



COMMENTARIES ON 'ROMANS'

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Chapter 15

Verse 1. *"We then that are strong, ought " - it is "we ought," not "we are so kind as to." What is it we ought to do? - "to bear the infirmities of the weak."*

See how he has roused their attention by his praises, not only by calling them powerful, but also by putting them alongside of himself. And not by this only, but by the advantage of the thing he again allures them, and by its not being burdensome. For thou, he says, art powerful, and art no whir the worse for condescending. But to him the hazard is of the last consequence, if he is not born with. And he does not say the infirm, but the "infirmities of the weak," so drawing him and bending him to mercy. As in another place too he says, "Ye that are spiritual restore such an one." (Galatians 6:1) Art thou become powerful? Render a return to God for making thee so. But render it thou wilt if thou settest the weakness of the sickly right. For we too were weak, but by grace we have become powerful. And this we are to do not in this case only, but also in the case of those who are weak in other respects. As, for instance, if any be passionate, or insolent, or has any such like failing bear with him. And how is this to be? Listen to what comes next. For after saying "we ought to bear," he adds, "and not to please ourselves."

Verse 2. *"Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification."*

But what he says is this. Art thou powerful? Let the weak have trial of thy power. Let him come to know thy strength; please him. And he does not barely say please, but for his good, and not barely for his good, lest the advanced person should say, See I am drawing him to his good! but he adds, "to edification." And so if thou be rich or be in power, please not thyself, but the poor and the needy, because in this way thou wilt at once have true glory to enjoy, and be doing much service. For glory from things of the world soon flies away, but that from things of the Spirit is abiding, if thou do it to edification. Wherefore of all men he requires this. For it is not this and that person that is to do it, but "each of you." Then since it was a great thing he had commanded them, and had bidden them even relax their own perfectness in order to set right the other's weakness; he again introduces Christ, in the following words:

Verse 3. *"For even Christ pleased not Himself."*

And this he always does. For when he was upon the subject of alms, he brought Him forward and said, "Ye know the grace of the Lord, that though He was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor." (2 Corinthians 8:9.) And when he was exhorting to charity, it was from Him that he exhorted in the words "As Christ also loved us." (Ephesians 5:25.) And when he was giving advice about bearing shame and

dangers, he took refuge in Him and said, "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame." (Hebrews 12:2). So in this passage too he shows how He also did this, and how the prophet proclaimed it from of old. Wherefore also he proceeds:

"The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell upon Me." (Psalm 69:9.) But what is the import of, "He pleased not Himself?" He had power not to have been reproached, power not to have suffered what He did suffer, had He been minded to look to His own things. But yet He was not so minded. But through looking to our good He neglected His own. And why did he not say, "He emptied Himself?" (Philippians 2:7.) It is because this was not the only thing he wished to point out, that He became man, but that He was also ill-treated, and obtained a bad reputation with many, being looked upon as weak. For it says, "If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross." (Matthew 27:40). And, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." (ib. 42). Hence he mentions a circumstance which was available for his present subject, and proves much more than he undertook to do; for he shows that it was not Christ alone that was reproached, but the Father also. "For the reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell," he says, "upon Me." But what he says is nearly this, What has happened is no new or strange thing. For they in the Old Testament who came to have a habit of reproaching Him, they also raved against His Son. But these things were written that we should not imitate them. And then he supplies them for a patient endurance of temptations.

Verse 4. *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime," he says, "were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope."*

That is, that we might not fall away, (for there are sundry conflicts within and without), that being nerved and comforted by the Scriptures, we might exhibit patience, that by living in patience we might abide in hope. For these things are productive of each other, patience of hope, and hope of patience. And both of them are brought about by the Scriptures. Then he again brings his discourse into the form of prayer, and says,

Verse 5. *"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus."*

For since he had given his own advice, and had also urged the example of Christ, he added the testimony of the Scriptures also, to show that with the Scripture Himself giveth patience also. And this is why he said, "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus." For this is what love would do, be minded toward another even as toward himself. Then to show again that it is not mere love that he requires, he adds, "according to Christ Jesus." And this he does, in all places, because there is also another sort of love. And what is the advantage of their agreeing?

Verse 6. *"That ye may with one mind," he says, "and one mouth, glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

He does not say merely with one mouth, but bids us do it with one will also. See how he has united the whole body into one, and how he concludes his address again with a doxology, whereby he gives the

utmost inducement to unanimity and concord. Then again from this point he keeps to the same exhortation as before, and says,

Verse 7. *“Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.”*

The example again is as before, and the gain unspeakable. For this is a thing that doth God especial glory, the being closely united. And so if even against thy will and for His sake, thou be at variance with thy brother, consider that by putting an end to thine anger thou art glorifying thy Master, and if not on thy brother’s account, for this at all events be reconciled to him: or rather for this first. For Christ also insists upon this upon all possible grounds, and when addressing His Father he said, “By this shall all men know that Thou hast sent Me, if they be one.” (John 17:21.)

