, 30.

7. Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all. “There is a reason why I should cherish this hope of you, and this confident expectation that you will be saved. That reason is found in the evidence which you have given that you are sincere Christians. Having evidence of that, it is proper that I should believe that you will finally reach heaven.”

Because I have you in my heart. Marg., Ye have me in your. The Greek will bear either, though the former translation is the most obvious. The meaning is, that he was warmly attached to them, and had experienced many proofs of their kindness; and that there was, therefore, a propriety in his wishing for their salvation. Their conduct towards him, moreover, in his trials, had convinced him that they were actuated by Christian principle; and it was proper that he should believe that they would be kept to eternal life.

Both in my bonds. While I have been a prisoner—referring to the care which they had taken to minister to his wants; chap. 4:10, 14, 18.

And in the defense. Gr., apology. Probably he refers to the time when he made his defense before Nero, and vindicated himself from the charges which had been brought against him; see Notes, 2 Tim. 4:16. Perhaps he means here, that on that occasion he was abandoned by those who should have stood by him, but that the Philippians showed him all the attention which they could. It is not impossible that they may have sent some of their number to sympathize with him in his trials, and to assure him of the unabated confidence of the church.

And confirmation of the gospel. In my efforts to defend the gospel, and to make it known; see ver. 17. The allusion is probably to the fact that, in all his efforts to defend the gospel, he had been sure of their sympathy and co-operation. Perhaps he refers to some assistance which he had derived from them in this cause, which is now to us unknown.

Ye all are partakers of my grace. Marg., “Or, with me of grace.” The meaning is, that as they had participated with him in the defense of the gospel; as in all his troubles and persecutions they had made common cause with him, so it followed that they would partake of the same tokens of the divine favor. He expected that the divine blessing would follow his efforts in the cause of the gospel, and he says that they would share in his blessing. They had shown all the sympathy which they could in his trials; they had nobly stood by him when others forsook him; and he anticipated, as a matter of course, that they would all share in the benefits which would flow to him in his efforts in the cause of the Redeemer.

8. For God is my record. My witness; I can solemnly appeal to him.

How greatly I long after you all. To see you; and how much I desire your welfare.

In the bowels of Jesus Christ. The word “bowels,” in the Scriptures denotes the upper viscera—the region of the heart and lungs; see Notes on Isa. 16:11. That region was regarded as the seat of affection, sympathy, and compassion, as the heart is with us. The allusion here is to the sympathy, tenderness, and love of the Redeemer; and probably the meaning is, that Paul

regarded them with something of the affection which the Lord Jesus had for them. This was the tenderest and strongest expression which he could find to denote the ardor of his attachment.

9. And this I pray. We pray for those whom we love, and whose welfare we seek. We desire their happiness; and there is no way more appropriate of expressing that desire than of going to God, and seeking it at his hand. Paul proceeds to enumerate the blessings which he sought for them; and it is worthy of observation that he did not ask riches, or worldly prosperity, but that his supplications were confined to spiritual blessings, and he sought these as the most desirable of all favors.

That your love may abound, &c. Love to God; love to one another; love to absent Christians; love to the world. This is an appropriate subject of prayer. We cannot wish and pray for a better thing for our Christian friends, than that they may abound in love. Nothing will promote their welfare like this; and we had better pray for this, than that they may obtain abundant riches, and share the honors and pleasures of the world.

In knowledge. The idea is, that he wished them to have intelligent affection. It should not be mere blind affection, but that intelligent love which is based on an enlarged view of divine things—on a just apprehension of the claims of God.

And in all judgment. Marg., sense; comp. Notes on Heb. 5:14. The word here means, the power of discerning; and the meaning is, that he wished that their love should be exercised with proper discrimination. It should be in proportion to the relative value of objects; and the meaning of the whole is, that he wished their religion to be intelligent and discriminating; to be based on knowledge, and a proper sense of the relative value of objects, as well as to be the tender affection of the heart.

10. That ye may approve things. Marg., “Or, try.” The word used here denotes the kind of trial to which metals are exposed in order to test their nature; and the sense here is, that the apostle wished them so to try the things that were of real value, as to discern that which was true and genuine.

That are excellent. Marg., “or, differ.” The margin here more correctly expresses the sense of the Greek word. The idea is, that he wished them to be able to distinguish between things that differed from each other; to have an intelligent apprehension of what was right and wrong—of what was good and evil. He would not have them love and approve all things indiscriminately. They should be esteemed according to their real value. It is remarkable here how anxious the apostle was, not only that they should be Christians, but that they should be intelligent Christians, and should understand the real worth and value of objects.

That ye may be sincere; see Notes on Eph. 6:24. The word here used—*εἰλικρινής*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in 2 Pet. 3:1, where it is rendered pure. The noun *εἰλικρίνεια*, however, occurs in 1 Cor. 5:8; 2 Cor. 1:12; 2:17; in all which places it is rendered sincerity. The word properly means, that which is judged of in sun-shine (*ἐῶλη κρίνω*); and then that which is clear and manifest. It is that over which there are no clouds; which is not doubtful and dark; which is pure and bright. The word sincere means literally without wax (*sine*

cera); that is, honey which is pure and transparent. Applied to Christian character, it means that which is not deceitful, ambiguous, hypocritical; that which is not mingled with error, worldliness, and sin; that which does not proceed from selfish and interested motives, and where there is nothing disguised. There is no more desirable appellation that can be given to a man than to say that he is sincere—a sincere friend, benefactor, Christian; and there is nothing more lovely in the character of a Christian than sincerity. It implies, (1.) that he is truly converted—that he has not assumed Christianity as a mask; (2.) that his motives are disinterested and pure; (3.) that his conduct is free from double-dealing, trick, and cunning; (4.) that his words express the real sentiments of his heart; (5.) that he is true to his word, and faithful to his promises; and, (6.) that he is always what he professes to be. A sincere Christian would bear to have the light let in upon him always; to have the emotions of his heart seen; to be scanned everywhere, and at all times, by men, by angels, and by God.

And without offence. Inoffensive to others. Not injuring them in property, feelings, or reputation. This is a negative virtue, and is often despised by the world. But it is much to say of a man that he injures no one; that neither by example, nor opinions, nor conversation, he leads them astray; that he never does injustice to their motives, and never impedes their influence; that he never wounds their feelings, or gives occasion for hard thoughts; and that he so lives that all may see that his is a blameless life.

Till the day of Christ; see Notes on ver. 6.

11. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness. That which righteousness in the heart produces. The fruits, or results, will be seen in the life; and those fruits are—honesty, truth, kindness, charity, meekness, goodness. The wish of the apostle is, that they might show abundantly by their lives that they were truly righteous. He does not refer to liberality merely, but to everything which true piety in the heart is fitted to produce in the life.

Which are by Jesus Christ. (1.) Which his religion is fitted to produce. (2.) Which result from endeavoring to follow his example. (3.) Which are produced by his agency on the heart.

Unto the glory and praise of God. His honor is never more promoted than by the eminent holiness of his friends; see Notes, John 15:8. If we wish, therefore, to honor God, it should not be merely with the lips, or by acts of prayer and praise; it should be by a life devoted to him. It is easy to render the service of the lips; it is far more difficult to render that service which consists in a life of patient and consistent piety; and in proportion to the difficulty of it, is its value in his sight.

12. But I would ye should understand. Paul here turns to himself, and goes into a somewhat extended account of his own feelings in his trials, and of the effects of his imprisonment at Rome. He wished them to understand what his circumstances were, and what had been the effect of his imprisonment, probably, for such reasons as these: (1.) They were tenderly attached to him, and would feel an interest in all that pertained to him. (2.) It was possible that they might hear unfounded rumors about the manner of his treatment, and he wished that they should understand the exact truth. (3.) He had real intelligence to communicate

to them that would be joyful to them, about the effect of his imprisonment, and his treatment there; and he wished them to rejoice with him.

That the things which happened unto me. The accusations against him, and his imprisonment at Rome. He had been falsely accused, and had been constrained to appeal to Cæsar, and had been taken to Rome as a prisoner; Acts 25–28. This arrest and imprisonment would seem to have been against his success as a preacher; but he now says that the contrary had been the fact.

Have fallen out. Have resulted in. Literally, “have come.” Tindal. “My business is happened.”

The furtherance. The increase, the promotion of the gospel. Instead of being a hindrance, they have been rather an advantage.

13. So that my bonds in Christ. Marg., for. The meaning is, his bonds in the cause of Christ. He was imprisoned because he preached Christ (Notes, Eph. 6:20), and was really suffering because of his attachment to the Redeemer. It was not for crime, but for being a Christian—for had he not been a Christian, he would have escaped all this. The manner of Paul’s imprisonment was, that he was suffered to occupy a house by himself, though chained to a soldier who was his guard; Acts 28:16. He was not in a dungeon indeed, but he was not at liberty, and this was a severe mode of confinement. Who would wish to be chained night and day to a living witness of all that he did; to a spy on all his movements? Who would wish to have such a man always with him, to hear all he said, and to see all that he did? Who could well bear the feeling that he could never be alone—and never be at liberty to do anything without the permission of one too who probably had little disposition to be indulgent?

Are manifest. That is, it has become known that I am imprisoned only for the sake of Christ.—Grotius. The true reason why I am thus accused and imprisoned begins to be understood, and this has awakened sympathy for me as an injured man. They see that it is not for crime, but that it is on account of my religious opinions, and the conviction of my innocence has spread abroad, and has produced a favorable impression in regard to Christianity itself. It must have been a matter of much importance for Paul to have this knowledge of the real cause why he was imprisoned go abroad. Such a knowledge would do much to prepare others to listen to what he had to say—for there is no man to whom we listen more readily than to one who is suffering wrongfully.

In all the palace. Marg., “Or Cæsar’s court.” Gr., ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ—in all the prætorium. This word properly denotes the general’s tent in a camp; then the house or palace of a governor of a province, then any large hall, house, or palace. It occurs in the New Testament only in the following places: Matt. 27:27, where it is rendered common hall; Mark 15:16, rendered Prætorium; John 18:28, 33; 19:9; Acts 23:35, rendered judgment hall; and in Phil. 1:13. It is employed to denote (1.) the palace of Herod at Jerusalem, built with great magnificence at the northern part of the upper city, westward of the temple, and overlooking the temple; (2.) the palace of Herod at Cesarea, which was probably occupied by the Roman procurator; and (3.) in the place before us to denote either the palace of the emperor at Rome, or the pretorian camp, the

headquarters of the pretorian guards or cohorts. These cohorts were a body of select troops instituted by Augustus to guard his person, and have charge of the city; see Rob. Lex. Bloomfield, Rosenmüller, and some others, understand this of the pretorian camp, and suppose that Paul meant to say that the cause of his imprisonment had become known to all the band of the pretorians. Grotius says that the usual word to denote the residence of the emperor at Rome was palatium—palace, but that those who resided in the provinces were accustomed to the word prætorium, and would use it when speaking of the palace of the emperor. Chrysostom says that the palace of the emperor was called prætorium, by a Latin word derived from the Greek; see Erasmus in loc. Calvin supposes that the palace of Nero is intended. The question about the meaning of the word is important, as it bears on the inquiry to what extent the gospel was made known at Rome in the time of Paul, and perhaps as to the question why he was released from his imprisonment. If the knowledge of his innocence had reached the palace, it was a ground of hope that he might be acquitted; and if that palace is here intended, it is an interesting fact, as showing that in some way the gospel had been introduced into the family of the emperor himself. That the palace or residence of the emperor is intended here, may be considered at least probable from the following considerations. (1.) It is the name which would be likely to be used by the Jews who came up from Judea and other provinces, to denote the chief place of judgment, or the principal residence of the highest magistrate. So it was used in Jerusalem, in Cesarea, and in the provinces generally, to denote the residence of the general in the camp, or the procurator in the cities—the highest representative of the Roman power. (2.) If the remark of Chrysostom, above referred to, be well founded, that this was a common name given to the palace in Rome, then this goes far to determine the question. (3.) In chap. 4:22, Paul, in the salutation of the saints at Rome to those of Philippi, mentions particularly those of “Cæsar’s household.” From this it would seem that some of the family of the emperor had been made acquainted with the Christian religion, and had been converted. In what way the knowledge of the true cause of Paul’s imprisonment had been circulated in the “palace,” is not now known. There was, however, close intimacy between the military officers and the government, and it was probably by means of some of the soldiers or officers who had the special charge of Paul, that this had been communicated. To Paul, in his bonds, it must have been a subject of great rejoicing, that the government became thus apprised of the true character of the opposition which had been excited against him; and it must have done much to reconcile him to the sorrows and privations of imprisonment, that he was thus the means of introducing religion to the very palace of the emperor.

And in all other places. Marg., to all others. The Greek will bear either construction. But if, as has been supposed, the reference in the word prætorium is to the palace, then this should be rendered “all other places.” It then means, that the knowledge of his innocence, and the consequences of that knowledge in its happy influence in spreading religion, were not confined to the palace, but were extended to other places. The subject was generally understood, so that it might be said that correct views of the matter pervaded the city, and the fact of his imprisonment was accomplishing extensively the most happy effects on the public mind.

14. And many of the brethren. Many Christians. It is evident from this, that there were already “many” in Rome who professed Christianity.

In the Lord. In the Lord Jesus; that is, united to him and to each other by a professed attachment to him. This is a common phrase to designate Christians.

Waxing confident by my bonds. Becoming increasingly bold and zealous in consequence of my being confined. This might have been either (1.) that from the very fact that so distinguished a champion of the truth had been imprisoned, they were excited to do all they could in the cause of the gospel. Or (2.) they were aroused by the fact that the cause of his imprisonment had become generally understood, and that there was a strong current of popular favor setting towards Christianity in consequence of it. Or (3.) they had had intercourse with Paul in his own “hired house,” and had been incited and encouraged by him to put forth great efforts in the cause. Or (4.) it would seem that some had been emboldened to promulgate their views, and set themselves up as preachers, who would have been restrained if Paul had been at liberty. They were disposed to form parties, and to secure followers, and rejoiced in an opportunity to increase their own popularity, and were not unwilling thus to diminish the popularity and lessen the influence of so great a man as Paul. Had he been at liberty, they would have had no prospect of success; see ver. 16. To this may be added a suggestion by Theodoret. “Many of the brethren have increased boldness—*θάρσος*—on account of my bonds. For seeing me bear such hard things with pleasure, they announce that the gospel [which sustains me] is divine.” The same sentiment occurs in Oecumen, and Theophyl.; see Bloomfield. In Paul himself they had an illustration of the power of religion, and being convinced of its truth, they went and proclaimed it abroad.

To speak the word without fear. That is, they see that I remain safely (comp. Acts 28:30), and that there is no danger of persecution, and, stimulated by my sufferings and patience, they go and make the gospel known.

15. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife. What was the ground of this “envy and strife” the apostle does not mention. It would seem, however, that even in Rome there was a party which was jealous of the influence of Paul, and which supposed that this was a good opportunity to diminish his influence, and to strengthen their own cause. He was not now at large so as to be able to meet and confute them. They had access to the mass of the people. It was easy, under plausible pretenses, to insinuate hints about the ambitious aims, or improper influence of Paul, or to take strong ground against him and in favor of their own views, and they availed themselves of this opportunity. It would seem most probable, though this is not mentioned, that these persons were Judaizing teachers, professing Christianity, and who supposed that Paul’s views were derogatory to the honor of Moses and the law.

And some also of good will. From pure motives, having no party aims to accomplish, and not intending in any way to give me trouble.

16. The one preach Christ of contention. So as to form parties, and to produce strifes among his professed followers.

Not sincerely. Not purely—*ἀγνῶς*—not with pure motives or intentions. Their real aim is not to preach Christ, but to produce difficulty, and to stir up strife. They are ambitious men, and they have no real regard for the welfare of the church and the honor of religion.

Supposing to add affliction to my bonds. To make my trial the greater. How they did this is unknown. Perhaps they were those who were strongly imbued with Jewish notions, and who felt that his course tended to diminish respect for the law of Moses, and who now took this opportunity to promote their views, knowing that this would be particularly painful to him when he was not at liberty to meet them openly, and to defend his own opinions. It is possible also that they may have urged that Paul himself had met with a signal reproof for the course which he had taken, and, as a consequence, was now thrown into chains. Bloomfield suggests that it was the opinion of many of the ancient expositors that they endeavored to do this by so preaching as to excite the fury of the multitude or the rulers against Paul, and to produce increased severity in his punishment. But the way in which they did this is unknown, and conjecture is altogether useless.

17. But the other of love. From pure motives, and from sincere affection to me.

Knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel. They believe that I am an ambassador from God. They regard me as unjustly imprisoned, and while I am disabled, they are willing to aid me in the great cause to which my life is devoted. To alleviate his sorrows, and to carry forward the great cause to defend which he was particularly appointed, they engaged in the work which he could not now do, and went forth to vindicate the gospel, and to make its claims better known. Coverdale renders this, "for they know that I lie here for the defense of the gospel." So Piscator, Michaelis, and Endius render it, supposing that the meaning is, that he lay in prison for the defense of the gospel, or as a consequence of his efforts to defend it. But this is not in accordance with the usual meaning of the Greek word (κεῖμαι). It means to lie, and in the perf. pass. to be laid, set, placed. If the apostle had referred to his being in prison, he would have added that fact to the statement made. The sense is, that he was appointed to be a defender of the gospel, and that they being well convinced of this, went forth to promulgate and defend the truth. That fact was one of Paul's chief consolations while he was thus in confinement.

18. What then? What follows from this? What effect does it have on my mind? Does the fact that some preach from a spirit of envy and contention give me pain?

Notwithstanding every way. No matter in what way it is done. We are not to suppose, however, that Paul was indifferent as to the way in which the gospel was preached, or the spirit with which it was done; but the meaning is, that it was a matter of rejoicing that it was done at all, whatever the motives might be.

Whether in pretense or in truth. Whether as a mere pretext to cover up some other design, or from pure motives. Their pretense was that they preached the gospel because they believed it true and loved it; their real object was to build up a party, and to diminish the influence and authority of Paul.

Christ is preached. They made known the name of the Savior, and announced that the Messiah had come. They could not go forth under any pretense as preachers, without making known some truth about the Redeemer. So now, it is hardly possible that any persons should attempt to preach, without stating some truth that would not otherwise be known. The name of a Savior will be announced, and that will be something. Some views of his life and work will be presented, which, though they may be far enough from full views, are yet better than none.

Though there may be much error in what is said, yet there will be also some truth. It would be better to have preachers that were better instructed, or that were more prudent, or that had purer motives, or that held a more perfect system, yet it is much in our world to have the name of the Redeemer announced in any way, and even to be told, in the most stammering manner, and from whatever motives, that man has a Savior. The announcement of that fact in any way may save a soul; but ignorance of it could save none.

And I therein do rejoice. This is an instance of great magnanimity on the part of Paul, and nothing, perhaps, could better show his supreme love for the Savior. Part preached to increase his afflictions, and the tendency of that preaching was, probably, as it was designed to be, to unsettle confidence in him, and to lessen his influence. Yet this did not move him. The more important matter was secured, and Christ was made known; and if this were secured, he was willing that his own name should be cast into the shade. This may furnish valuable lessons to preachers of the gospel now. When (1.) we are laid aside from preaching by sickness, we should rejoice that others are in health, and are able to make the Savior known, though we are forgotten. (2.) When we are unpopular and unsuccessful, we should rejoice that others are more popular and successful—for Christ is preached. (3.) When we have rivals, who have better plans than we for doing good, and whose labors are crowned with success, we should not be envious or jealous—for Christ is preached. (4.) When ministers of other denominations preach what we regard as error, and their preaching becomes popular, and is attended with success, we can find occasion to rejoice—for they preach Christ. In the error we should not, we cannot rejoice; but in the fact that the great truth is held up that Christ died for men, we can always find abundant occasion for joy. Mingled as it may be with error, it may be nevertheless the means of saving souls, and though we should rejoice more if the truth were preached without any admixture of error, yet still the very fact that Christ is made known lays the foundation for gratitude and rejoicing. Had all Christians, and Christian ministers, the feelings which Paul expresses here, there would be much less envy and uncharitableness than there is now in the churches. May we not hope that the time will yet come when all who preach the gospel will have such supreme regard for the name and work of the Savior, that they will find sincere joy in the success of a rival denomination, or a rival preacher, or in rival plans for doing good? Then, indeed, contentions would cease, and the hearts of Christians, “like kindred drops,” would mingle into one.

19. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation. Will be a means of my salvation. Whether the effect shall be to turn public favor towards the Christian religion, and secure my release; or whether it shall be to instigate my enemies more, so as to lead to my death; I am satisfied that the result, so far as I am concerned, will be well. The word “salvation,” here, does not refer to his release from captivity, as Koppe, Rosenmüller, Clarke, and others, suppose; for he was not absolutely certain of that, and could not expect that to be effected by “the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” But the meaning is, that all these dealings, including his imprisonment, and especially the conduct of those who thought to add affliction to his bonds, would be among the means of his salvation. Trying and painful as all this was, yet trial and pain Paul reckoned among the means of grace; and he had no doubt that this would prove so.

Through your prayer; see Notes on 2 Cor. 1:11.

And the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. To sustain me, and to cause those happy results to come out of these trials. He needed the same spirit which Jesus Christ had, to enable him to bear his trials with patience, and to impart to him the consolations which he required. He had no idea that these trials would produce these effects of their own accord, nor that it could be by any strength of his own.

20. According to my earnest expectation. The word here used occurs but in one other place in the New Testament; see it explained in the Notes on Rom. 8:19. The earnest desire and hope which Paul had was not, primarily, that he might be released; but it was that, in all circumstances, he might be able to honor the gospel, living or dying. To that he looked as a much more important matter than to save his life. Life with him was the secondary consideration; the main thing was, to stand up everywhere as the advocate of the gospel, to maintain its truth, and to exhibit its spirit.

That in nothing I shall be ashamed. That I shall do nothing of which I shall have occasion to be ashamed. That in these heavy trials, I may not be left to deny the truth of the Christian religion; that, even before the emperor, I may maintain its principles; and that the dread of death may not lead me to do a dishonorable thing, or in any way so to shrink from an avowal of my belief, as to give me or my friends occasion of regret.

But that with all boldness. By my speaking the truth, and maintaining my principles with all boldness; Notes, 2 Cor. 7:4; Eph. 6:19, 20.

Christ shall be magnified. Shall be held up to the view of man as the true and only Savior, whatever becomes of me.

Whether it be by life. If I am permitted to live. He was not yet certain how the case would terminate with him. He had not been put on his trial, and, whether that trial would result in his acquittal or not, he could not certainly know. But he felt assured that, if he were acquitted, the effect would be to honor Christ. He would ascribe his deliverance to his gracious interposition; he would devote himself with new ardor to his service; and he felt assured, from his past efforts, that he would be able to do something that would “magnify” Christ in the estimation of mankind.

Or by death. If my trial shall result in my death. Then, he believed, he would be able to show such a spirit as to do honor to Christ and his cause. He was not afraid to die, and he was persuaded that he would be enabled to bear the pains of death in such a manner as to show the sustaining power of religion, and the value of Christianity. Christ is “magnified” in the death of Christians, when his gospel is seen to sustain them; when, supported by its promises, they are enabled to go calmly into the dark valley; and when, in the departing moments, they confidently commit their eternal all into his hands. The effect of this state of feeling on the mind of Paul must have been most happy. In whatever way his trial terminated, he felt assured that the great object for which he lived would be promoted. Christ would be honored, perhaps, as much by his dying as a martyr, as by his living yet many years to proclaim his gospel. He was, therefore, reconciled to his lot. He had no anxiety. Come what might, the purpose which he had most at heart would be secured, and the name of the Savior would be honored.

21. For to me to live is Christ. My sole aim in living is to glorify Christ. He is the supreme End of my life, and I value it only as being devoted to his honor. Doddridge. His aim was not honor, learning, gold, pleasure; it was, to glorify the Lord Jesus. This was the single purpose of his soul—a purpose to which he devoted himself with as much singleness and ardor as ever did a miser to the pursuit of gold, or a devotee of pleasure to amusement, or an aspirant for fame to ambition. This implied the following things: (1.) A purpose to know as much of Christ as it was possible to know—to become as fully acquainted as he could with his rank, his character, his plans, with the relations which he sustained to the Father, and with the claims and influences of his religion; see Phil. 3:10; Eph. 3:19; comp. John 17:3. (2.) A purpose to imitate Christ—to make him the model of his life. It was a design that his Spirit should reign in his heart, that the same temper should actuate him, and that the same great end should be constantly had in view. (3.) A purpose to make his religion known, as far as possible, among mankind. To this Paul seriously gave his life, and devoted his great talents. His aim was to see on how many minds he could impress the sentiments of the Christian religion; to see to how many of the human family he could make Christ known, to whom he was unknown before. Never was there a man who gave himself with more ardor to any enterprise, than Paul did to this; and never was one more successful, in any undertaking, than he was in this. (4.) It was a purpose to enjoy Christ. He drew his comforts from him. His happiness he found in communion with him. It was not in the works of art; not in the pursuits of elegant literature; not in the gay and fashionable world; but it was in communion with the Savior, and in endeavoring to please him. Remark, (1.) Paul never had occasion to regret this course. It produced no sadness when he looked over his life. He never felt that he had had an unworthy aim of living; he did not wish that his purpose had been different when he came to die. (2.) If it was Paul's duty thus to live, it is no less that of every Christian. What was there in his case that made it his duty to "live unto Christ," which does not exist in the case of every sincere Christian on earth? No believer, when he comes to die, will regret that he has lived unto Christ; but how many, alas! regret that this has not been the aim and purpose of their souls!

And to die is gain; comp. Rev. 14:13. A sentiment similar to this occurs frequently in the Greek and Latin classic writers. See Wetstein, in loc., who has collected numerous such passages. With them, the sentiment had its origin in the belief that they would be freed from suffering, and admitted to some happy world beyond the grave. To them, however, all this was conjecture and uncertainty. The word gain, here, means profit, advantage; and the meaning is, there would be an advantage in dying above that of living. Important benefits would result to him personally, should he die; and the only reason why he should wish at all to live was, that he might be the means of benefiting others; ver. 24, 25. But how would it be gain to die? What advantage would there be in Paul's circumstances? What in ours? It may be answered, that it will be gain for a Christian to die in the following respects: (1.) He will be then freed from sin. Here it is the source of perpetual humiliation and sorrow; in heaven he will sin no more. (2.) He will be freed from doubts about his condition. Here the best are liable to doubts about their personal piety, and often experience many an anxious hour in reference to this point; in heaven, doubt will be known no more. (3.) He will be freed from temptation. Here, no one knows when he may be tempted, nor how powerful the temptation may be; in heaven, there will be no allurements to lead him astray; no artful, cunning, and skillful votaries of pleasure to place inducements before him

to sin; and no heart to yield to them, if there were. (4.) He will be delivered from all his enemies—from the slanderer, the calumniator, the persecutor. Here the Christian is constantly liable to have his motives called in question, or to be met with detraction and slander; there, there will be none to do him injustice; all will rejoice in the belief that he is pure. (5.) He will be delivered from suffering. Here he is constantly liable to it. His health fails, his friends die, his mind is sad. There, there shall be no separation of friends, no sickness, and no tears. (6.) He will be delivered from death. Here, death is ever nigh—dreadful, alarming, terrible to our nature. There, death will be known no more. No face will ever turn pale, and no knees tremble, at his approach; in all heaven there will never be seen a funeral procession, nor will the soil there ever open its bosom to furnish a grave. (7.) To all this may be added the fact, that the Christian will be surrounded by his best friends; that he will be reunited with those whom he loved on earth; that he will be associated with the angels of light; and that he will be admitted to the immediate presence of his Savior and his God! Why, then, should a Christian be afraid to die? And why should he not hail that hour, when it comes, as the hour of his deliverance, and rejoice that he is going home? Does the prisoner, long confined in a dungeon, dread the hour which is to open his prison, and permit him to return to his family and friends? Does the man in a foreign land, long an exile, dread the hour when he shall embark on the ocean to be conveyed where he may embrace the friends of his youth? Does the sick man dread the hour which restores him to health; the afflicted, the hour of comfort? the wanderer at night, the cheering light of returning day? And why then should the Christian dread the hour which will restore him to immortal vigor; which shall remove all his sorrows; which shall introduce him to everlasting day?

Death is the crown of life:

Were death denied, poor man would live in vain:

Were death denied, to live would not be life;

Were death denied, even fools would wish to die.

Death wounds to cure; we fall; we rise; we reign!

Spring from our fetters; fasten in the skies;

Where blooming Eden withers in our sight.

