



# COMMENTARIES ON 'ROMANS'

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

## Chapter 16

**Verse 1.** *"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a deaconess (A.V. servant) of the church which is at Cenchrea."*

See how many ways he takes to give her dignity. For he has both mentioned her before all the rest, and called her sister. And it is no slight thing to be called the sister of Paul. Moreover he has added her rank, by mentioning her being "deaconess."

**Verse 2.** *"That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints."*

That is, for the Lord's sake, that she may enjoy honor among you. For he that receives a person for the Lord's sake, though it be no great one that he receives, yet receives him with attention. But when it is a saint, consider what attention he ought to have shown him. And this is why he adds, "as becometh saints," as such persons ought to be received. For she has two grounds for her having attention shown her by you, both that of her being received for the Lord's sake, and that of her being a saint herself. And "that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you." You see how little he burdens them. For he does not say, That ye despatch, but that ye contribute your own part, and reach out a hand to her: and that "in whatsoever business she hath need." Not in whatsoever business she may be, but in such as she may ask of you. But she will ask in such things as lie in your power. Then again there comes a very great praise of her. "For she hath been a succorer of many and of myself also."

See his judgment. First come the encomiums, then he makes an exhortation intervene, and then again gives encomiums, so placing on each side of the needs of this blessed woman her praises. For how can the woman be else than blessed who has the blessing of so favorable a testimony from Paul, who had also the power to render assistance to him who had righted the whole world? For this was the summit of her good deeds, and so he placed it the last, as he says, "and of myself also." But what does the phrase of myself also convey? Of the herald of the world, of him who hath suffered so much, of him who is equal to assisting tens of thousands. Let us then imitate, both men and women, this holy woman and her that followeth, with her husband also. And who are they?

**Verse 3.** *"Greet," he says, "Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus."*

To the excellence of these St. Luke also bears witness. Partly when he says that Paul "abode with them, for by their occupation they were tent-makers" (Acts 18:3); and partly when he points out the woman as receiving Apollos, and instructing him in the way of the Lord. (ib. 26.) Now these are great things, but what Paul mentions are greater. And what does he mention? In the first place he calls them "helpers," to point out that they had been sharers of his very great labors and dangers. Then he says,

**Verse 4.** *“Who for my life have laid down their own necks.”*

You see they are thoroughly furnished martyrs. For in Nero’s time it is probable that there were thousands of dangers, at the time as he even commanded all Jews to be removed from Rome.” (Acts 8:2).

“Unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the Churches of the Gentiles.”

Here he hints at their hospitality, and pecuniary assistance, holding them in admiration because they had both poured forth their blood, and had made their whole property open to all. You see these were noble women, hindered no way by their sex in the course of virtue. And this is as might be expected. “For in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female.” (Galatians 3:28.) And what he had said of the former, that he said also of this. For of her also he had said, “she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also.” So too of this woman “not only I give thanks, but also all the Churches of the Gentiles.” Now that in this he might not seem to be a flatterer, he also adduces a good many more witnesses to these women.

**Verse 5.** *“Likewise greet the Church that is in their house.”*

For she had been so estimable as even to make their house a Church, both by making all in it believers, and because they opened it to all strangers. For he was not in the habit of calling any houses Churches, save where there was much piety, and much fear of God deeply rooted in them. And on this ground he said to the Corinthians also, “Salute Aquila and Priscilla, with the Church that is in their house.” (1 Corinthians 16:19.) And when writing about Onesimus, “Paul unto Philemon, and to the beloved Apphia, and to the Church that is in their house.” (Philemon 1, 2.) For it is possible for a man even in the married state to be worthy of being looked up to, and noble. See then how these were in that state and became very honorable, and yet their occupation was far from being honorable; for they were “tent-makers.” Still their virtue covered all this, and made them more conspicuous than the sun. And neither their trade nor their marriage (cf. Philippians 4:3) was any hurt to them, but the love which Christ required of them, that they exhibited. “For greater love hath no man than this, He says, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13.) And that which is a proof of being a disciple, they achieve, since they took up the Cross and followed Him. For they who did this for Paul, would much rather have displayed their fortitude in Christ’s behalf.

Let rich and poor both hear all this. For if they who lived from their labor, and were managers of a workshop, exhibited such profuseness as to be of service to many Churches; what pardon can they expect, who are rich, and yet neglect the poor? For they were not sparing even of their blood for the sake of God’s will, but thou art sparing even of scanty sums, and many times sparest not thine own soul. But in regard to the teacher were they so, and not so with regard to the disciples? Nay even this cannot be said. For “the churches of the Gentiles,” he says, “thank them.” And yet they were of the Jews. But still they had such a clear faith, as to minister unto them also with all willingness. Such ought women to be, not adorning themselves with “broidered hair, or gold, or costly array” (1 Timothy 2:9), but in these good deeds. For what empress pray, was so conspicuous or so celebrated as this wife of the tent-maker? she is in everybody’s mouth, not for ten or twenty years, but until the coming of Christ, and all proclaim her fame for things such as adorn far more than any royal diadem. For what is greater or so great, as to