Let us obey then, and knit ourselves to one another. For in this place it is not any longer the weak, but all that he is rousing. And were a man minded to break with thee, do not thou break also. Nor give utterance to that cold saying, “Him I love that loveth me; if my right eye does not love me, I tear it out.” For these are satanical sayings, and fit for publicans, and the little spirit of the Gentiles. But thou that art called to a greater citizenship, and are enrolled in the books of Heaven, art liable to greater laws. Do not speak in this way, but when he is not minded to love thee, then display the more love, that thou mayest draw him to thee. For he is a member; and when by any force a member is sundered from the body, we do everything to unite it again, and then pay more attention to it. For the reward is the greater then, when one draws to one a person not minded to love. For if He bids us invite to supper those that cannot make us any recompense, that what goes for recompense may be the greater, much more ought we to do this in regard to friendship. Now he that is loved and loveth, does pay thee a recompense. But he that is loved and loveth not, hath made God a debtor to thee in his own room. And besides, when he loves thee he needs not much pains; but when he loves thee not, then he stands in need of thy assistance. Make not then the cause for painstaking a cause for listlessness; and say not, because he is sick, that is the reason I take no care of him (for a sickness indeed the dulling of love is), but do thou warm again that which hath become chilled. But suppose he will not be warmed, “what then?” is the reply. Continue to do thy own part. “What if he grow more perverse?” He is but procuring to thee so much greater return, and shows thee so much the greater imitator of Christ. For if the loving one another was to: be the characteristic of disciples (“For hereby,” He says, “shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another), (ib. 13:35) consider how great an one loving one that hates us must be. For thy Master loved those that hated Him, and called them to Him; and the weaker they were, the greater the care He showed them; and He cried and said, “They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” (Matthew 9:12.) And He deemed publicans and sinners worthy of the same table with Him. And as great as was the dishonor wherewith the Jewish people treated Him, so great was the honor and concern He showed for them, yea, and much greater. Him do thou also emulate: for this good work is no light one, but one without which not even he that is a martyr can please God much, as Paul says. Say not then, I get hated, and that is why I do not love. For this is why thou oughtest to love most. And besides, it is not in the nature of things for a man who loves to be soon hated, but brute as a person may be, he loves them that love him. For this He says the heathens and the publicans do. (Matthew 5:46.) But if every one loves those that love him, who is there that would not love those who love while they are hated? Display then this conduct, and cease not to use this word, “Hate me as much as you may, I will not leave off loving thee,” and then thou wilt humble his quarrelsomeness, and cast out all coldness? For this disorder comes either from excessive heat, or from coldness; but both of these is the might of love

wont to correct by its warmth. Did you never see those who indulge a base love beaten, spit upon, called names, ill-treated in a thousand ways by those fornicatrices? What then? Do the insults break off this love? In no wise: they even kindle it the more. And yet they who do these things, besides being harlots, are of a disreputable and low grade. But they who submit to it, have often illustrious ancestors to count up, and much other nobility to boast of. Yet still none of these things break the tie, nor keep them aloof from her whom they love. And are we not ashamed then to find what great power the love of the devil and the demons hath, and not to be able to display as much in the love according to God? Dost thou not perceive that this is a very great weapon against the devil? Do you not see, that wicked demon stands by, dragging to himself the man thou hatest, and desiring to snatch away the member? And dost thou run by, and give up the prize of the conflict? For thy brother, lying between you, is the prize. And if thou get the better, thou receivest a crown; but if thou art listless, thou goest away without a crown. Cease then to give utterance to that satanical saying, "if my eye hates me, I cannot see it." For nothing is more shameful than this saying, and yet the generality lay it down for a sign of a noble spirit. But nothing is more ignoble than all this, nothing more senseless, nothing more foolish. Therefore I am indeed quite grieved that the doings of vice are held to be those of virtue, that looking down on men, and despising them, should seem to be honorable and dignified. And this is the devil's greatest snare, to invest iniquity with a good repute, whereby it becomes hard to blot out. For I have often heard men taking credit to themselves at their not going near those who are averse to them. And yet thy Master found a glory in this. How often do not men despise Him? how often show aversion to Him? Yet He ceaseth not to run unto them. Say not then that "I cannot bear to come near those that hate me," but say, that "I cannot bear to despise those that despise me." This is the language of Christ's disciple, as the other is of the devil's. This makes men honorable and glorious, as the other doth shameful and ridiculous. It is on this ground we feel admiration for Moses, because even when God said, "Let Me alone, that I may destroy them in Mine anger," (Exodus 32:10) he could not bear to despise those who had so often shown aversion to him, but said, "If thou wilt forgive them their trespass, forgive it; else blot out me also." (ibid. 32.) This was owing to his being a friend of God, and a copier of Him. And let us not pride ourselves in things for which we ought to hide our faces. Nor let us use the language of these lewd fellows, that are the scum of men, I know how to scorn thousands. But even if another use it, let us laugh him down, and stop his mouth for taking a delight in what he ought to feel ashamed of. What say you, pray, do you scorn a man that believes, whom when unbelieving Christ scorned not? Why do I say scorned not? Why He had such love towards him, when he was vile and unsightly, as even to die for him. He then so loved, and that such a person, and do you now, when he has been made fair and admirable, scorn him; now he is made a member of Christ, and hath been made thy Master's body? Dost thou not consider what thou art uttering, nor perceive what thou art venturing to do? He hath Christ as a Head, and a Table, and a Garment, and Life, and Light, and a Bridegroom, and He is ever? thing to him, and dost thou dare to say, "this fellow I despise?" and not this only, but thousands of others along with him? Stay thee, O man, and cease from thy madness; get to know thy brother. Learn that these be words of unreasonableness, and frenzy, and say on the contrary, though he despise me ten thousand times, yet will I never stand aloof from him. In this way thou wilt both gain thy brother, and wilt live to the glory of God, and wilt share the good things to come. To which God grant that we may all attain, by the grace and love toward man, etc.

Verse 8. *"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers."*

Again, he is speaking of Christ's concern for us, still holding to the same topic, and showing what great things He hath done for us, and how "He pleased not Himself." (Romans 15:3.) And besides this, there is another point which he makes good, that those of the Gentiles are debtors to a larger amount unto God. And if to a larger amount, then they ought to bear with the weak among the Jews. For since he had spoken very sharply to such, lest this should make these elated, he humbles their unreasonableness, by showing that it was by "promise made to the fathers" that they had the good things given them. while they of the Gentiles had them out of pity and love toward man only. And this is the reason of his saying, "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy." But that what is said may be made plainer, it is well to listen once more to the words themselves, that you may see what Christ's having been made "a Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers," means. What then is that which is stated? There had been a promise made to Abraham, saying, "Unto thee will I give the earth, and to thy seed, and in thy seed shall all the nations be blessed." (Genesis 12:7; 22:18.) But after this, they of the seed of Abraham all became subject to punishment. For the Law wrought wrath unto them by being transgressed, and thenceforward deprived them of that promise made unto the fathers. Therefore the Son came and wrought with the Father, in order that those promises might come true, and have their issue. For having fulfilled the whole Law in which He also fulfilled the circumcision, and having by it, and by the Cross, freed them from the curse of the transgression, He suffered not this promise to fall to the ground. When then he calls Him "a Minister of the circumcision," he means this, that by having come and fulfilled the Law, and been circumcised, and born of the seed of Abraham, He undid the curse, stayed the anger of God, made also those that were to receive the promises fit for them, as being once for all freed from their alienation. To prevent then these accused persons from saying, How then came Christ to be circumcised and to keep the whole Law? he turns their argument to the opposite conclusion. For it was not that the Law might continue, but that He might put an end to it, and free thee from the curse thereof, and set thee entirely at liberty from the dominion of that Law. For it was because thou hadst transgressed the Law, that He fulfilled it, not that thou mightest fulfill it, but that He might confirm to thee the promises made unto the fathers, which the Law had caused to be suspended, by showing thee to have offended, and to be unworthy of the inheritance. And so thou also art saved by grace, since thou wast cast off. Do not thou then bicker, nor perversely cling to the Law at this unsuitable time, since it would have cast thee also out of the promise, unless Christ had suffered so many things for thee. And He did suffer these, not because thou wast deserving of salvation, but that God might be true. And then that this might not puff up him of the Gentiles, he says.