Death gives us more than was in Eden lost,

The king of terrors is the prince of peace.

Night Thoughts, iii.

22. But if I live in the flesh. If I continue to live; if I am not condemned and made a martyr at my approaching trial.

This is the fruit of my labor. The meaning of this passage, which has given much perplexity to commentators, it seems to me is, “If I live in the flesh, it will cost me labor; it will be attended, as it has been, with much effort and anxious care, and I know not which to prefer—whether to remain on the earth with these cares and the hope of doing good, or to go at once to a world of rest.” A more literal version of the Greek will show that this is the meaning. τοῦτό μοι καρπὸς ἔργου—“this to me is [or would be] the fruit of labor.” Coverdale, however, renders it, “Inasmuch as to live in the flesh is fruitful to me for the work, I wot not what I shall choose.” So Luther, “But since to live in the flesh serves to produce more fruit.” And so Bloomfield, “But if my life in the flesh be of use to the gospel (be it so, I say no more), verily what I shall choose I see and know not.” See also Koppe, Rosenmüller, and Calvin, who give the same sense. According to this, the meaning is, that if his life were of value to the gospel, he was willing to live; or that it was a valuable object—*operæ pretium*—worth an effort thus to live. This sense accords well with the connection, and the thought is a valuable one, but it is somewhat doubtful whether it can be made out from the Greek. To do it, it is necessary to suppose that μοι—my—is expletive (Koppe), and that καὶ—and—is used in an unusual sense. See Erasmus. According to the interpretation first suggested, it means that Paul felt that it would be gain to die, and that he was entirely willing; that he felt that if he continued to live it would involve toil and fatigue, and that, therefore, great as was the natural love of life, and desirous as he was to do good, he did not know which to choose—an immediate departure to the world of rest, or a prolonged life of toil and pain, attended even with the hope that he might do good. There was an intense desire to be with Christ, joined with the belief that his life here must be attended with toll and anxiety; and on the other hand, an earnest wish to live in order to do good, and he knew not which to prefer.

Yet. The sense has been obscured by this translation. The Greek word (καὶ) means and, and should have been so rendered here, in its usual sense. “To die would be gain; my life here would be one of toil, AND I know not which to choose.”

What I shall choose I wot not. I do not know which I should prefer, if it were left to me. On each side there were important considerations, and he knew not which overbalanced the other. Are not Christians often in this state, that if it were left to themselves, they would not know which to choose, whether to live or to die?

23. For I am in a strait betwixt two. Two things, each of which I desire. I earnestly long to be with Christ; and I desire to remain to be useful to the world. The word rendered “I am in a strait”—συνέχομαι—means to be pressed on or constrained, as in a crowd; to feel one’s self pressed or pent up so as not to know what to do; and it here means that he was in perplexity and doubt, and did not know what to choose. “The words of the original are very emphatic. They appear to be derived from a ship when lying at anchor, and when violent winds blow upon it that would drive it out to sea. The apostle represents himself as in a similar condition. His strong affection for them bound his heart to them—as an anchor holds a ship to its moorings—and yet there was a heavenly influence bearing upon him—like the gale upon the vessel—which would bear him away to heaven.” Burder, in Ros. Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, in loc.

Having a desire to depart. To die—to leave this world for a better. Men, as they are by nature, usually dread to die. Few are even made willing to die. Almost none desire to die—and

even then, they wish it only as the least of two evils. Pressed down by pain and sorrow; or sick and weary of the world, the mind may be wrought up into a desire to be away. But this, with the world, is in all cases the result of misanthropy, or morbid feeling, or disappointed ambition, or an accumulation many sorrows. Wetstein has adduced on this verse several most beautiful passages from the classic writers, in which men expressed a desire to depart—but all of them probably could be traced to disappointed ambition, or to mental or bodily sorrows, or to dissatisfaction with the world. It was from no such wish that Paul desired to die. It was not because he hated man,—for he ardently loved him. It was not because he had been disappointed about wealth and honor—for he had sought neither. It was not because he had not been successful—for no man has been more so. It was not because he had been subjected to pains and imprisonments—for he was willing to bear them. It was not because he was old, and infirm, and a burden to the world—for, from anything that appears, he was in the vigor of life, and in the fulness of his strength. It was from a purer, higher motive than any of these—the strength of attachment which bound him to the Savior, and which made him long to be with him.

And to be with Christ. We may remark on this expression, (1.) That this was the true reason why he wished to be away. It was his strong love to Christ; his anxious wish to be with him; his firm belief that in his presence was “fulness of joy.” (2.) Paul believed that the soul of the Christian would be immediately with the Savior at death. It was evidently his expectation that he would at once pass to his presence, and not that he would remain in an intermediate state to some far distant period. (3.) The soul does not sleep at death. Paul expected to be with Christ, and to be conscious of the fact—to see him, and to partake of his glory. (4.) The soul of the believer is made happy at death. To be with Christ is synonymous with being in heaven—for Christ is in heaven, and is its glory. We may add, (a) that this wish to be with Christ constitutes a marked difference between a Christian and other men. Other men may be willing to die; perhaps be desirous to die, because their sorrows are so great that they feel that they cannot be borne. But the Christian desires to depart from a different motive altogether. It is to be with Christ—and this constitutes a broad line of distinction between him and other men. (b) A mere willingness to die, or even a desire to die, is no certain evidence of preparation for death. If this willingness or desire is caused by mere intensity of suffering; if it is produced by disgust at the world or by disappointment; if it arises from some view of fancied Elysian fields beyond the grave, it constitutes no evidence whatever of preparation for death. I have seen not a few persons who were not professed Christians on a bed of death, and not a few willing to die, nay, not a few who wished to depart. But in the vast majority of instances, it was because they were sick of life, or because their pain made them sigh for relief, or because they were so wretched that they did not care what happened—and this they and their friends construed into an evidence that they were prepared to die! In most instances this is a miserable delusion; in no case is a mere willingness to die an evidence of preparation for death.

Which is far better. Would be attended with more happiness; and would be a higher, holier state than to remain on earth. This proves, also, that the soul of the Christian at death is made at once happy—for a state of insensibility can in no way be said to be a better condition than to remain in this present world. The Greek phrase here πολλῶ μᾶλλον κρείσσον—is very emphatic, and the apostle seems to labor for language which will fully convey his idea. It means,

“by much more, or rather better,” and the sense is, “better beyond all expression.” Doddridge. See numerous examples illustrating the phrase in Wetstein. Paul did not mean to say that he was merely willing to die, or that he acquiesced in its necessity, but that the fact of being with Christ was a condition greatly to be preferred to remaining on earth. This is the true feeling of Christian piety; and having this feeling, death to us will have no terrors.

24. Nevertheless to abide in the flesh. To live. All this is language derived from the belief that the soul will be separate from the body at death, and will occupy a separate state of existence.

Is more needful for you. Another object that was dear to the heart of Paul. He never supposed that his life was useless; or that it was a matter of no importance to the cause of religion whether he lived or died. He knew that God works by means; and that the life of a minister of the gospel is of real value to the church and the world. His experience, his influence, his paternal counsels, he felt assured would be of value to the church, and he had, therefore, a desire to live—and it was no part of his religion affectedly to undervalue or despise himself.

25. And having this confidence. “Being persuaded of this, that my continuance on earth is desirable for your welfare, and that the Lord has a work for me to do, I confidently expect that I shall be permitted to live.” The “confidence” here referred to was, that his life was needful for them, and hence that God would spare him. A literal translation would be, “And being persuaded as to this, or of this”—*τουτο πεποιθώς*—“I know,” &c. The foundation of his expectation that he should live does not appear to have been any revelation to that effect, as Doddridge supposes; or any intimation which he had from the palace of the intentions of the government, as some others suppose, but the fact that he believed his life to be necessary for them, and that therefore God would preserve it.

I know that I shall abide. The word know, however, (*οιδα*) is not to be pressed as denoting absolute necessity—for it appears from ver. 27, and chap. 2:17, that there was some ground for doubt whether he would live—but is to be taken in a popular sense, as denoting good courage, and an earnest hope that he would be permitted to live and visit them. Heinrichs.

And continue with you all. That is, that he would be permitted not only to live, but to enjoy their society.

For your furtherance and joy of faith. For the increase of your faith, and the promotion of that joy which is the consequence of faith. Wetstein has quoted a beautiful passage from Seneca (Epis. 104) which strikingly resembles this sentiment of Paul. He says that when a man had meditated death, and when on his own account he would be willing to die, yet that he ought to be willing to live—to come back again to life—for the sake of his friends. He then adds, “It pertains to a great mind to be willing to come back to life for the sake of others; which distinguished men often do.”

26. That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Christ Jesus. Through the mercy and grace of Christ. If he was spared, his deliverance would be traced to Christ, and they would rejoice together in one who had so mercifully delivered him.

For me by my coming to you again. Their joy would not only be that he was delivered, but that he was permitted to see them again.

27. Only let your conversation The word conversation we now apply almost exclusively to oral discourse, or to talking. But it was not formerly confined to that, and is never so used in the Scriptures. It means conduct in general—including, of course, our manner of speaking, but not limited to that—and should be so understood in every place where it occurs in the Bible. The original word here used—πολιτεύω—politeuo, means, properly, to administer the state; to live as a citizen; to conduct oneself according to the laws and customs of a state; see Acts 23:1; compare examples in Wetstein. It would not be improperly rendered, “let your conduct as a citizen be as becomes the gospel;” and might without impropriety, though not exclusively, be referred to our deportment as members of a community, or citizens of a state. It undoubtedly implies that, as citizens, we should act, in all the duties which that relation involves—in maintaining the laws, in submission to authority, in the choice of rulers, &c., as well as in other relations—on the principles of the gospel; for the believer is bound to perform every duty on Christian principles. But the direction here should not be confined to that. It doubtless includes our conduct in all relations in life, and refers to our deportment in general; not merely as citizens of the state, but as members of the church, and in all other relations. In our manner of speech, our plans of living, our dealings with others, our conduct and walk in the church and out of it—all should be done as becomes the gospel. The direction, therefore, in this place, is to be understood of everything pertaining to conduct.

As it becometh the gospel of Christ. (1.) The rules of the gospel are to be applied to all our conduct—to our conversation, business transactions, modes of dress, style of living, entertainments, &c. There is nothing which we do, or say, or purpose, that is to be excepted from those rules. (2.) There is a way of living which is appropriate to the gospel, or which is such as the gospel requires. There is something which the gospel would secure as its proper fruits in all our conduct, and by which our lives should be regulated. It would distinguish us from the gay, and from those who seek honor and wealth as their supreme object. If all Christians were under the influence of the gospel, there would be something in their dress, temper, conversation, and aims, which would distinguish them from others. The gospel is not a thing of naught; nor is it intended that it should exert no influence on its friends. (3.) It is very important that Christians should frame their lives by the rules of the gospel, and, to this end, should study them, and know what they are. This is important, (a) because they are the best and wisest of all rules; (b) because it is only in this way that Christians can do good; (c) because they have solemnly covenanted with the Lord to take his laws as their guide; (d) because it is only in this way that they can enjoy religion; and (e) because it is only by this that they can have peace on a dying bed. If men live as “becometh the gospel,” they live well. Their lives are honest and honorable; they are men of truth and uprightness; they will have no sources of regret when they die, and they will not give occasion to their friends to hang their heads with shame in the remembrance of them. No man on a dying bed ever yet regretted that he had framed his life by the rules of the gospel, or felt that his conduct had been conformed too much to it.

That whether I come and see you. Alluding to the possibility that he might be released, and be permitted to visit them again.

Or else be absent. Either at Rome, still confined, or released, and permitted to go abroad.

I may hear of your affairs, &c. I may hear always respecting you that you are united, and that you are vigorously striving to promote the interests of the gospel.

28. And in nothing terrified by your adversaries. Adversaries, or opponents, they had, like most of the other early Christians. There were Jews there who would be likely to oppose them (comp. Acts 17:5), and they were exposed to persecution by the heathen. In that city, Paul had himself suffered much (Acts 16); and it would not be strange if the same scenes should be repeated. It is evident from this passage, as well as from some other parts of the epistle, that the Philippians were at this time experiencing some form of severe suffering. But in what way, or why, the opposition to them was excited, is nowhere stated. The meaning here is, “do not be alarmed at anything which they can do. Maintain your Christian integrity, notwithstanding all the opposition which they can make. They will, in the end, certainly be destroyed, and you will be saved.”

Which is to them an evident token of perdition. What, it may be asked, would be the token of their perdition? What is the evidence to which Paul refers that they will be destroyed? The relative “which”—ἣτις—is probably used as referring to the persecution which had been commenced, and to the constancy which the apostle supposed the Philippians would evince. The sentence is elliptical; but it is manifest that the apostle refers either to the circumstance then occurring, that they were persecuted, and that they evinced constancy; or to the constancy which he wished them to evince in their persecutions. He says that this circumstance of persecution, if they evinced such a spirit as he wished, would be to them an evidence of two things: (1.) Of the destruction of those who were engaged in the persecution. This would be, because they knew that such persecutors could not ultimately prevail. Persecution of the church would be a certain indication that they who did it would be finally destroyed. (2.) It would be a proof of their own salvation, because it would show that they were the friends of the Redeemer; and they had the assurance that all those who were persecuted for his sake would be saved. The gender of the Greek relative here is determined by the following noun (ἐνδειξις), in a manner that is not uncommon in Greek; see Wetstein, in loc., and Koppe.

And that of God. That is, their persecution is a proof that God will interpose in due time, and save you. The hostility of the wicked to us is one evidence that we are the friends of God, and shall be saved.

29. For unto you. Unto you as Christians. This favor is granted unto you in your present circumstances.

It is given. God concedes to you this privilege or advantage.

In the behalf of Christ. In the cause of Christ, or with a view to honor Christ. Or, these things are brought on you in consequence of your being Christians.

Not only to believe on him. It is represented here as a privilege to be permitted to believe on Christ. It is so. (1.) It is an honor to a man to believe one who ought to be believed, to trust one who ought to be trusted, to love one who ought to be loved. (2.) It is a privilege to believe on Christ, because it is by such faith that our sins are forgiven; that we become reconciled to God, and have the hope of heaven. (3.) It is a privilege, because it saves the mind from the tortures and the deadly influence of unbelief—the agitation, and restlessness, and darkness, and gloom of a sceptic. (4.) It is a privilege, because we have then a Friend to whom we may go in trial, and on whom we may roll all our burdens. If there is anything for which a Christian ought to give unfeigned thanks, it is that he has been permitted to believe on the Redeemer. Let a sincere Christian compare his peace, and joy, and hope of heaven, and support in trials, with the restlessness, uneasiness, and dread of death, in the mind of an unbeliever; and he will see abundant occasion for gratitude.

But also to suffer for his sake. Here it is represented as a privilege to suffer in the cause of the Redeemer—a declaration which may sound strange to the world. Yet this sentiment frequently occurs in the New Testament. Thus it is said of the apostles (Acts 5:41), that “they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name;” Col. 1:24. “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you;” 1 Pet. 4:13. “But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings;” comp. James 1:2; Mark 10:30. see Notes on Acts 5:41. It is a privilege thus to suffer in the cause of Christ, because (1.) we then resemble the Lord Jesus, and are united with him in trials; (2.) because we have evidence that we are his, if trials come upon us in his cause; (3.) because we are engaged in a good cause, and the privilege of maintaining such a cause is worth much of suffering; and (4.) because it will be connected with a brighter crown and more exalted honor in heaven.

30. Having the same conflict. The same agony—ἀγῶνα—the same strife with bitter foes, and the same struggle in the warfare.

Which ye saw in me. When I was in Philippi, opposed by the multitude, and thrown into prison; Acts 16.

And now hear to be in me. In Rome. He was a prisoner there, was surrounded by enemies, and was about to be tried for his life. He says that they ought to rejoice if they were called to pass through the same trials.

In this chapter we have a beautiful illustration of the true spirit of a Christian in circumstances exceedingly trying. The apostle was in a situation where religion would show itself, if there were any in the heart; and where, if there was none, the bad passions of our nature would be developed. He was a prisoner. He had been unjustly accused. He was about to be put on trial for his life, and it was wholly uncertain what the result would be. He was surrounded with enemies, and there were not a few false friends and rivals who took advantage of his imprisonment to diminish his influence and to extend their own. He was, perhaps, about to die; and at any rate, was in such circumstances as to be under a necessity of looking death in the face.

In this situation he exhibited some of the tenderest and purest feelings that ever-exist in the heart of man—the genuine fruit of pure religion. He remembered them with affectionate and

constant interest in his prayers. He gave thanks for all that God had done for them. Looking upon his own condition, he said that the trials which had happened to him, great as they were, had been overruled to the furtherance of the gospel. The gospel had become known even in the imperial palace. And though it had been preached by some with no good will towards him, and with much error, yet he cherished no hard feeling; he sought for no revenge; he rejoiced that in any way, and from any motives, the great truth had been made known that a Savior died. Looking forward to the possibility that his trial before the emperor might terminate in his death, he calmly anticipated such a result, and looked at it with composure. He says that in reference to the great purpose of his life, it would make no difference whether he lived or died, for he was assured that Christ would be honored, whatever was the result. To him personally it would be gain to die; and, as an individual, he longed for the hour when he might be with Christ. This feeling is religion, and this is produced only by the hope of eternal life through the Redeemer. An impenitent sinner never expressed such feelings as these; nor does any other form of religion but Christianity enable a man to look upon death in this manner. It is not often that a man is even willing to die—and then this state of mind is produced, not by the hope of heaven, but by disgust at the world; by disappointed ambition; by painful sickness, when the sufferer feels that any change would be for the better. But Paul had none of these feelings. His desire to depart was not produced by a hatred of life; nor by the greatness of his sufferings; nor by disgust at the world. It was the noble, elevated, and pure wish to be with Christ—to see him whom he supremely loved, whom he had so long and so faithfully served, and with whom he was to dwell forever. To that world where Christ dwelt, he would gladly rise; and the only reason why he could be content to remain here was, that he might be a little longer useful to his fellow men. Such is the elevated nature of Christian feeling. But, alas! how few attain to it; and even among Christians, how few are they that can habitually feel and realize that it would be gain for them to die! How few can say with sincerity that they desire to depart, and to be with Christ! How rarely does even the Christian reach that state of mind, and gain that view of heaven, that, standing amidst his comforts here, and looking on his family, and friends, and property, he can say from the depths of his soul, that he feels it would be gain for him to go to heaven! Yet such deadness to the world may be produced—as it was in the case of Paul; such deadness to the world should exist in the heart of every sincere Christian. Where it does exist, death loses its terror, and the heir of life can look calmly on the bed where he will lie down to die; can think calmly of the moment when he will give the parting hand to wife and child, and press them to his bosom for the last time, and imprint on them the last kiss; can look peacefully on the spot where he will molder back to dust, and in view of all can triumphantly say, “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.”

Chapter 2: Analysis of the Chapter

This chapter is made up principally of exhortations to the performance of various Christian duties, and the exhibition of Christian virtues. The apostle first exhorts the Philippians, in the most tender manner, so to live as to give him joy, by evincing among themselves unity and concord. He entreats them to do nothing by strife and a desire of distinction, but to evince that humility which is manifested when we regard others as more worthy than we are; ver. 1–4. This

exhortation he enforces in a most impressive manner by a reference to the example of Christian—an example of condescension and humiliation fitted to repress in us all the aspirings of ambition, and to make us ready to submit to the most humble offices to benefit others; ver. 5–11. He then exhorts them to work out their salvation with diligence, assuring them, for their encouragement, that God worked in them to will and to do of his good pleasure; ver. 12, 13. To this he adds an exhortation that they would avoid everything like murmuring and disputing—that they would be blameless and harmless in their walk, showing the excellency of the religion which they loved to all around them, and exerting such an influence on others that Paul might feel that he had not labored in vain; ver. 14–16. To excite them to this, he assures them that he was ready himself to be sacrificed for their welfare, and should rejoice if by his laying down his life their happiness would be promoted. He asked the same thing in return from them; ver. 17, 18. He then tells them, in expressing his interest in them, that he hoped soon to be able to send Timothy to them again—a man who felt a deep interest in their welfare, and whose going to them would be one of the highest proofs of the apostle’s love, ver. 19–24. The same love for them, he says, he had now shown to them by sending to them Epaphroditus—a man to whom he was tenderly attached, and who had an earnest desire again to return to the church from which he had been sent. Paul sent him, therefore, again to Philippi, that he might be with them and comfort them, and he asked for him a kind reception and affectionate treatment, in view of the sufferings which he had experienced in the cause of the Redeemer, ver. 25–30.

1. If there be therefore any consolation in Christ. This, with what is said in the remainder of the verse, is designed as a motive for what he exhorts them to in ver. 2—that they would be of the same mind, and would thus fulfil his joy. To urge them to this, he appeals to the tender considerations which religion furnished—and begins by a reference to the consolation which there was in Christ. The meaning here may be this: “I am now persecuted and afflicted. In my trials it will give me the highest joy to learn that you act as becomes Christians. You also are persecuted and afflicted (chap. 1:28–30); and, in these circumstances, I entreat that the highest consolation may be sought; and by all that is tender and sacred in the Christian religion, I conjure you, so to live as not to dishonor the gospel. So live as to bring down the highest consolation which can be obtained—the consolation which Christ alone can impart.” We are not to suppose that Paul doubted whether there was any consolation in Christ, but the form of expression here is one that is designed to urge upon them the duty of seeking the highest possible. The consolation in Christ is that which Christ furnishes or imparts. Paul regarded him as the source of all comfort, and earnestly prays that they might so live that he and they might avail themselves in the fullest sense of that unspeakable enjoyment. The idea is, that Christians ought at all times, and especially in affliction, so to act as to secure the highest possible happiness which their Savior can impart to them. Such an object is worth their highest effort; and if God sees it needful, in order to that, that they should endure much affliction, still it is gain. Religious consolation is always worth all which it costs to secure it.

If any comfort of love. If there be any comfort in the exercise of tender affection. That there is, no one can doubt. Our happiness is almost all centered in love. It is when we love a

parent, a wife, a child, a sister, a neighbor, that we have the highest earthly enjoyment. It is in the love of God, of Christ, of Christians, of the souls of men, that the redeemed find their highest happiness. Hatred is a passion full of misery; love an emotion full of joy. By this consideration, Paul appeals to them, and the motive here is drawn from all the joy which mutual love and sympathy are fitted to produce in the soul Paul would have that love exercised in the highest degree, and would have them enjoy all the happiness which its mutual exercise could furnish.

If any fellowship of the Spirit. The word “fellowship”—κοινωνία—means that which is common to two or more; that of which they partake together; Notes, Eph. 3:9; Phil. 1:5. The idea here is, that among Christians there was a participation in the influences of the Holy Ghost; that they shared in some degree the feelings, views, and joys of the sacred Spirit himself; and that this was a privilege of the highest order. By this fact, Paul now exhorts them to unity, love, and zeal—so to live that they might partake in the highest degree of the consolations of this Spirit.

If any bowels and mercies. If there is any affectionate bond by which you are united to me, and any regard for my sorrows, and any desire to fill up my joys, so live as to impart to me, your spiritual father and friend, the consolation which I seek.

2. Fulfil ye my joy. Fill up my joy so that nothing shall be wanting to complete it. This, he says, would be done by their union, zeal, and humility; comp. John 3:29.

That ye be like-minded. Gr. That ye think the same thing; see Notes on 2 Cor. 13:11. Perfect unity of sentiment, opinion, and plan would be desirable if it could be attained. It may be, so far as to prevent discord, schism, contention and strife in the church, and so that Christians may be harmonious in promoting the same great work—the salvation of souls.

Having the same love. Love to the same objects, and the same love one for another. Though their opinions might differ on some points, yet they might be united in love; see Notes on 1 Cor. 1:10.

Being of one accord. σύμψυχοι—of one soul; having your souls joined together. The word used here does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means a union of soul; or an acting together as if but one soul actuated them.

Of one mind. Gr. Thinking the same thing. The apostle here uses a great variety of expressions to denote the same thing. The object which he aimed at was union of heart, of feeling, of plan, of purpose. He wished them to avoid all divisions and strifes; and to show the power of religion by being united in the common cause. Probably there is no single thing so much insisted on in the New Testament as the importance of harmony among Christians. Now, there is almost nothing so little known; but if it prevailed, the world would soon be converted to God; comp. Notes on John 17:21—or see the text itself without the Notes.

3. Let nothing be done through strife. With a spirit of contention. This command forbids us to do anything, or attempt anything as the mere result of strife. This is not the principle from which we are to act, or by which we are to be governed. We are to form no plan, and aim at no object, which is to be secured in this way. The command prohibits all attempts to secure anything over others by mere physical strength, or by superiority of intellect or numbers, or as the result of

dark schemes and plans formed by rivalry, or by the indulgence of angry passions, or with the spirit of ambition. We are not to attempt to do anything merely by outstripping others, or by showing that we have more talent, courage, or zeal. What we do is to be by principle, and with a desire to maintain the truth, and to glorify God. And yet how often is this rule violated! How often do Christian denominations attempt to outstrip each other, and to see which shall be the greatest! How often do ministers preach with no better aim! How often do we attempt to outdo others in dress, and in the splendor of furniture and equipage! How often, even in plans of benevolence, and in the cause of virtue and religion, is the secret aim to outdo others. This is all wrong. There is no holiness in such efforts. Never once did the Redeemer act from such a motive, and never once should this motive be allowed to influence us. The conduct of others may be allowed to show us what we can do, and ought to do; but it should not be our sole aim to outstrip them; comp. 2 Cor. 9:2–4.

Or vain glory. The word here used—κενοδοξία—kenodoxia, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, though the adjective—κενόδοξος—kenodoxos, occurs once in Gal. 5:26; see Notes on that place. It means, properly empty pride, or glory, and is descriptive of vain and hollow parade and show. Suidas renders it, “any vain opinion about one’s self”—ματαία τις περὶ ἑαυτοῦ οἴησις. The idea seems to be that of mere self-esteem; a mere desire to honor ourselves, to attract attention, to win praise, to make ourselves uppermost, or foremost, or the main object. The command here solemnly forbids our doing anything with such an aim—no matter whether it be in intellectual attainments, in physical strength, in skill in music, in eloquence or song, in dress, furniture, or religion. Self is not to be foremost; selfishness is not to be the motive. Probably there is no command of the Bible which would have a wider sweep than this, or would touch on more points of human conduct, if fairly applied. Who is there who passes a single day without, in some respect, desiring to display himself? What minister of the gospel preaches, who never has any wish to exhibit his talents, eloquence, or learning? How few make a gesture, but with some wish to display the grace or power with which it is done! Who, in conversation, is always free from a desire to show his wit, or his power in argumentation, or his skill in repartee? Who plays at the piano without the desire of commendation? Who thunders in the senate, or goes to the field of battle; who builds a house, or purchases an article of apparel; who writes a book, or performs a deed of benevolence, altogether uninfluenced by this desire? If all could be taken out of human conduct which is performed merely from “strife,” or from “vain-glory,” how small a portion would be left!

But in lowliness of mind. Modesty, or humility. The word here used is the same which is rendered humility in Acts 20:19; Col. 2:18, 23; 1 Pet. 5:5; humbleness, in Col. 3:12; and lowliness, in Eph. 4:2; Phil. 2:3 It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It here means humility, and it stands opposed to that pride or self-valuation which would lead us to strive for the ascendancy, or which acts from a wish for flattery or praise. The best and the only true correction of these faults is humility. This virtue consists in estimating ourselves according to truth. It is a willingness to take the place which we ought to take in the sight of God and man; and, having the low estimate of our own importance and character which the truth about our insignificance as creatures and vileness as sinners would produce, it will lead us to a willingness to perform lowly and humble offices that we may benefit others.

Let each esteem other better than themselves; comp. 1 Pet. 5:5. This is one of the effects produced by true humility, and it naturally exists in every truly modest mind. The reasons are these. (1.) We are sensible of our own defects, but we have not the same clear view of the defects of others. We see our own hearts; we are conscious of the great corruption there; we have painful evidence of the impurity of the motives which often actuate us—the evil thoughts and corrupt desires in our own souls; but we have not the same view of the errors, defects, and follies of others. We can see only their outward conduct; but, in our own case, we can look within. It is natural for those who have any just sense of the depravity of their own souls, charitably to hope that it is not so with others, and to believe that they have purer hearts. This will lead us to feel that they are worthy of more respect than we are. Hence this is always the characteristic of modesty and humility—graces which the gospel is fitted eminently to produce. A truly pious man will be always, therefore, a humble man, and will wish that others should be preferred in office and honor to himself. Of course, this will not make him blind to the defects of others when they are manifested; but he will be himself retiring, modest, unambitious, unobtrusive. This rule of Christianity would strike a blow at all the ambition of the world. It would rebuke the love of office, and would produce universal contentment in any low condition of life where the providence of God may have cast our lot; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. 7:21.