have been a succorer of Paul? at her own peril to have saved the teacher of the world? And consider: how many empresses there are that no one speaks of. But the wife of the tent-maker is everywhere reported of with the tent-maker; and the width that the sun sees over, is no more of the world than what the glory of this woman runneth unto. Persians, and Scythians, and Thracians, and they who dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth, sing of the Christian spirit of this woman, and bless it. How much wealth, how many diadems and purples would you not be glad to venture upon obtaining such a testimony? For no one can say either, that in dangers they were of this character, and lavish with their money, and yet neglected the preaching. For he calls them "fellow-workers and helpers" on this ground. And this "chosen vessel" (Acts 9:15) does not feel ashamed to call a woman his helper but even finds an honor in doing so. For it is not the sex that he minds, but the will is what he honors. What is equal to this ornament? Where now is wealth overflowing on every side? and where the adorning of the person? and where is vainglory? Learn that the dress of woman is not that put about the body, but that which decorates the soul, which is never put off, which does not lie in a chest, but is laid up in the heavens. Look at their labor for the preaching, the crown in martyrdom, the munificence in money, the love of Paul, the charm they found in Christ. Compare with this thine own estate, thy anxiety about money, thy vying with harlots, thy emulating of the grass, and then thou wilt see who they were and who thou art. Or rather do not compare only, but vie with this woman, and after laying aside the burdens of grass, (for this is what thy costly dressing is), take thou the dress from heaven, and learn whence Priscilla became such as she was. How then did they become so? For two years they entertained Paul as a guest: and what is there that these two years may not have done for their souls? What am I to do then, you will say because I have not Paul? If thou be minded thou mayest have him in a truer sense than they. For even with them the sight of Paul was not what made them of such a character, but the words of Paul. And so, if thou be so minded, thou shall have both Paul, and Peter, and John, and the whole choir of the Prophets, with the Apostles, associating with thee continually. For take the books of these blessed ones, and hold a continual intercourse with their writings, and they will be able to make thee like the tent-maker's wife. And why speak I of Paul? For if thou wilt, thou mayest have Paul's Master Himself. For through Paul's tongue even He will discourse with thee. And in another way again thou wilt be able to receive this Person, when thou receivest the saints, even when thou tendest those that believe on Him. And so even after their departure thou wilt have many memorials of piety. For even the table at which the saint ate, and a seat on which he sat, and the couch on which he lay knoweth how to pierce him that received him; even after his departure. How then, think you, was that Shunamite pierced at entering the upper chamber where Elisha abode, when she saw the table, the couch on which the holy man slept; and what religiousness must she have felt come from it? For had this not been so, she would not have cast the child there when dead, if she had not reaped great benefit from thence. For if so long time after upon entering in where Paul abode, where he was bound, where he sat and discoursed, we are elevated, and find ourselves starting off from the places to that memory; when the circumstances were still fresher, what must those have been likely to feel, who had religiously entertained him? Knowing all this then, let us receive the Saints, that the house may shine, that it may be freed from choking thorns, that the bed-chamber may become a haven. And let us receive them, and wash their feet. Thou art not better than Sarah, nor more noble, nor more wealthy, though thou be an empress. For she had three hundred and eighteen home-born servants, at a time when to have two servants even was to be wealthy. And why do I mention the three hundred and eighteen servants? She had become possessed of the whole world in her seed and in the promises, she had the "friend of God" (Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23) for her husband, God Himself as a Patron, a thing greater than any kingdom. And yet, though she was in so illustrious and honorable estate, this woman kneaded the flour, and did all the other servant's offices,

and stood by them as they banqueted too in the rank of a servant. Thou art not of nobler birth than Abraham, who yet did the part of domestics after his exploits after his victories, after the honor paid him by the king of Egypt, after driving out the kings of the Persians, and raising the glorious trophies. And look not to this; that in appearance the Saints that lodge with thee are but poor, and as beggars, and in rags many times, but be mindful of that voice which says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these, ye have done it unto me." (Matthew 25:40.) And, "Despise not one of these little ones, because their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 18:10.) Receive them then with readiness of mind, bringing as they do ten thousand blessings to thee, through the greeting of peace. (ib. 10:12, 13.) And after Sarah, reflect upon Rebecca also, who both drew water and gave to drink, and called the stranger in, trampling down all haughtiness. However, through this, great were the rewards of hospitality she received! And thou, if thou be so minded, wilt receive even greater than those. For it will not be the fruit of children only that God will give thee, but the heaven, and the blessings there, and a freedom from hell, and a remission of sins. For great, yea, very great, is the fruit of hospitality. (Luke 11:41.) Thus too Jethro, and that though he was a foreigner, gained for a relation him who with so great power commanded the sea. (Daniel 4:27; Exodus 3:1.) For his daughters too drew into his net this honorable prey. (Numbers 10:29.) Setting then thy thoughts upon these things, and reflecting upon the manly and heroic temper of those women, trample upon the gorgeousness of this day, the adornments of dress, the costly jewelry, the anointing with perfumes. And have done with those wanton and delicate airs, and that mincing walk, and turn all this attentiveness unto the soul, and kindle up in thy mind a longing for the heavens. For should but his love take hold of thee, thou wilt discern the mire and the clay, and ridicule the things now so admired. For it is not even possible for a woman adorned with spiritual attainments to be seeking after this ridiculousness. Having then cast this aside, which wives of the lewder sort of men, and actresses, and singers, have so much ambition in, clothe thee with the love of wisdom, with hospitality, with the succoring of the Saints, with compunction, with continual prayer. These be better than cloth of gold, these more stately than jewels and than necklaces, these both make thee of good repute among men, and bring thee great reward with God. This is the dress of the Church, that of the playhouses. This is worthy of the heaven, that, of horses and mules; that is put even round dead corpses, this shineth in a good soul alone wherein Christ dwelleth. Let this then be the dress for us to acquire, that we also may have our praise sung everywhere, and be well-pleasing to Christ, by Whom and with Whom, etc. Amen.

**Verse 5.** *"Salute my well-beloved Epenetus who is the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ."*

I think that many even of those who have the appearance of being extremely good men, hasten over this part of the Epistle as superfluous, and having no great weight in it. And I think that the same befalls them in regard to the genealogy that is in the Gospel. For because it is a catalogue of names, they think they cannot get any great good from it. Yet the gold founders' people are careful even about the little fragments; while these pass over even such great cakes of gold. That this then may not befall them, what I have already said were enough to lead them off from their listlessness. For that the gain even from this is no contemptible one, we have shown even from what was said on a former occasion, when we lifted up your soul by means of these addresses. We will endeavor then today also to mine in this same place. For it is possible even from bare names to find a great treasure. If, for instance, you were shown why Abraham was so called, why Sarah, why Israel, why Samuel, you would find even from this a great many real subjects of research. And from times too, and from places, you may gather the same advantage. For the good man waxes rich even from these; but he that is slothful, does not gain even

from the most evident things. Thus the very name of Adam teaches us no small wisdom, and that of his son, and of his wife, and most of the others. For names serve to remind us of several circumstances. They show at once God's benefits and women's thankfulness. For when they conceived by the gift of God, it was they who gave these names to the children. But why are we now philosophizing about names, while meanings so important are neglected, and many do not so much as know the very names of the sacred books? Still even then we ought not to recede from an attention to things of this sort. For "thou oughtest," He says, "to have put My money to the exchangers." (Matthew 25:27.) And therefore though there be nobody that listens to it, let us do our part, and show that there is nothing superfluous, nothing added at random in the Scriptures. For if these names had no use, they would not then have been added to the Epistle, nor would Paul have written what he has written. But there are some even so low-minded, and empty, and unworthy of Heaven, as not to think that names only, but whole books of the Bible are of no use, as Leviticus, Joshua, and more besides. And in this way many of the simple ones have been for rejecting the Old Testament, and advancing on in the way, that results from this evil habit of mind, have likewise pruned away many parts of the New Testament also. But of these men, as intoxicated and living to the flesh, we do not make much account. But if any be a lover of wisdom, and a friend to spiritual entertainments, let him be told that even the things which seem to be unimportant in Scripture, are not placed there at random and to no purpose, and that even the old laws have much to profit us. For it says, "All these things are types and are written for our instruction." (1 Corinthians 10:11.) Wherefore to Timothy too he says, "Give heed to reading, to exhortation" (1 Timothy 4:13), so urging him to the reading of the old books, though he was a man with so great a spirit in him, as to be able to drive out devils, and to raise the dead. Let us now keep on with the subject in hand. "Salute my well-beloved Epenetus." It is worth learning from this how he distributes to each the different praises. For this praise is no slight one, but even very great, and a proof of great excellence in him, that Paul should hold him beloved, Paul who had no idea of loving by favor, and not by cool judgment. Then another encomium comes, "Who is the first-fruits of Achaia." For what he means is, either that he leaped forward before any one else, and became a believer (and this were no slight praise), or that he displayed more religious behavior than any other. And on this account after saying, "who is the first-fruits of Achaia," he does not hold his peace, but to prevent your suspecting it to be a glory of the world's, he added, "unto Christ." Now if in civil matters, he that is first seemeth to be great and honorable, much more so in these. As then it was likely that they were of low extraction, he speaks of the true noble birth and preeminency, and gives him his honors from this. And he says, that he "is the first-fruits," not of Corinth only, but of the whole nation, as having become as it were a door, and an entrance to the rest. And to such, the reward is no small one. For such an one will reap much recompense also from the achievements of others, in that he too contributed much toward them by beginning.