Verse 9. *"And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy."*

But what he means is this. Those of the Jews would have had promises, even though they were unworthy. But thou hadst not this even, but wast saved from love towards man alone, even if, to put it at the lowest, they too would not have been the better for the promises, unless Christ had come. But yet that he might amalgamate them and not allow them to rise up against the weak, he makes mention of the promises. But of these he says that it was by mercy alone that they were saved. Hence they are the most bound to glorify God. And a glory it is to God that they be blended together, be united, praise with one mind, bear the weaker, neglect not the member that is broken off. Then he adds testimonies, in which he shows that the man of the Jews ought to blend himself with those of the Gentiles; and so he says, "As it is written, For this cause I will confess to Thee among the Gentiles, O Lord, and will sing unto Thy Name." (Psalm 18:46.)

Verse 10-12. "And, rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people. And, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles" (Deuteronomy 32:43). "and let all people laud Him." (Psalm 107:1.) "And, There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him shall the Gentiles trust." (Isaiah 11:1, 10.)

Now all these quotations he has given to show that we ought to be united, and to glorify God; and also, to humble the Jew, that he may not lift himself up over these, since all the prophets called these, as well as to persuade the man of the Gentiles to be lowly, by showing him that he had a larger grace to answer for. Then he concludes his argument with a prayer again.

Verse 13. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

That is, that ye may get clear of that heartlessness towards one another, and may never be cast down by temptations. And this will be by your abounding in hope. Now this is the cause of all good things, and it comes from the Holy Ghost. But it is not simply from the Spirit, but on condition of our contributing our part also. This is why he says, "in believing." For this is the way for you to be filled with joy, if ye believe, if ye hope. Yet he does not say if ye hope, but, "if ye abound in hope," so as not to find comfort in troubles only, but even to have joy through the abundance of faith and hope. And in this way, ye will also draw the Spirit to you. In this way, when He is come ye will continually keep to all good things. For just as food maintaineth our life, and by this ruleth the body, so if we have good works, we shall have the Spirit; and if we have the Spirit, we shall also have good works. As also, on the other hand, if we have no works, the Spirit flieth away. But if we be deserted by the Spirit, we shall also halt in our works. For when this hath gone, the unclean one cometh: this is plain from Saul. For what if he doth not choke us as he did him, still he strangles us in some other way by wicked works. We have need then of the harp of David, that we may charm our souls with the divine songs, both these, and those from good actions. Since if we do the one only, and while we listen to the charm, war with the charmer by our actions, as he did of old (1 Samuel 19:10); the remedy will even turn to judgment to us, and the madness become the more furious. For before we heard, the wicked demon was afraid lest we should hear it and recover. But when after hearing it even, we continue the same as we were, this is the very thing to rid him of his fear. Let us sing then the Psalm of good deeds, that we may cast out the sin that is worse than the demon. For a demon certainly will not deprive us of heaven, but doth in some cases even work with the sober-minded. But sin will assuredly cast us out. For this is a demon we willingly receive, a self-chosen madness. Wherefore also it hath none to pity it or to pardon it. Let us then sing charms over a soul in this plight, as well from the other Scriptures, as also from the blessed David. And let the mouth sing, and the mind be instructed. Even this is no small thing. For if we once teach the tongue to sing, the soul will be ashamed to be devising the opposite of what this singeth. Nor is this the only good thing that we shall gain, for we shall also come to know many things which are our interest. For he discourseth to thee both of things present, and things to come, and of things seen, and of the invisible Creation. And if thou wouldest learn about the Heaven, whether it abideth as it is or shall be changed, he gives thee a clear answer, and will say, "The heavens shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shall thou fold them up, O God, and they shall be changed." (Psalm 102:26.) And if thou wishest to hear of the form of them again, thou shall hear, "That spreadeth forth the Heaven like a curtain". And if thou be minded to know further about the back of them, he will tell thee again, "that covereth His upper chambers with waters." (Psalm 104:2, 3.) And even here he does not pause, but will likewise discourse with thee on the