4. Look not every man on his own things. That is, be not selfish. Do not let your care and attention be wholly absorbed by your own concerns, or by the concerns of your own family. Evince a tender interest for the happiness of the whole, and let the welfare of others lie near your hearts. This, of course, does not mean that there is to be any improper interference in the business of others, or that we are to have the character of “busy-bodies in other men’s matters” (comp, Notes, 2 Thess. 3:11; 1 Tim. 5:13; 1 Pet. 4:15); but that we are to regard, with appropriate solicitude the welfare of others, and to strive to do them good.

But every man also on the things of others. It is the duty of every man to do this. No one is at liberty to live for himself or to disregard the wants of others. The object of this rule is to break up the narrow spirit of selfishness, and to produce a benevolent regard for the happiness of others. In respect to the rule we may observe, (1.) We are not to be “busy-bodies” in the concerns of others; see the references above. We are not to attempt to pry into their secret purposes. Every man has his own plans, and thoughts, and intentions, which no other one has a right to look into. Nothing is more odious than an intermeddler in the concerns of others. (2.) We are not to obtrude our advice where it is not sought, or at unseasonable times and places, even if the advice is in itself good. No man likes to be interrupted to hear advice; and I have no right to require that he should suspend his business in order that I may give him counsel. (3.) We are not to find fault with what pertains exclusively to him. We are to remember that there are some things which are his business, not ours; and we are to learn to “possess our souls in patience,” if he does not give just as much as we think he ought to benevolent objects, or if he dresses in a manner not to please our taste, or if he indulges in things which do not accord exactly with our views. He may see reasons for his conduct which we do not; and it is possible that he may be right, and that, if we understood the whole case, we should think and act as he does. We often complain of a man because he does not give as much as we think he ought, to objects of charity; and it is possible that he may be miserably niggardly and narrow. But it is also possible that he may be more

embarrassed than we know of; or that he may just then have demands against him of which we are ignorant; or that he may have numerous poor relatives dependent on him; or that he gives much with “the left hand” which is not known by “the right hand.” At any rate, it is his business, not ours; and we are not qualified to judge until we understand the whole case. (4.) We are not to be gossips about the concerns of others. We are not to hunt up small stories, and petty scandals respecting their families; we are not to pry into domestic affairs, and divulge them abroad, and find pleasure in circulating such things from house to house. There are domestic secrets, which are not to be betrayed; and there is scarcely an offence of a meaner or more injurious character than to divulge to the public what we have seen in a family whose hospitality we have enjoyed. (5.) Where Christian duty and kindness require us to look into the concerns of others, there should be the utmost delicacy. Even children have their own secrets, and their own plans and amusements, on a small scale, quite as important to them as the greater games which we are playing in life; and they will feel the meddlesomeness of a busy-body to be as odious to them as we should in our plans. A delicate parent, therefore, who has undoubtedly a right to know all about his children, will not rudely intrude into their privacies, or meddle with their concerns. So, when we visit the sick, while we show a tender sympathy for them, we should not be too particular in inquiring into their maladies or their feelings. So, when those with whom we sympathize have brought their calamities on themselves by their own fault, we should not ask too many questions about it. We should not too closely examine one who is made poor by intemperance, or who is in prison for crime. And so, when we go to sympathize with those who have been, by a reverse of circumstances, reduced from affluence to penury, we should not ask too many questions. We should let them tell their own story. If they voluntarily make us their confidants, and tell us all about their circumstances, it is well; but let us not drag out the circumstances, or wound their feelings by our impertinent inquiries, or our indiscreet sympathy in their affairs. There are always secrets which the sons and daughters of misfortune would wish to keep to themselves. But, while these things are true, it is also true that the rule before us positively requires us to show an interest in the concerns of others; and it may be regarded as implying the following things: (1.) We are to feel that the spiritual interests of everyone in the church is, in a certain sense, our own interest. The church is one. It is confederated together for a common object. Each one is entrusted with a portion of the honor of the whole, and the conduct of one member affects the character of all. We are, therefore, to promote, in every way possible, the welfare of every other member of the church. If they go astray, we are to admonish and entreat them; if they are in error, we are to instruct them; if they are in trouble, we are to aid them. Every member of the church has a claim on the sympathy of his brethren, and should be certain of always finding it when his circumstances are such as to demand it. (2.) There are circumstances where it is proper to look with special interest on the temporal concerns of others. It is when the poor, the fatherless, and the afflicted must be sought out in order to be aided and relieved. They are too retiring and modest to press their situation on the attention of others, and they need that others should manifest a generous care in their welfare in order to relieve them. This is not improper interference in their concerns, nor will it be so regarded. (3.) For a similar reason, we should seek the welfare of all others in a spiritual sense. We should seek to arouse the sinner, and lead him to the Savior. He is blind, and will not come himself; unconcerned, and will not seek salvation; filled with the love of this world, and will not seek a better; devoted to

pursuits that will lead him to ruin, and he ought to be apprised of it. It is no more an improper interference in his concerns to apprise him of his condition, and to attempt to lead him to the Savior, than it is to warn a man in a dark night, who walks on the verge of a precipice, of his peril; or to arouse one from sleep whose house is in flames. In like manner, it is no more intermeddling with the concerns of another to tell him that there is a glorious heaven which may be his, than it is to apprise a man that there is a mine of golden ore on his farm. It is for the man's own interest, and it is the office of a friend to remind him of these things. He does a man a favor who tells him that he has a Redeemer, and that there is a heaven to which he may rise; he does his neighbor the greatest possible kindness who apprizes him that there is a world of infinite woe, and tells him of an easy way by which he may escape it. The world around is dependent on the church of Christ to be apprised of these truths. The gay will not warn the gay of their danger; the crowd that presses to the theatre or the ball-room will not apprise those who are there that they are in the broad way to hell; and everyone who loves his neighbor, should feel sufficient interest in him to tell him that he may be eternally happy in heaven.

5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. The object of this reference to the example of the Savior is particularly to enforce the duty of humility. This was the highest example which could be furnished, and it would illustrate and confirm all the apostle had said of this virtue. The principle in the case is, that we are to make the Lord Jesus our model, and are in all respects to frame our lives, as far as possible, in accordance with this great example. The point here is, that he left a state of inexpressible glory, and took upon him the most humble form of humanity, and performed the most lowly offices, that he might benefit us.

6. Who, being in the form of God. There is scarcely any passage in the New Testament which has given rise to more discussion than this. The importance of the passage on the question of the Divinity of the Savior will be perceived at once, and no small part of the point of the appeal by the apostle depends, as will be seen, in the fact that Paul regarded the Redeemer as equal with God. If he was truly divine, then his consenting to become a man was the most remarkable of all possible acts of humiliation. The word rendered form—μορφή—*morphē*, occurs only in three places in the New Testament, and in each place is rendered form. Mark 16:12; Phil. 2:6, 7. In Mark it is applied to the form which Jesus assumed after his resurrection, and in which he appeared to two of his disciples on his way to Emmaus. "After that he appeared in another form unto two of them." This "form" was so unlike his usual appearance, that they did not know him. The word properly means, form, shape, bodily shape, especially a beautiful form, a beautiful bodily appearance. Passow. In ver. 7, it is applied to the appearance of a servant—"and took upon him the form of a servant;" that is, he was in the condition of a servant—or of the lowest condition. The word form is often applied to the gods by the classic writers, denoting their aspect or appearance when they became visible to men; see Cic. de Nat. Deor. ii. 2; Ovid, Meta. i. 73; Silius, xiii. 643; Xen. Memora. iv; Æneid, iv. 556, and other places cited by Wetstein, in loc. Hesychius explains it by ἰδέα εἶδος. The word occurs often in the Septuagint, (1.) as the translation of the word צִי—*Ziv*—splendor, Dan. 4:33; 5:6, 9, 10; 7:28; (2.) as the translation of the word תבנית—*Tabnith*, structure, model, pattern—as in building, Isa. 44:13; (3.) as the translation of the word תמונה—*temuna*—appearance, form, shape, image, likeness, Job 4:16; see also the Book of Wisdom 18:1. The word can have here only one of two meanings, either (1.)

splendour, majesty, glory—referring to the honor which the Redeemer had, his power to work miracles, &c.—or (2.) nature, or essence—meaning the same as φύσις, nature, or ουσία, being. The first is the opinion adopted by Crellius, Grotius, and others, and substantially by Calvin. Calvin says, “The form of God here denotes majesty. For as a man is known from the appearance of his form, so the majesty which shines in God, is his figure. Or to use a more appropriate similitude, the form of a king consists of the external marks which indicate a king—as his scepter, diadem, coat of mail, attendants, throne, and other insignia of royalty; the form of a consul is the toga, ivory chair, attending lictors, &c. Therefore, Christ before the foundation of the world was in the form of God, because he had glory with the Father before the world was; John 17:5. For in the wisdom of God, before he put on our nature, there was nothing humble or abject, but there was magnificence worthy of God.” Comm. in loc. The second opinion is, that the word is equivalent to nature, or being; that is, that he was in the nature of God, or his mode of existence was that of God, or was divine. This is the opinion adopted by Schleusner (Lex.); Prof. Stuart (Letters to Dr. Channing, p. 40); Doddridge, and by orthodox expositors in general, and seems to me to be the correct interpretation. In support of this interpretation, and in opposition to that which refers it to his power of working miracles, or his divine appearance when on earth, we may adduce the following considerations. (1.) The “form” here referred to must have been something before he became a man, or before he took upon him the form of a servant. It was something from which he humbled himself by making “himself of no reputation;” by taking upon himself “the form of a servant;” and by being made “in the likeness of men.” Of course, it must have been something which existed when he had not the likeness of men; that is, before he became incarnate. He must therefore have had an existence before he appeared on earth as a man, and in that previous state of existence there must have been something which rendered it proper to say that he was “in the form of God.” (2.) That it does not refer to any moral qualities, or to his power of working miracles on earth, is apparent from the fact that these were not laid aside. When did he divest himself of these in order that he might humble himself? There was something which he possessed which made it proper to say of him that he was “in the form of God,” which he laid aside when he appeared in the form of a servant and in the likeness of men. But assuredly that could not have been his moral qualities, nor is there any conceivable sense in which it can be said that he divested himself of the power of working miracles in order that he might take upon himself the “form of a servant.” All the miracles which he ever wrought were performed when he sustained the form of a servant, in his lowly and humble condition. These considerations make it certain that the apostle refers to a period before the incarnation. It may be added (3.) that the phrase “form of God” is one that naturally conveys the idea that he was God. When it is said that he was “in the form of a servant,” the idea is, that he was actually in a humble and depressed condition, and not merely that he appeared to be. Still, it may be asked, what was the “form” which he had before his incarnation? What is meant by his having been then “in the form of God?” To these questions perhaps no satisfactory answer can be given. He himself speaks (John 17:5) of “the glory which he had with the Father before the world was;” and the language naturally conveys the idea that there was then a manifestation of the divine nature through him, which in some measure ceased when he became incarnate; that there was some visible splendour and majesty which was then laid aside. What manifestation of his glory God may make in the heavenly world, of course, we cannot now understand. Nothing forbids us,

however, to suppose that there is some such visible manifestation; some splendour and magnificence of God in the view of the angelic beings such as becomes the Great Sovereign of the universe—for he “dwells in light which no man can approach unto;” 1 Tim 6:16. That glory, visible manifestation, or splendour, indicating the nature of God, it is here said that the Lord Jesus possessed before his incarnation.

Thought it not robbery to be equal with God. This passage, also, has given occasion to much discussion. Prof. Stuart renders it, “did not regard his equality with God as an object of solicitous desire;” that is, that though he was of a divine nature or condition, he did not eagerly seek to retain his equality with God, but took on him a humble condition—even that of a servant. Letters to Channing, pp. 88–92. That this is the correct rendering of the passage is apparent from the following considerations;—(1.) It accords with the scope and design of the apostle’s reasoning. His object is not to show, as our common translation would seem to imply, that he aspired to be equal with God, or that he did not regard it as an improper invasion of the prerogatives of God to be equal with him, but that he did not regard it, in the circumstances of the case, as an object to be greatly desired, or eagerly sought to retain his equality with God. Instead of retaining this by an earnest effort, or by a grasp which he was unwilling to relinquish, he chose to forego the dignity, and to assume the humble condition of a man. (2.) It accords better with the Greek than the common version. The word rendered robbery—*ἀρπαγμος*—is found nowhere else in the New Testament, though the verb from which it is derived frequently occurs; Matt. 11:12; 13:19; John 6:15; 10:12, 28, 29; Acts 8:29; 23:10; 2 Cor. 12:2, 4; 1 Thess. 4:17; Jude 23; Rev. 12:5. The notion of violence, or seizing, or carrying away, enters into the meaning of the word in all these places. The word here used does not properly mean an act of robbery, but the thing robbed—the plunder—*das Rauben* (Passow), and hence something to be eagerly seized and appropriated. Schleusner; comp. Storr, *Opuscul. Acade.* i. 322, 323. According to this, the meaning of the word here is, something to be seized and eagerly sought, and the sense is, that his being equal with God was not a thing to be anxiously retained. The phrase “thought it not,” means “did not consider;” it was not judged to be a matter of such importance that it could not be dispensed with. The sense is, “he did not eagerly seize and tenaciously hold” as one does who seizes prey or spoil. So Rosenmüller, Schleusner, Bloomfield, Stuart, and others understand it.

To be equal with God. *τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ*. That is, the being equal with God he did not consider a thing to be tenaciously retained. The plural neuter form of the word equal in Greek—*ἴσα*—is used in accordance with a known rule of the language, thus stated by Buttman: “When an adjective as predicate is separated from its substantive, it often stands in the neuter where the substantive is a masculine or feminine, and in the singular where the substantive is in the plural. That which the predicate expresses is, in this case, considered in general as a thing.” *Gr. Gram.*, § 129. 6. The phrase “equal with God,” or “equal with the gods,” is of frequent occurrence in the Greek Classics; see Wetstein in loc. The very phrase here used occurs in the *Odyssey*, O.

Τον νῦν ἴσα Θεῷ Ἰθακήσιοι εισορόωσι.

Comp. John 5:18. “Made himself equal with God.” The phrase means one who sustains the same rank, dignity, nature. Now it could not be said of an angel that he was in any sense equal with God; much less could this be said of a mere man. The natural and obvious meaning of the language is, that there was an equality of nature and of rank with God, from which he humbled himself when he became a man. The meaning of the whole verse, according to the interpretation suggested above, is, that Christ, before he became a man, was invested with honor, majesty, and glory, such as was appropriate to God himself; that there was some manifestation or splendour in his existence and mode of being then, which showed that he was equal with God; that he did not consider that that honor, indicating equality with God, was to be retained at all events, and so as to do violence, as it were, to other interests, and to rob the universe of the glory of redemption; and that he was willing, therefore, to forget that, or lay it by for a time, in order that he might redeem the world. There were a glory and majesty which were appropriate to God, and which indicated equality with God—such as none but God could assume. For how could an angel have such glory, or such external splendour in heaven, as to make it proper to say that he was “equal with God?” With what glory could he be invested which would be such as became God only? The fair interpretation of this passage, therefore, is, that Christ before his incarnation was equal with God.

7. But made himself of no reputation. This translation by no means conveys the sense of the original. According to this it would seem that he consented to be without distinction or honor among men; or that he was willing to be despised or disregarded. The Greek is *ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε*. The word *κενόω* means literally, to empty, to make empty, to make vain or void. It is rendered made void in Rom. 4:14; made of none effect, 1 Cor. 1:17; make void, 1 Cor. 9:15; should be vain 2 Cor. 9:3. The word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, except in the passage before us. The essential idea is that of bringing to emptiness, vanity, or nothingness; and hence it is applied to a case where one lays aside his rank and dignity, and becomes in respect to that as nothing; that is, he assumes a more humble rank and station. In regard to its meaning here, we may remark (1.) that it cannot mean that he literally divested himself of his divine nature and perfections, for that was impossible. He could not cease to be omnipotent, and omnipresent, and most holy, and true, and good. (2.) It is conceivable that he might have laid aside, for a time, the symbols or the manifestation of his glory, or that the outward expressions of his majesty in heaven might have been withdrawn. It is conceivable for a divine being to intermit the exercise of his almighty power, since it cannot be supposed that God is always exerting his power to the utmost. And in like manner there might be for a time a laying aside or intermitting of these manifestations or symbols, which were expressive of the divine glory and perfections. Yet (3.) this supposes no change in the divine nature, or in the essential nature of the divine perfections. When the sun is obscured by a cloud, or in an eclipse, there is no real change of its glory, nor are his beams extinguished, nor is the sun himself in any measure changed. His luster is only for a time obscured. So it might have been in regard to the manifestation of the glory of the Son of God. Of course, there is much in regard to this which is obscure, but the language of the apostle undoubtedly implies more than that he took a humble place, or that he demeaned himself in a humble manner. In regard to the actual change respecting his manifestations in heaven, or the

withdrawing of the symbols of his glory there, the Scriptures are nearly silent, and conjecture is useless—perhaps improper. The language before us fairly implies that he laid aside that which was expressive of his being divine—that glory which is involved in the phrase “being in the form of God”—and took upon himself another form and manifestation in the condition of a servant.

And took upon him the form of a servant. The phrase “form of a servant,” should be allowed to explain the phrase “form of God,” in ver. 6. The “form of a servant” is that which indicates the condition of a servant, in contradistinction from one of higher rank. It means to appear as a servant, to perform the offices of a servant, and to be regarded as such. He was made like a servant in the lowly condition which he assumed. The whole connection and force of the argument here demands this interpretation. Storr and Rosenmüller interpret this as meaning that he became the servant or minister of God, and that in doing it, it was necessary that he should become a man. But the objection to this is obvious. It greatly weakens the force of the apostle’s argument. His object is to state the depth of humiliation to which he descended; and this was best done by saying that he descended to the lowest condition of humanity, and appeared in the most humble garb. The idea of being a “servant or minister of God” would not express that, for this is a term which might be applied to the highest angel in heaven. Though the Lord Jesus was not literally a servant or slave, yet what is here affirmed was true of him in the following respects:— (1.) he occupied a most lowly condition in life; and (2.) he condescended to perform such acts as are appropriate only to those who are servants. “I am among you as he that serveth;” Luke 22:27; comp. John 13:4–15.

And was made in the likeness of men. Marg., habit. The Greek word means likeness, resemblance. The meaning is, he was made like unto men by assuming such a body as theirs; see Notes, chap. 3:3.

8. And being found. That is, being such, or existing as a man, he humbled himself.

In fashion as a man. The word rendered fashion—σχήμα—means figure, mien, deportment. Here it is the same as state, or condition. The sense is, that when he was reduced to this condition, he humbled himself, and obeyed even unto death. He took upon himself all the attributes of a man. He assumed all the innocent infirmities of our nature. He appeared as other men do, was subjected to the necessity of food and raiment, like others, and was made liable to suffering, as other men are. It was still he who had been in the “form of God” who thus appeared; and, though his divine glory had been for a time laid aside, yet it was not extinguished or lost. It is important to remember, in all our meditations on the Savior, that it was the same Being who had been invested with so much glory in heaven, that appeared on earth in the form of a man.

He humbled himself. Even then, when he appeared as a man. He had not only laid aside the symbols of his glory (ver. 7), and become a man; but when he was a man, he humbled himself. Humiliation was a constant characteristic of him as a man. He did not aspire to high honors; he did not affect pomp and parade; he did not demand the service of a train of menials; but he condescended to the lowest conditions of life; Luke 22:27. The words here are very carefully chosen. In the former case (ver. 7), when he became a man, he “emptied himself,” or

laid aside the symbols of his glory; now, when a man, he humbled himself. That is, though he was God appearing in the form of man—a divine person on earth—yet he did not assume and assert the dignity and prerogatives appropriate to a divine being, but put himself in a condition of obedience. For such a being to obey law implied voluntary humiliation; and the greatness of his humiliation was shown by his becoming entirely obedient, even till he died on the cross.

And became obedient. He subjected himself to the law of God, and wholly obeyed it; Heb. 10:7, 9. It was a characteristic of the Redeemer that he yielded perfect obedience to the will of God. Should it be said that, if he was God himself, he must have been himself the lawgiver, we may reply that this rendered his obedience the more wonderful and the more meritorious. If a monarch should for an important purpose place himself in a position to obey his own laws, nothing could show in a more striking manner their importance in his view. The highest honor that has been shown to the law of God on earth was, that it was perfectly observed by him who made the law—the great Mediator.

Unto death. He obeyed even when obedience terminated in death. The point of this expression is this: One may readily and cheerfully obey another where there is no particular peril. But the case is different where obedience is attended with danger. The child shows a spirit of true obedience when he yields to the commands of a father, though it should expose him to hazard; the servant who obeys his master, when obedience is attended with risk of life; the soldier, when he is morally certain that to obey will be followed by death. Thus, many a company or platoon has been ordered into the “deadly breach,” or directed to storm a redoubt, or to scale a wall, or to face a cannon, when it was morally certain that death would be the consequence. No profounder spirit of obedience can be evinced than this. It should be said, however, that the obedience of the soldier is in many cases scarcely voluntary, since, if he did not obey, death would be the penalty. But in the case of the Redeemer, it was wholly voluntary. He placed himself in the condition of a servant to do the will of God, and then never shrank from what that condition involved.

Even the death of the cross. It was not such a death as a servant might incur by crossing a stream, or by falling among robbers, or by being worn out by toil; it was not such as the soldier meets when he is suddenly cut down, covered with glory as he falls; it was the long, lingering, painful, humiliating death of the cross. Many a one might be willing to obey if the death that was suffered was regarded as glorious; but when it is ignominious, and of the most degrading character, and the most torturing that human ingenuity can invent, then the whole character of the obedience is changed. Yet this was the obedience the Lord Jesus evinced; and it was in this way that his remarkable readiness to suffer was shown.

9. Wherefore. As a reward of this humiliation and these sufferings. The idea is, that there was an appropriate reward for it, and that that was bestowed upon him by his exaltation as Mediator to the right hand of God; comp. Notes on Heb. 2:9.

God also hath highly exalted him. As Mediator. Though he was thus humbled, and appeared in the form of a servant, he is now raised up to the throne of glory, and to universal dominion. This exaltation is spoken of the Redeemer as he was, sustaining a divine and a human

nature. If there was, as has been supposed, some obscuration or withdrawing of the symbols of his glory (ver. 7), when he became a man, then this refers to the restoration of that glory, and would seem to imply, also, that there was additional honor conferred on him. There was all the augmented glory resulting from the work which he had performed in redeeming man.

And given him a name which is above every name. No other name can be compared with his. It stands alone. He only is Redeemer, Savior. He only is Christ, the Anointed of God; see Notes on Heb. 1:4. He only is the Son of God. His rank, his titles, his dignity, are above all others; see this illustrated in the Notes on Eph. 1:20, 21.

10. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. The knee should bow, or bend, in token of honor, or worship; that is, all men should adore him. This cannot mean merely that at the mention of the name of Jesus we should bow; nor is there any evidence that God requires this. Why should we bow at the mention of that name, rather than at any of the other titles of the Redeemer? Is there any special sacredness or honor in it above the other names which he bears? And why should we bow at his name rather than at the name of the Father? Besides, if any special homage is to be paid to the name of the Savior under the authority of this passage—and this is the only one on which the authority of this custom is based—it should be by bowing the knee, not the “head.” But the truth is, this authorizes and requires neither; and the custom of bowing at the name of Jesus, in some churches, has arisen entirely from a misinterpretation of this passage. There is no other place in the Bible to which an appeal is made to authorize the custom; comp. Neal’s History of the Puritans, chap. 5. Ninth. 5. The meaning here is, not that a special act of respect or adoration should be shown wherever the name “Jesus” occurs in reading the Scriptures, or whenever it is mentioned, but that he was so exalted that it would be proper that all in heaven and on earth should worship him, and that the time would come when he would be thus everywhere acknowledged as Lord. The bowing of the knee properly expresses homage, respect, adoration, (comp. Notes, Rom. 11:4); and it cannot be done to the Savior by those who are in heaven, unless it be divine.

Of things in heaven. ἐπουρανίων—rather of beings in heaven, the word “things” being improperly supplied by our translators. The word may be in the neuter plural; but it may be also in the masculine plural, and denote beings rather than things. Things do not bow the knee; and the reference here is undoubtedly to angels, and to the “spirits of the just made perfect” in heaven. If Jesus is worshipped there, he is divine; for there is no idolatry of a creature in heaven. In this whole passage there is probably an allusion to Isa 45:23; see it illustrated in the Notes on Rom. 14:11. In the great divisions here specified—of those in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth—the apostle intends, doubtless, to denote the universe. The same mode of designating the universe occurs in Rev. 5:13; Ex. 20:4; comp. Ps. 96:11, 12. This mode of expression is equivalent to saying, “all that is above, around, and beneath us,” and arises from what appears to us. The division is natural and obvious—that which is above us in the heavens, that which is on the earth where we dwell, and all that is beneath us.

And things in earth. Rather, “beings on earth,” to wit, men; for they only are capable of rendering homage.

And things under the earth. Beings under the earth. The whole universe shall confess that he is Lord. This embraces, doubtless, those who have departed from this life, and perhaps includes also fallen angels. The meaning is, that they shall all acknowledge him as universal Lord; all bow to his sovereign will; all be subject to his control; all recognize him as divine. The fallen and the lost will do this; for they will be constrained to yield an unwilling homage to him by submitting to the sentence from his lips that shall consign them to woe; and thus, the whole universe shall acknowledge the exalted dignity of the Son of God. But this does not mean that they will all be saved, for the guilty and the lost may be compelled to acknowledge his power, and submit to his decree as the sovereign of the universe. There is the free and cheerful homage of the heart which they who worship him in heaven will render; and there is the constrained homage which they must yield who are compelled to acknowledge his authority.

11. And that every tongue should confess. Everyone should acknowledge him. On the duty and importance of confessing Christ, see Notes on Rom. 10:9, 10.

That Jesus Christ is Lord. The word Lord, here, is used in its primitive and proper sense, as denoting owner, ruler, sovereign; comp. Notes, Rom. 14:9. The meaning is, that all should acknowledge him as the universal sovereign.

To the glory of God the Father. Such a universal confession would honor God; see Notes on John 5:23, where this sentiment is explained.

12. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed. The Philippians had from the beginning manifested a remarkable readiness to show respect to the apostle, and to listen to his teaching. This readiness he more than once refers to and commends. He still appeals to them, and urges them to follow his counsels, that they might secure their salvation.

Now much more in my absence. Though they had been obedient when he was with them, yet circumstances had occurred in his absence which made their obedience more remarkable, and more worthy of special commendation.

Work out your own salvation. This important command was first addressed to Christians, but there is no reason why the same command should not be regarded as addressed to all—for it is equally applicable to all. The duty of doing this is enjoined here; the reason for making the effort, or the encouragement for the effort, is stated in the next verse. In regard to the command here, it is natural to inquire why it is a duty; and what is necessary to be done in order to comply with it? On the first of these inquiries, it may be observed that it is a duty to make a personal effort to secure salvation, or to work out our salvation: (1.) Because God commands it. There is no command more frequently repeated in the Scriptures, than the command to make to ourselves a new heart; to strive to enter in at the strait gate; to break off from sin, and to repent. (2.) It is a duty because it is our own personal interest that is at stake. No other one has, or can have, as much interest in our salvation as we have. It is every man's duty to be as happy as possible here, and to be prepared for eternal happiness in the future world. No man has a right either to throw away his life or his soul. He has no more right to do the one than the other; and if it is a man's duty to endeavor to save his life when in danger of drowning, it is no less his duty to endeavor to save his soul when in danger of hell. (3.) Our earthly friends cannot save us. No effort of theirs

can deliver us from eternal death without our own exertion. Great as may be their solicitude for us, and much as they may do, there is a point where their efforts must stop—and that point is always short of our salvation, unless we are roused to seek salvation. They may pray, and weep, and plead, but they cannot save us. There is a work to be done on our own hearts which they cannot do. (4.) It is a duty, because the salvation of the soul will not take care of itself without an effort on our part. There is no more reason to suppose this than that health and life will take care of themselves without our own exertion. And yet many live as if they supposed that somehow all would yet be well; that the matter of salvation need not give them any concern, for that things will so arrange themselves that they will be saved. Why should they suppose this any more in regard to religion than in regard to anything else? (5.) It is a duty, because there is no reason to expect the divine interposition without our own effort. No such interposition is promised to any man, and why should he expect it? In the case of all who have been saved, they have made an effort—and why should we expect that God will favor us more than he did them? “God helps them who help themselves;” and what reason has any man to suppose that he will interfere in his case and save him, if he will put forth no effort to “work out his own salvation?” In regard to the other inquiry—What does the command imply; or what is necessary to be done in order to comply with it? we may observe, that it does not mean (1.) that we are to attempt to deserve salvation on the ground of merit. That is out of the question; for what can man do that shall be an equivalent for eternal happiness in heaven? Nor (2.) does it mean that we are to endeavor to make atonement for past sins. That would be equally impossible, and it is, besides, unnecessary. That work has been done by the great Redeemer. But it means, (1.) that we are to make an honest effort to be saved in the way which God has appointed; (2.) that we are to break off from our sins by true repentance; (3.) that we are to believe in the Savior, and honestly to put our trust in him; (4.) that we are to give up all that we have to God; (5.) that we are to break away from all evil companions and evil plans of life; and (6.) that we are to resist all the allurements of the world, and all the temptations which may assault us that would lead us back from God, and are to persevere unto the end. The great difficulty in working out salvation is in forming a purpose to begin at once. When that purpose is formed, salvation is easy.