**Verse 6.** *"Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us."*

How is this? a woman again is honored and proclaimed victorious! Again are we men put to shame. Or rather, we are not put to shame only, but have even an honor conferred upon us. For an honor we have, in that there are such women amongst us, but we are put to shame, in that we men are left so far behind by them. But if we come to know whence it comes, that they are so adorned, we too shall speedily overtake them. Whence then is their adorning? Let both men and women listen. It is not from bracelets, or from necklaces, nor from their eunuchs either, and their maid-servants, and gold-broidered dresses, but from their toils in behalf of the truth. For he says, "who bestowed much labor on us," that

is, not on herself only, nor upon her own advancement, (for this many women of the present day do, by fasting, and sleeping on the floor), but upon others also, so carrying on the race Apostles and Evangelists ran. In what sense then does he say, "I suffer not a woman to teach?" (1 Timothy 2:12.) He means to hinder her from publicly coming forward (1 Corinthians 14:35), and from the seat on the bema, not from the word of teaching. Since if this were the case, how would he have said to the woman that had an unbelieving husband, "How knowest thou, O woman, if thou shalt save thy husband?" (ib. 7:16.) Or how came he to suffer her to admonish children, when he says, but "she shall be saved by child-bearing if they continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety?" (1 Timothy 2:15.) How came Priscilla to instruct even Apollos? It was not then to cut in sunder private conversing for advantage that he said this, but that before all, and which it was the teacher's duty to give in the public assembly; or again, in case the husband be believing and thoroughly furnished, able also to instruct her. When she is the wiser, then he does not forbid her teaching and improving him. And he does not say, who taught much, but "who bestowed much labor," because along with teaching she performs other ministries besides, those in the way of dangers, in the way of money, in the way of travels. For the women of those days were more spirited than lions, sharing with the Apostles their labors for the Gospel's sake. In this way they went traveling with them, and also performed all other ministries. And even in Christ's day there followed Him women, "which ministered unto Him of their substance" (Luke 8:3), and waited upon the Teacher.

**Verse 7.** *"Salute Andronicus and Junia my kinsmen."*

This also looks like an encomium. And what follows is much more so. And what sort is this of? "And my fellow-prisoners." For this is the greatest honor, the noble proclamation. And where was Paul a prisoner, that he should call them "my fellow-prisoners?" A prisoner indeed he had not been, but he had suffered things worse than prisoners, in being not an alien only to his country and his family, but in wrestling with famine and continual death, and thousands of other things. For of a prisoner the only misfortune is this, that he is separated from his relations, and often has to be a slave instead of being free. But in this case one may mention temptations thick as snow-flakes, which this blessed person underwent by being carried and taken about, scourged, fettered, stoned, shipwrecked, with countless people plotting against him. And captives indeed have no further foe after they are led away, but they even experience great care from those who have taken them. But this man was continually in the midst of enemies, and saw spears on every side, and sharpened swords, and arrays, and battles. Since then it was likely that these shared many dangers with him, he calls them fellow-captives. As in another passage also, "Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner." (Colossians 4:10.) Then another praise besides. "Who are of note among the Apostles." And indeed to be apostles at all is a great thing. But to be even amongst these of note, just consider what a great encomium this is! But they were of note owing to their works, to their achievements. Oh! how great is the devotion of this woman, that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle! But even here he does not stop, but adds another encomium besides, and says, "Who were also in Christ before me."

For this too is a very great praise, that they sprang forth and came before others. But let me draw your attention to the holy soul, how untainted it is by vanity. For after glory such as his in kind and degree, he sets others before himself, and does not hide from us the fact of his having come after them, nor is ashamed of confessing this. And why art thou surprised at his not being ashamed of this, when he shunneth not even to parade before men his former life, calling himself "a blasphemer, and a persecutor?" (1 Timothy 1:13.) Since then he was not able to set them before others on this score, he

looked out himself, who had come in after others, and froth this he did find means of bestowing a praise upon them by saying, "Who were in Christ before me."

**Verse 8.** *"Greet Amplias my beloved."*

Here again he passes encomiums upon his person by his love. For the love of Paul was for God, carrying countless blessings with it. For if being loved by the king is a great thing, what a great encomium must it be to be beloved by Paul? For if he had not acquired great virtue, he would not have attracted his love? Since as for those who live in vice and transgressions he is accustomed not only to abstain from loving them, but even to anathematize them. As when he says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be accursed" (1 Corinthians 16:22); and, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:8.)

**Verse 9.** *"Salute Urbane, my helper in the Lord."*

This is a greater encomium than the other. For this even comprehends that. "And Stachys, my beloved." This again is an honor of the same kind.

**Verse 10.** *"Salute Apelles, approved in Christ."*

There is no praise like this, being unblamable, and giving no handle in the things of God. For when he says, "approved in Christ," he includes the whole list of virtues. And on what ground does he nowhere say my Lord such an one, my Master this? It is because these encomiums were greater than those. For those are mere titles of rank, but these are of virtue. And this same honor he paid them not at random, or as addressing several of inferior virtue with the high and great characters. For so far as he is addressing, and that too one along with another, and in the same letter, he honors them all alike. But by stating the praises particularly to each, he sets before us the virtue peculiar to each; so as neither to give birth to envy by honoring one and dishonoring another, nor to work in them listlessness and confusion, by giving them all the same dignity, though they did not deserve the same. See now how he again comes to the admirable women. For after saying, "Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household,"

**Verse 11.** *"Salute Herodion my kinsman; greet them which be of the household of Narcissus;"*

Who, it is likely, were not so worthy as the afore-mentioned, on which account also he does not mention them all by name even, and after giving them the encomium which was suited to them, that of being faithful, (and this the meaning of, "Which are in the Lord.")