breadth and height, and show thee that these are of equal measure. For, "As far as the east," he says, "is from the west, so far hath He set our iniquities from us. Like as the heaven's height above the earth, so is the Lord's mercy upon them that fear Him." (ib. 103:12, 11.) But if thou wouldest busy thyself with the foundation of the earth, even this he will not hide from thee, but thou shall hear him singing and saying, "He hath founded it upon the seas." (ib. 24:2.) And if of earthquakes thou art desirous to know, whence they come, he will free thee from this difficulty also, by saying, "That looketh upon the earth, and maketh it tremble." (ib. 104:32.) And if thou enquire the use of the night, this too mayest thou learn, and know from him. For "therein all the beasts of the forest do move." (ib. 20.) And in what way the mountains are for use, he will tell thee, "The high mountains are for the stags." And why there are rocks, "The rocks are a refuge for the porcupines." (ib. 18.) Why are there trees yielding no fruit? learn from him, for "there the sparrows build their nests." (ib. 17.) Why are there fountains in the wildernesses? hear, "that by them the fowls of the heaven dwell, and the wild beasts." (ib. 12.) Why is there wine? not that thou mayest drink only (for water is of a nature to suffice for this), but that thou mayest be gladdened also, "For wine maketh glad the heart of man." (ib. 15.) And by knowing this you will know how far the use of wine is allowable. Whence are the fowls and the wild beasts nourished? thou wilt hear from his words, "All these wait upon Thee, to give them their meat in due season." (ib. 27.) If thou sayest, For what purpose are the cattle? he will answer thee, that these also are for thee, "That causeth the grass," he says, "to grow for the cattle, and the green herb for the service (or retinue) of men." (ib. 14.) What is the use of the moon? hear him saying, "He made the moon for seasons." (Psalm 115:19.) And that all things seen and those not seen are made, is a thing that he has also clearly taught us by saying, "Himself spake, and they were made, He commanded, and they were created." (ib. 33:9.) And that there is an end of death, this he also teaches when he says, "God shall deliver my soul from the hand of hell when He shall receive me." (ib. 49:15.) Whence was our body made? he also tells us; "He remembereth that we are dust" (ib. 103:14); and again, whither goeth it away? "It shall return to its dust." (ib. 104:29.) Why was this universe made? For thee: "For thou crownest him with glory and honor, and settest him over the works of Thy hands." (ib. 8:5, 6.) Have we men any community with the Angels? This he also tells us, saying as follows, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the Angels." Of the love of God, "Like as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful to them that fear Him." (ib. 103:13.) And of the things that are to meet us after our present life, and of that undisturbed condition, he teacheth, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul." (ib. 116:7.) Why the Heaven is so great, this he will also say. For it is because "the heavens declare the glory of God." (ib. 19:10.) Why day and night were made, - not that they may shine and give us rest only, but also that they may instruct us. "For there are no speeches nor words, the sounds of which (i.e. day and night) are not heard." (ib. 3.) How the sea lies round about the earth, this too thou wilt learn from hence. "The deep as a garment is the envelopment thereof." For so the Hebrew has it. But having a sample in what I have mentioned, ye will have a notion of all the rest besides, the things about Christ, about the resurrection, about the life to come, about the resting, about punishment, about moral matters, all that concerns doctrines, and you will find the book filled with countless blessings. And if you fall into temptations, you will gain much comfort from hence. If you fall into sins even, you will find countless remedies stored up here, or if into poverty or tribulation, you will see many havens. And if thou be righteous thou wilt gain much security hence, and if a sinner much relief. For if thou be just and art ill-treated, thou wilt hear him say, "For Thy sake are we killed all the day long, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter." (Psalm 44:22.) "All these things have come upon us, and yet have we not forgotten Thee." (ib. 17.) And if thy well-doings make thee high, thou wilt hear him say, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (ib. 143:2), and thou wilt be straightway made lowly. And if thou be a sinner, and

hast despaired of thyself, thou wilt hear him continually singing, "Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation" (ib. 95:7, 8), and thou wilt be stayed up speedily. And if thou have a crown even on thy head, and art high-minded, thou wilt learn that "a king is not saved by a great host, neither shall a giant be saved by the greatness of his might" (ib. 33:16): and thou wilt find thyself able to be reasonable. If thou be rich, and in reputation, again thou wilt hear him singing, "Woe to them that trust in their own might, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches," (ib. 49:6.) And, "As for man, his days are as grass" (ib. 103:15), And His glory shall not go down with him, after him (ib. 49:17): and thou wilt not think any of the things upon the earth are great. For when what is more splendid than all, even glory and power, is so worthless, what else of things on earth is worth accounting of? But art thou in despondency? Hear him saying, "Why art thou so sorrowful, O my soul, and why dost thou so disturb me? Trust in God, for I will confess unto Him." (ib. 42:5.) Or dost thou see men in honor who deserve it not? "Fret not thyself at them that do wickedly. For as the grass shall they be dried up, and as the green herb shall they soon fall away." (ib. 37:1, 2.) Dost thou see both righteous and sinners punished? be told that the cause is not the same. For "many" he says, "are the plagues of sinners." (ib. 32:10.) But in the case of the righteous, he does not say plagues, but, "Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all." (ib. 34:19.) And again, "The death of the sinner is evil." (ib. 21.) And, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (ib. 116:15.) These things do thou say continually: by these be instructed. For every single word of this has in it an undiscoverable ocean of meaning. For we have been just running over them only: but if you were minded to give these passages accurate investigation, you will see the riches to be great. But at present it is possible even by what I have given, to get cleared of the passions that lie on you. For since he forbids our envying, or being grieved, or despondent out of season, or thinking that riches are anything, or tribulation, or poverty, or fancying life itself to be anything, he frees thee from all passions. So for this let us give thanks to God, and let us have our treasure always in hand, "that by patience and comfort of the Scriptures we may have hope" (Romans 15:4), and enjoy the good things to come. Which God grant that we may all attain, by the grace and love toward man of our Lord Jesus Christ. By Whom and with Whom, etc.

Verse 14. *"And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."*

He had said, "Inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." (Romans 11:13.) He had said, "Take heed lest He also spare not thee." (ib. 21.) He had said, "Be not wise in your own conceits" (ib. 12:16); and again, "Why dost thou judge thy brother?" (ib. 14:10) And, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" (ib. 4.) And several other like things besides. Since then he had often made his language somewhat harsh, he now speaks kindly. And what he said in the beginning, that he doth in the end also. At the beginning he said, "I thank my God for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." (ib. 1:8.) But here he says, "I am persuaded that ye also are full of goodness, being able also to admonish others;" and this is more than the former. And he does not say, I have heard, but, "I am persuaded," and have no need to hear, from others. And, "I myself," that is, I that rebuke, that accuse you. That "ye are full of goodness," this applies to the exhortation lately given. As if he said, It was not as if you were cruel, or haters of your brethren, that I gave you that exhortation, to receive, and not to neglect, and not to destroy "the work of God." For I am aware that "ye are full of goodness." But he seems to me here to be calling their virtue perfect. And he does not say ye have, but "ye are full of." And the sequel is with the same intensives: "filled with all knowledge." For suppose

they had been affectionate, but yet did not know how to treat those they loved properly. This was why he added, "all knowledge. Able to admonish others," not to learn only, but also to teach.