With fear and trembling. That is, with that kind of anxiety which one has who feels that he has an important interest at stake, and that he is in danger of losing it. The reason or the ground for “fear” in this case is in general this: there is danger of losing the soul. (1.) So many persons make shipwreck of all hope and perish, that there is danger that we may also. (2.) There are so many temptations and allurements in the world, and so many things that lead us to defer attention to religion, that there is danger that we may be lost. (3.) There is danger that if the present opportunity passes, another may not occur. Death may soon overtake us. No one has a moment to lose. No one can designate one single moment of his life, and say, “I may safely lose that moment. I may safely spend it in the neglect of my soul.” (4.) It should be done with the most earnest concern, from the immensity of the interest at stake. If the soul is lost, all is lost. And who is there that can estimate the value of that soul which is thus in danger of being lost forever?

13. For it is God that worketh in you. This is given as a reason for making an effort to be saved, or for working out our salvation. It is often thought to be the very reverse, and men often

feel that if God works “in us to will and to do,” there can be no need of our making an effort, and that there would be no use in it. If God does all the work, say they, why should we not patiently sit still, and wait until he puts forth his power and accomplishes in us what he wills? It is of importance, therefore, to understand what this declaration of the apostle means, in order to see whether this objection is valid, or whether the fact that God “works in us” is to be regarded as a reason why we should make no effort. The word rendered worketh—ἐνεργῶν—working—is from a verb meaning to work, to be active, to produce effect—and is that from which we have derived the word energetic. The meaning is, that God produces a certain effect in us; he exerts such an influence over us as to lead to a certain result in our minds—to wit, “to will and to do.” Nothing is said of the mode in which this is done, and probably this cannot be understood by us here; comp. John 3:8. In regard to the divine agency here referred to, however, certain things, though of a negative character, are clear. (1.) It is not God who acts for us. He leads us to “will and to do.” It is not said that he wills and does for us, and it cannot be. It is man that “wills and does”—though God so influences him that he does it. (2.) He does not compel or force us against our will. He leads us to “will as well as to “do.” The will cannot be forced; and the meaning here must be that God exerts such an influence as to make us willing to obey him; comp. Ps. 110:3. (3.) It is not a physical force, but it must be a moral influence. A physical power cannot act on the will. You may chain a man, incarcerate him in the deepest dungeon, starve him, scourge him, apply red-hot pincers to his flesh, or place on him the thumb-screw, but the will is still free. You cannot bend that or control it, or make him believe otherwise than as he chooses to believe. The declaration here, therefore, cannot mean that God compels us, or that we are anything else but free agents still, though he “works in us to will and to do.” It must mean merely that he exerts such an influence as to secure this result.

To will and to do of his good pleasure. Not to will and to do everything, but ‘his good pleasure.’ The extent of the divine agency here referred to, is limited to that, and no man should adduce this passage to prove that God “works” in him to lead him to commit sin. This passage teaches no such doctrine. It refers here to Christians, and means that he works in their hearts that which is agreeable to him, or leads them to “will and to do” that which is in accordance with his own will. The word rendered “good pleasure”—εὐδοκία—means delight, good-will, favor; then good pleasure, purpose, will; see Eph. 1:5; 2 Thess. 1:11. Here it means that which would be agreeable to him; and the idea is, that he exerts such an influence as to lead men to will and to do that which is in accordance with his will. Paul regarded this fact as a reason why we should work out our salvation with fear and trembling. It is with that view that he urges it, and not with any idea that it will embarrass our efforts, or be a hindrance to us in seeking salvation. The question then is, how this fact can be a motive to us to make an effort? In regard to this we may observe, (1.) That the work of our salvation is such that we need help, and such help as God only can impart. We need it to enable us to overcome our sins; to give us such a view of them as to produce true penitence; to break away from our evil companions; to give up our plans of evil, and to resolve to lead different lives. We need help that our minds may be enlightened; that we may be led in the way of truth; that we may be saved from the danger of error, and that we may not be suffered to fall back into the ways of transgression. Such help we should welcome from any quarter; and any assistance furnished on these points will not interfere with our freedom. (2.) The influence which God exerts on the mind is in the way of help or aid. What he does will not

embarrass or hinder us. It will prevent no effort which we make to be saved; it will throw no hindrance or obstacle in the way. When we speak of God's working "in us to will and to do," men often seem to suppose that his agency will hinder us, or throw some obstacle in our way, or exert some evil influence on our minds, or make it more difficult for us to work out our salvation than it would be without his agency. But this cannot be. We may be sure that all the influence which God exerts over our minds, will be to aid us in the work of salvation, not to embarrass us; will be to enable us to overcome our spiritual enemies and our sins, and not to put additional weapons into their hands or to confer on them new power. Why should men ever dread the influence of God on their hearts, as if he would hinder their efforts for their own good? (3.) The fact that God works is an encouragement for us to work. When a man is about to set out a peach or an apple tree, it is an encouragement for him to reflect that the agency of God is around him, and that he can cause the tree to produce blossoms, and leaves, and fruit. When he is about to plough and sow his farm, it is an encouragement, not a hindrance, to reflect that God works, and that he can quicken the grain that is sown, and produce an abundant harvest. What encouragement of a higher order can man ask? And what farmer is afraid of the agency of God in the case, or supposes that the fact that God exerts an agency is a reason why he should not plough and plant his field, or set out his orchard? Poor encouragement would a man have in these things if God did not exert any agency in the world, and could not be expected to make the tree grow or to cause the grain to spring up; and equally poor would be all the encouragement in religion without his aid.

14. Do all things without murmurings and disputings. In a quiet, peaceful, inoffensive manner. Let there be no brawls, strifes, or contentions. The object of the apostle here is, probably, to illustrate the sentiment which he had expressed in ver. 3–5, where he had inculcated the general duties of humbleness of mind, and of esteeming others better than themselves. In order that that spirit might be fully manifested, he now enjoins the duty of doing everything in a quiet and gentle manner, and of avoiding any species of strife; see Notes on Eph. 4:31, 32.

15. That ye may be blameless. That you may give no occasion for others to accuse you of having done wrong.

And harmless. Marg., sincere. The Greek word (ἀκέραιος) means properly that which is unmixed; and then pure, sincere. The idea here is, that they should be artless, simple, without guile. Then they would injure no one. The word occurs only in Matt. 10:16; Phil. 2:15, where it is rendered harmless, and Rom. 16:19, where it is rendered sincere; see Notes Matt. 10:16, and Rom. 16:19.

The sons of God. The children of God; a phrase by which true Christians were denoted; see Notes, Matt. 5:45; Eph. 5:1.

Without rebuke. Without blame; without giving occasion for anyone to complain of you.

In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. Among those of perverted sentiments and habits; those who are disposed to complain and find fault; those who will take every occasion to pervert what you do and say, and who seek every opportunity to retard the cause of truth and righteousness. It is not certainly known to whom the apostle refers here, but it seems not

improbable that he had particular reference to the Jews who were in Philippi. The language here used was employed by Moses (Deut. 32:5), as applicable to the Jewish people, and it is accurately descriptive of the character of the nation in the time of Paul. The Jews were among the most bitter foes of the gospel, and did perhaps more than any other people to embarrass the cause of truth and prevent the spread of the true religion.

Among whom ye shine. Marg., “or, shine ye.” The Greek will admit of either construction, and expositors have differed as to the correct interpretation. Rosenmüller, Doddridge, and others regard it as imperative, and as designed to enforce on them the duty of letting their light shine. Erasmus says it is doubtful whether it is to be understood in the indicative or imperative. Grotius, Koppe, Bloomfield, and others, regard it as in the indicative, and as teaching that they did in fact shine as lights in the world. The sense can be determined only by the connection; and in regard to it different readers will form different opinions. It seems to me that the connection seems rather to require the sense of duty or obligation to be understood. The apostle is enforcing on them the duty of being blameless and harmless; of holding forth the word of life; and it is in accordance with his design to remind them that they ought to be lights to those around them.

As lights in the world. The comparison of Christians with light, often occurs in the Scriptures; see Notes on Matt. 5:14, 16. The image here is not improbably taken from light-houses on a seacoast. The image then is, that as those light-houses are placed on a dangerous coast to apprize vessels of their peril, and to save them from shipwreck, so the light of Christian piety shines on a dark world, and in the dangers of the voyage which we are making; see the Note of Burder, in Ros. Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, in loc.

16. Holding forth the word of life. That is, you are under obligation to hold forth the word of life. It is a duty incumbent on you as Christians to do it. The “word of life” means the gospel, called the “word of life” because it is the message that promises life; or perhaps this is a Hebraism, denoting the living, or life-giving word. The gospel stands thus in contrast with all human systems of religion—for they have no efficacy to save—and to the law which “killeth;” see Notes on John 6:63, and 2 Cor. 3:6. The duty here enjoined is that of making the gospel known to others, and of thus keeping up the knowledge of it in the world. This duty rests on Christians (comp. Matt. 5:14, 16.), and they cannot escape from the obligation. They are bound to do this, not only because God commands it, but (1.) because they are called into the church that they may be witnesses for God, Isa. 43:10. (2.) Because they are kept on the earth for that purpose. If it were not for some such design, they would be removed to heaven at once on their conversion. (3.) Because there are no others to do it. The gay will not warn the gay, nor the proud the proud, nor the scoffer the scoffer. The thoughtless and the vain will not go and tell others that there is a God and a Savior; nor will the wicked warn the wicked, and tell them that they are in the way to hell. There are none who will do this but Christians; and, if they neglect it, sinners will go unwarned and unalarmed down to death. This duty rests on every Christian. The exhortation here is not made to the pastor, or to any officer of the church particularly; but to the mass of communicants. They are to shine as lights in the world; they are to hold forth the word of life. There is not one member of a church who is so obscure as to be exempt from the

obligation; and there is not one who may not do something in this work. If we are asked how this may be done, we may reply, (1.) they are to do it by example. Everyone is to hold forth the living word in that way. (2.) By efforts to send the gospel to those who have it not. There is almost no one who cannot contribute something, though it may be but two mites, to accomplish this. (3.) By conversation. There is no Christian who has not some influence over the minds and hearts of others; and he is bound to use that influence in holding forth the word of life. (4.) By defending the Divine origin of religion when attacked. (5.) By rebuking sin, and thus testifying to the value of holiness. The defense of the truth, under God, and the diffusion of a knowledge of the way of salvation, rests on those who are Christians. Paganism never originates a system which it would not be an advantage to the world to have destroyed as soon as it is conceived. Philosophy has never yet told of a way by which a sinner may be saved. The world at large devises no plan for the salvation of the soul. The most crude, ill-digested, and perverse systems of belief conceivable, prevail in the community called “the world.” Every form of opinion has an advocate there; every monstrous vagary that the human mind ever conceived, finds friends and defenders there. The human mind has of itself no elastic energy to bring it from the ways of sin; it has no recuperative power to lead it back to God. The world at large is dependent on the church for any just views of God, and of the way of salvation; and every Christian is to do his part in making that salvation known.

That I may rejoice. This was one reason which the apostle urged, and which it was proper to urge, why they should let their light shine. He had been the instrument of their conversion, he had founded their church, he was their spiritual father, and had shown the deepest interest in their welfare; and he now entreats them, as a means of promoting his highest joy, to be faithful and holy. The exemplary piety and holy lives of the members of a church will be one of the sources of highest joy to a pastor in the day of judgment; comp. 3 John 4.

In the day of Christ. The day when Christ shall appear—the day of judgment. It is called the day of Christ, because he will be the glorious object which will be prominent on that day; it will be the day in which he will be honored as the judge of all the world.

That I have not run in vain. That is, that I have not lived in vain—life being compared with a race; see Notes on 1 Cor. 9:26.

Neither labored in vain. In preaching the gospel. Their holy lives would be the fullest proof that he was a faithful preacher.

17. Yea, and if I be offered. Marg., poured forth. The mention of his labors in their behalf, in the previous verse, seems to have suggested to him the sufferings which he was likely yet to endure on their account. He had labored for their salvation. He had exposed himself to peril that they and others might have the gospel. On their account he had suffered much; he had been made a prisoner at Rome; and there was a possibility, if not a probability, that his life might be a forfeit for his labors in their behalf. Yet he says that, even if this should happen, he would not regret it, but it would be a source of joy. The word which is here used—σπένδομαι—properly means, to pour out, to make a libation; and is commonly used, in the classic writers, in connection with sacrifices. It refers to a drink-offering, where one who was about to offer a

sacrifice, or to present a drink-offering to the gods, before he tasted of it himself, poured out a part of it on the altar. Passow. It is used also to denote the fact that, when an animal was about to be slain in sacrifice, wine was poured on it as a solemn act of devoting it to God; comp. Num. 15:5; 28:7, 14. In like manner, Paul may have regarded himself as a victim prepared for the sacrifice. In the New Testament it is found only in this place, and in 2 Tim. 4:6, where it is rendered, "I am ready to be offered;" Notes on that place. It does not here mean that Paul really expected to be a sacrifice, or to make an expiation for sin by his death; but that he might be called to pour out his blood, or to offer up his life as if he were a sacrifice, or an offering to God. We have a similar use of language, when we say that a man sacrifices himself for his friends or his country.

Upon the sacrifice. ἐπὶ τῇ θυσίᾳ. The word here rendered sacrifice, means (1.) the act of sacrificing; (2.) the victim that is offered; and (3.) any oblation or offering. Robinson, Lex. Here it must be used in the latter sense, and is connected with "faith"—"the sacrifice of your faith." The reference is probably to the faith, i. e., the religion of the Philippians, regarded as a sacrifice or an offering to God; the worship which they rendered to him. The idea of Paul is, that if, in order to render that offering what it should be—to make it as complete and acceptable to God as possible—it were necessary for him to die, pouring out his blood, and strength, and life, as wine was poured out to prepare a sacrifice for the altar and make it complete, he would not refuse to do it, but would rejoice in the opportunity. He seems to have regarded them as engaged in making an offering of faith, and as endeavoring to make the offering complete and acceptable; and says that if his death were necessary to make their piety of the highest and most acceptable kind, he was ready to die.

And service. λειτουργία—a word taken from an act of worship, or public service, and especially the ministry of those engaged in offering sacrifices; Luke 1:23; Heb. 8:6. Here it means, the ministering or service which the Philippians rendered to God; the worship which they offered, the essential element of which was faith. Paul was willing to endure anything, even to suffer death in their cause, if it would tend to make their "service" more pure, spiritual, and acceptable to God. The meaning of the whole is, (1.) that the sufferings and dangers which he now experienced were in their cause, and on their behalf; and (2.) that he was willing to lay down his life, if their piety would be promoted, and their worship be rendered more pure and acceptable to God.

I joy. That is, I am not afraid of death; and if my dying can be the means of promoting your piety, it will be a source of rejoicing; comp. Notes on chap. 1:23.

And rejoice with you all. My joy will be increased in anything that promotes yours. The fruits of my death will reach and benefit you, and it will be a source of mutual congratulation.

18. For the same cause. Because we are united, and what affects one of us should affect both.

Do ye joy and rejoice with me. That is, "do not grieve at my death. Be not overwhelmed with sorrow, but let your hearts be filled with congratulation. It will be a privilege and a pleasure thus to die." This is a noble sentiment, and one that could have been uttered only by a heroic and

generous mind—by a man who did not dread death, and who felt that it was honorable thus to die. Doddridge has illustrated the sentiment by an appropriate reference to a fact stated by Plutarch. A brave Athenian returned from the battle of Marathon, bleeding with wounds and exhausted, and rushed into the presence of the magistrates, and uttered only these two words—*χαίρετε, χαίρομεν*—“rejoice, we rejoice,” and immediately expired. So, Paul felt that there was occasion for him, and for all whom he loved, to rejoice, if he was permitted to die in the cause of others, and in such a manner that his death would benefit the world.

19. But I trust in the Lord Jesus. His hope was that the Lord Jesus would so order affairs as to permit this—an expression that no man could use who did not regard the Lord Jesus as on the throne, and as more than human.

To send Timotheus shortly unto you. There was a special reason why Paul desired to send Timothy to them rather than any other person, which he himself states, ver. 22. “Ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.” From this passage, as well as from chap. 1:1, where Timothy is joined with Paul in the salutation, it is evident that he had been with the apostle at Philippi. But this fact is nowhere mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which contains an account of the visit of Paul to that place. The narrative in the Acts, however, as Dr. Paley has remarked (*Horæ Paulinæ*, in loc.), is such as to render this altogether probable, and the manner in which the fact is adverted to here is such as would have occurred to no one forging an epistle like this, and shows that the Acts of the Apostles and the epistle are independent books, and are not the work of imposture. In the Acts of the Apostles it is said that when Paul came to Derbe and Lystra he found a certain disciple named Timothy, whom he would have go forth with him; chap. 16:1–3. The narrative then proceeds with an account of the progress of Paul through various provinces of Asia Minor, till it brings him to Troas. There he was warned in a vision to go over into Macedonia. In pursuance of this call, he passed over the *Ægean* sea, came to Samothracia, and thence to Neapolis, and thence to Philippi. No mention is made, indeed, of Timothy as being with Paul at Philippi, but after he had left that city, and had gone to Berea, where the “brethren sent away Paul,” it is added, “but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.” From this it is evident that he had accompanied them in their journey, and had no doubt been with them at Philippi. For the argument which Dr. Paley has derived from the manner in which this subject is mentioned in the Acts, and in this epistle, in favor of the genuineness of the Scripture account; see *Horæ Paul.* on the epistle to the Philippians, No. iv.

When I know your state. It was a considerable time since Epaphroditus had left the Philippians, and since, therefore, Paul had been informed of their condition.

20. For I have no man like-minded. *Marg.*, so dear unto me. The Greek is, *ισόψυχον*—similar in mind, or like-minded. The meaning is, that there was no one with him who would feel so deep an interest in their welfare.

Who will naturally care? The word rendered naturally—*γνησίως*—means sincerely, and the idea is, that he would regard their interests with a sincere tenderness and concern. He might be depended on to enter heartily into their concerns. This arose doubtless from the fact that he

had been with them when the church was founded there, and that he felt a deeper interest in what related to the apostle Paul than any other man. Paul regarded Timothy as a son, and his sending him on such an occasion would evince the feelings of a father who should send a beloved son on an important message.

21. For all seek their own. That is, all who are with me. Who Paul had with him at this time is not fully known, but he doubtless means that this remark should apply to the mass of Christians and Christian ministers then in Rome. Perhaps he had proposed to some of them to go and visit the church at Philippi, and they had declined it because of the distance and the dangers of the way. When the trial of Paul came on before the emperor, all who were with him in Rome fled from him (2 Tim. 4:16), and it is possible that the same disregard of his wishes and his welfare had already begun to manifest itself among the Christians who were at Rome, so that he was constrained to say that, as a general thing, they sought their own ease and comfort, and were unwilling to deny themselves in order to promote the happiness of those who lived in the remote parts of the world. Let us not be harsh in judging them. How many professing Christians in our cities and towns are there now who would be willing to leave their business and their comfortable homes and go on an embassy like this to Philippi? How many are there who would not seek some excuse, and show that it was a characteristic that they “sought their own” rather than the things which pertained to the kingdom of Jesus Christ?

Not the things which are Jesus Christ’s. Which pertain to his cause and kingdom. They are not willing to practice self-denial in order to promote that cause. It is implied here (1.) that it is the duty of those who profess religion to seek the things which pertain to the kingdom of the Redeemer, or to make that the great and leading object of their lives. They are bound to be willing to sacrifice “their own” things—to deny themselves of ease, and to be always ready to expose themselves to peril and want if they may be the means of advancing his cause. (2.) That frequently this is not done by those who profess religion. It was the case with the professed Christians at Rome, and it is often the case in the churches now. There are few Christians who deny themselves much to promote the kingdom of the Redeemer; few who are willing to lay aside what they regard as “their own” in order to advance his cause. Men live for their own ease; for their families; for the prosecution of their own business—as if a Christian could have anything which he has a right to pursue independently of the kingdom of the Redeemer, and without regard to his will and glory.

22. But ye know the proof of him. You have had evidence among yourselves how faithfully Timothy devoted himself to the promotion of the gospel, and how constantly he served with me. This proves that Timothy was with Paul when he was at Philippi.

As a son with the father. Manifesting the same spirit towards me which a son does towards a father, and evincing the same interest in my work. He did all he could do to aid me, and lighten my labors and sufferings.

23. So soon as I shall see how it will go with me. Paul was a prisoner at Rome, and there was not a little uncertainty whether he would be condemned or acquitted. He was, it is commonly supposed, in fact released on the first trial; 2 Tim. 4:16. He now felt that he would

soon be able to send Timothy to them at any rate. If he was condemned and put to death, he would, of course, have no further occasion for his services, and if he was released from his present troubles and dangers, he could spare him for a season to go and visit the churches.

24. But I trust in the Lord, &c. Note, chap. 1:25.

25. Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus. Epaphroditus is nowhere else mentioned but in this epistle; see chap. 4:18. All that is known of him, therefore, is what is mentioned here. He was from Philippi, and was a member of the church there. He had been employed by the Philippians to carry relief to Paul when he was in Rome (chap. 4:18), and while in Rome he was taken dangerously sick. News of this had been conveyed to Philippi, and again intelligence had been brought to him that they had heard of his sickness and that they were much affected by it. On his recovery, Paul thought it best that he should return at once to Philippi, and doubtless sent this epistle by him. He is much commended by Paul for his faithfulness and zeal.

My brother. In the gospel; or brother Christian. These expressions of affectionate regard must have been highly gratifying to the Philippians.

And companion in labor. It is not impossible that he may have labored with Paul in the gospel, at Philippi; but more probably the sense is, that he regarded him as engaged in the same great work that he was. It is not probable that he assisted Paul much in Rome, as he appears to have been sick during a considerable part of the time he was there.

And fellow-soldier Christians and Christian ministers are compared with soldiers (Philem. 2; 2 Tim. 2:3, 4), because of the nature of the service in which they are engaged. The Christian life is a warfare; there are many foes to be overcome; the period which they are to serve is fixed by the Great Captain of salvation, and they will soon be permitted to enjoy the triumphs of victory. Paul regarded himself as enlisted to make war on all the spiritual enemies of the Redeemer, and he esteemed Epaphroditus as one who had shown that he was worthy to be engaged in so good a cause.

But your messenger. Sent to convey supplies to Paul; chap. 4:18. The original is, “your apostle”—ὁμῶν δὲ ἀπόστολον—and some have proposed to take this literally, meaning that he was the apostle of the church at Philippi, or that he was their bishop. The advocates for Episcopacy have been rather inclined to this, because in chap. 1:1, there are but two orders of ministers mentioned—“bishops and deacons”—from which they have supposed that “the bishop” might have been absent, and that “the bishop” was probably this Epaphroditus. But against this supposition the objections are obvious. (1.) The word ἀπόστολος means properly one sent forth, a messenger, and it is uniformly used in this sense unless there is something in the connection to limit it to an apostle, technically so called. (2.) The supposition that it here means a messenger meets all the circumstances of the case, and describes exactly what Epaphroditus did. He was in fact sent as a messenger to Paul; chap. 4:18. (3.) He was not an apostle in the proper sense of the term—the apostles having been chosen to be witnesses of the life, the teachings, the death, and the resurrection of the Savior; see Acts 1:22; comp. Notes, 1 Cor. 9:1. (4.) If he had been an apostle, it is altogether improbable that he would have been sent on an errand comparatively so

humble as that of carrying supplies to Paul. Was there no one else who could do this without sending their bishop? Would a diocese be likely to employ a “bishop” for such a purpose now?

And he that ministered to my wants; chap. 4:18.

26. For he longed after you all. He was desirous to see you all, and to relieve your anxiety in regard to his safety.

27. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death. Dr. Paley has remarked (Hor. Paul. on Phil. No. ii.) that the account of the sickness and recovery of Epaphroditus is such as to lead us to suppose that he was not restored by miracle; and he infers that the power of healing the sick was conferred on the apostles only occasionally, and did not depend at all on their will, since, if it had, there is every reason to suppose that Paul would at once have restored him to health. This account, he adds, shows also that this epistle is not the work of an impostor. Had it been, a miracle would not have been spared. Paul would not have been introduced as showing such anxiety about a friend lying at the point of death, and as being unable to restore him. It would have been said that he interposed at once, and raised him up to health.

But God had mercy on him. By restoring him to health, evidently not by miracle, but by the use of ordinary means.

On me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. In addition to all the sorrows of imprisonment, and the prospect of a trial, and the want of friends. The sources of his sorrow, had Epaphroditus died, would have been such as these: (1.) He would have lost a valued friend, and one whom he esteemed as a brother and worthy fellow-laborer. (2.) He would have felt that the church at Philippi had lost a valuable member. (3.) His grief might have been aggravated from the consideration that his life had been lost in endeavoring to do him good. He would have felt that he was the occasion, though innocent, of his exposure to danger.

28. I sent him therefore the more carefully. With more diligence, or speed; I was the more ready to send him.

That I may be the less sorrowful. That is, on account of my solicitude for you; that I may know that your minds are at ease, and that you rejoice in his being among you.

29. Receive him therefore in the Lord. As the servant of the Lord, or as now restored to you by the Lord, and therefore to be regarded as a fresh gift from God. Our friends restored to us after a long absence, we should receive as the gift of God, and as a proof of his mercy.

And hold such in reputation. Marg., honor such. This is a high commendation of Epaphroditus, and, at the same time, it enjoins an important duty in regard to the proper treatment of those who sustain such a character. It is a Christian duty to honor those who ought to be honored, to respect the virtuous and the pious, and especially to honor those who evince fidelity in the work of the Lord.

30. Because for the work of Christ. That is, either by exposing himself in his journey to see the apostle in Rome, or by his labors there.

Not regarding his life. There is a difference in the MSS. here, so great that it is impossible now to determine which is the true reading, though the sense is not materially affected. The common reading of the Greek text is, παραβουλευσάμενος; literally misconcluding, not consulting carefully, not taking pains. The other reading is, παραβολευσάμενος; exposing oneself to danger, regardless of life; see the authorities for this reading in Wetstein; comp. Bloomfield, in loc. This reading suits the connection, and is generally regarded as the correct one.

To supply your lack of service toward me. Not that they had been indifferent to him, or inattentive to his wants, for he does not mean to blame them; but they had not had an opportunity to send to his relief (see chap. 4:10), and Epaphroditus therefore made a special journey to Rome on his account. He came and rendered to him the service which they could not do in person; and what the church would have done, if Paul had been among them, he performed in their name and on their behalf.

Remarks

1. Let us learn to esteem others as they ought to be; ver. 3. Every person who is virtuous and pious has some claim to esteem. He has a reputation which is valuable to him and to the church, and we should not withhold respect from him. It is one evidence, also, of true humility and of right feeling, when we esteem them as better than ourselves, and when we are willing to see them honored, and are willing to sacrifice our own ease to promote their welfare. It is one of the instinctive promptings of true humility to feel that other persons are better than we are.

2. We should not be disappointed or mortified if others think little of us—if we are not brought into prominent notice among men; ver. 3. We profess to have a low opinion of ourselves, if we are Christians, and we ought to have; and why should we be chagrined and mortified if others have the same opinion of us? Why should we not be willing that they should accord in judgment with us in regard to ourselves?