He again reverts to the women, and says,

**Verse 12.** *"Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord."*

And in regard to the former woman, he says that "she bestowed labor upon you," but of these that they are still laboring. And this is no small encomium, that they should be in work throughout, and should not only work, but labor even. But Persis he calls beloved too, to show that she is greater than these.

For he says, "Salute my beloved Persis."

And of her great laborings he likewise bears testimony, and says, "which labored much in the Lord."

So well does he know how to name each after his deserts, so making these more eager by not depriving them of any of their dues, but commending even the slightest preeminence, and making the others more virtuous, and inciting them to the same zeal, by his encomiums upon these.

**Verse 12.** *"Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine."*

Here again the good things are without any drawback, since the son and the mother are each of such a character, and the house is full of blessing, and the root agreeth with the fruit; for he would not have simply said, "his mother and mine," unless he had been bearing testimony to the woman for great virtue.

**Verse 14.** *"Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them."*

Here do not be looking to how he starts them without any encomium, but how he did not reckon them, though far inferior, as it seems, to all, unworthy of being addressed by him. Or rather even this is no slight praise that he even calls them brethren, as also those that are after them he calls saints. For he says,

**Verse 15.** *"Salute Philologus, and Julius, and Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them;"*

Which was the greatest dignity, and unspeakable height of honor. Then to prevent any jealousy rising from his addressing one in one way and another in another, and some by name and some with no distinction, and some with more points of praise, and some with fewer, he again mingles them in the equality of charity, and in the holy kiss, saying,

**Verse 16.** *"Salute one another with an holy kiss."*

To cast out of them, by this salutation, all arguing that confused them, and all grounds for little pride; that neither the great might despise the little, nor the little grudge at the greater, but that haughtiness and envy might be more driven away, when this kiss soothed down and leveled every one. And therefore he not only bids them salute in this way, but sends in like manner to them the greeting from the Churches. For "there salute you," he says, not this or that person individually, but all of you in common,

"The Churches of Christ."

You see that they are no small gains that we earn from these addresses, and what treasures we should have passed hastily over, unless in this part of the Epistle also we had examined it with accuracy, such, I mean, as was in our power. So if there be found any man of wisdom and spiritual, he will dive even



deeper, and find a greater number of pearls. But since some have often made it a question wherefore it was that in this Epistle he addressed so many, which thing he has not done in any other Epistle, we might say that it is owing to his never having seen the Romans yet, that he does this. And yet one may say, "Well, he had not seen the Colossians either, and yet he did not do anything of the kind." But these were more honorable than others, and had come thither from other cities, as to a safer and more royal city. Since then they were living in a foreign country, and they needed much provision for security, and some of them were of his acquaintance, but some too were there who had rendered him many important services, he with reason commends them by letters; for the glory of Paul was then not little, but so great, that even from his sending them letters, those who had the happiness to have an Epistle to them, gained much protection. For men not only revered him, but were even afraid of him. Had this not been so, he would not have said, who had been "a succorer of many, and of myself also." (v. 2.) And again, "I could wish that myself were accursed." (Romans 9:3.) And to Philemon he wrote and said, "as Paul the aged, and a prisoner of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 9.) And to the Galatians, "Behold, I Paul say unto you." (Galatians 5:2.) And, "Ye received me even as Jesus Christ." (ib. 4:14.) And writing to the Corinthians he said, "Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come unto you." (1 Corinthians 4:18.) And again, "These things I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos, that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written." (ib. 6.) Now from all these passages it is clear that all had a great opinion of him. Wishing then that they should feel on easy terms, and be in honor, he addressed each of them, setting forth their praise to the best advantage he might. For one he calls beloved another kinsman, another both, another fellow-prisoner, another fellow-worker, another approved, another elect. And of the women one he addresses by her title, for he does not call her servant of the Church in an undefined way (because if this were so he would have given Tryphena and Persis this name too), but this one as having the office of deaconess, and another as helper and assistant another as mother, another from the labors she underwent, and some he addresses from the house they belonged to, some by the name of Brethren, some by the appellation of Saints. And some he honors by the mere fact of addressing them, and some by addressing them by name, and some by calling them first-fruits, and some by their precedence in time, but more than all, Priscilla and Aquila. For even if all were believers, still all were not alike, but were different in their merits. Wherefore to lead them all to greater emulation, he keeps no man's encomiums concealed. For when they who labor more, do not receive the greater reward also, many become more listless. On this ground even in the kingdom, the honors are not equal, nor among the disciples were all alike, but the three were preeminent above the rest. And among these three again there was a great difference. For this is a very exact method observed by God even to the last. Hence, "one star differeth from another star in glory," (1 Corinthians 15:41), it says. And yet all were Apostles and all are to sit on twelve thrones, and all left their goods, and all companied with Him; still it was the three He took. And again, to these very three, He said it was possible that some might even be superior. "For to sit," He says, "on My right hand and on My left, is not mine to give, save to those for whom it is prepared." (Mark 10:40.) And He sets Peter before them, when He says, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" (John 21:15.) And John too was loved even above the rest. For there shall be a strict examination of all, and if thou be but little better than thy neighbor, if it be even an atom, or anything ever so little, God will not overlook even this. And this even from of old one might see coming out. For even Lot was a righteous man, yet not so, as was Abraham; and Hezekiah again, yet not so as was David: and all the prophets, yet not so as was John.