Verse 15. *"Nevertheless, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort."*

Observe the lowly-mindedness of Paul, observe his wisdom, how he gave a deep cut in the former part, and then when he had succeeded in what he wished, how he uses much kindness next. For even without what he has said, this very confession of his having been bold were enough to unstring their vehemency. And this he does in writing to the Hebrews also, speaking as follows, "But, beloved, I am persuaded better things of you, and things which belong unto salvation, though we thus speak." (Hebrews 6:9.) And to the Corinthians again, "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." (1 Corinthians 11:2.) And in writing to the Galatians he says, "I have confidence in you, that ye will be none otherwise minded." (Galatians 5:10.) And in all parts of his Epistles one may find this to be frequently observed. But here even in a greater degree For they were in a higher rank, and there was need to bring down their fastidious spirit, not: by astringents only, but by laxatives also. For he does this in different ways. Wherefore he says in this place too, "I have written the more boldly unto you," and with this even he is not satisfied, but has added, "in some sort," that is, gently; and even here he does not pause, but what does he say? "As putting you in mind." And he does not say as teaching, nor simply putting in mind, but he uses a word which means putting you in mind in a quiet way. Observe the end falling in with the introduction. For as in that passage he said, "that your faith is made known in all the world." (Romans 1:8.) So in the end of the Epistle also, "For your obedience hath reached unto all." (ib. 16:19.) And as in the beginning he wrote, "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end that ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you" (ib. 1:11, 12); so here also he said, "As putting you in mind." And having come down from the seat of the master, both there and here, he speaks to them as brethren and friends of equal rank. And this is quite a Teacher's duty, to give his address that variety which is profitable to the hearers. See then how after saying, "I have written the more boldly," and, "in some sort," and, "as putting you in mind," he was not satisfied even with these, but making his language still more lowly, he proceeds:

"Because of the grace that is given me of God." As he said at the beginning, "I am a debtor." (Romans 1:14.) As if he had said, I have not snatched at the honor for myself, neither was I first to leap forward to it, but God commanded this, and this too according unto grace, not as if He had separated me for this office because I deserved it. Do not ye then be exasperated, since it is not I that raise myself up, but it is God that enjoins it. And as he there says, "whom I serve in the Gospel of His Son" (ib. 9), so also here, after saying, "because of the grace given unto me by God," he adds,

Verse 16. *"That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God."*

For after his abundant proof of his statements, he draws his discourse to a more lofty tone, not speaking of mere service, as in the beginning, but of service and priestly ministering. For to me this is a priesthood, this preaching and declaring. This is the sacrifice I bring. Now no one will find fault with a priest, for being anxious to offer the sacrifice without blemish. And he says this at once to elevate (ptew'n) their thoughts, and show them that they are a sacrifice, and in apology for his own part in the matter, because he was appointed to this office. For my knife, he says, is the Gospel, the word of the

preaching. And the cause is not that I may be glorified, not that I may appear conspicuous, but that the “offering up of the Gentiles may be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.”

That is, that the souls of those that are taught by me, may be accepted. For it was not so much to honor me, that God led me to this pitch, as out of a concern for you. And how are they to become acceptable? In the Holy Ghost. For there is need not only of faith, but also of a spiritual way of life, that we may keep the Spirit that was given once for all. For it is not wood and fire, nor altar and knife, but the Spirit that is all in us. For this cause, I take all means to prevent that Fire from being extinguished, as I have been also enjoined to do. Why then do you speak to those that need it not? This is just the reason why I do not teach you, but put you in mind, he replies. As the priest stands by stirring up the fire, so I do, rousing up your ready-mindedness. And observe, he does not say, “that the offering up of” you “may be” etc. but “of the Gentiles.” But when he says of the Gentiles, he means the whole world, the land, and the whole sea, to take down their haughtiness, that they might not disdain to have him for a teacher, who was putting himself forth onto the very end of the world. As he said in the beginning, “as among the other Gentiles also, I am a debtor to Greeks, and also to barbarians, to wise, and to foolish.” (Romans 1:13, 14)

Verse 17. *“I have therefore whereof I may glory, through Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain to God.”*

Inasmuch as he had humbled himself exceedingly, he again raised his style, doing this also for their sakes, lest he should seem to become readily an object of contempt. And while he raises himself, he remembers his own proper temper, and says, “I have therefore whereof to glory.” I glory, he means, not in myself, not in our zeal, but in the “grace of God.”

Verse 18. *“For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God.”*

And none, he means, can say that my words are a mere boast. For of this priestly ministry of mine, the signs that I have, and the proofs of the appointment too, are many. Not the long garment and the bells as they of old, nor the miter and the turban, but signs and wonders, far more awful than these. Nor can it be said that I have been entrusted indeed with the charge, but yet have not executed it. Or rather, it is not I that have executed, but Christ. Wherefore also it is in Him that I boast, not about common things, but about spiritual. And this is the force of, “in things which pertain to God.” For that I have accomplished the purpose for which I was sent, and that my words are not mere boast, the miracles, and the obedience of the Gentiles show. “For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God.” See how violently he tries to show that the whole is God’s doing, and nothing his own. For whether I speak anything, or do anything, or work miracles, He doth all of them, the Holy Spirit all. And this he says to show the dignity of the Holy Spirit also. See how these things are more wondrous and more awful than those of old, the sacrifice, the offering, the symbols. For when he says, “in word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders,” he means this, the doctrine, the system relating to the Kingdom, the exhibition of actions and conversation, the dead that were raised, the devils that were cast out, and the blind that were healed, and the lame that leaped, and the other marvelous acts, all whereof the Holy Spirit wrought in us. Then the proof of these things (since-all this is yet but an

assertion) is the multitude of the disciples. Wherefore he adds, "So that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ." Count up then cities, and places, and nations, and peoples, not those under the Romans only, but those also under barbarians. For I would not have you go the whole way through Phoenicia, and Syria, and the Cilicians, and Cappadocians, but reckon up also the parts behind, the country of the Saracens, and Persians, and Armenians, and that of the other savage nations. For this is why he said, "round about," that you might not only go through the direct high road, but that you should run over the whole, even the southern part of Asia in your mind. And as he ran over miracles thick as snow, in a single word, by saying, "through mighty signs and wonders," so he has comprehended again endless cities, and nations, and peoples, and places, in this one word "round about." For he was far removed from all boasting. And this, he said on their account, so that they should not be conceited about themselves. And at the beginning he said, that "I might have some fruit amongst you also, even as among I other Gentiles." But here he states the compulsion of his priesthood. For as he had spoken in a sharper tone, he shows also by it his power more clearly. This is why he there only says, "even as among other Gentiles." But here he insists on the topic fully, so that the conceit may be pruned away on all grounds. And he does not merely say, preached the Gospel, but "have fully preached the Gospel of Christ."