3. We should be willing to occupy our appropriate place in the church; ver. 3. That is true humility; and why should anyone be unwilling to be esteemed just as he ought to be? Pride makes us miserable, and is the grand thing that stands in the way of the influence of the gospel on our hearts. No one can become a Christian who is not willing to occupy just the place which he ought to occupy; to take the lowly position as a penitent which he ought to take; and to have God regard and treat him just as he ought to be treated. The first, second, and third thing in religion is humility; and no one ever becomes a Christian who is not willing to take the lowly condition of a child.

4. We should feel a deep interest in the welfare of others; ver. 4. Men are by nature selfish, and it is the design of religion to make them benevolent. They seek their own interests by nature, and the gospel would teach them to regard the welfare of others. If we are truly under the influence of religion, there is not a member of the church in whom we should not feel an interest, and whose welfare we should not strive to promote as far as we have opportunity. And we may have opportunity every day. It is an easy matter to do good to others. A kind word, or even a

kind look, does good; and who is so poor that he cannot render this? Every day that we live, we come in contact with some who may be benefited by our example, our advice, or our alms; and every day, therefore, may be closed with the feeling that we have not lived in vain.

5. Let us in all things look to the example of Christ; ver. 5. He came that he might be an example; and he was exactly such an example as we need. We may be always sure that we are right when we follow his example and possess his spirit. We cannot be so sure that we are right in any other way. He came to be our model in all things, and in all the relations of life. (1.) He showed us what the law of God requires of us. (2.) He showed us what we should aim to be, and what human nature would be if it were wholly under the influence of religion. (3.) He showed us what true religion is, for it is just such as was seen in his life. (4.) He showed us how to act in our treatment of mankind. (5.) He showed us how to bear the ills of poverty, and want, and pain, and temptation, and reproach from the world. We should learn to manifest the same spirit in suffering which he did, for then we are sure we are right. (6.) And he has showed us how to die. He has exhibited in death just the spirit which we should when we die; for it is not less desirable to die well than to live well.

6. It is right and proper to worship Christ; ver. 6. He was in the form of God, and equal with God; and, being such, we should adore him. No one need be afraid to render too high honor to the Savior; and all piety may be measured by the respect which is shown to him. Religion advances in the world just in proportion as men are disposed to render honor to the Redeemer; it becomes dim and dies away just in proportion as that honor is withheld.

7. Like the Redeemer, we should be willing to deny ourselves in order that we may promote the welfare of others; ver. 6–8. We can never, indeed, equal his condescension. We can never stoop from such a state of dignity and honor as he did; but, in our measure, we should aim to imitate him. If we have comforts, we should be willing to deny ourselves of them to promote the happiness of others. If we occupy an elevated rank in life, we should be willing to stoop to one more humble. If we live in a palace, we should be willing to enter the most lowly cottage, if we can render its inmates happy.

8. Christ was obedient unto death; ver. 8. Let us be obedient also, doing the will of God in all things. If in his service we are called to pass through trials, even those which will terminate in death, let us obey. He has a right to command us, and we have the example of the Savior to sustain us. If he requires us, by his providence, and by the leadings of his Spirit, to forsake our country and home; to visit climes of pestilential air, or to traverse wastes of burning sand, to make his name known; if he demands that, in that service, we shall die far away from kindred and home, and that our bones shall be laid on the banks of the Senegal or the Ganges,—still, let us remember that these sufferings are not equal to those of the Master. He was an exile from heaven, in a world of suffering. Our exile from our own land is not like that from heaven; nor will our sufferings, though in regions of pestilence and death, be like his sufferings in the garden and on the cross.

9. Let us rejoice that we have a Savior who has ascended to heaven, and who is to be forever honored there; ver. 9–11. He is to suffer no more. He has endured the last pang; has

passed through a state of humiliation and woe which he will never repeat; and has submitted to insults and mockeries to which it will not be necessary for him to submit again. When we now think of the Redeemer, we can think of him as always happy and honored. There is no moment, by day or by night, in which he is not the object of adoration, love, and praise—nor will there ever be such a moment to all eternity. Our best friend is thus to be eternally revered, and in heaven he will receive a full reward for all his unparalleled woes.

10. Let us diligently endeavor to work out our salvation; ver. 12, 13. Nothing else so much demands our unceasing solicitude as this, and in nothing else have we so much encouragement. We are assured that God aids us in this work. He throws no obstructions in our path, but all that God does in the matter of salvation is in the way of help. He does not work in our evil passions, or impure desires, or unbelief;—his agency is to enable us to perform “his good pleasure,” or that which will please him—that is, that which is holy. The farmer is encouraged to plough and plant his fields when God works around him by sending the warm breezes of the spring, and by refreshing the earth with gentle dews and rains. And so, we may be encouraged to seek our salvation when God works in our hearts, producing serious thoughts, and a feeling that we need the blessings of salvation.

11. Christians should let their light shine; ver. 14–16. God has called them into his kingdom that they may show what is the nature and power of true religion. They are to illustrate in their lives the nature of that gospel which he has revealed, and to show its value in purifying the soul, and in sustaining it in the time of trial. The world is dependent on Christians for just views of religion, and every day that a Christian lives, he is doing something to honor or dishonor the gospel. Every word that he speaks, every expression of the eye, every cloud or beam of sunshine on his brow, will have some effect in doing this. He cannot live without making some impression upon the world around him, either favorable or unfavorable to the cause of his Redeemer.

12. We should be ready to die, if called to such a sacrifice in behalf of the church of Christ; ver. 17. We should rejoice in being permitted to suffer, that we may promote the welfare of others, and be the means of saving those for whom Christ died. It has been an honor to be a martyr in the cause of religion, and so it ever will be when God calls to such a sacrifice of life. If he calls us to it, therefore, we should not shrink from it, nor should we shrink from any sufferings by which we may honor the Savior, and rescue souls from death.

13. Let us learn, from the interesting narrative respecting Epaphroditus at the close of this chapter, to live and act as becomes Christians in every situation in life; ver. 25–30. It was much to have the praise of an apostle and to be commended for his Christian conduct, as this stranger in Rome was. He went there, not to view the wonders of the imperial city, and not to run the rounds of giddy pleasure there, but to perform an important duty of religion. While there he became sick—not by indulgence in pleasures; not as the result of feasting and revelry, but in the work of Christ. In a strange city, far from home, amidst the rich, the great, the gay; in a place where theatres opened their doors, and where places of amusement abounded, he led a life which an apostle could commend as pure. There is nothing more difficult for a Christian than to maintain an irreproachable walk when away from the usual restraints and influences that serve to

keep him in the paths of piety, and when surrounded with the fascinations and allurements of a great and wicked city. There strangers, extending the rites of hospitality, often invite the guest to places of amusement which the Christian would not visit were he at home. There the desire to see all that is to be seen, and to hear all that is to be heard, attracts him to the theatre, the opera, and the gallery of obscene and licentious statuary and painting. There the plea readily presents itself that an opportunity of witnessing these things may never occur again; that he is unknown, and that his example, therefore, can do no harm; that it is desirable, from personal observation, to know what is the condition of the world; or that perhaps his former views in these matters may have been precise and puritanical. To such considerations he yields; but yields only to regret it in future life. Rarely is such a thing done without its being in some way soon known; and rarely very rarely, does a Christian minister or other member of the church travel much without injury to his piety, and to the cause of religion. A Christian man who is under a necessity of visiting Europe from this country, should feel that he has special need of the prayers of his friends, that he may not dishonor his religion abroad; he who is permitted to remain at home, and to cultivate the graces of piety in his own family, and in the quiet scenes where he has been accustomed to move, should regard it as a cause of special thankfulness to God.

Chapter 3: Analysis of the Chapter

This chapter consists in the main, of exhortations to holy living, and to an effort to make great attainments in the divine life. It is full of tenderness and affection, and is one of the most beautiful appeals which can anywhere be found to induce Christians to devote themselves to the service of the Redeemer. The appeal is drawn in a great measure from the apostle's statement of his own feelings, and is one which the Philippians could not but feel, for they knew him well. In the course of the chapter, he adverts to the following points.

He exhorts them to rejoice in the Lord; ver. 1.

He warns them against the Jewish teachers who urged the necessity of complying with the Mosaic laws, and who appear to have boasted of their being Jews, and to have regarded themselves as the favorites of God on that account; ver. 2, 3.

To meet what they had said, and to show how little all that on which they relied was to be valued, Paul says that he had had advantages of birth and education which surpassed them all, and that all the claim to the favor of God, and all the hope of salvation which could be derived from birth, education, and a life of zeal and conformity to the law, had been his; ver. 4–5.

Yet he says, he had renounced all this, and now regarded it as utterly worthless in the matter of salvation. He had cheerfully suffered the loss of all things, and was willing still to do it, if he might obtain salvation through the Redeemer. Christ was more to him than all the advantages of birth, and rank, and blood; and all other grounds of dependence for salvation, compared with reliance on him, were worthless; ver. 7–11.

The object which he had sought in doing this, he says, he had not yet fully attained. He had seen enough to know its inestimable value, and he now pressed onward that he might secure all that he desired. The mark was before him, and he pressed on to secure the prize; ver. 12–14.

He exhorts them to aim at the same thing, and to endeavor to secure the same object, assuring them that God was ready to disclose to them all that they desired to know, and to grant all that they wished to obtain; ver. 15, 16.

This whole exhortation he enforces in the end of the chapter (ver. 17–21) by two considerations. One was, that there were not a few who had been deceived and who had no true religion—whom he had often warned with tears, ver. 18, 19; the other was, that the home, the citizenship of the true Christian, was in heaven, and they who were Christians ought to live as those Who expected soon to be there. The Savior would soon return to take them to glory. He would change their vile body, and make them like himself, and they should therefore live as became those who had a hope so blessed and transforming.

1. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. That is, in the Lord Jesus; see ver. 3; comp. Notes on Acts 1:24, and 1 Thess. 5:16. The idea here is, that it is the duty of Christians to rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ. This duty implies the following things. (1.) They should rejoice that they have such a Savior. Men everywhere have felt the need of a Savior, and to us it should be a subject of unfeigned joy that one has been provided for us. When we think of our sins, we may now rejoice that there is one who can deliver us from them; when we think of the worth of the soul, we may rejoice that there is one who can save it from death; when we think of our danger, we can rejoice that there is one who can rescue us from all peril, and bring us to a world where we shall be forever safe. (2.) We may rejoice that we have such a Savior. He is just such as we need. He accomplishes just what we want a Savior to do. We need one to make known to us a way of pardon, and he does it. We need one to make an atonement for sin, and he does it. We need one to give us peace from a troubled conscience, and he does it. We need one to support us in trials and bereavements, and he does it. We need one who can comfort us on the bed of death, and guide us through the dark valley, and the Lord Jesus is just what we want. When we look at his character, it is just such as it should be to win our hearts, and to make us love him; and when we look at what he has done, we see that he has accomplished all that we can desire, and why should we not rejoice? (3.) We may and should rejoice in him. The principal joy of the true Christian should be in the Lord. He should find his happiness not in riches, or gaiety, or vanity, or ambition, or books, or in the world in any form, but in communion with the Lord Jesus, and in the hope of eternal life through him. In his friendship, and in his service, should be the highest of our joys, and in these we may always be happy. It is the privilege, therefore, of a Christian to rejoice. He has more sources of joy than any other man—sources which do not fail when all others fail. Religion is not sadness or melancholy, it is joy; and the Christian should never leave the impression on others that his religion makes him either gloomy or morose. A cheerful countenance, an eye of benignity, a conversation pleasant and kind, should always evince the joy of his heart, and in all his intercourse with the world around him he should show that his heart is full of joy.

To write the same things. That is, to repeat the same truths and admonitions. Perhaps he refers in this to the exhortations which he had given them when he was with them, on the same topics on which he is now writing to them. He says, that for him to record these exhortations, and transmit them by a letter, might be the means of permanent welfare to them, and would not be burdensome or oppressive to him. It was not absolutely necessary for them, but still, it would be conducive to their order and comfort as a church. We may suppose that this chapter is a summary of what he had often inculcated when he was with them.

To me indeed is not grievous. It is not burdensome or oppressive to me to repeat these exhortations in this manner. They might suppose that in the multitude of cares which he had, and in his trials in Rome, it might be too great a burden for him to bestow so much attention on their interests.

But for you it is safe. It will contribute to your security as Christians, to have these sentiments and admonitions on record. They were exposed to dangers which made them proper. What those dangers were, the apostle specifies in the following verses.

2. Beware of dogs. Dogs in the east are mostly without masters; they wander at large in the streets and fields, and feed upon offals, and even upon corpses; comp. 1 Kings 14:11; 16:4; 21:19. They are held as unclean, and to call one a dog is a much stronger expression of contempt there than with us; 1 Sam. 17:43; 2 Kings 8:13. The Jews called the heathen dogs, and the Mohammedans call Jews and Christians by the same name. The term dog also is used to denote a person that is shameless, impudent, malignant, snarling, dissatisfied, and contentious, and is evidently so employed here. It is possible that the language used here may have been derived from some custom of affixing a caution, on a house that was guarded by a dog, to persons approaching it. Lenfant remarks that at Rome it was common for a dog to lie chained before the door of a house, and that a notice was placed in sight, "Beware of the dog." The same notice I have seen in this city affixed to the kennel of dogs in front of a bank, that were appointed to guard it. The reference here is, doubtless, to Judaizing teachers, and the idea is, that they were contentious, troublesome, dissatisfied, and would produce disturbance. The strong language which the apostle uses here, shows the sense which he had of the danger arising from their influence. It may be observed, however, that the term dogs is used in ancient writings with great frequency, and even by the most grave speakers. It is employed by the most dignified characters in the Iliad (Bloomfield), and the name was given to a whole class of Greek philosophers—the Cynics. It is used in one instance by the Savior; Matt. 7:6. By the use of the term here, there can be no doubt that the apostle meant to express strong disapprobation of the character and course of the persons referred to, and to warn the Philippians in the most solemn manner against them.

Beware of evil workers. Referring, doubtless, to the same persons that he had characterized as dogs. The reference is to Jewish teachers, whose doctrines and influence he regarded only as evil. We do not know what was the nature of their teaching, but we may presume that it consisted much in urging the obligations of the Jewish rites and ceremonies; in speaking of the advantage of having been born Jews; and in urging a compliance with the law in order to justification before God. In this way their teachings tended to set aside the great doctrine of salvation by the merits of the Redeemer.

Beware of the concision. Referring, doubtless, also to the Jewish teachers. The word rendered concision—κατατομή—means properly a cutting off, a mutilation. It is used here contemptuously for the Jewish circumcision, in contrast with the true circumcision Robinson, Lex. It is not to be understood that Paul meant to throw contempt on circumcision as enjoined by God, and as practiced by the pious Jews of other times (comp. Acts 16:3), but only as it was held by the false Judaizing teachers. As they held it, it was not the true circumcision. They made salvation to depend on it, instead of its being only a sign of the covenant with God. Such a doctrine, as they held it, was a mere cutting off of the flesh, without understanding anything of the true nature of the rite, and hence the unusual term by which he designates it. Perhaps, also, there may be included the idea that a doctrine so held would be in fact a cutting off of the soul; that is, that it tended to destruction. Their cutting and mangling the flesh might be regarded as an emblem of the manner in which their doctrine would cut and mangle the church.—Doddridge. The meaning of the whole is, that they did not understand the true nature of the doctrine of circumcision, but that with them it was a mere cutting of the flesh, and tended to destroy the church.

3. For we are the circumcision. We who are Christians. We have and hold the true doctrine of circumcision. We have that which was intended to be secured by this rite—for we are led to renounce the flesh, and to worship God in the spirit. The apostle in this verse teaches that the ordinance of circumcision was not designed to be a mere outward ceremony, but was intended to be emblematic of the renunciation of the flesh with its corrupt propensities, and to lead to the pure and spiritual worship of God. In this, he has undoubtedly stated its true design. They who now urged it as necessary to salvation, and who made salvation depend on its mere outward observance, had lost sight of this object of the rite. But this, the real design of circumcision, was attained by those who had been led to renounce the flesh, and who had devoted themselves to the worship of God; see Notes on Rom. 2:28, 29.

Which worship God in the spirit; see Notes on John 4:24; comp. Gen. 17:10–14.

And rejoice in Christ Jesus; see ver. 1. That is, we have, through him, renounced the flesh; we have become the true worshippers of God, and have thus attained what was originally contemplated by circumcision, and by all the other rites of religion.

And have no confidence in the flesh. In our own corrupt nature; or in any ordinances that relate merely to the flesh. We do not depend on circumcision for salvation, or on any external rites and forms whatever—on any advantage of rank, or blood. The word “flesh” here seems to refer to every advantage which any may have of birth; to any external conformity to the law, and to everything which unaided human nature can do to effect salvation. On none of these things can we put reliance for salvation; none of them will constitute a ground of hope.

4. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. That is, though I had uncommon advantages of this kind; and if anyone could have trusted in them, I could have done it. The object of the apostle is to show that he did not despise those things because he did not possess them, but because he now saw that they were of no value in the great matter of salvation. Once he had confided in them, and if anyone could find any ground of reliance on them, he could have

found more than any of them. But he had seen that all these things were valueless in regard to the salvation of the soul. We may remark here, that Christians do not despise or disregard advantages of birth, or amiableness of manners, or external morality, because they do not possess them—but because they regard them as insufficient to secure their salvation. They who have been most amiable and moral before their conversion will speak in the most decided manner of the insufficiency of these things for salvation, and of the danger of relying on them. They have once tried it, and they now see that their feet were standing on a slippery rock. The Greek here is, literally, “although I [was] having confidence in the flesh.” The meaning is, that he had every ground of confidence in the flesh which anyone could have, and that if there was any advantage for salvation to be derived from such birth, and blood, and external conformity to the law, he possessed it. He had more to rely on than most other men had; nay, he could have boasted of advantages of this sort which could not be found united in any other individual. What those advantages were, he proceeds to specify.

5. Circumcised the eighth day. That is, he was circumcised in exact compliance with the law. If there was any ground of confidence from such compliance with the law, he had it. The law required that circumcision should be performed on the eighth day (Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3; Luke 1:59); but it is probable that, in some cases, this was delayed on account of sickness, or from some other cause; and, in the case of proselytes, it was not performed until adult age; see Acts 16:3. But Paul says that, in his case, the law had been literally complied with; and, consequently, all the advantage which could be derived from such a compliance, was his.

Of the stock of Israel. Descended from the patriarch Israel, or Jacob; and, therefore, able to trace his genealogy back as far as any Jew could. He was not a proselyte himself from among the heathen, nor were any of his ancestors proselytes. He had all the advantages which could be derived from a regular descent from the venerable founders of the Jewish nation. He was thus distinguished from the Edomites and others who practiced circumcision; from the Samaritans, who were made up of a mixture of people; and from many, even among the Jews, whose ancestors had been once heathen, and who had become proselytes.

Of the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin was one of the two tribes which remained when the ten tribes revolted under Jeroboam, and, with the tribe of Judah, it ever afterwards maintained its allegiance to God. The idea of Paul is, that he was not one of the revolted tribes, but that he had as high a claim to the honor of being a Jew as anyone could boast. The tribe of Benjamin, also, was located near the temple, and indeed it has been said that the temple was on the dividing line between that tribe and the tribe of Judah; and it might have been supposed that there was some advantage in securing salvation from having been born and reared so near where the holy rites of religion were celebrated. If there were any such derived from the proximity of the tribe to the temple, he could claim it; for, though his birth was in another place, yet he was a member of the tribe.

A Hebrew of the Hebrews. This is the Hebrew mode of expressing the superlative degree; and the idea is, that Paul enjoyed every advantage which could possibly be derived from the fact of being a Hebrew. He had a lineal descent from the very ancestor of the nation; he belonged to a tribe that was as honorable as any other, and that had its location near the very center of religious

influence; and he was a Hebrew by both his parents, with no admixture of Gentile blood. On this fact—that no one of his ancestors had been a proselyte, or of Gentile extraction—a Jew would pride himself much; and Paul says that he was entitled to all the advantage which could be derived from it.

As touching the law, a Pharisee. In my views of the law, and in my manner of observing it, I was of the straightest sect—a Pharisee; see Notes on Acts 26:5. The Pharisees were distinguished among the Jewish sects for their rigid adherence to the letter of the law, and had endeavored to guard it from the possibility of violation by throwing around it a vast body of traditions, which they considered to be equally binding with the written law; see Notes on Matt. 3:7. The Sadducees were much less strict; and Paul here says that whatever advantage could be derived from the most rigid adherence to the letter of the law, was his.

6. Concerning zeal, persecuting the church. Showing the greatness of my zeal for the religion which I believed to be true, by persecuting those whom I considered to be in dangerous error. Zeal was supposed to be, as it is, an important part of religion; see 2 Kings 10:16; Ps. 69:9; 119:139; Isa. 59:17; Rom. 10:2. Paul says that he had shown the highest degree of zeal that was possible. He had gone so far in his attachment for the religion of his fathers, as to pursue with purposes of death those who had departed from it, and who had embraced a different form of belief. If any, therefore, could hope for salvation on the ground of extraordinary devotedness to religion, he said that he could.

Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. So far as the righteousness which can be obtained by obeying the law is concerned. It is not needful to suppose here that he refers merely to the ceremonial law; but the meaning is, that he did all that could be done to obtain salvation by the mere observance of law. It was supposed by the Jews, and especially by the Pharisees, to which sect he belonged, that it was possible to be saved in that way; and Paul says that he had done all that was supposed to be necessary for that. We are not to imagine that, when he penned this declaration, he meant to be understood as saying that he had wholly complied with the law of God; but that, before his conversion, he supposed that he had done all that was necessary to be done in order to be saved by the observance of law. He neglected no duty that he understood it to enjoin. He was not guilty of deliberately violating it. He led a moral and strictly upright life, and no one had occasion to “blame” or to accuse him as a violator of the law of God. There is every reason to believe that Paul, before his conversion, was a young man of correct deportment, of upright life, of entire integrity; and that he was free from the indulgences of vice and passion, into which young men often fall. In all that he ever says of himself as being “the chief of sinners,” and as being “unworthy to be called an apostle,” he never gives the least intimation that his early life was stained by vice, or corrupted by licentious passions. On the contrary, we are left to the fair presumption that, if any man could be saved by his own works, he was that man. This fact should be allowed to make its proper impression on those who are seeking salvation in the same way; and they should be willing to inquire whether they may not be deceived in the matter, as he was, and whether they are not in as much real danger in depending on their own righteousness, as was this most upright and zealous young man.

7. But what things were gain to me. The advantages of birth, of education, and of external conformity to the law. "I thought these to be gain—that is, to be of vast advantage in the matter of salvation. I valued myself on these things, and supposed that I was rich in all that pertained to moral character and to religion." Perhaps, also, he refers to these things as laying the foundation of a hope of future advancement in honor and in wealth in this world. They commended him to the rulers of the nation; they opened before him a brilliant prospect of distinction; they made it certain that he could rise to posts of honor and of office, and could easily gratify all the aspirations of his ambition.

Those I counted loss. "I now regard them all as so much loss. They were really a disadvantage—a hindrance—an injury. I look upon them, not as gain or an advantage, but as an obstacle to my salvation." He had relied on them. He had been led by these things to an improper estimate of his own character, and he had been thus hindered from embracing the true religion. He says, therefore, that he now renounced all dependence on them; that he esteemed them not as contributing to his salvation, but, so far as any reliance should be placed on them, as in fact so much loss.

For Christ. Gr., "On account of Christ." That is, so far as Christ and his religion were concerned, they were to be regarded as worthless. In order to obtain salvation by him, it was necessary to renounce all dependence on these things.

8. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss. Not only those things which he had just specified, and which he had himself possessed, he says he would be willing to renounce in order to obtain an interest in the Savior, but everything which could be imagined. Were all the wealth and honor which could be conceived of his, he would be willing to renounce them in order that he might obtain the knowledge of the Redeemer. He would be a gainer who should sacrifice everything in order to win Christ. Paul had not only acted on this principle when he became a Christian, but had ever afterwards continued to be ready to give up everything in order that he might obtain an interest in the Savior. He uses here the same word—ζημίαν—which he does in the Acts of the Apostles, chap. 27:21, when speaking of the loss which had been sustained by loosing from Crete, contrary to his advice, on the voyage to Rome. The idea here seems to be, "What I might obtain, or did possess, I regard as loss in comparison with the knowledge of Christ, even as seamen do the goods on which they set a high value, in comparison with their lives. Valuable as they may be, they are willing to throw them all overboard in order to save themselves." Burder, in Ros. Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, in loc.

For the excellency of the knowledge. A Hebrew expression to denote excellent knowledge. The idea is, that he held everything else to be worthless in comparison with that knowledge, and he was willing to sacrifice everything else in order to obtain it. On the value of this knowledge of the Savior, see Notes on Eph. 3:19.

For whom I have suffered the loss of all things. Paul, when he became a Christian, gave up his brilliant prospects in regard to this life, and everything indeed on which his heart had been placed. He abandoned the hope of honor and distinction; he sacrificed every prospect of gain or ease; and he gave up his dearest friends and separated himself from those whom he tenderly

loved. He might have risen to the highest posts of honor in his native land, and the path which an ambitious young man desires was fully open before him. But all this had been cheerfully sacrificed in order that he might obtain an interest in the Savior, and partake of the blessings of his religion. He has not, indeed, informed us of the exact extent of his loss in becoming a Christian. It is by no means improbable that he had been excommunicated by the Jews; and that he had been disowned by his own family.

And do count them but dung. The word here used—σκύβαλον—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, dregs; refuse; what is thrown away as worthless; chaff; offal, or the refuse of a table or of slaughtered animals, and then filth of any kind. No language could express a more deep sense of the utter worthlessness of all that external advantages can confer in the matter of salvation. In the question of justification before God, all reliance on birth, and blood, and external morality, and forms of religion, and prayers, and alms, is to be renounced, and, in comparison with the merits of the great Redeemer, to be esteemed as vile. Such were Paul's views, and we may remark that if this was so in his case, it should be in ours. Such things, can no more avail for our salvation than they could for his. We can no more be justified by them than he could. Nor will they do anything more in our case to commend us to God than they did in his.

9. And be found in him. That is, united to him by a living faith. The idea is, that when the investigations of the great day should take place in regard to the ground of salvation, it might be found that he was united to the Redeemer and depended solely on his merits for salvation; comp. Notes on John 6:56.

Not having mine own righteousness. That is, not relying on that for salvation. This was now the great aim of Paul, that it might be found at last that he was not trusting to his own merits, but to those of the Lord Jesus.

Which is of the law; see Notes on Rom. 10:3. The "righteousness which is of the law" is that which could be obtained by conformity to the precepts of the Jewish religion, such as Paul had endeavored to obtain before he became a Christian. He now saw that no one complied perfectly with the holy law of God, and that all dependence on such a righteousness was vain. All men by nature seek salvation by the law. They set up some standard which they mean to comply with, and expect to be saved by conformity to that. With some it is the law of honor, with others the laws of honesty, with others the law of kindness and courtesy, and with others the law of God. If they comply with the requirements of these laws, they suppose that they will be safe, and it is only the grace of God showing them how defective their standard is, or how far they come from complying with its demands, that can ever bring them from this dangerous dependence. Paul in early life depended on his compliance with the laws of God as he understood them, and supposed that he was safe. When he was brought to realize his true condition, he saw how far short he had come of what the law of God required, and that all dependence on his own works was vain.

But that which is through the faith of Christ. That justification which is obtained by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ; see Notes on Rom. 1:17; 3:24; 4:5.

Righteousness which is of God by faith. Which proceeds from God, or of which he is the great source and fountain. This may include the following things. (1.) God is the author of pardon—and this is a part of the righteousness which the man who is justified has. (2.) God purposes to treat the justified sinner as if he had not sinned—and thus his righteousness is of God. (3.) God is the source of all the grace that will be imparted to the soul, making it really holy. In this way, all the righteousness which the Christian has is “of God.” The idea of Paul is, that he now saw that it was far more desirable to be saved by righteousness obtained from God than by his own. That obtained from God was perfect, and glorious, and sufficient; that which he had attempted to work out was defective, impure, and wholly insufficient to save the soul. It is far more honorable to be saved by God than to save ourselves; it is more glorious to depend on him than to depend on anything that we can do.

10. That I may know him. That I may be fully acquainted with his nature, his character, his work, and with the salvation which he has wrought out. It is one of the highest objects of desire in the mind of the Christian to know Christ; see Notes on Eph. 3:19.