Where then are they who with all this great exactness in view, yet will not allow that there is a hell? For if all the righteous are not to enjoy the same lot, if they exceed others even a little ("for one star," it

says, "differeth from another star in glory,") (1 Corinthians 15:41), how are sinners to be in the same lot with the righteous? Such a confusion as this even man would not make, much less God! But if ye will, I will show you that even in the case of sinners, arguing from existing facts, there is this distinction, and exact just judgment. Now consider; Adam sinned, and Eve sinned, and both transgressed, yet they were not equally sinful. And therefore neither were they equally punished. For the difference was so great that Paul said, "Adam was not deceived but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." And yet the deceit was one. But still God's searching examination pointed out a difference so great, as that Paul should make this assertion. Again, Cain was punished, but Lamech, who committed a murder after him, did not suffer near so great a punishment. And yet this was a murder, and that was a murder, and that so much the worse, because even by the example he had not become the better. But since the one neither killed his brother after exhortation, nor needed an accuser, nor shrunk from answering when God questioned him, but even without any accuser both pleaded again himself, and condemned himself more severely, he obtained pardon. But the other as having done the opposite was punished. See with what exactness God sifteth the facts. For this reason He punished those in the flood in one way, and those in Sodom in another; and the Israelites again, both those in Babylon, and those in Antiochus' time, in different ways: so showing that He keeps a strict account of our doings. And these were slaves for seventy years, and those for four hundred, but others again ate their children, and underwent countless other more grievous calamities, and even in this way were not freed, either they or those that were burnt alive in Sodom. "For it shall be more tolerable," He says, "for the land of Sodome and Gomorrha, than for that city." (Matthew 10:15.) For if He hath no care for us, either when we sin or when we do aright, perhaps there will be some reason in saying that there is no punishment. But since He is so exceedingly urgent about our not sinning, and adopts so many means to keep us in the right, it is very plain that He punisheth the wicked, and also crowneth those that do right. But let me beg you to consider the unfairness of the generality. For they find fault with God because He so often long-suffering, overlooks so many that are impious, impure, or violent, without now suffering punishment. Again, if He threaten to punish them in the other world, they are vehement and pressing in their accusations. And yet if this be painful, they ought to accept and admire the other. But alas the folly! the unreasonable and asinine spirit! alas the sin-loving soul, that gazes after vice! For it is from this that all these opinions have their birth. And so if they who utter these things should be minded to lay hold upon virtue, they will presently find themselves satisfied concerning hell also, and will not doubt. And where (it is said) and in what place is this hell? For some fablers say that it is in the valley of Josaphat, thus drawing that which was said about a certain by-gone war, to apply to hell. But the Scripture does not say this. But in what place, pray, will it be? Somewhere as I think at least quite out of the pale of this world. For as the prisons and mines are at a great distance from royal residences, so will hell be somewhere out of this world. Seek we not then to know where it is, but how we may escape it. Neither yet because God doth not punish all here, therefore disbelieve things to come. For merciful and long-suffering He is: that is why he threatens, and does not east us into it forthwith. For "I desire not," He says, "the death of a sinner." (Ezekiel 18:32.) But if there is no death of a sinner, the words are but idle. And I know indeed that there is nothing less pleasant to you than these words. But to me nothing is pleasanter. And would it were possible at our dinner, and our supper, and our baths, and everywhere, to be discoursing about hell. For we should not then feel the pain at the evils in this world, nor the pleasure of its good things. For what would you tell me was an evil? poverty? disease? captivity? maiming of the body? Why all these things are sport compared to the punishment there, even should you speak of those who are tormented with famine all their life long; or those who are maimed from their earliest days, and beg, even this is luxury compared to those other evils. Let us then continually employ ourselves with talking

about these things. For to remember hell prevents our falling into hell. Dost thou not hear St. Paul saying, "Who shall suffer everlasting punishment from the face of the Lord?" (2 Thessalonians 1:9.) Dost thou not hear what Nero's character was, whom Paul even calls the Mystery of Antichrist? For "the mystery of iniquity," he says, "already worketh." (ib. 2:7.) What then? Is Nero to suffer nothing? Is Antichrist to suffer nothing? or the Devil nothing? Then he will always be Antichrist, and so the Devil. For from mischief they will not leave off, unless they be punished. "Yea," you say, "but that there is a hell everybody sees. But the unbelievers only are to fall into it." What is the reason, pray? It is because the believers acknowledge their Master. And what is this to the purpose? when their life is impure, they will on this ground be punished more severely than the unbelievers. "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: but as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." (Romans 2:12.) And, "The servant that knew his master's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." (Luke 12:47.) But if there is no such thing as giving an account of one's life, and all this is said in a loose way then neither will the Devil have vengeance taken upon him. For he too knows God, and far more than men too, and all the demons know Him, and tremble, and own He is their Judge. If then there is no giving an account of our life, nor of evil deeds, then will they also clean escape. These things are not so, surely they are not! Deceive not yourselves, beloved. For if there is no hell, how are the Apostles to judge the twelve tribes of Israel? How cometh Paul to say, "Know ye not that we shall judge Angels? how much more things of this life?" (1 Corinthians 6:3.) How came Christ to say, "The men of Nineveh shall arise and condemn this generation" (Matthew 12:41); and, "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment?" (ib. 11:24.) Why then make merry with things that are no subjects for merriment? Why deceive thyself and put cheats upon thy reason? Why fight with the love of God toward man? For it was through this that He prepared it, and threatened, that we might not be east into it, as having by this fear become better. And thus he that does away with speaking on these subjects doth nothing else than thrust us into it, and drive us thither by this deceit. Slacken not the hands of them then that labor for virtue, nor make the listlessness of them that sleep greater. For if the many be persuaded that there is no hell, When will they leave off vice? Or when will right be seen? I do not say between sinners and righteous men, but between sinners and sinners? For why is it that one is punished here, and another not punished, though he does the same sins, or even far worse? For if there be no hell, you will having nothing to say in defense of this to those who make it an objection. Wherefore my advice is, that we leave off this trifling, and stop the mouths of those that are gainsayers upon these subjects. For there will be an exact searching into the smallest things, both in the way of sins and in the way of good deeds, and we shall be punished for unchaste looks, and for idle words, and for mere reproachful words, and for drunkenness we shall render an account, as even for a cup of cold water we shall receive a reward, and a sigh only. (Ecclesiastes 12:14.) For it says, "Set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry." (Ezekiel 9:4.) How then darest thou to say that He, who with so great exactness will search into our doings, threatened hell in bare words, and lightly? Do not, I beseech you, do not with these vain hopes destroy thyself and those that are persuaded by thee! For if thou disbelievest our words, make enquiry of Jews and Gentiles, and all heretics. And all of them as with one mouth will answer that a judgment there shall be, and a retribution. And are men not enough? Ask the devils themselves, and thou wilt hear them cry, "Why hast thou come thither to torment us before the time." (Matthew 8:29.) And putting all this together persuade thy soul not to trifle idly, test by experience thou come to know there is a hell, but from this thou mayest be sobered, and so able to escape those tortures, and attain to the good things to come; whereof may we all partake by the grace and love towards man, etc.