Verse 20. *"Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named."*

See here another preeminence; that he had not only preached the Gospel to so many, and persuaded them, but he did not even go to those who had become disciples. So far was he from thrusting himself upon other men's disciples, and from doing this for glory's sake, that he even made it a point to teach those who had not heard. For neither does he say where they were not persuaded, but "where Christ was not even named," which is more. And what was the reason why he had this ambition? "Lest I should build," he says, "upon another man's foundation."

This he says to show himself a stranger to vanity, and to instruct them that it was not from any love of glory, or of honor from them, that he came to write, but as fulfilling his ministry, as perfecting his priestly duty, as loving their salvation. But he calls the foundation of the Apostles "another man's," not in regard to the quality of the person, or the nature of preaching, but in regard to the question of reward. For it was not that the preaching was that of another man, but so far as it went to another man's reward. For the reward of the labors of others was, to this man, another man's. Then he shows that a prophecy was fulfilled also saying,

Verse 21. *"As it is written, To whom He was not spoken of, they shall see, and they that have not heard shall understand." (Isaiah 3:15. LXX.)*

You see he runs to where the labor is more, the toil greater.

Verse 22. *"For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you."*

Observe again, how he makes the end of the like texture with the introduction. For while he was quite at the beginning of the Epistle, he said, "Oftentimes I purpose to come unto you, but was let hitherto." (Romans 1:13.) But here he gives the cause also by which he was let, and that not once, but twice even, aye, and many times. For as he says there, "oftentimes I purposed to come to you," so here too, "I have

been much hindered from coming to you." Now it is a thing which proves a very strong desire, that he attempted it so often.

Verse 23. *"But now having no more place in these parts."*

See how he shows that it was not from any coveting of glory from them, that he both wrote and was also coming. "And having a great desire to come to you these many years,"

Verse 24. *"Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I trust to see you in my journey; and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company,"*

For that he might not seem to be holding them very cheap, by saying, Since I have not anything to do, therefore I am coming to you, he again touches on the point of love by saying, "I have a great desire, these many years, to come unto you." For the reason why I desire to come, is not because I am disengaged, but that I may give birth to that desire wherewith I am travailing so long. Then that this again should not puff them up, consider how he lowers them by saying, "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I trust to see you in my journey." For this was why he stated this, that they should not be high-minded. For what he wants is to show his love, and at the same time to prevent them from being dainty. And so he places this close on the other, and uses things confirmative of either alternately. For this reason again that they might not say, Do you make us a by-object of your journey? he adds, "and to be brought on my way thitherward by you: that is, that you may be my witnesses that it is not through any slight of you, but by force of necessity, that I run by you. But as this is still distressing, he heals it over more carefully, by saying, "If I be first somewhat filled with your company." For by his saying, "in my journey," he shows that he did not covet their good opinion. But by saying "be filled," that he was eager for their love, and not only was eager for it, but exceedingly so; and this is why he does not say "be filled," but be "somewhat" so. That is, no length of time can fill me or create in me a satiety of your company. See how he shows his love, when even though in haste he doth not rise up until he be filled. And this is a sign of his great affectionateness, that he uses his words in so warm a way. For he does not say even I will see, but "shall be filled," imitating thus the language of parents. And at the beginning he said, "that I might have some fruit." (Romans 1:13.) But here that I may be "filled." And both these are like a person who is drawing others to him. For the one was a very great commendation of them, if they were likely to yield him fruit from their obedience; and the other, a genuine proof of his own friendship. And in writing to the Corinthians he thus says, "That ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go" (1 Corinthians 16:6), so in all ways exhibiting an unrivaled love to his disciples. And so at the beginning of all his Epistles it is with this he starts, and at the end in this he concludes again. For as an indulgent father doth an only and true born son, so did he love all the faithful. Whence it was that he said, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?" (2 Corinthians 11:29.)

For before everything else this is what the teacher ought to have. Wherefore also to Peter Christ saith, "If thou lovest Me, feed My sheep." (John 21:16.) For he who loveth Christ loveth also His flock. And Moses too did He then set over the people of the Jews, when he had shown a kindly feeling towards them. And David in this way came to be king, having been first seen to be affectionately-minded towards them; so much indeed, though yet young, did he grieve for the people, as to risk his life for them, when he killed that barbarian. But if he said, "What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine?" (1 Samuel 19:5; ib. 17:26) he said it not in order to demand a reward, but out of a wish to have confidence