And the power of his resurrection. That is, that I may understand and experience the proper influence which the fact of his resurrection should have on the mind. That influence would be felt in imparting the hope of immortality; in sustaining the soul in the prospect of death, by the expectation of being raised from the grave in like manner; and in raising the mind above the world; Rom. 6:11. There is no one truth that will have greater power over us, when properly believed, than the truth that Christ has risen from the dead. His resurrection confirms the truth of the Christian religion (Notes, 1 Cor. 15); makes it certain that there is a future state, and that the dead will also rise; dispels the darkness that was around the grave, and shows us that our great interests are in the future world. The fact that Christ has risen from the dead, when fully believed, will produce a sure hope that we also shall be raised, and will animate us to bear trials for his sake, with the assurance that we shall be raised up as he was. One of the things which a Christian ought most earnestly to desire is, to feel the power of this truth on his soul—that his great Redeemer has burst the bands of death; has brought life and immortality to light, and has given us the pledge that our bodies shall rise. What trials may we not bear with this assurance? What is to be dreaded in death, if this is so? What glories rise to the view when we think of the resurrection! And what trifles are all the things which men seek here, when compared with the glory that shall be ours when we shall be raised from the dead!

And the fellowship of his sufferings. That I may participate in the same kind of sufferings that he endured; that is, that I may in all things be identified with him. Paul wished to be just like his Savior. He felt that it was an honor to live as he did; to evince the spirit that he did, and to suffer in the same manner. All that Christ did and suffered was glorious in his view, and he wished in all things to resemble him. He did not desire merely to share his honors and triumphs in heaven, but, regarding his whole work as glorious, he wished to be wholly conformed to that, and, as far as possible, to be just like Christ. Many are willing to reign with Christ, but they would not be willing to suffer with him; many would be willing to wear a crown of glory like him, but not the crown of thorns; many would be willing to put on the robes of splendour which will be worn in heaven, but not the scarlet robe of contempt and mockery. They would desire to

share the glories and triumphs of redemption, but not its poverty, contempt, and persecution. This was not the feeling of Paul. He wished in all things to be just like Christ, and hence he counted it an honor to be permitted to suffer as he did. So, Peter says, “Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings;” 1 Pet 4:13. So Paul says (Col. 1:24) that he rejoiced in his sufferings in behalf of his brethren, and desired “to fill up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ,” or that in which he had hitherto come short of the afflictions which Christ endured. The idea is, that it is an honor to suffer as Christ suffered; and that the true Christian will esteem it a privilege to be made just like him, not only in glory, but in trial. To do this, is one evidence of piety; and we may ask ourselves, therefore, whether these are the feelings of our hearts. Are we seeking merely the honors of heaven, or should we esteem it a privilege to be reproached and reviled as Christ was—to have our names cast out as his was—to be made the object of sport and derision as he was—and to be held up to the contempt of a world as he was? If so, it is an evidence that we love him; if not so, and we are merely seeking the crown of glory, we should doubt whether we have ever known anything of the nature of true religion.

Being made conformable to his death. In all things, being just like Christ—to live as he did, and to die as he did. There can be no doubt that Paul means to say that he esteemed it so desirable to be just like Christ, that he would regard it as an honor to die in the same manner. He would rejoice to go with him to the cross, and to pass through the circumstances of scorn and pain which attended such a death. Yet how few there are who would be willing to die as Christ died, and how little would the mass of men regard it as a privilege and honor! Indeed, it requires an elevated state of pious feeling to be able to say that it would be regarded as a privilege and honor to die like Christ to have such a sense of the loveliness of his character in all things, and such ardent attachment to him, as to rejoice in the opportunity of dying as he did! When we think of dying, we wish to have our departure made as comfortable as possible. We would have our sun go down without a cloud. We would wish to lie on a bed of down; we would have our head sustained by the kind arm of a friend, and not left to fall, in the intensity of suffering, on the breast; we would wish to have the place where we die surrounded by sympathizing kindred, and not by those who would mock our dying agonies. And, if such is the will of God, it is not improper to desire that our end may be peaceful and happy; but we should also feel, if God should order it otherwise, that it would be an honor, in the cause of the Redeemer, to die amidst reproaches—to be led to the stake, as the martyrs have been—or to die, as our Master did, on a cross. They who are most like him in the scenes of humiliation here, will be most like him in the realms of glory.

11. If by any means. Implying, that he meant to make use of the most strenuous exertions to obtain the object.

I might attain unto. I may come to, or may secure this object.

The resurrection of the dead. Paul believed that all the dead would be raised (Acts 24:15; 26:6–8); and in this respect he would certainly attain to the resurrection of the dead, in common with all mankind. But the phrase, “the resurrection of the dead,” also might be used, in a more limited sense, to denote the resurrection of the righteous as a most desirable object; and this might be secured by effort. It was this which Paul sought—this for which he strove—this that

was so bright an object in his eye that it was to be secured at any sacrifice. To rise with the saints; to enter with them into the blessedness of the heavenly inheritance, was an object that the apostle thought was worth every effort which could he made. The doctrine of the resurrection was, in his view, that which distinguished the true religion, and which made it of such inestimable value (Acts 26:6, 7; 23:6; 1 Cor. 15) and he sought to participate in the full honor and glory of such a resurrection.

12. Not as though I had already attained. This verse and the two following are full of allusions to the Grecian races. "The word rendered 'attained' signifies, to have arrived at the goal and won the prize, but without having as yet received it." Pict. Bib. The meaning here is, I do not pretend to have attained to what I wish or hope to be. He had indeed been converted; he had been raised up from the death of sin; he had been imbued with spiritual life and peace; but there was a glorious object before him which he had not yet received. There was to be a kind of resurrection which he had not arrived at. It is possible that Paul here may have had his eye on an error which prevailed to some extent in the early church, that "the resurrection was already past" (2 Tim. 2:18), by which the faith of some had been perverted. How far this error had spread, or on what it was founded, is not now known; but it is possible that it might have found advocates extensively in the churches. Paul says, however, that he entertained no such opinion. He looked forward to a resurrection which had not yet occurred. He anticipated it as a glorious event yet to come, and he purposed to secure it by every effort which he could make.

Either were already perfect. This is a distinct assertion of the apostle Paul that he did not regard himself as a perfect man. He had not reached that state where he was free from sin. It is not indeed a declaration that no one was perfect, or that no one could be in this life but it is a declaration that he did not regard himself as having attained to it. Yet who can urge better claims to having attained perfection than Paul could have done? Who has surpassed him in love, and zeal, and self-denial, and true devotedness to the service of the Redeemer? Who has more elevated views of God, and of the plan of salvation? Who prays more, or lives nearer to God than he did? That must be extraordinary piety which surpasses that of the apostle Paul; and he who lays claim to a degree of holiness which even Paul did not pretend to, gives little evidence that he has any true knowledge of himself, or has ever been imbued with the true humility which the gospel produces. It should be observed, however, that many critics, as Bloomfield, Koppe, Rosenmüller, Robinson (Lex.), Clarke, the editor of the Pictorial Bible, and others, suppose the word here used—*τελειόω*—not to refer to moral or Christian perfection, but to be an allusion to the games that were celebrated in Greece, and to mean that he had not completed his course and arrived at the goal, so as to receive the prize. According to this, the sense would be, that he had not yet received the crown which he aspired after as the result of his efforts in this life. It is of importance to understand precisely what he meant by the declaration here; and, in order to this, it will be proper to look at the meaning of the word elsewhere in the New Testament. The word properly means, to complete, to make perfect, so as to be full, or so that nothing shall be wanting. In the New Testament it is used in the following places, and is translated in the following manner: It is rendered fulfilled in Luke 2:23; John 19:28: perfect, and perfected, in Luke 13:32; John 17:23; 2 Cor. 12:9; Phil. 3:12; Heb. 2:10; 5:9; 7:19; 9:9; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23; James 2:22; 1 John 2:5; 4:12, 17, 18; finish, and finished, John 5:36; Acts 20:24: and

consecrated, Heb. 7:28. In one case (Acts 20:24), it is applied to a race or course that is run—“That I might finish my course with joy;” but this is the only instance, unless it be in the case before us. The proper sense of the word is that of bringing to an end, or rendering complete, so that nothing shall be wanting. The idea of Paul evidently is, that he had not yet attained that which would be the completion of his hopes. There was something which he was striving after, which he had not obtained, and which was needful to render him perfect, or complete. He lacked now what he hoped yet to attain to; and that which he lacked may refer to all those things which were wanting in his character and condition then, which he expected to secure in the resurrection. What he would then obtain, would be—perfect freedom from sin, deliverance from trials and temptations, victory over the grave, and the possession of immortal life. As those things were needful in order to the completion of his happiness, we may suppose that he referred to them now, when he says that he was not yet “perfect.” This word, therefore, while it will embrace an allusion to moral character, need not be understood of that only, but may include all those things which were necessary to be observed in order to his complete felicity. Though there may be, therefore, an allusion in the passage to the Grecian foot-races, yet still it would teach that he did not regard himself as in any sense perfect. In all respects, there were things wanting to render his character and condition complete, or what he desired they might ultimately be. The same is true of all Christians now. We are imperfect in our moral and religious character, in our joys, in our condition. Our state here is far different from that which will exist in heaven; and no Christian can say, any more than Paul could, that he has obtained that which is requisite to the completion or perfection of his character and condition. He looks for something brighter and purer in the world beyond the grave. Though, therefore, there may be—as I think the connection and phraseology seem to demand—a reference to the Grecian games, yet the sense of the passage is not materially varied. It was still a struggle for the crown of perfection—a crown which the apostle says he had not yet obtained.

But I follow after. I pursue the object, striving to obtain it. The prize was seen in the distance, and he diligently sought to obtain it. There is a reference here to the Grecian races, and the meaning is, “I steadily pursue my course;” comp. Notes on 1 Cor. 9:24.

If that I may apprehend. If I may obtain, or reach, the heavenly prize. There was a glorious object in view, and he made most strenuous exertions to obtain it. The idea in the word “apprehend” is that of taking hold of, or of seizing suddenly and with eagerness; and, since there is no doubt of its being used in an allusion to the Grecian foot-races, it is not improbable that there is a reference to the laying hold of the pole or post which marked the goal, by the racer who had outstripped the other competitors, and who, by that act, might claim the victory and the reward.

That for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. By Christ Jesus. The idea is, that he had been called into the service of the Lord Jesus, with a view to the obtaining of an important object. He recognized (1.) the fact that the Lord Jesus had, as it were, laid hold on him, or seized him with eagerness or suddenness, for so the word used here—κατελήφθην—means (comp. Mark 9:18; John 8:3, 4; 12:35; 1 Thess. 5:4; and (2.) the fact that the Lord Jesus had laid hold on him, with a view to his obtaining the prize. He had done it in order that he might obtain the

crown of life, that he might serve him faithfully here, and then be rewarded in heaven. We may learn, from this, (1.) That Christians are seized, or laid hold on, when they are converted, by the power of Christ, to be employed in his service. (2.) That there is an object or purpose which he has in view. He designs that they shall obtain a glorious prize, and he “apprehends” them with reference to its attainment. (3.) That the fact that Christ has called us into his service with reference to such an object, and designs to bestow the crown upon us, need not and should not dampen our exertions, or diminish our zeal. It should rather, as in the case of Paul, excite our ardor, and urge us forward. We should seek diligently to gain that, for the securing of which, Christ has called us into his service. The fact that he has thus arrested us in our mad career of sin; that he has by his grace constrained us to enter into his service, and that he contemplates the bestowment upon us of the immortal crown, should be the highest motive for effort. The true Christian, then, who feels that heaven is to be his home, and who believes that Christ means to bestow it upon him, will make the most strenuous efforts to obtain it. The prize is so beautiful and glorious, that he will exert every power of body and soul that it may be his. The belief, therefore, that God means to save us, is one of the highest incentives to effort in the cause of religion.

13. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. That is, to have obtained that for which I have been called into the service of the Redeemer. There is something which I strive after which I have not yet gained. This statement is a confirmation of the opinion that in the previous verse, where he says that he was not “already perfect,” he includes a moral perfection, and not merely the obtainment of the prize or reward; for no one could suppose that he meant to be understood as saying that he had obtained the crown of glory.

This one thing I do. Paul had one great aim and purpose of life. He did not attempt to mingle the world and religion, and to gain both. He did not seek to obtain wealth and salvation too; or honor here and the crown of glory hereafter, but he had one object, one aim, one great purpose of soul. To this singleness of purpose, he owed his extraordinary attainments in piety, and his uncommon success as a minister. A man will accomplish little who allows his mind to be distracted by a multiplicity of objects. A Christian will accomplish nothing who has not a single great aim and purpose of soul. That purpose should be to secure the prize, and to renounce everything that would be in the way to its attainment. Let us then so live that we may be able to say, that there is one great object which we always have in view, and that we mean to avoid everything which would interfere with that.

Forgetting those things which are behind. There is an allusion here undoubtedly to the Grecian races. One running to secure the prize would not stop to look behind him to see how much ground he had run over, or who of his competitors had fallen or lingered in the way. He would keep his eye steadily on the prize, and strain every nerve that he might obtain it. If his attention was diverted for a moment from that, it would hinder his flight, and might be the means of his losing the crown. So, the apostle says it was with him. He looked onward to the prize. He fixed the eye intently on that. It was the single object in his view, and he did not allow his mind to be diverted from that by anything—not even by the contemplation of the past. He did not stop to think of the difficulties which he had overcome, or the troubles which he had met, but he

thought of what was yet to be accomplished. This does not mean that he would not have regarded a proper contemplation of the past life as useful and profitable for a Christian (comp. Notes on Eph. 2:11), but that he would not allow any reference to the past to interfere with the one great effort to win the prize. It may be, and is, profitable for a Christian to look over the past mercies of God to his soul, in order to awaken emotions of gratitude in the heart, and to think of his shortcomings and errors, to produce penitence and humility. But none of these things should be allowed for one moment to divert the mind from the purpose to win the incorruptible crown. And it may be remarked in general, that a Christian will make more rapid advances in piety by looking forward than by looking backward. Forward we see everything to cheer and animate us—the crown of victory, the joys of heaven, the society of the blessed—the Savior beckoning to us and encouraging us. Backward, we see everything to dishearten and to humble. Our own unfaithfulness; our coldness, deadness, and dullness; the little zeal and ardor which we have, all are fitted to humble and discourage. He is the most cheerful Christian who looks onward, and who keeps heaven always in view; he who is accustomed much to dwell on the past, though he may be a true Christian, will be likely to be melancholy and dispirited, to be a recluse rather than a warm-hearted and active friend of the Savior. Or if he looks backward to contemplate what he has done—the space that he has run over—the difficulties which he has surmounted—and his own rapidity in the race, he will be likely to become self-complacent and self-satisfied. He will trust in his past endeavors, and feel that the prize is now secure, and will relax his future efforts. Let us then look onward. Let us not spend our time either in pondering the gloomy past, and our own unfaithfulness, or in thinking of what we have done, and thus becoming puffed up with self-complacency; but let us keep the eye steadily on the prize, and run the race as though we had just commenced it.

And reaching forth. As one does in a race.

Unto those things which are before. Before the racer there was a crown or garland to be bestowed by the judges of the games. Before the Christian there is the crown of glory, the eternal reward of heaven. There is the favor of God, victory over sin and death, the society of the redeemed and of angelic beings, and the assurance of perfect and eternal freedom from all evil. These are enough to animate the soul, and to urge it on with ever-increasing vigor in the Christian race.

14. I press toward the mark. As he who was running a race did. The “mark” means properly the object set up at a distance at which one looks or aims, and hence the goal, or post which was set up at the end of a race-course, and which was to be reached in order that the prize might be won. Here it means that which is at the end of the Christian race—in heaven.

For the prize. The prize of the racer was a crown or garland of olive, laurel, pine, or apple; see Notes on 1 Cor. 9:24. The prize of the Christian is the crown that is incorruptible in heaven.

Of the high calling of God. Which is the end or result of that calling. God has called us to great and noble efforts; to a career of true honor and glory; to the obtainment of a bright and imperishable crown. It is a calling which is “high,” or upward—(ἄνω)—that is, which tends to

the skies. The calling of the Christian is from heaven, and to heaven; comp. Prov. 15:24. He has been summoned by God through the gospel of the Lord Jesus to secure the crown. It is placed before and above him in heaven. It may he is, if he will not faint or tire or look backward. It demands his highest efforts, and it is worth all the exertions which a mortal can make even in the longest life.

15. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect; see Notes on ver. 12. Or, rather, those who would be perfect; or who are aiming at perfection. It can hardly be supposed that the apostle would address them as already perfect, when he had just said of himself that he had not attained to that state. But those whom he addressed might be supposed to be aiming at perfection, and he exhorts them, therefore, to have the same spirit that he himself had, and to make the same efforts which he himself put forth.

Be thus minded. That is, be united in the effort to obtain the prize, and to become entirely perfect. "Let them put forth the same effort which I do, forgetting what is behind, and pressing forward to the mark."

And if in anything ye be otherwise minded. That is, if there were any among them who had not these elevated views and aims, and who had not been brought to see the necessity of such efforts, or who had not learned that such high attainments were possible. There might be those among them who had been very imperfectly instructed in the nature of religion; those who entertained views which impeded their progress, and prevented the simple and earnest striving for salvation which Paul was enabled to put forth. He had laid aside every obstacle; renounced all the Jewish opinions which had impeded his salvation, and had now one single aim—that of securing the prize. But there might be those who had not attained to these views, and who were still impeded and embarrassed by erroneous opinions.

God shall reveal even this unto you. He will correct your erroneous opinions, and disclose to you the importance of making this effort for the prize. This is the expression of an opinion, that to those who were sincere and true Christians, God would yet make a full revelation of the nature of religion, or would lead them on so that they would fully understand it. They who are acquainted with religion at all, or who have been truly converted, God will teach and guide until they shall have a full understanding of divine things.

16. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule. This is a most wise and valuable rule, and a rule that would save much difficulty and contention in the church, if it were honestly applied. The meaning is this, that though there might be different degrees of attainment among Christians, and different views on many subjects, yet there were points in which all could agree; there were attainments which they all had made, and in reference to them they should walk in harmony and love. It might be that some had made much greater advances than others. They had more elevated views of religion; they had higher knowledge; they were nearer perfection. Others had had less advantages of education and instruction, had had fewer opportunities of making progress in the divine life, and would less understand the higher mysteries of the Christian life. They might not see the truth or propriety of many things which those in advance of them would see clearly. But it was not worthwhile to quarrel about

these things. There should be no angry feeling, and no fault-finding on either side. There were many things in which they could see alike, and where there were no jarring sentiments. In those things they could walk harmoniously; and they who were in advance of others should not complain of their less informed brethren as lacking all evidence of piety; nor should those who had not made such advances complain of those before them as fanatical, or as disposed to push things to extremes. They who had the higher views should, as Paul did, believe that God will yet communicate them to the church at large, and in the meantime should not denounce others; and those who had less elevated attainments should not censure their brethren as wild and visionary. There were common grounds on which they might unite, and thus the harmony of the church would be secured. No better rule than this could be applied to the subjects of inquiry which spring up among Christians respecting temperance, slavery, moral reform, and the various doctrines of religion; and, if this rule had been always observed, the church would have been always saved from harsh contention and from schism. If a man does not see things just as I do, let me try with mildness to “teach” him, and let me believe that, if he is a Christian, God will make this known to him yet; but let me not quarrel with him, for neither of us would be benefited by that, nor would the object be likely to be attained. In the meantime, there are many things in which we can agree. In them let us work together, and strive, as far as we can, to promote the common object. Thus, we shall save our temper, give no occasion to the world to reproach us, and be much more likely to come together in all our views. The best way to make true Christians harmonious is, to labor together in the common cause of saving souls. As far as we can agree, let us go and labor together; and where we cannot yet, let us “agree to differ.” We shall all think alike by-and-by.

17. Brethren, be followers together of me. That is, live as I do. A minister of the gospel, a parent, or a Christian of any age or condition, ought so to live that he can refer to his own example, and exhort others to imitate the course of life which he had led. Paul could do this without ostentation or impropriety. They knew that he lived so as to be a proper example for others; and he knew that they would feel that his life had been such that there would be no impropriety in his referring to it in this manner. But, alas! how few are there who can safely imitate Paul in this!

And mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample. There were those in the church who endeavored to live as he had done, renouncing all confidence in the flesh, and aiming to win the prize. There were others, it would seem, who were actuated by different views; see ver. 18. There are usually two kinds of professing Christians in every church—those who imitate the Savior, and those who are worldly and vain. The exhortation here is, to “mark”—that is, to observe with a view to imitate—those who lived as the apostles did. We should set before our minds the best examples, and endeavor to imitate the most holy men. A worldly and fashionable professor of religion is a very bad example to follow; and especially young Christians should set before their minds for imitation, and associate with, the purest and most spiritual members of the church. Our religion takes its form and complexion much from those with whom we associate; and he will usually be the most holy man who associates with the most holy companions.

18. For many walk. Many live, the Christian life being often in the Scriptures compared with a journey. In order to induce them to imitate those who were the most holy, the apostle says that there were many, even in the church, whom it would not be safe for them to imitate. He evidently here refers mainly to the church at Philippi, though it may be that he meant to make the declaration general, and to say that the same thing existed in other churches. There has not probably been any time yet in the Christian church when the same thing might not be said.

Of whom I have told you often. When he preached in Philippi. Paul was not afraid to speak of church-members when they did wrong, and to warn others not to imitate their example. He did not attempt to cover up or excuse guilt because it was in the church, or to apologize for the defects and errors of those who professed to be Christians. The true way is, to admit that there are those in the church who do not honor their religion, and to warn others against following their example. But this fact does not make religion any the less true or valuable, any more than the fact that there is counterfeit money makes all money bad, or makes genuine coin of no value.

And now tell you even weeping. This is the true spirit with which to speak of the errors and faults of Christians. It is not to go and blazon their inconsistencies abroad. It is not to find pleasure in the fact that they are inconsistent. It is not to reproach religion on that account, and to say that all religion is false and hollow, and that all professors are hypocrites. We should rather speak of the fact with tears; for, if there is anything that should make us weep, it is, that there are those in the church who are hypocrites, or who dishonor their profession. We should weep, (1.) because they are in danger of destroying their own souls; (2.) because they are destined to certain disappointment when they come to appear before God; and (3.) because they injure the cause of religion, and give occasion to the “enemies of the Lord to speak reproachfully.” He who loves religion, will sweep over the inconsistencies of its friends; he who does not will exult and triumph.

That they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. The “cross” was the instrument of death on which the Redeemer died to make atonement for sin. As the atonement made by Christ for sin is that which peculiarly distinguishes his religion from all others, the “cross” comes to be used to denote his religion; and the phrase here means, that they were the enemies of his religion, or were strangers to the gospel. It is not to be supposed that they were open and avowed enemies of the cross, or that they denied that the Lord Jesus died on the cross to make an atonement. The characteristic of those persons mentioned in the following verse is, rather, that they were living in a manner which showed that they were strangers to his pure gospel. An immoral life is enmity to the cross of Christ; for he died to make us holy. A life where there is no evidence that the heart is renewed, is enmity to the cross; for he died that we might be renewed. They are the enemies of the cross, in the church, (1.) who have never been born again; (2.) who are living in the indulgence of known sin; (3.) who manifest none of the peculiarities of those who truly love him; (4.) who have a deeper interest in worldly affairs than they have in the cause of the Redeemer; (5.) whom nothing can induce to give up their worldly concerns when God demands it; (6.) who are opposed to all the peculiar doctrines of Christianity; and (7.) who are opposed to all the peculiar duties of religion, or who live in the habitual neglect of them. It is to be feared that at all

times there are such enemies of the cross in the church, and the language of the apostle implies that it is a proper subject of grief and tears. He wept over it, and so should we. It is from this cause that so much injury is done to the true religion in the world. One secret enemy in a camp may do more harm than fifty men who are open foes; and a single unholy or inconstant member in a church may do much more injury than many men who are avowedly opposed to religion. It is not by infidels, and scoffers, and blasphemers, so much, that injury is done to the cause of religion; it is by the unholy lives of its professed friends—the worldliness, inconsistency, and want of the proper spirit of religion, among those who are in the church. Nearly all the objections that are made to religion are from this quarter; and, if this objection were taken away, the religion of Christ would soon spread its triumphs around the globe.

19. Whose end is destruction. That is, as they have no true religion, they must perish in the same manner as all sinners. A mere profession will not save them. Unless they are converted, and become the true friends of the cross, they cannot enter heaven.

Whose God is their belly. Who worship their own appetites; or who live not to adore and honor God, but for self-indulgence and sensual gratifications; see Rom. 16:18.

And whose glory is in their shame. That is, they glory in things of which they ought to be ashamed. They indulge in modes of living which ought to cover them with confusion.

Who mind earthly things? That is, whose hearts are set on earthly things, or who live to obtain them. Their attention is directed to honor, gain, or pleasure, and their chief anxiety is that they may secure these objects. This is mentioned as one of the characteristics of enmity to the cross of Christ; and if this be so, how many are there in the church now who are the real enemies of the cross! How many professing Christians are there who regard little else than worldly things! How many who live only to acquire wealth, to gain honor, or to enjoy the pleasures of the world! How many are there who have no interest in a prayer-meeting, in a Sabbath-school, in religious conversation, and in the advancement of true religion on the earth! These are the real enemies of the cross. It is not so much those who deny the doctrines of the cross, as it is those who oppose its influence on their hearts; not so much those who live to scoff and deride religion, as it is those who “mind earthly things,” that injure this holy cause in the world.

20. For our conversation is in heaven. That is, this is true of all who are sincere Christians. It is a characteristic of Christians, in contradistinction from those who are the “enemies of the cross,” that their conversation is in heaven. The word “conversation” we now apply almost entirely to oral discourse. It formerly, however, meant conduct in general, and it is usually employed in this sense in the Scriptures; see Notes on chap. 1:27, where the verb occurs, from which the noun here is derived. The word here used—*πολίτευμα*—is found nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means, any public measure, administration of the state, the manner in which the affairs of a state are administered; and then the state itself, the community, commonwealth, those who are bound under the same laws, and associated in the same society. Here it cannot mean that their “conversation,” in the sense of discourse or talking, was in heaven; nor that their “conduct” was in heaven—for this would convey no idea, and the original word does not demand it; but the idea is, that they were heavenly citizens, or citizens of the heavenly

world, in contradistinction from a worldly community. They were governed by the laws of heaven; they were a community associated as citizens of that world, and expecting there to dwell. The idea is, that there are two great communities in the universe—that of the world, and that of heaven; that governed by worldly laws and institutions, and that by the laws of heaven; that associated for worldly purposes, and that associated for heavenly or religious purposes; and that the Christian belonged to the latter,—the enemy of the cross, though in the church, belonged to the former. Between true Christians, therefore, and others, there is all the difference which arises from belonging to different communities; being bound together for different purposes; subject to different laws; and altogether under a different administration. There is more difference between them than there is between the subjects of two earthly governments; comp. Notes on Eph. 2:6, 19.

From whence also we look for the Savior. From heaven. That is, it is one of the characteristics of the Christian that he believes that the Lord Jesus will return from heaven, and that he looks and waits for it. Other men do not believe this (2 Pet. 3:4), but the Christian confidently expects it. His Savior has been taken away from the earth, and is now in heaven, but it is a great and standing article of his faith that that same Savior will again come, and take the believer to himself; see Notes on John 14:2, 3; 1 Thess. 4:14. This was the firm belief of the early Christians, and this expectation with them was allowed to exert a constant influence on their hearts and lives. It led them (1.) to desire to be prepared for his coming; (2.) to feel that earthly affairs were of little importance, as the scene here was soon to close; (3.) to live above the world, and in the desire of the appearing of the Lord Jesus. This was one of the elementary doctrines of their faith, and one of the means of producing deadness to the world among them; and among the early Christians there was, perhaps, no doctrine that was more the object of firm belief, and the ground of more delightful contemplation, than that their ascended Master would return. In regard to the certainty of their belief on this point, and the effect which it had on their minds, see the following texts of the New Testament; Matt. 24:42, 44; Luke 12:37; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Cor. 4:5; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 2:19; 2 Thess. 2:1; Heb. 10:37; James 5:7, 8; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 22:7, 12, 20. It may be asked, with great force, whether Christians in general have now any such expectation of the second appearing of the Lord Jesus, or whether they have not fallen into the dangerous error of prevailing unbelief, so that the expectation of his coming is allowed to exert almost no influence on the soul. In the passage before us, Paul says that it was one of the distinct characteristics of Christians that they looked for the coming of the Savior from heaven. They believed that he would return. They anticipated that important effects would follow to them from his second coming. So we should look. There may be, indeed, a difference of opinion about the time when he will come, and about the question whether he will come to reign “literally, on the earth—but the fact that Christ will return to our world is common ground on which all Christians may meet, and is a fact which should be allowed to exert its full influence on the heart. It is a glorious truth—for what a sad world would this be, and what a sad prospect would be before the Christian, if the Savior were never to come to raise his people from their graves, and to gather his redeemed to himself! The fact that he will come is identified with all our hopes. It is fitted to cheer us in trial; to guard us in temptation; to make us dead to the world; to lead us to keep the eye turned toward heaven.