**Verse 17, 18.** *“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”*

Again an exhortation, and prayer after the exhortation. For after telling them to “mark them which cause divisions,” and not to listen to them, he proceeds, “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly:” and, “The grace of our Lord be with you.” And notice how gently too he exhorts them: doing it not in the character of a counselor, but that of a servant, and with much respect. For he calls them brethren, and supplicates them likewise. For, “I beseech you, brethren,” (he says). Then he also puts them on the defensive by showing the deceitfulness of those who abused them. For as though they were not at once to be discerned, he says, “I beseech you to mark,” that is, to be exceedingly particular about, and to get acquainted with, and to search out thoroughly - whom, pray? why, “those that cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned.” For this is, if anything the subversion of the Church, the being in divisions. This is the devil’s weapon, this turneth all things upside-down. For so long as the body is joined into one, he has no power to get an entrance, but it is from division that the offense cometh. And whence is division? From opinions contrary to the teaching of the Apostles. And whence come opinions of this sort? From men’s being slaves to the belly, and the other passions. For “such,” he says, “serve not the Lord, but their own belly.” And so there would be no offense, there would be no division, unless some opinion were thought of contrary to the doctrine of the Apostles. And this he here points out by saying, “contrary to the doctrine.” And he does not say which we have taught, but “which ye have learned,” so anticipating them, and showing that they were persuaded of and had heard them and received them. And what are we to do to those who make mischief in this way? He does not say have a meeting and come to blows, but “avoid them.” For if it was from ignorance or error that they did this, one ought to set them right. But if they sin willingly, spring away from them. And in another place too he says this. For he says, “Withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly” (2 Thessalonians 3:6): and in speaking to Timothy about the coppersmith, he gives him the like advice, and says, “Of whom be thou ware also.” (2 Timothy 4:15.) Then also to lash those who dare to do such things, he mentions also the reason of their devising this division. “For they that are such,” he says, “serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly.” And this he said too when he wrote to the Philippians, “Whose God is their belly.” (Philippians 3:19.) But here he appears to me to intimate those of the Jews, whom he ever uses particularly to find fault with as gluttonous. For in writing to Titus too, he said of them, “Evil beasts, slow bellies.” (Titus 1:12, see 5:10.) And Christ also blames them on this head: “Ye devour widows’ houses” (Matthew 23:14), He says. And the Prophets accuse them of things of the kind. For, “My beloved,” He says, “hath waxen fat and gross, and hath kicked” (Deuteronomy 32:15). Wherefore also Moses exhorted them, and said, “When thou hast eaten and drunken and art full, remember the Lord thy God.” (ib. 6:11, 12.) And in the Gospels, they who say to Christ, “What sign showest thou unto us?” (John 6:30) pass over everything else, and remember the manna. So do they everywhere appear to be possessed with this affection. How then comest thou not to be ashamed at having slaves of the belly for thy teachers, when thou art a brother of Christ? Now the ground of the error is this, but the mode of attack is again a different disorder, viz. flattery. For it is by “fair speeches,” he says, “that they deceive the hearts of the simple.” For their attention reaches only to words; but their meaning is not such, for it is full of fraud. And he does not say that they deceive you, but “the hearts of the simple.” And even with this he was not satisfied, but with a view to making this statement less grating, he says,

**Verse 19.** *“For your obedience is come abroad unto all men?”*

This he does, not to leave them free to be shameless, but to win them beforehand with encomiums, and the number of his witnesses, to arrest their attention. For neither is it I alone that am the witness, but the whole world. And he does not say for your understanding, but, “your obedience:” that is, their compliance, which was evidence of much meekness in them. “I am glad therefore on your behalf.” And this is no small encomium too. Then, after the praise, admonition. For lest, after liberating them from any charges against them, he should make them the more listless, as not being observed; he gives them another hint in the words,

“I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.”

You see then how he attacks them again, and that without their suspecting it. For this looks like intimating that some of them were apt to be led astray.

**Verse 20.** *“And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”*

For since he had spoken of those who “caused divisions and offenses among them,” he has mentioned “the God of peace” also, that they might feel hopeful about the riddance of these evils. For he that rejoiceth in this (i.e., peace) will put an end to that which makes havoc of it. And he does not say, will subject, but “will bruise” (Genesis 3:19), which is a stronger expression. And not those people only, but also him who was the general over them herein, Satan. And not “will bruise” merely, but “under your feet,” so that they may obtain the victory themselves, and become noble by the trophy. And the time again is made a ground of comfort. For he adds, “shortly.” And this was prayer and prophecy as well at once. “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”

That greatest weapon; that impregnable wall; that tower unshaken! For he reminds them of the grace, that he may give them the more alacrity. Because if ye have been freed from the ills more grievous by far, and freed by grace only, much more will ye be freed from the lesser, now ye have become friends too, and contribute your own share likewise. You see how he neither puts prayer without works, nor works without prayer. For after giving them credit for their obedience, than he prays; to show that we need both, our own part as well as God’s part, if we are to be duly saved. For it was not before only, but now too, even though we be great and in high esteem, we need grace from Him.

**Verse 21.** *“Timotheus my work-fellow saluteth you.”*

Observe the customary encomiums again. “And Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater my kinsmen.”

This Jason Luke also mentions, and sets before us his manliness also, when he says, that “they drew” him “to the rulers of the city, crying,” etc. (Acts 17:5.) And it is likely that the others too were men of note. For he does not mention relations barely, unless they were also like him in religiousness.

**Verse 22.** *“I Tertius, who wrote this Epistle, salute you.”*

This too is no small encomium, to be Paul's amanuensis. Still it is not to pass encomiums on himself that he says this, but that he might attach a warm love to him on their part, for this ministration.

**Verse 23.** *"Gains mine host, and of the whole Church, saluteth you."*

See what a crown he has framed for him by bearing witness to such great hospitality in him, and brought in the entire Church into this man's house! For by the word *xenos*, used here, he means a host, not a guest. But when you hear that he was Paul's host, do not admire him for his munificence only, but also for his strictness of life. For except he were worthy of Paul's excellency, he would never have lodged there, since he, who took pains to go beyond many of Christ's commands, would never have trespassed against that law, which bids us be very particular about who receive us, and about lodging with "worthy" persons. (Matthew 10:11.) "Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, salutes you, and Quartus a brother." There is a purpose in his adding "the chamberlain of the city," for as he wrote to the Philippians, "They of Caesar's household salute you" (Philippians 4:22), that he might show that the Gospel had taken a hold upon great folk, so here too he mentions the title with a view to the same object, and to show that, to the man who gives heed, neither riches are a hindrance, nor the cares of government, nor anything else of the kind.

**Verse 24.** *"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."*

See what we ought to begin and to end with everywhere! For in this he laid the foundation of the Epistle, and in this he putteth on the roof, at once praying for the mother of all good things for them, and calling the whole of his loving-kindness to their mind. For this is the best proof of a generous teacher, to benefit his learners not by 'word only, but likewise by prayer, for which cause also one said, "But let us give ourselves continually to prayers, and to the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:4.)