placed in himself, and to have the battle with him delivered to his charge. And therefore, when he came to the king after the victory, he said nothing of these things. And Samuel too was very affectionate whence it was that he said, "But God forbid that I should sin in ceasing to pray unto the Lord for you." (1 Samuel 12:23.) In like way Paul also, or rather not in like way, but even in a far greater degree, burned towards all his subjects. Wherefore he made his disciples of such affection towards himself, that he said, "If were possible, ye would have pulled out your eyes and given them to me." (Galatians 4:15.) On this ground too it is, that God charges the teachers of the Jews above all things with this, saying, "Oh shepherds of Israel, do shepherds feed themselves? do they not feed the flock?" (Ezekiel 34:2, 3.) But they did the reverse. For he says, "Ye eat the milk, and clothe you with the wool, and ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the flock." And Christ, in bringing out the rule for the fittest Pastor, said, "The good shepherd layeth down his life for his sheep." (John 10:11.) This David did also, both on sundry other occasions, and also when that fearful wrath from above came down upon the whole people. For while all were being slain he said, "I the shepherd have sinned, I the shepherd have done amiss, and these the flock what have they done?" (2 Samuel 24:17.) And so in the choice of those punishments also, he chose not famine, nor flight before enemies, but the pestilence sent by God, whereby he hoped to place all the others in safety, but that he should himself in preference to all the rest be carried off. But since this was not so, he bewails, and says, "On me be Thy Hand:" or if this be not enough, "on my father's house" also. "For I," he says, "the shepherd have sinned." As though he had said, that if they also sinned, I was the person who should suffer the vengeance, as I corrected them not. But since the sin is mine also, it is I who deserve to suffer the vengeance. For wishing to increase the crime he used the name of "Shepherd." Thus then he stayed the wrath, thus he got the sentence revoked! So great is the power of confession. "For the righteous is his own accuser first. So great is the concern and sympathy of a good Pastor. For his bowels were writhed at their falling, as when one's own children are killed. And on this ground he begged that the wrath might come upon himself. And in the beginning of the slaughter he would have done this, unless he had seen it advancing and expected that it would come to himself. When therefore he saw that this did not happen, but that the calamity was raging among them, he no longer forebore, but was touched more than for Amnon his first-born. For then he did not ask for death, but now he begs to fall in preference to the others. Such ought a ruler to be and to grieve rather at the calamities of others than his own. Some such thing he suffered in his son's case likewise, that you might see that he did not love his son more than his subjects, and yet the youth was unchaste, and an ill-user of his father, and still he said, "Would that I might have died for thee!" (a Samuel 18:33.) What sayest thou, thou blessed one, thou meekest of all men? Thy son was set upon killing thee, and compassed thee about with ills unnumbered. And when he had been removed, and the trophy was raised. dost thou then pray to be slain? Yea, he says, for it is not for me that the army has been victorious, but I am warred against more violently than before, and my bowels are now more torn than before. These however were all thoughtful for those committed to their charge, but the blessed Abraham concerned himself much even for those that were not entrusted to him, and so much so as even to throw himself amongst alarming dangers. For when he did what he did, not for his nephew only, but for the people of Sodom also, he did not leave driving those Persians before him until he had set them all free: and yet he might have departed after he had taken him, yet he did not choose it. For he had the like concern for all, and this he showed likewise by his subsequent conduct. When then it was not a host of barbarians that was on the point of laying siege to them, but the wrath of God that was plucking their cities up from the foundations, and it was no longer the time for arms, and battle, and array, but for supplication; so great was the zeal he showed for them, as, if he himself had been on the point of perishing. For this reason he comes once, twice, thrice, aye and many times to God, and finds a refuge (i.e. an excuse) in his nature by

saying, "I am dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27): and since he saw that they were traitors to themselves, he begs that they may be saved for others. Wherefore also God said, "I will hide not from Abraham My servant that thing which I am about to do" (ib. 17), that we might learn how loving to man the righteous is. And he would not have left off beseeching, unless God had left off first (so he takes 5:33). And he seems indeed to be praying for the just, but is doing the whole for them. For the souls of the Saints are very gentle and, loving unto man, both in regard to their own, and to strangers. And even to the unreasoning creatures they extend their gentleness. Wherefore also a certain wise man said, "The righteous pitieth the souls of his cattle." But if he doth those of cattle, how much more those of men. But since I have mentioned cattle, let us just consider the shepherds of the sheep who are in the Cappadocian land, and what they suffer in kind and degree in their guardianship of unreasoning creatures. They often stay for three days together buried down under the snows. And those in Libya are said to undergo no less hardships than these, ranging about for whole months through that wilderness, dreary as it is, and filled with the direst wild beasts. Now if for unreasonable things there be so much zeal, what defense are we to set up, who are entrusted with reasonable souls, and yet slumber on in this deep sleep? For is it right to be at rest, and in quiet, and not to be running about everywhere, and giving one's self up to endless deaths in behalf of these sheep? Or know ye not the dignity of this flock? Was it not for this that thy Master took endless pains, and afterwards poured forth His blood? And dost thou seek for rest? Now what can be worse than these Shepherds? Dost thou not perceive, that there stand round about these sheep wolves much more fierce and savage than those of this world? Dost thou not think with thyself, what a soul he ought to have who is to take in hand this office? Now men that lead the populace, if they have but common matters to deliberate on, add days to nights in watching. And we that are struggling in heaven's behalf sleep even in the daytime. And who is now to deliver us from the punishment for these things? For if the body were to be cut in pieces, if to undergo ten thousand deaths, ought one not to run to it as to a feast? And let not the shepherds only, but the sheep also hear this; that they may make the shepherds the more active minded, that they may the more encourage their goodwill: I do not mean by anything else but by yielding all compliance and obedience. Thus Paul also bade them, saying, "Obey them which have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give account." (Hebrews 13:17.) And when he says, "watch," he means thousands of labors, cares and dangers. For the good Shepherd, who is such as Christ wisheth for, is contending, before countless witnesses. For He died once for him; but this man ten thousand times for the flock, if, that is, he be such a shepherd as he ought to be; for such an one can die every day. And therefore do ye, as being acquainted with what the labor is, cooperate with them, with prayers, with zeal, with readiness, with affection, that both we may have to boast of you, and you of us. For on this ground He entrusted this to the chief of the Apostles, who also loved Him more than the rest; after first asking him if He was loved by him, that thou mayest learn that this before other things, is held as a proof of love to Him. For this requireth a vigorous soul. This I have said of the best shepherds; not of myself and those of our days, but of any one that may be such as Paul was, such as Peter, such as Moses. These then let us imitate, both the rulers of us and the ruled. For the ruled may be in the place of a shepherd to his family, to his friends, to his servants, to his wife, to his children: and if we so order our affairs we shall attain to all manner of good things. Which God grant that we may all attain unto, by the grace and love toward man, etc.