21. Who shall change our vile body; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. 15. The original words, which are here rendered “vile body,” properly mean “the body of humiliation;” that is, our humble body. It refers to the body as it is in its present state, as subject to infirmities, disease, and death. It is different far from what it was when man was created, and from what it will be in the future world. Paul says that it is one of the objects of the Christian hope and expectation, that this body, so subject to infirmities and sicknesses, will be changed.

That it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. Gr., “The body of his glory;” that is, the body which he has in his glorified state. What change the body of the Redeemer underwent when he ascended to heaven, we are not informed,—nor do we know what is the nature, size, appearance, or form of the body which he now has. It is certain that it is adapted to the glorious world where he dwells; that it has none of the infirmities to which it was liable when here; that it is not subject, as here, to pain or death; that it is not sustained in the same manner. The body of Christ in heaven is of the same nature as the bodies of the saints will be in the resurrection, and which the apostle calls “spiritual bodies,” (Notes, 1 Cor. 15:44); and it is doubtless accompanied with all the circumstances of splendour and glory which are appropriate to the Son of God. The idea here is, that it is the object of the desire and anticipation of the Christian, to be made just like Christ in all things. He desires to resemble him in moral character here, and to be like him in heaven. Nothing else will satisfy him but such conformity to the Son of God; and when he shall resemble him in all things, the wishes of his soul will be all met and fulfilled.

According to the working, &c. That is, such a change demands the exertion of vast power. No creature can do it. But there is One who has power entrusted to him over all things, and he can effect this great transformation in the bodies of men; comp. 1 Cor. 15:26, 27. He can mould the mind and the heart to conformity to his own image, and thus also he can transform the body so that it shall resemble his. Everything he can make subject to his will. (Notes on Matt. 28:18; John 17:2.) And he that has this power can change our humbled and debased bodies, so that they shall put on the glorious appearance and form of that of the Son of God himself. What a contrast between our bodies here—frail, feeble, subject to sickness, decay, and corruption—and the body as it will be in heaven! And what glorious prospect awaits the weak and dying believer, in the future world!

Remarks

1. It is a privilege of the Christian to rejoice; ver. 1. He has more sources of real joy than any other persons; see 1 Thess. 5:16. He has a Savior in whom he may always find peace; a God whose character he can always contemplate with pleasure, a heaven to look forward to where there is nothing but happiness; a Bible that is full of precious promises, and at all times the opportunity of prayer, in which he may roll all his sorrows on the arms of an unchanging friend. If there is any one on earth who ought to be happy, it is the Christian.

2. The Christian should so live as to leave on others the impression that religion produces happiness. In our intercourse with our friends, we should show them that religion does not cause sadness or gloom, sourness or misanthropy, but that it produces cheerfulness, contentment, and

peace. This may be shown by the countenance, and by the whole demeanor—by a calm brow, and a benignant eye, and by a cheerful aspect. The internal peace of the soul should be evinced by every proper external expression. A Christian may thus be always doing good—for he is always doing good who leaves the impression on others that religion makes its possessors happy.

3. The nature of religion is almost always mistaken by the world. They suppose that it makes its possessors melancholy and sad. The reason is, not that they are told so by those who are religious, and not that even they can see anything in religion to produce misery, but because they have fixed their affections on certain things which they supposed to be essential to happiness, and which they suppose religion would require them to give up without substituting anything in their place. But never was there a greater mistake. Let them go and ask Christians, and they will obtain but one answer from them. It is, that they never knew what true happiness was till they found it in the Savior. This question may be proposed to a Christian of any denomination, or in any land, and the answer will be uniformly the same. Why is it, then, that the mass of persons regard religion as adapted only to make them unhappy? Why will they not take the testimony of their friends in the case, and believe those whom they would believe on any other subject, when they declare that it is only true religion that ever gives them solid peace?

4. We cannot depend on any external advantages of birth or blood for salvation; ver. 4–6. Few or no persons have as much in this respect to rely on as Paul had. Indeed, if salvation were to be obtained at all by such external advantages, it is impossible to conceive that more could have been united in one case than there was in his. He had not only the advantage of having been born a Hebrew; of having been early trained in the Jewish religion; of being instructed in the ablest manner, but also the advantage of entire blamelessness in his moral deportment. He had showed in every way possible that he was heartily attached to the religion of his fathers, and he began life with a zeal in the cause which seemed to justify the warmest expectations of his friends. But all this was renounced, when he came to see the true method of salvation, and saw the better way by which eternal life is to be obtained. And if Paul could not depend on this, we cannot safely do it. It will not save us that we have been born in the church; that we have had pious parents; that we were early baptized and consecrated to God; that we were trained in the Sabbath-school. Nor will it save us that we attend regularly on the place of worship, or that we are amiable, correct, honest, and upright in our lives. We can no more depend on these things than Saul of Tarsus could, and if all his eminent advantages failed to give him a solid ground of hope, our advantages will be equally vain in regard to our salvation. It almost seems as if God designed in the case of Saul of Tarsus, that there should be one instance where every possible external advantage for salvation should be found, and there should be everything that men ever could rely on in moral character, in order to show that no such things could be sufficient to save the soul. All these may exist, and yet there may not be a particle of love to God, and the heart may be full of selfishness, pride, and ambition, as it was in his case.

5. Religion demands humility; ver. 7, 8. It requires us to renounce all dependence on our own merits, and to rely simply on the merits of another—the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are ever saved, we must be brought to esteem all the advantages which birth and blood and our own righteousness can bestow as worthless, and even vile, in the matter of justification. We shall not

despise these things in themselves, nor shall we consider that vice is as desirable as virtue, nor that a bad temper is to be sought rather than an amiable disposition, nor that dishonesty is as commendable as honesty; but we shall feel that in comparison with the merits of the Redeemer all these are worthless. But the mind is not brought to this condition without great humiliation. Nothing but the power of God can bring a proud and haughty and self-righteous sinner to this state, where he is willing to renounce all dependence on his own merits, and to be saved in the same way as the vilest of the species.

6. Let us seek to obtain an interest in the righteousness of the Redeemer; ver. 9. Our own righteousness cannot save us. But in him there is enough. There is all that we want, and if we have that righteousness which is by faith, we have all that is needful to render us accepted with God, and to prepare us for heaven. When there is such a way of salvation—so easy, so free, so glorious, so ample for all, how unwise is anyone to rest on his own works, and to expect to be saved by what he has done! The highest honor of man is to be saved by the merits of the Son of God, and he has reached the most elevated rank in the human condition who has the most certain hope of salvation through him.

7. There is enough to be gained to excite us to the utmost diligence and effort in the Christian life; ver. 10–14. If men can be excited to effort by the prospect of an earthly crown in a race or a game, how much more should we be urged forward by the prospect of the eternal prize! To seek to know the Redeemer; to be raised up from the degradation of sin; to have part in the resurrection of the just; to obtain the prize of the high calling in heaven—to be made everlastingly happy and glorious there—what object was ever placed before the mind like this? What ardor should it excite that we may gain it? Surely, the hope of obtaining such a prize as is before the Christian, should call forth all our powers. The struggle will not be long. The race will soon be won. The victory will be glorious; the defeat would be overwhelming and awful. No one need fear that he can put forth too much effort to obtain the prize. It is worth every exertion, and we should never relax our efforts, or give over in despair.

8. Let us, like Paul, ever cherish an humble sense of our attainments in religion; ver. 12, 13. If Paul had not reached the point of perfection, it is not to be presumed that we have; if he could not say that he had “attained,” it is presumption in us to suppose that we have, if he had occasion for humiliation, we have more; if he felt that he was far short of the object which he sought, and was pressed down with the consciousness of imperfection, such a feeling becomes us also. Yet let us not sink down in despondency and inaction. Like him, let us strain every nerve that we may overcome our imperfections and win the prize. That prize is before us. It is glorious. We may be sensible that we, as yet, have not reached it, but if we will strive to obtain it, it will soon be certainly ours. We may feel that we are far distant from it now in the degree of our attainments, but we are not far from it in fact. It will be but a short period before the Christian will lay hold on that immortal crown, and before his brow will be encircled with the diadem of glory. For the race of life, whether we win or lose, is soon run; and when a Christian begins a day, he knows not but he may end it in heaven; when he lies down on his bed at night, he knows not but he may awake with the “prize” in his hand, and with the diadem of glory sparkling on his brow.

9. Our thoughts should be much in heaven; ver. 20. Our home is there, our citizenship is there. Here we are strangers and pilgrims. We are away from home, in a cold and unfriendly world. Our great interests are in the skies; our eternal dwelling is to be there; our best friends are already there. There is our glorious Savior, with a body adapted to those pure abodes, and there are many whom we have loved on earth already with him. They are happy now, and we should not love them less because they are in heaven. Since, therefore, our great interests are there, and our best friends there; and since we ourselves are citizens of that heavenly world, our best affections should be there.

10. We look for the Savior; ver. 20, 21. He will return to our world. He will change our vile bodies, and make them like his own glorious body. And since this is so, let us (1.) bear with patience the trials and infirmities to which our bodies here are subject. These trials will be short, and we may well bear them for a few days, knowing that soon all pain will cease, and that all that is humiliating in the body will be exchanged for glory. (2.) Let us not think too highly or too much of our bodies here. They may be now beautiful and comely, but they are “vile” and degraded, compared with what they will soon be. They are subject to infirmity and to numerous pains and sicknesses. Soon the most beautiful body may become loathsome to our best friends. Soon, too offensive to be looked upon, it will be hidden in the grave. Why then should we seek to pamper and adorn these mortal frames? Why live only to decorate them? Why should we idolize a mass of molded and animated clay? Yet (3.) let us learn to honor the body in a true sense. It is soon to be changed. It will be made like the glorified body of Christ. Yes, this frail, diseased, corruptible, and humbled body; this body; that is soon to be laid in the grave, and to return to the dust, is soon to put on a new form, and to be clothed with immortality. It will be what the body of Christ now is—glorious and immortal. What a change! Christian, go and look on the creeping caterpillar, and see it changed to the gay and gilded butterfly—yesterday, a crawling and offensive insect; to-day, with gaudy colors an inhabitant of the air, and a dweller amidst flowers; and see an image of what thy body shall be, and of the mighty transformation which thou wilt soon undergo. See the change from the cold death of winter to the fragrance and life of spring, and behold an image of the change which thou thyself wilt ere long experience, and a proof that some such change awaits thee.

“Shall spring the faded world revive?

Shall waning moons their light renew?

Again shall setting suns ascend

And chase the darkness from our view?

Shall life revisit dying worms,

And spread the joyful insect’s wing?

And, oh, shall man awake no more,

To see thy face, thy name to sing?

Faith sees the bright, eternal doors

Unfold to make her children way;

They shall be cloth'd with endless life,

And shine in everlasting day.”

DWIGHT.

11. Let us look for the coming of the Lord; ver. 21. All that we hope for depends on his reappearing. Our day of triumph and of the fulness of our joy is to be when he shall return. Then we shall be raised from the grave; then our vile bodies shall be changed; then we shall be acknowledged as his friends; then we shall go to be forever with him. The earth is not our home; nor is the grave to be our everlasting bed of rest. Our home is heaven—and the Savior will come, that he may raise us up to that blessed abode. And who knows when he may appear? He himself commanded us to be ready, for he said he would come at an hour when we think not. We should so desire his coming, that the hours of his delay would seem to be heavy and long and should so live that we can breathe forth with sincerity, at all times, the fervent prayer of the beloved disciple, “Come, Lord Jesus, COME QUICKLY;” Rev. 22:20.

“My faith shall triumph o’er the grave,

And trample on the tombs;

My Jesus, my Redeemer, lives,

My God, my Savior, comes;

Ere long I know he shall appear,

In power and glory great;

And death, the last of all his foes,

Lie vanquish’d at his feet.

Then, though the worms my flesh devour,

And make my form their prey,

I know I shall arise with power,

On the last judgment-day;—
When God shall stand upon the earth,
Him then mine eyes shall see;
My flesh shall feel a sacred birth,
And ever with him be.

Then his own hand shall wipe the tears
From every weeping eye;
And pains, and groans, and griefs, and fears,
Shall cease eternally.
How long, dear Savior! Oh, how long
Shall this bright hour delay?
Fly swift around, ye wheels of time,
And bring the welcome day.”

WATTS.

Chapter 4: Analysis of the Chapter

This chapter comprises the following points:

- I. Exhortations.
- II. Solemn commands to live as became Christians.
- III. The expression of a grateful acknowledgment of the favors which he had received from them; and,
- IV. The customary salutations.

I. Exhortations; ver. 1–3. (1.) He exhorts them to stand fast in the Lord; ver. 1. (2.) He entreats Euodias and Syntyche, who appear to have been alienated from each other, to be reconciled; ver. 2. (3.) He entreats one whom he calls a “true yoke-fellow” to render assistance to those women who had labored with him in the gospel; ver. 3.

II. Commands; ver. 4–9. He commands them to rejoice in the Lord always, ver. 4; to let their moderation be known to all, ver. 5; to have no anxiety about worldly matters, but in all their

necessities to go to God, ver. 6, 7; and to do whatever was honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, ver. 8, 9.

III. A grateful acknowledgment of their kindness; ver. 10–19. He says that their care of him had been manifested again, in such a way as to be highly grateful to his feelings; ver. 10. He did not indeed say that he had suffered, for he had learned, in whatever state he was, to be content (ver. 11–13); but they had shown a proper spirit in endeavoring to relieve his necessities; ver. 14. He remarks that their church was the only one that had aided him when he was in Macedonia, and that they had sent to him more than once when he was in Thessalonica; and says that their favor now was an offering acceptable to God, who would abundantly reward them; ver. 15–20.

IV. Salutations; ver. 21–23.

1. Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for. Doddridge unites this verse with the previous chapter, and supposes that it is the proper close of the solemn statement which the apostle makes there. The word therefore—ὄστε—has undoubted reference to the remarks made there; and the meaning is, that in view of the fact that there were many professed Christians who were not sincere—that the “citizenship” of all true Christians was in heaven, and that Christians looked for the coming of the Lord Jesus, who would make them like to himself, the apostle exhorts them to stand fast in the Lord. The accumulation of epithets of endearment in this verse shows his tender regard for them, and is expressive of his earnest solicitude for their welfare, and his deep conviction of their danger. The term “longed for” is expressive of strong affection; see chap. 1:8; and 2:26.

My joy. The source of my joy. He rejoiced in the fact that they had been converted under him; and in their holy walk, and their friendship. Our chief joy is in our friends; and the chief happiness of a minister of the gospel is in the pure lives of those to whom he ministers, see 3 John 4.

And crown; comp. 1 Thess. 2:19. The word crown means a circlet, chaplet, or diadem, (1) as the emblem of royal dignity—the symbol of office; (2) as the prize conferred on victors in the public games, 1 Cor. 9:25, and hence as an emblem of the rewards of a future life; 2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Pet. 5:4; (3) anything that is an ornament or honor, as one glories in a crown; comp. Prov. 12:4, “A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband;” 14:24, “The crown of the wise is their riches;” 16:31, “The hoary head is a crown of glory;” 17:6, “Children’s children are the crown of old men.” The idea here is, that the church at Philippi was that in which the apostle gloried. He regarded it as a high honor to have been the means of founding such a church, and he looked upon it with the same interest with which a monarch looks upon the diadem which he wears.

So, stand fast in the Lord. In the service of the Lord, and in the strength which he imparts; see Notes on Eph. 6:13, 14.

2. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche. These are doubtless the names of females. The name Syntyche is sometimes the name of a man; but, if these persons are referred to in ver. 3, there can be no doubt that they were females. Nothing more is known of them than is here mentioned. It has been commonly supposed that they were deaconesses, who preached the gospel to those of their own sex; but there is no certain evidence of this. All that is known is, that there was some disagreement between them, and the apostle entreats them to be reconciled to each other.

That they be of the same mind. That they be united, or reconciled. Whether the difference related to doctrine, or to something else, we cannot determine from this phrase. The language is such as would properly relate to any difference.

In the Lord. In their Christian walk and plans. They were doubtless professing Christians, and the apostle exhorts them to make the Lord the great object of their affections, and in their regard for him, to bury all their petty differences and animosities.

3. And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow. It is not known to whom the apostle refers here. No name is mentioned, and conjecture is useless. All that is known is, that it was someone whom Paul regarded as associated with himself in labor, and one who was so prominent at Philippi that it would be understood who was referred to, without more particularly mentioning him. The presumption, therefore, is, that it was one of the ministers, or “bishops” (see Notes, chap. 1:1) of Philippi, who had been particularly associated with Paul when he was there. The epistle was addressed to the “church with the bishops and deacons” (chap. 1:1); and the fact that this one had been particularly associated with Paul, would serve to designate him with sufficient particularity. Whether he was related to the women referred to, is wholly unknown. Doddridge supposes that he might be the husband of one of these women; but of that there is no evidence. The term “yoke-fellow”—συζυγος—some have understood as a proper name (Syzygus); but the proper import of the word is yoke-fellow, and there is no reason to believe that it is used here to denote a proper name. If it had been, it is probable that some other word than that here used and rendered true—γνήσιος—would have been employed. The word true—γνήσιος—means that he was sincere, faithful, worthy of confidence. Paul had had evidence of his sincerity and fidelity; and he was a proper person, therefore, to whom to entrust a delicate and important business.

Help those women. The common opinion is, that the women here referred to were Euodias and Syntyche, and that the office which the friend of Paul was asked to perform was, to secure a reconciliation between them. There is, however, no certain evidence of this. The reference seems rather to be to influential females who had rendered important assistance to Paul when he was there. The kind of “help” which was to be imparted was probably by counsel, and friendly co-operation in the duties which they were called to perform. There is no evidence that it refers to pecuniary aid; and, had it referred to a reconciliation of those who were at variance, it is probable that some other word would have been used than that here rendered help—συλλαμβάνου.

Which labored with me in the gospel. As Paul did not permit women to preach (see 1 Tim. 2:12; comp. Notes on 1 Cor. 10:5), he must have referred here to some other services which

they had rendered. There were deaconesses in the primitive churches, (Notes Rom. 16:1; 1 Tim. 5:9, seq.), to whom was probably entrusted particularly the care of the female members of a church. In the custom which prevailed in the oriental world, of excluding females from the public gaze, and of confining them to their houses, it would not be practicable for the apostles to have access to them. The duties of instructing and exhorting them were then probably entrusted chiefly to pious females; and in this way important aid would be rendered in the gospel. Paul could regard such as “laboring with him,” though they were not engaged in preaching.

With Clement also. That is, they were associated with Clement, and with the other fellow-laborers of Paul, in aiding him in the gospel. Clement was doubtless someone who was well known among them; and the apostle felt that, by associating them with him, as having been real helpers in the gospel, their claim to respectful attention would be better appreciated. Who Clement was, is unknown. Most of the ancients say it was Clement of Rome, one of the primitive fathers. But there is no evidence of this. The name Clement was common, and there is no improbability in supposing that there might have been a preacher of this name in the church at Philippi.

Whose names are in the book of life; see Notes on Isa. 4:3. The phrase, “the book of life,” which occurs here, and in Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19, is a Jewish phrase, and refers originally to a record or catalogue of names, as the roll of an army. It then means to be among the living, as the name of an individual would be erased from a catalogue when he was deceased. The word life here refers to eternal life; and the whole phrase refers to those who were enrolled among the true friends of God, or who would certainly be saved. The use of this phrase here implies the belief of Paul that these persons were true Christians. Names that are written in the book of life will not be blotted out. If the hand of God records them there who can obliterate them?

4. Rejoice in the Lord always; see Notes, chap. 3:1. It is the privilege of Christians to do this, not at certain periods and at distant intervals, but at all times they may rejoice that there is a God and Savior; they may rejoice in the character, law, and government of God—in his promises, and in communion with him. The Christian, therefore, may be, and should be, always a happy man. If everything else changes, yet the Lord does not change; if the sources of all other joy are dried up, yet this is not; and there is not a moment of a Christian’s life in which he may not find joy in the character, law, and promises of God.

5. Let your moderation be known unto all men. That is, let it be such that others may see it. This does not mean that they were to make an ostentatious display of it, but that it should be such a characteristic of their lives that it would be constantly visible to others. The word moderation—ἐπιεικὲς—refers to restraint on the passions, general soberness of living, being free from all excesses. The word properly means that which is fit or suitable, and then propriety, gentleness, mildness.—They were to indulge in no excess of passion, or dress, or eating, or drinking. They were to govern their appetites, restrain their temper, and to be examples of what was proper for men in view of the expectation that the Lord would soon appear.

The Lord is at hand. Is near; see Notes, chap. 3:20; 1 Cor. 16:22. This has the appearance of being a phrase in common use among the early Christians, and as being designed to keep before their minds a lively impression of an event which ought, by its anticipation, to produce an important effect. Whether, by this phrase, they commonly understood the coming of the Lord to destroy Jerusalem, or to remove them by death, or to judge the world, or to reign personally on the earth, it is impossible now to determine, and is not very material to a proper understanding of its use here. The idea is, that the expectation that the Lord Jesus will “come,” ought to be allowed to produce moderation of our passions, in our manner of living, in our expectations of what this world can furnish, and in our desires of earthly good. On him who feels that he is soon to die, and to stand at the bar of God—on him who expects soon to see the Lord Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven, it cannot fail to have this effect. Men indulge their passions—are extravagant in their plans of life, and in their expectations of earthly good for themselves and for their families, because they have no realizing sense of the truth that there is before them a vast eternity. He that has a lively expectation that heaven will soon be his, will form very moderate expectations of what this world can furnish.

6. Be careful for nothing. That is, be not anxious or solicitous about the things of the present life. The word here used—μεριμνᾶτε—does not mean that we are to exercise no care about worldly matters—no care to preserve our property, or to provide for our families (comp. 1 Tim. 5:8); but that there is to be such confidence in God as to free the mind from anxiety, and such a sense of dependence on him as to keep it calm; see the subject explained in the Notes on Matt. 6:25.

But in everything. Everything in reference to the supply of your wants, and the wants of your families; everything in respect to afflictions, embarrassments, and trials; and everything relating to your spiritual condition. There is nothing which pertains to body, mind, estate, friends, conflicts, losses, trials, hopes, fears, in reference to which we may not go and spread it all out before the Lord.

By prayer and supplication. The word rendered supplication is a stronger term than the former. It is the mode of prayer peculiarly which arises from the sense of need, or want—from δέομαι, to want, to need.

With thanksgiving. Thanksgiving connected with prayer. We can always find something to be thankful for, no matter what may be the burden of our wants, or the special subject of our petitions. When we pray for the supply of our wants, we may be thankful for that kind Providence which has hitherto befriended us; when we pray for restoration from sickness, we may be thankful for the health we have hitherto enjoyed, and for God’s merciful interposition in the former days of trial, and for his goodness in now sparing our lives; when we pray that our children and friends may be preserved from danger and death, we may remember how often God has interposed to save them; when, oppressed with a sense of sin, we pray for pardon, we have abundant cause of thanksgiving that there is a glorious way by which we may be saved. The greatest sufferer that lives in this world of redeeming love, and who has the offer of heaven before him, has cause of gratitude.

Let your request be made known unto God. Not as if you were to give him information, but to express to him your wants. God needs not to be informed of our necessities, but he requires that we come and express them to him; comp. Ezek. 36:37. “Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.”

7. And the peace of God. The peace which God gives. The peace here particularly referred to is that which is felt when we have no anxious care about the supply of our wants, and when we go confidently and commit everything into the hands of God. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee;” Isa. 26:3; see Notes on John 14:27.

Which passeth all understanding. That is, which surpasses all that men had conceived or imagined. The expression is one that denotes that the peace imparted is of the highest possible kind. The apostle Paul frequently used terms which had somewhat of a hyperbolic cast (see Notes on Eph. 3:19; comp. John 21:25), and the language here is that which one would use who designed to speak of that which was of the highest order. The Christian, committing his way to God, and feeling that he will order all things aright, has a peace which is nowhere else known. Nothing else will furnish it but religion. No confidence that a man can have in his own powers; no reliance which he can repose on his own plans or on the promises or fidelity of his fellow-men, and no calculations which he can make on the course of events, can impart such peace to the soul as simple confidence in God.

Shall keep your hearts and minds. That is, shall keep them from anxiety and agitation. The idea is, that by thus making our requests known to God, and going to him in view of all our trials and wants, the mind would be preserved from distressing anxiety. The way to find peace, and to have the heart kept from trouble, is thus to go and spread out all before the Lord; comp. Isa. 26:3, 4, 20; 37:1–7. The word here rendered shall keep, is a military term, and means that the mind would be guarded as a camp or castle is. It would be preserved from the intrusion of anxious fears and alarms.

Through Christ Jesus. By his agency, or intervention. It is only in him that the mind can be preserved in peace. It is not by mere confidence in God, or by mere prayer, but it is by confidence in God as he is revealed through the Redeemer, and by faith in him. Paul never lost sight of the truth that all the security and happiness of a believer were to be traced to the Savior.

8. Finally, brethren. As for what remains—τὸ λοιπὸν—or as a final counsel or exhortation.

Whatsoever things are true. In this exhortation the apostle assumes that there were certain things admitted to be true, and pure, and good, in the world, which had not been directly revealed, or which were commonly regarded as such by the men of the world, and his object is to show them that such things ought to be exhibited by the Christian. Everything that was honest and just towards God and towards men was to be practiced by them, and they were in all things to be examples of the highest kind of morality. They were not to exhibit partial virtues; not to perform one set of duties to the neglect or exclusion of others; not to be faithful in their duties to God, and to neglect their duty to men; not to be punctual in their religious rites, and neglectful of the common laws of morality; but they were to do everything that could be regarded as the fair

subject of commendation, and that was implied in the highest moral character. The word true refers here to everything that was the reverse of falsehood. They were to be true to their engagements; true to their promises; true in their statements; and true in their friendships. They were to maintain the truth about God; about eternity; about the judgment; and about every man's character. Truth is a representation of things as they are; and they were constantly to live under the correct impression of objects. A man who is false to his engagements, or false in his statements and promises, is one who will always disgrace religion.

Whatsoever things are honest. *σεμνὰ*. Properly, venerable, reverend; then honorable, reputable. The word was originally used in relation to the gods, and to the things that pertained to them, as being worthy of honor or veneration. Passow. As applied to men, it commonly means grave, dignified, worthy of veneration or regard. In the New Testament it is rendered grave in 1 Tim. 3:8, 11, and Titus 2:2, the only places where the word occurs except this; and the noun (*σεμνότης*) is rendered honesty in 1 Tim. 2:2, and gravity in 1 Tim. 3:4, and Tit. 2:7. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The word, therefore, does not express precisely what the word honest does with us, as confined to dealings or business transactions, but rather has reference to what was regarded as worthy of reputation or honor; what there was in the customs of society, in the respect due to age and rank, and in the intercourse of the world, that deserved respect or esteem. It includes indeed what is right in the transaction of business, but it embraces also much more, and means that the Christian is to show respect to all the venerable and proper customs of society, when they did not violate conscience or interfere with the law of God; comp. 1 Tim. 3:7.

Whatsoever things are just. The things which are right between man and man. A Christian should be just in all his dealings. His religion does not exempt him from the strict laws which bind men to the exercise of this virtue, and there is no way by which a professor of religion can do more injury perhaps than by injustice and dishonesty in his dealings. It is to be remembered that the men of the world, in estimating a man's character, affix much more importance to the virtues of justice and honesty than they do to regularity in observing the ordinances of religion; and therefore, if a Christian would make an impression on his fellow-men favorable to religion, it is indispensable that he manifests uncorrupted integrity in his dealings.

Whatsoever things are pure. Chaste—in thought, and feeling, and in the intercourse between the sexes; comp. Notes, 1 Tim. 5:2.

Whatsoever things are lovely. The word here used means properly what is dear to any one; then what is pleasing. Here it means what is amiable—such a temper—of mind that one can love it; or such as to be agreeable to others. A Christian should not be sour, crabbed, and irritable in his temper for nothing almost tends so much to injure the cause of religion as a temper always chafed; a brow morose and stern; an eye that is severe and unkind, and a disposition to find fault with everything. And yet it is to be regretted that there are many persons who make no pretensions to piety, who far surpass many professors of religion in the virtue here commended. A sour and crabbed temper in a professor of religion will undo all the good that he attempts to do.