Who is there then to pray over us, since Paul hath departed? These who are the imitators of Paul. Only let us yield ourselves worthy of such intercession, that it may not be that we hear Paul's voice here only, but that hereafter, when we are departed, we may be counted worthy to see the wrestler of Christ. Or rather, if we hear him here, we shall certainly see him hereafter, if not as standing near him, yet see him we certainly shall, glistening near the Throne of the king. Where the Cherubim sing the glory, where the Seraphim are flying, there shall we see Paul, with Peter, and as a chief and leader of the choir of the Saints, and shall enjoy his generous love. For if when here he loved men so, that when he had the choice of departing and being with Christ, he chose to be here, much more will he there display a warmer affection. I love Rome even for this, although indeed one has other grounds for praising it, both for its greatness, and its antiquity, and its beauty, and its populousness, and for its power, and its wealth, and for its successes in war. But I let all this pass, and esteem it blessed on this account, that both in his lifetime he wrote to them, and loved them so, and talked with them whiles he was with us, and brought his life to a close there. Wherefore the city is more notable upon this ground, than upon all others together. And as a body great and strong, it hath as two glistening eyes the bodies of these Saints. Not so bright is the heaven, when the sun sends forth his rays, as is the city of Rome, sending out these two lights into all parts of the world. From thence will Paul be caught up, from thence Peter. Just bethink you, and shudder at the thought of what a sight Rome will see, when Paul ariseth suddenly from that deposit, together with Peter, and is lifted up to meet the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:17.) What a rose will Rome send up to Christ! (Isaiah 35:1) what two crowns will the city have about it! what golden chains

will she be girded with! what fountains possess! Therefore I admire the city, not for the much gold, not for the columns, not for the other display there, but for these pillars of the Church. (1 Corinthians 15:38.) Would that it were now given me to throw myself round the body of Paul, and be riveted to the tomb, and to see the dust of that body that “filled up that which was lacking” after “Christ” Colossians 1:24), that bore “the marks” (Galatians 6:17) that sowed the Gospel everywhere yea, the dust of that body through which he ran to and fro everywhere! the dust of that body through which Christ spoke, and the Light shone forth more brilliant than any lightning, and the voice started out, more awful than any thunder to the devils! through which he uttered that blessed voice, saying, “I could wish that myself were accursed, for my brethren” (Romans 9:3), through which he spake “before kings, and was not ashamed!” (Psalm 119:46) through which we come to know Paul through which also Paul’s Master! Not so awful to us is the thunder, as was that voice to the demons! For if they shuddered at his clothes (Acts 19:12), much more did they at his voice. This led them away captive, this cleansed out the world, this put a stop to diseases, cast out vice, lifted the truth on high, had Christ riding upon it, and everywhere went about with Him; and what the Cherubim were, this was Paul’s voice, for as He was seated upon those Powers, so was He upon Paul’s tongue. For it had become worthy of receiving Christ, by speaking those things only which were acceptable to Christ, and flying as the Seraphim to height unspeakable! for what more lofty than that voice which says, “For I am persuaded that neither Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus?” (Romans 8:38, 39.) What pinions doth not this discourse seem to thee to have? what eyes? (Ezekiel 10:12.) It was owing to this that he said, “for we are not ignorant of his devices.” (2 Corinthians 2:11.) Owing to this did the devils flee not only at hearing him speak, but even at seeing his garments. This is the mouth, the dust whereof I would fain see, through which Christ spake the great and secret things, and greater than in His own person, (for as He wrought, so He also spake greater things by the disciples, ) through which the Spirit gave those wondrous oracles to the world! For what good thing did not that mouth effect? Devils it drove out, sins it loosed, tyrants it muzzled, philosophers’ mouths it stopped, the world it brought over to God, savages it persuaded to learn wisdom, all the whole order of the earth it altered. Things in Heaven too it disposed what way it listed (1 Corinthians 5:3, 4), binding whom it would, and loosing in the other world, “according unto the power given unto it.” (2 Corinthians 13:10.) Nor is it that mouth only, but the heart too would fain see the dust of, which a man would not do wrong to call the heart of the world, and a fountain of countless blessings, and a beginning, and element of our life. For the spirit of life was furnished out of it all, and was distributed through the members of Christ, not as being sent forth by arteries, but by a free choice of good deeds. This heart was so large, as to take in entire cities, and peoples, and nations. “For my heart” he says, “is enlarged.” (ib. 6:11.) Yet even a heart thus large, did this very charity that enlarged it many a time straiten and oppress. For he says, “Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you.” (ib. 2:4.) I were desirous to see that heart even after its dissolution, which burned at each one that was lost, which travailed a second time with the children that had proved abortions (Galatians 4:19), which saw God, (“for the pure in heart,” He says, “shall see God,”) (Matthew 5:8) which became a Sacrifice, (“for a sacrifice to God is a contrite heart,”) (Psalm 51:17) which was loftier than the heavens, which was wider than the world, which was brighter than the sun’s beam, which was warmer than fire, which was stronger than adamant, which sent forth rivers, (“for rivers,” it says, “of living water shall flow out of his belly,”) (John 7:38) wherein was a fountain springing up, and watering, not the face of the earth, but the souls of men, whence not rivers only, but even fountains of tears, issued day and night, which lived the new life, not this of ours, (for “I live,” he says, “yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,” (Galatians 2:20) so Paul’s heart was His heart, and a tablet of the