Verse 25-27. *"But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it has pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily, and their debtors they are."*

Since he had said that I have no longer “more place in these parts,” and, “I have a great desire, these many years, to come unto you,” but he still intended to delay; lest it should be thought that he was making a jest of them, he mentions the cause also why he still puts it off, and he says, that “I am going unto Jerusalem,” and is apparently giving the excuse for the delay. But by means of this he also makes good another object, which is the exhorting of them to alms, and making them more in earnest about it. Since if he had not been minded to effect this, it had sufficed to say, “I am going unto Jerusalem.” But now he adds the reason of his journey. “For I go,” says he, “to minister to the saints.” And he dwells over the subject, and enters into reasonings, and says that they “are debtors,” and that, “if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things,” that they might learn to imitate these. Wherefore also there is much reason to admire his wisdom for devising this way of giving the advice. For they were more likely to bear it in this way than if he had said it in the form of exhortation; as then he would have seemed to be insulting them, if, with a view to incite them, he had brought before them Corinthians and Macedonians. Indeed, this is the ground on which he does incite the others as follows, saying, “Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the Churches in Macedonia.” (2 Corinthians 8:1.) And again he incites the Macedonians by these. “For your zeal,” he says, “hath provoked very many.” (ib. 9:2.) And by the Galatians in like manner he does this, as when he says, “As I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye.” (1 Corinthians 16:1.) But in the case of the Romans he does not do so, but in a more covert way. And he does this also in regard to the preaching, as when he says, “What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?” (ib. 14:36.) For there is nothing so powerful as emulation. And so he often employs it. For elsewhere too he says, “And so ordain I in all the Churches;” (ib. 7:17); and again, “As I teach everywhere in every Church.” (ib. 4:17.) And to the Colossians he says, “that the Gospel increaseth and bringeth forth fruit in all the world.” (Colossians 1:6.) This then he does here also in the case of alms. And consider what dignity there is in his expressions. For he does not say, I go to carry alms, but “to minister”. But if Paul ministers, just consider how great a thing is doing, when the Teacher of the world undertakes to be the bearer, and when on the point of traveling to Rome, and so greatly desiring them too, he yet prefers this to that. “For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia, that is, it meets their approbation, their desire. “A certain contribution,” And, he does not say alms, but “contribution”. And the “certain” is not used without a meaning, but to prevent his seeming to reproach these. And he does not say the poor, merely, but the “poor saints,” so making his recommendation twofold, both that from their virtue and that from their poverty. And even with this alone he was not satisfied, but he adds, “they are their debtors.” Then he shows how they are debtors. For if, he says, “the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their debt is also to minister unto them in carnal things.” But what he means is this. It was for their sakes that Christ came. To them it was that all the promises were made, to them of the Jews. Of them Christ came. (Wherefore also it said, “Salvation is of the Jews.”) (John 4:22.) From them were the Apostles, from them the Prophets, from them all good things. In all these things then the world was made a partaker. If then, he says, ye have been made partakers in that which is greater, and when it was for them that the banquet was prepared, ye have been brought in to enjoy the feast that was spread (Matthew 22:9), according to the Parable of the Gospel, ye are debtors also to share your carnal things with them, and to impart to them. But he does not say to share, but “to minister”, so ranking them with ministers, and those that pay the tribute to kings. And he does not say in your carnal things, as he did in “their spiritual things.” For the spiritual things were theirs. But the carnal belonged not to these alone, but were the common property of all. For he bade money to be held to belong to all, not to those who were its possessors only.

Verse 28. *“When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed unto them this fruit.”*

That is, when I have laid it up as it were in the royal treasuries, as in a place secure from robbers and danger. And he does not say alms, but “fruit” again, to show that those who gave it were gainers by it. “I will come by you into Spain.” He again mentions Spain to show his forwardness and warmth towards them.

Verse 29. *“And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.”*

What is the force of, “In the fullness of the blessing? Either he speaks of alms, or generally of good deeds. For blessing is a name he very commonly gives to alms. As when he says, “As a blessing and not as covetousness.” (2 Corinthians 9:5.) And it was customary of old for the thing to be so called. But as he has here added “of the Gospel,” on this ground we assert that he speaks not of money only, but of all other things. As if he had said, I know that when I come I shall find you with the honor and freshness of all good deeds about you, and worthy of countless praises in the Gospel. And this is a very striking mode of advice, I mean this way of forestalling their attention by encomiums. For when he entreats them in the way of advice, this is the mode of setting them right that he adopts.

Verse 30. *“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit.”*

Here he again puts forward Christ and the Spirit, and makes no mention whatever of the Father. And I say this, that when you find him mentioning the Father and the Son, or the Father only, you may not despise either the Son or the Spirit. And he does not say the Spirit, but “the love of the Spirit.” For as Christ loved the world, and as the Father doth, so doth the Spirit also. And what is it that thou beseechest us, let me hear? “To strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,”

Verse 31. *“That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea.”*

A great struggle then lies before him. And this too is why he calls for their prayers. And he does not say that I may be engaged in it, but “I may be delivered,” as Christ commanded, to “pray that we enter not into temptation.” (Matthew 26:41.) And in saying this he showed, that certain evil wolves would attack them, and those who were wild beasts rather than men. And out of this he also found grounds for another thing, namely, for showing that he with good reason took the office of ministering to the Saints. If, that is, the unbelievers were in such force that he even prayed to be delivered from them. For they who were amongst so many enemies, were in danger of perishing by famine also. And therefore there was absolute need of aid coming (or “of his going”) from other quarters to them. “And that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the Saints.”

That is, that my sacrifice may be accepted, that with cheerfulness they may receive what is given them. See how he again exalts the dignity of those who were to receive it. Then he asks for the prayer of so great a people in order to what was sent being received. And by this he shows another point also, that to have given alms does not secure its being accepted. For when any one gives it constrainedly, or out of unjust gains, or for vanity, the fruit of it is gone.

Verse 32. *“That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God.”*

As he had said at the beginning, “If by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey, by the will of God, to come unto you” (Romans 1:10); so here again he takes refuge in the same Will, and says that this is why I press on and wish to be delivered from them, that I may see you shortly, and that with pleasure, without bringing any load of heaviness from thence. “And may with you be refreshed.”

See how he again shows unassumingness. For he does not say, I may teach you, and give you a lesson, but that, “I may with you be refreshed.” And yet he was the very man engaged in the striving and conflict. In what sense then does he say “that I may be refreshed with you?” It is to gratify them on this point too, and to make them the more cheerful by making them sharers of his crown, and to show that the), too struggle and labor. Then, as was always his custom to do, he adds prayer after the exhortation, and says,

Verse 33. *“Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.”*