Whatsoever things are of good report. That is, whatsoever is truly reputable in the world at large. There are actions which all men agree in commending, and which in all ages and countries are regarded as virtues. Courtesy, urbanity, kindness, respect for parents, purity between brothers and sisters, are among those virtues, and the Christian should be a pattern and an example in them all. His usefulness depends much more on the cultivation of these virtues than is commonly supposed.

If there be any virtue. If there is anything truly virtuous. Paul did not suppose that he had given a full catalogue of the virtues which he would have cultivated. He, therefore, adds, that if there was anything else that had the nature of true virtue in it, they should be careful to cultivate that also. The Christian should be a pattern and an example of every virtue.

And if there be any praise. Anything worthy of praise, or that ought to be praised.

Think on these things. Let them be the object of your careful attention and study, so as to practice them. Think what they are; think on the obligation to observe them; think on the influence which they would have on the world around you.

9. Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do. That is, what you have witnessed in me, and what you have learned of me, and what you have heard about me, practice yourselves. Paul refers them to his uniform conduct—to all that they had seen, and known, and heard of him, as that which it was proper for them to imitate. The same thing, substantially, he urges in chap. 3:17; see Notes on that verse. It could have been only the consciousness of a pure and upright life which would make such counsel proper. How few are the men at this day who can urge others to imitate all that they have seen in them, and learned from them, and heard of them.

And the God of peace shall be with you. The God who gives peace; comp. Heb. 13:20; 1 Thes. 5:23; see also Notes on ver. 7. The meaning here is, that Paul, by pursuing the course of life which he had led, and which he here counsels them to follow, had found that it had been attended with the blessing of the God of peace, and he felt the fullest assurance that the same blessing would rest on them if they imitated his example. The way to obtain the blessing of the God of peace, is to lead a holy life, and to perform with faithfulness all the duties which we owe to God and to our fellow-men.

10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly. The favor which Paul had received, and for which he felt so much gratitude, had been received of the Philippians; but he regarded “the Lord” as the source of it, and rejoiced in it as the expression of his kindness. The effect was to lead his heart with cheerfulness and joy up to God.

That now at the last. After so long a time. The reason why he had not before received the favor, was not neglect or inattention on their part, but the difficulty of having communication with him.

Your care of me hath flourished again. In the margin this is rendered “is revived,” and this is the proper meaning of the Greek word. It is a word properly applicable to plants or flowers, meaning to grow green again; to flourish again; to spring up again. Here the meaning is,

that they had been again prospered in their care of him, and to Paul it seemed as if their care had sprung up anew.

Wherein ye were also careful. That is, they were desirous to render him assistance, and to minister to his wants. Paul adds this, lest they should think he was disposed to blame them for inattention.

But ye lacked opportunity. Because there were no persons going to Rome from Philippi by whom they could send to him. The distance was considerable, and it is not probable that the intercourse between the two places was very constant.

11. Not that I speak in respect of want. Though Paul was doubtless often in circumstances of necessity, yet he did not make these remarks on that account. In his journeys, in his imprisonments, he could not but be at times in want; but he had learned to bear all this; and that which most impressed itself on his mind was the interest which the church ought to show in the cause of religion, and the evidence which it would thus furnish of attachment to the cause. As to his own personal trials, he had learned to bear them, so that they did not give him great uneasiness.

For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. That is, to have a contented mind. Paul says that he had “learned” this. Probably by nature he had a mind as prone to impatience as others, but he had been in circumstances fitted to produce a different state of feeling. He had had ample experience (2 Cor. 11:26), and, in his life of trials, he had acquired invaluable lessons on the subject. He had had abundant time for reflection, and he had found that there was grace enough in the gospel to enable him to bear trials with resignation. The considerations by which he had been taught this, he does not state; but they were probably such as the following:—that it is wrong to murmur at the allotments of Providence; that a spirit of impatience does no good, remedies no evil, and supplies no want; that God could provide for him in a way which he could not foresee, and that the Savior was able abundantly to sustain him. A contented mind is an invaluable blessing, and is one of the fruits of religion in the soul. It arises from the belief that God is right in all his ways. Why should we be impatient, restless, discontented? What evil will be remedied by it? what want supplied? what calamity removed? “He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast” (Prov. 15:15); and one of the secrets of happiness is to have a mind satisfied with all the allotments of Providence. The members of the Episcopal church beautifully pray, every day, “Give us minds always contented with our present condition.” No prayer can be offered which will enter more deeply into all our happiness on earth.

12. I know both how to be abased. To be in circumstances of want.

And I know how to abound. To have an abundance. He had been in circumstances where he had an ample supply for all his wants, and knew what it was to have enough. It requires as much grace to keep the heart right in prosperity, as it does in adversity, and perhaps more. Adversity, of itself, does something to keep the mind in a right state; prosperity does nothing.

Everywhere and in all things. In all my travels and imprisonments, and in reference to everything that occurs, I learn important lessons on these points.

I am instructed. The word here used—μεμύημαι—is one that is commonly used in relation to mysteries, and denoted being instructed in the secret doctrines that were taught in the ancient “mysteries.” Passow. In those mysteries, it was only the “initiated” who were made acquainted with the lessons that were taught there. Paul says that he had been initiated into the lessons taught by trials and by prosperity. The secret and important lessons which these schools of adversity are fitted to teach, he had had an ample opportunity of learning; and he had faithfully embraced the doctrines thus taught.

Both to be full. That is, he had learned to have an ample supply of his wants, and yet to observe the laws of temperance and soberness, and to cherish gratitude for the mercies which he had enjoyed.

And to be hungry. That is, to be in circumstances of want, and yet not to murmur or complain. He had learned to bear all this without discontent. This was then, as it is now, no easy lesson to learn; and it is not improper to suppose that, when Paul says that he had “been instructed” in this, even he means to say that it was only by degrees that he had acquired it. It is a lesson which we slowly learn, not to murmur at the allotments of Providence; not to be envious at the prosperity of others; not to repine when our comforts are removed. There may be another idea suggested here. The condition of Paul was not always the same. He passed through great reverses. At one time he had abundance; then he was reduced to want;—now he was in a state which might be regarded as affluent; then he was brought down to extreme poverty. Yesterday, he was poor and hungry; to-day, all his necessities are supplied. Now, it is in these sudden reverses that grace is most needed, and in these rapid changes of life that it is most difficult to learn the lessons of calm contentment. Men get accustomed to an even tenor of life, no matter what it is, and learn to shape their temper and their calculations according to it. But these lessons of philosophy vanish when they pass suddenly from one extreme to another, and find their condition of life suddenly changed. The garment that was adapted to weather of a uniform temperature, whether of heat or cold, fails to be fitted to our wants when these transitions rapidly succeed each other. Such changes are constantly occurring in life. God tries his people, not by a steady course of prosperity, or by long-continued and uniform adversity, but by transition from the one to the other; and it often happens that the grace which would have been sufficient for either continued prosperity or adversity would fail in the transition from the one to the other. Hence, new grace is imparted for this new form of trial, and new traits of Christian character are developed in these rapid transitions in life, as some of the most beautiful exhibitions of the laws of matter are brought out in the transitions produced in chemistry. The rapid changes from heat to cold, or from a solid to a gaseous state, develop properties before unknown, and acquaint us much more intimately with the wonderful works of God. The gold or the diamond, unsubjected to the action of intense heat, and to the changes produced by the powerful agents brought to bear on them, might have continued to shine with steady beauty and brilliancy; but we should never have witnessed the peculiar beauty and brilliancy which may be produced in rapid chemical changes. And so, there is many a beautiful trait of character which would never have been known

by either continued prosperity or adversity. There might have been always a beautiful exhibition of virtue and piety, but not that peculiar manifestation which is produced in the transitions from the one to the other.

13. I can do all things. From the experience which Paul had in these various circumstances of life, he comes here to the general conclusion that he could “do all things.” He could bear any trial, perform any duty, subdue any evil propensity of his nature, and meet all the temptations incident to any condition of prosperity or adversity. His own experience in the various changes of life had warranted him in arriving at this conclusion; and he now expresses the firm confidence that nothing would be required of him which he would not be able to perform. In Paul, this declaration was not a vain self-reliance, nor was it the mere result of his former experience. He knew well where the strength was to be obtained by which to do all things, and on that arm that was able to uphold him he confidently relied.

Through Christ which strengtheneth me; see Notes on John 15:5. Of the strength which Christ can impart, Paul had had abundant experience; and now his whole reliance was there. It was not in any native ability which he had; not in any vigor of body or of mind; not in any power which there was in his own resolutions; it was in the strength that he derived from the Redeemer. By that he was enabled to bear cold, fatigue, and hunger; by that, he met temptations and persecutions; and by that, he engaged in the performance of his arduous duties. Let us learn, hence, (1.) That we need not sink under any trial, for there is one who can strengthen us. (2.) That we need not yield to temptation. There is one who is able to make a way for our escape. (3.) That we need not be harassed, and vexed, and tortured with improper thoughts and unholy desires. There is one who can enable us to banish such thoughts from the mind, and restore the right balance to the affections of the soul. (4.) That we need not dread what is to come. Trials, temptations, poverty, want, persecution, may await us; but we need not sink into despondency. At every step of life, Christ is able to strengthen us, and can bring us triumphantly through. What a privilege it is, therefore, to be a Christian—to feel, in the trials of life, that we have one friend, unchanging and most mighty, who can always help us! How cheerfully should we engage in our duties, and meet the trials that are before us, leaning on the arm of our Almighty Redeemer! Let us not shrink from duty; let us not dread persecution let us not fear the bed of death. In all circumstances, Christ, our unchanging Friend, can uphold us. Let the eye and the affections of the heart be fixed on him; let the simple, fervent, believing prayer be directed always to him when trials come, when temptations assail, when duty presses hard upon us, and when a crowd of unholy and forbidden thoughts rush into the soul: and we shall be safe.

14. Notwithstanding, ye have well done. Though he had learned the grace of contentment, and though he knew that Christ could enable him to do all things, it was well for them to show sympathy for his sufferings; for it evinced a proper regard for a benefactor and an apostle.

Ye did communicate. You took part with my affliction. That is, you sympathized with me, and assisted me in bearing it. The relief which they had sent, not only supplied his wants, but it sustained him by the certainty that he was not forgotten.

15. In the beginning of the gospel. “At the time when I first preached the gospel to you; or when the gospel began its benign influence on your hearts.”

When I departed from Macedonia; see Acts 17:14. The last place that Paul visited in Macedonia, at that time, was Berea. There a tumult was excited by the Jews, and it was necessary for him to go away. He left Macedonia to go to Athens; and left it in haste, amidst scenes of persecution, and when he needed sympathizing aid. At that time, as well as when he was in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1–10), he needed the assistance of others to supply his wants; and he says that aid was not withheld. The meaning here is, that this aid was sent to him “as he was departing from Macedonia;” that is, alike in Thessalonica and afterwards. This was about twelve years before this epistle was written. Doddridge.

No church communicated with me. No church so participated with me in my sufferings and necessities, as to send to my relief; comp. 2 Cor. 11:8, 9. Why they did not, Paul does not intimate. It is not necessary to suppose that he meant to blame them. They might not have been acquainted with his necessities. All that is implied here is, that he specially commends the Philippians for their attention to him.

16. For even in Thessalonica; Notes, Acts 17:1. Paul remained there long enough to establish a flourishing church. He met, indeed, with much opposition and persecution there; and hence it was necessary that his wants should be supplied by others.

17. Not because I desire a gift. “The reason why I rejoice in the reception of what you have sent to me, is not that I am covetous.” From the interest with which he had spoken of their attention to him, some might perhaps be disposed to say, that it arose from this cause. He says, therefore, that, grateful as he was for the favor which he had received, his chief interest in it arose from the fact that it would contribute ultimately to their own good. It showed that they were governed by Christian principle, and this would not fail to be rewarded. What Paul states here is by no means impossible; though it may not be very common. In the reception of favors from others, it is practicable to rejoice in them mainly, because their bestowment will be a means of good to the benefactor himself. All our selfish feelings and gratifications may be absorbed and lost in the superior joy which we have in seeing others actuated by a right spirit, and in the belief that they will be rewarded. This feeling is one of the fruits of Christian kindness. It is that which leads us to look away from self, and to rejoice in every evidence that others will be made happy.

I desire fruit. The word “fruit” is often used in the Scriptures, as elsewhere, to denote results, or that which is produced. Thus, we speak of punishment as the fruit of sin, poverty as the fruit of idleness, and happiness as the fruit of a virtuous life. The language is taken from the fact, that a man reaps or gathers the fruit or result of that which he plants.

To your account. A phrase taken from commercial dealings. The apostle wished that it might be set down to their credit. He desired that when they came to appear before God, they might reap the benefit of all the acts of kindness which they had shown him.

18. But I have all. Marg., “or, have received.” The phrase here is equivalent to, “I have received everything. I have all I want, and desire no more.” He was entirely satisfied. What they

had sent to him is, of course, now unknown. It is sufficient to know, that it was of such a nature as to make his situation comfortable.

I am full. I have enough. This is a strong expression, denoting that nothing was lacking.

Having received of Epaphroditus; see Notes, chap. 2:25.

An odor of a sweet smell. This does not mean that it was such an odor to Paul, but to God. He regarded it as an offering which they had made to God himself; and he was persuaded that he would regard it as acceptable to him. They had doubtless made the offering, not merely from personal friendship for Paul, but because he was a minister of Christ, and from love to his cause; and Paul felt assured that this offering would be acceptable to him; comp. Matt. 10:41, 42. The word “odor” refers properly, to the pleasant fragrance produced in the temple by the burning of incense; Notes on Luke 1:9. On the meaning of the word rendered “a sweet smell,”—*εὐωδία*—see Notes on 2 Cor. 2:15. The whole language here is taken from an act of worship; and the apostle regarded what he had received from the Philippians as in fact a thank-offering to God, and as presented with the spirit of true devotion to him. It was not, indeed, a formal act of worship; but it was acceptable to God as an expression of their regard for his cause.

A sacrifice acceptable. Acceptable to God; comp. Heb. 13:16; Notes, Rom. 12:1.

Well-pleasing to God. Because it evinced a regard for true religion. Learn hence, (1.) That kindness done to the ministers of the gospel is regarded as an acceptable offering to God. (2.) That kindness to the servants of God in distress and want, is as well-pleasing to God as direct acts of worship. (3.) That such acts of benevolence are evidences of attachment to the cause of religion, and are proofs of genuine piety; Notes, Matt. 10:42.

19. But my God shall supply all your need. That is, “You have shown your regard for me as a friend of God, by sending to me in my distress, and I have confidence that, in return for all this, God will supply all your wants, when you are in circumstances of necessity.” Paul’s confidence in this seems not to have been founded on any express revelation; but on the general principle that God would regard their offering with favor. Nothing is lost, even in the present life, by doing good. In thousands of instances, it is abundantly repaid. The benevolent are not usually poor; and if they are, God often raises up for them benefactions, and sends supplies in a manner as unexpected, and bearing proofs of divine interposition as decided, as when supplies were sent by the ravens to the prophet.

According to his riches in glory; Notes, Eph. 3:16. The word riches here means, his abundant fulness; his possessing all things; his inexhaustible ability to supply their wants. The phrase “in glory,” is probably to be connected with the following phrase, “by Christ Jesus;” and means that the method of imparting supplies to men was through Jesus Christ, and was a glorious method; or, that it was done in a glorious manner. It is such an expression as Paul is accustomed to use, when speaking of what God does. He is not satisfied with saying simply that it is so; but connects with it the idea that whatever God does is done in a way worthy of himself, and so as to illustrate his own perfections.

In Christ Jesus. By the medium of Christ; or through him. All the favors that Paul expected for himself, or his fellow-men, he believed would be conferred through the Redeemer. Even the supply of our temporal wants comes to us through the Savior. Were it not for the atonement, there is no more reason to suppose that blessings would be conferred on men than that they would be on fallen angels. For them no atonement has been made; and at the hand of justice, they have received only wretchedness and woe.

20. Now unto God and our Father, &c.; see Notes on Rom. 16:27. It was common for Paul to address such an ascription of praise to God, at the close of his epistles.

21. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. It was usual for him also to close his epistles with affectionate salutations to various members of the churches to which he wrote. These salutations are generally specific, and mention the names, particularly if prominent members of the churches; see the close of the epistles to the Romans; 1 Corinthians; Colossians, and 2 Timothy. In this epistle, however, as in some others, the salutation is general. Why none are specified in particular is not certainly known.

The brethren which are with me, &c. The word “brethren” here probably refers to ministers that were with Paul as the “saints” in general are mentioned in the next verse. It is possible that at Rome the ministers were known by the general name of the brethren. Pierce.

22. All the saints salute you. All in Rome, where this epistle was written. No individuals are specified, perhaps because none of the Christians at Rome were personally known to the church at Philippi. They would, however, feel a deep interest in a church which had thus the confidence and affection of Paul. There is reason to believe that the bonds of affection among the churches then were much stronger than they are now. There was a generous warmth in the newness of the Christian affections—the first ardor of love; and the common trials to which they were exposed would serve to bind them closely together.

Chiefly they that are of Cæsar’s household. That is, of Nero, who was at that time the reigning emperor. The name Cæsar was given to all the emperors after the time of Julius Cæsar, as the name Pharaoh was the common name of the kings of Egypt. The phrase here used—“the household of Cæsar”—may refer to the relatives of the emperor; and it is certainly possible that some of them may have been converted to Christianity. But it does not of necessity refer to those related to him, but may be applied to his domestics, or to some of the officers of the court that were more particularly employed around his person; and as it is more probable that some of them would be converted than his own relatives, it is more safe to suppose that they were intended; see Notes on 1:13.

23. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.; Notes, Rom. 16:20.

In regard to the subscription at the end of this epistle, it may be remarked, as has been done of the other subscriptions at the end of the epistles, that it is of no authority whatever. There is no reason, however, to doubt that in this case it is correct. The epistle bears internal evidence of having been written from Rome, and was doubtless sent by Epaphroditus. See the Intro., § 3. There is considerable variety in the subscription. The Greek is, “It was written to the Philippians

from Rome by Epaphroditus.” The Syriac, “The epistle to the Philippians was written from Rome, and sent by Epaphroditus.” The Æthiopic, “To the Philippians, by Timothy.”

Remarks

The principal lessons taught in this closing chapter are the following:—

1. It is our duty to be firm in the Lord, in all the trials, temptations, and persecutions to which we may be exposed; ver. 1. This duty should be pressed on Christians by their teachers, and by each other, by all that is tender and sacred in the Christian profession, and all that is endearing in Christian friendship. Like Paul, we should appeal to others as “brethren dearly beloved and longed for,” and by all their affection for us we should entreat them to be steadfast in the Christian profession. As their “joy and crown,” also, ministers should desire that their people should be holy. Their own happiness and reward is to be closely connected with the firmness with which their people maintain the principles of the Christian faith. If Christians, therefore, wish to impart the highest joy to their religious teachers, and to exalt them as high as possible in future happiness and glory, they should strive to be faithful to their great Master, and to be steadfast in attachment to his cause.

2. It is the duty of those who have from any cause been alienated, to seek to be reconciled; ver. 2. They should be of the same mind. Almost nothing does more to hinder the cause of religion than alienations and bickerings among its professed friends. It is possible for them to live in harmony, and to be of the same mind in the Lord; and such is the importance of this, that it well deserves to be enforced by apostolic authority and persuasion. It may be observed, also, that in the case referred to in this chapter—that of Euodias and Syntyche—the exhortation to reconciliation is addressed to both. Which was in the wrong, or whether both were, is not intimated, and is not needful for us to know. It is enough to know that there was alienation, and both of them were exhorted to see that the quarrel was made up. So, in all cases where members of the church are at variance, it is the business of both parties to seek to be reconciled, and neither party is right if he waits for the other before he moves in the matter. If you feel that you have been injured, go and tell your brother kindly wherein you think he has done you wrong. He may at once explain the matter, and show that you have misunderstood it, or he may make proper confession or restitution. Or, if he will do neither, you will have done your duty; Matt. 18:15. If you are conscious that you have injured, him, then nothing is more proper than that you should go and make confession. The blame of the quarrel rests wholly on you. And if some meddling third person has got up the quarrel between you, then go and see your brother, and disappoint the devices of the enemy of religion.

3. It is our duty and our privilege to rejoice in the Lord always; ver. 4. As God is unchanging, we may always find joy in him. The character of God which we loved yesterday, and in the contemplation of which we found happiness then, is the same to-day, and its contemplation will furnish the same joy to us now. His promises are the same; his government is the same; his readiness to impart consolation is the same; the support which he can give in trial and temptation is the same. Though in our own hearts we may find much over which to mourn,

yet when we look away from ourselves we may find abundant sources of consolation and peace. The Christian, therefore, may be always happy. If he will look to God and not to himself; to heaven and not to earth, he will find permanent and substantial sources of enjoyment. But in nothing else than God can we rejoice always. Our friends, in whom we find comfort, are taken away; the property that we thought would make us happy, fails to do so; and pleasures that we thought would satisfy, pall upon the sense and make us wretched. No man can be permanently happy who does not make THE LORD the source of joy, and who does not expect to find his chief pleasure in him.

4. It is a privilege to be permitted to go and commit everything to God; ver. 6, 7. The mind may be in such a state that it shall feel no anxiety about anything. We may feel so certain that God will supply all our wants; that he will bestow upon us all that is really necessary for us in this life and the next, and that he will withhold from us nothing which it is not for our real good to have withheld, that the mind may be constantly in a state of peace. With a thankful heart for all the mercies which we have enjoyed—and in all cases they are many—we may go and commit ourselves to God for all that we need hereafter. Such is the privilege of religion; such an advantage is it to be a Christian. Such a state of mind will be followed by peace. And it is only in such a way that true peace can be found. In every other method there will be agitation of mind and deep anxiety. If we have not this confidence in God, and this readiness to go and commit all to him, we shall be perplexed with the cares of this life; losses and disappointments will harass us; the changes which occur will weary and wear out our spirits, and through life we shall be tossed as on a restless ocean.

5. It is the duty of Christians to be upright in every respect; ver. 8. Every friend of the Redeemer should be a man of incorruptible and unsuspected integrity. He should be one who can always be depended on to do what is right, and pure, and true, and lovely. I know not that there is a more important verse in the New Testament than the eighth verse of this chapter. It deserves to be recorded in letters of gold in the dwelling of every Christian, and it would be well if it could be made to shine on his way as if written in characters of living light. There should be no virtue, no truth, no noble plan of benevolence, no pure and holy undertaking in society, of which the Christian should not be, according to his ability, the patron and the friend. The reasons are obvious. It is not only because this is in accordance with the law of God, but it is from its effect on the community. The people of the world judge of religion by the character of its professed friends. It is not from what they hear in the pulpit, or learn from the Bible, or from treatises on divinity; it is from what they see in the lives of those who profess to follow Christ. They mark the expression of the eye; the curl of the lip; the words that we speak—and if they perceive peevishness and irritability, they set it down to the credit of religion. They watch the conduct, the temper and disposition, the manner of doing business, the respect which a man has for truth, the way in which he keeps his promises, and set it all down to the credit of religion. If a professed Christian fails in any one of these things, he dishonors religion and neutralizes all the good which he might otherwise do. It is not only the man in the church who is untrue, and dishonest, and unjust, and unlovely in his temper, that does evil; it is he who is either false, or dishonest, or unjust, or unlovely in his temper. One evil propensity will neutralize all that is good; and one

member of the church who fails to lead a moral and upright life will do much to neutralize all the good that can be done by all the rest of the church; comp. Eccl. 10:1.

6. It is the duty of Christians to show kindness to the ministers of the gospel, especially in times and circumstances of want; ver. 10, 14–17. Paul commended much what the Philippians had done for him. Yet they had done no more than they ought to do; see 1 Cor. 9:11. He had established the gospel among them, carrying it to them by great personal sacrifice and self-denial. What he had done for them had cost him much more than what they had done for him—and was of much more value. He had been in want. He was a prisoner; among strangers; incapable of exerting himself for his own support; not in a situation to minister to his own wants, as he had often done by tent-making, and in these circumstances, he needed the sympathizing aid of friends. He was not a man to be voluntarily dependent on others, or to be at any time a burden to them. But circumstances beyond his control had made it necessary for others to supply his wants. The Philippians nobly responded to his claims on them, and did all that he could ask. Their conduct is a good example for other Christians to imitate in their treatment of the ministers of the gospel. Ministers now are often in want. They become old, and are unable to labor; they are sick, and cannot render the service which they have been accustomed to; their families are afflicted, and they have not the means of providing for them comfortably in sickness. It is to be remembered also that such cases often happen where a minister has spent the best part of his life in the service of a people; where he has devoted his most vigorous days to their welfare; where he has been unable to lay up anything for sickness or old age; where he may have abandoned what would have been a lucrative calling in life, for the purpose of preaching the gospel. If there ever is a claim on the generosity of a people, his case is one, and there is no debt of gratitude which a people ought more cheerfully to pay than that of providing for the wants of an aged or an afflicted and disabled servant of Christ, who has spent his best years in endeavoring to train them and their children up for heaven. Yet, it cannot be denied, that great injustice is often done in such cases. The poor beast that has served a man and his family in the days of his vigor, is often turned out in old age to die; and something like this sometimes occurs in the treatment of ministers of the gospel. The conduct of a people, generous in many other respects, is often unaccountable in their treatment of their pastors; and one of the lessons which ministers often have to learn, like their Master, by bitter experience, is the ingratitude of those for whose welfare they have toiled, and prayed, and wept.

7. Let us learn to be contented with our present condition; ver. 11, 12. Paul learned this lesson. It is not a native state of mind. It is a lesson to be acquired by experience. By nature, we are all restless and impatient; we are reaching after things that we have not, and often after things that we cannot and ought not to have. We are envious of the condition of others, and suppose that if we had what they have we should be happy. Yet, if we have right feelings, we shall always find enough in our present condition to make us contented. We shall have such confidence in the arrangements of Providence as to feel that things are ordered for the best. If we are poor, and persecuted, and in want, or are prostrated by sickness, we shall feel that there is some good reason why this is so arranged—though the reason may not be known to us. If we are benevolent, as we ought to be, we shall be willing that others shall be made happy by what they possess, instead of coveting it for ourselves, and desiring to wrest it from them. If we are disposed to

estimate our mercies, and not to give up our minds to a spirit of complaining, we shall see enough around us to make us contented. Paul was a prisoner; he was poor; he was among strangers; he had neither wife nor children; he was about to be tried for his life, and probably put to death—yet he learned to be content. He had a good conscience; the hope of heaven; a sound intellect; a heart disposed to do good, and confidence in God, and why should a man in such circumstances murmur? Says Jeremy Taylor, “Am I fallen into the hands of publicans and sequestrators, who have taken all from me? What now? Let me look about me. They have left me the sun and moon, fire and water, a loving wife, and many friends to pity me, and some to relieve me, and I can still discourse; and unless I list, they have not taken away my merry countenance, and a cheerful spirit, and a good conscience; they still have left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the gospel, and my religion, and my hopes of heaven, and my charity to them too; and still I sleep and digest; I eat and drink; I read and meditate; I can walk in my neighbor’s pleasant fields, and see the varieties of natural beauties, and delight in all in which God delights, that is, in virtue and wisdom, in the whole creation, and in God himself. And he who hath so many causes of joy, and so great, is very much in love with sorrow and peevishness, who loses all these pleasures, and chooses to sit down upon his little handful of thorns.”—Holy Living, chap. ii. sect. vi. Let the whole of this section “on Contentedness” be read. It is one of the most beautiful arguments for contentment that ever proceeded from uninspired lips.

8. In all these things; in all the duties and the trials of life; in all our efforts to meet temptation, and to cultivate contentment with our present condition, let us put our trust in the Savior; ver. 13. Paul said that he could “do all things through Christ who strengthened him.” His strength was there; ours is there also. If we attempt these things, relying on our own strength, we shall certainly fail. The bad passions of our nature will get the ascendancy, and we shall be left to discontent and murmuring. The arm that is to uphold us is that of the Redeemer; and relying on that, we shall find no duty so arduous that we may not be able to perform it; no temptation so formidable that we may not be able to meet it; no trial so great that we may not be able to bear it; no situation in life through which we may be called to pass, where we may not find contentment and peace. And may God of his rich mercy give to each one who shall read these Notes on this beautiful epistle to the Philippians, abundant grace thus to confide in the Savior, and to practice all the duties so tenderly enjoined on the Philippian Christians and on us by this illustrious prisoner in the cause of Christ.

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