Holy Spirit, and a book of grace); which trembled for the sins of others, (for I fear, he says, lest by any means "I have bestowed labor upon you in vain; (ib. 4:11) lest as the serpent beguiled Eve; (2 Corinthians 11:3) lest when I come I should find you not such as I would;") (ib. 12:20) which both feared for itself, and was confiding too, (for I fear, he says, "lest by any means after having preached to others I myself should be a castaway," (1 Corinthians 9:27) And, "I am persuaded that neither angels nor powers shall be able to separate us;") (alluding to Romans 9:3) which was counted Worthy to love Christ as no other man loved Him: which despised death and hell, yet was broken down by brothers' tears, (for he says, "what mean ye to weep and to break mine heart?") (Acts 21:13) which was most enduring, and yet could not bear to be absent from the Thessalonians by the space of an hour! (1 Thessalonians 2:17; 3:10.) Fain would I see the dust of hands that were in a chain, through the imposition of which the Spirit was furnished, through which the divine writings were written, (for "behold how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand:" (Galatians 6:11) and again, "The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand,") (1 Corinthians 16:21) of those hands at the sight of which the serpent "fell off into the fire." (Acts 28:5.) Fain would I see the dust of those eyes which were blinded gloriously, which recovered their sight again for the salvation of the world; which even in the body were counted worthy to see Christ, which saw earthly things, yet saw them not, which saw the things which are not seen, which saw not sleep, which were watchful at midnight, which were not effected as eyes are. I would also see the dust of those feet, which ran through the world and were not weary; which were bound in the stocks when the prison shook, which went through parts habitable or uninhabited, which walked on so many journeys. And why need I speak of single parts? Fain would I see the tomb, where the armor of righteousness is laid up, the armor of [light, the limbs which now live, but which in life were made dead; and in all whereof Christ lived, which were crucified to the world, which were Christ's members, which were clad in Christ, were a temple of the Spirit, an holy building, "bound in the Spirit," (Acts 20:22) riveted to the fear of God, which had the marks of Christ. This body is a wall to that City, which is safer than all towers, and than thousands of battlements. And with it is that of Peter. For he honored him while alive. For he "went up to see Peter." (Galatians 1:18) and therefore even when departed grace deigned to give him the same abode with him. Fain would I see the spiritual Lion. For as a lion breathing (Gr. sending,) (Cant. 2:15) forth fire upon the herds of foxes, so rushed he upon the clan of demons and philosophers, and as the burst of some thunderbolt, was born down into the host of the devil. (Luke 13:32.) For he did not even come to set the battle in array against him, since he feared so and trembled at him, as that if he saw his shadow, and heard his voice, he fled even at a distance. And so did he deliver over to him the fornicator, though at a distance, and again snatched him out of his hands (1 Corinthians 5:5, 2 Corinthians 2:7, 11); and so others also, that they might be taught "not to blaspheme." (1 Timothy 1:20.) And consider how he sent forth his own liegemen against him, rousing them, suppling them. And at one time he says to the Ephesians, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers." (Ephesians 6:12.) Then too he puts our prize in heavenly places. For we struggle not for things of the earth, he says, but for Heaven, and the things in the Heavens. And to others, he says, "Know ye not that we shall judge Angels? how much more the things of this life?" (1 Corinthians 6:3.) Let us then, laying all this to heart, stand nobly; for Paul was a man, partaking of the same nature with us, and having everything else in common with us. But because he showed such great love toward Christ, he went up above the Heavens, and stood with the Angels. And so if we too would rouse ourselves up some little, and kindle in ourselves that fire, we shall be able to emulate that holy man. For were this impossible, he would never have cried aloud, and said, "Be ye imitators of me, as I am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1.) Let us not then admire him only, or be struck with him only, but imitate him, that we too may, when we depart hence, be counted worthy to see him, and to share the



glory unutterable, which God grant that we may all attain to by the grace and love toward man of our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom, and with Whom, be glory to the Father, with the Holy Ghost, now and evermore. Amen.

**Verse 25-27.** *“Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to God only wise, to Him be glory through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”*

It is always a custom with Paul to conclude his exhortation with prayers and doxologies. For he knows that the thing is one of no slight importance. And it is out of affectionateness and caution that he is in the habit of doing this. For it is the character of a teacher devoted to his children, and to God, not to instruct them in words only, but by prayer too to bring upon his teaching the assistance which is from God. And this he does here also. But the connection is as follows: “To Him that is of power to stablish you, be glory for ever. Amen.” For he again clings to those weak brethren, and to them he directs his discourse. For when he was rebuking, he made all share his rebuke; but now, when he is praying, it is for these that he wears the attitude of a suppliant. And after saying, “to stablish,” he proceeds to give the mode of it, “according to my Gospel;” and this was what one would do to show that as yet they were not firmly fixed, but stood, though with wavering. Then to give a trustworthiness to what he says, he proceeds, “and the preaching of Jesus Christ;” that is, which He Himself preached. But if He preached it, the doctrines are not ours, but the laws are of Him. And afterwards, in discussing the nature of the preaching, He shows that this gift is one of much benefit, and of much honor; and this he first proves from the person of the declarer thereof, and then likewise from the things declared. For it was glad tidings. Besides, from His not having made aught of them known to any before us. And this he intimates in the words, “according to the revelation of the mystery.” And this is a sign of the greatest friendliness, to make us share in the mysteries, and no one before us. “Which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest.” For it had been determined long ago, but was only manifested now. How was it made manifest? “By the Scriptures of the Prophets.” Here again he is releasing the weak person from fear. For what dost thou fear? is it lest thou depart from the Law? This the Law wishes, this it foretold from of old. But if thou pryest into the cause of its being made manifest now, thou art doing a thing not safe to do, in being curious about the mysteries of God, and calling Him to account. For we ought not with things of this nature to act as busybodies, but to be well pleased and content with them. Wherefore that he might himself put a check upon a spirit of this sort, he adds, “according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for the obedience of faith.” For faith requires obedience, and not curiosity. And when God commands, one ought to be obedient, not curious. Then he uses another argument to encourage them, saying “made known to all nations.” That is, it is not thou alone but the whole world that is of this Creed, as having had not man, but God for a Teacher. Wherefore also he adds, “through Jesus Christ.” But it was not only made known, but also confirmed. Now both are His work. And on this ground too the way it is to be read is, “Now to Him that is of power to stablish you through Jesus Christ;” and, as I was saying, he ascribes them both to Him; or rather, not both of these only, but the glory belonging to the Father also. And this too is why he said, “to Whom be glory forever, Amen.” And he uses a doxology again through awe at the incomprehensibility of these mysteries. For even now they have appeared, there is no such thing as comprehending them by reasonings, but it is by faith we must come to a knowledge of them, for in no other way can we. He well says, “To the only wise

God.” For if you will only reflect how He brought the nations in, and blended them with those who in olden time had wrought well, how He saved those who were desperate, how He brought men not worthy of the earth up to heaven, and brought those who had fallen from the present life into that undying and unalterable life, and made those who were trampled down by devils to vie with Angels, and opened Paradise, and put a stop to all the old evils, and this too in a short time and by an easy and compendious way, then wilt thou learn His wisdom; - when thou seest that which neither Angels nor Archangels knew, they of the Gentiles learnt on a sudden through Jesus. Right then is it to admire His wisdom, and to give Him glory! But thou keepest dwelling over little things, still sitting under the shadow. And this is not much like one that giveth glory. For he who has no confidence in Him, and no trust in the faith, does not bear testimony to the grandeur of His doings. But he himself offers glory up in their behalf, in order to bring them also to the same zeal. But when you hear him say, “to the only wise God,” think not that this is said in disparagement of the Son. For if all these things whereby His wisdom is made apparent were done (or made, see John 1:3) by Christ, and without Him no single one, it is quite plain that he is equal in wisdom also. What then is the reason of his saying” only?” To set Him in contrast with every created being.