

THE AGES DIGITAL LIBRARY
COMMENTARIES

COMMENTARY ON THE
NEW TESTAMENT, VOL 3

Philippians

By Rev. W. B. Godbey, A. M.,

COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT

VOL III EPHESIANS-PHILEMON

PAUL, THE CHAMPION THEOLOGIAN

BY

REV. W. B. GODBEY, A. M.,

Author of "Commentary, Volumes I and II;" "Spiritual Gifts and Graces," "Holy Land," "Victory," "Holiness or Hell," "Christian Perfection," "Sanctification," "Baptism," and "Woman Preacher."

PHILIPPIANS

PROLOGUE

Philippi was the first city in Europe complimented by the gospel. Paul, accompanied by Luke, his amanuensis, Silas and Timothy, his fire-baptized preachers, responsive to his heavenly vision, sailed over the Aegean Sea from Asia to Europe, and began his evangelistic work at Philippi, the capital of Macedonia, availing himself of the Jewish city mission, in which Lydia and other daughters of Abraham were preaching the Old Testament gospel to the people of that heathen city. How grossly inconsistent for Europeans and Americans to criticize woman's ministry, when our gospel traveled that road! Paul is gospel father.

A woman's meeting opened to him the first door to preach the gospel to our progenitors.

Paul reached Rome a prisoner, in February, A. D. 61, and spent two years preaching the gospel in his hired house. At the expiration of that period, Burrus, the commander in chief of the Praetorian army, which guarded the emperor's palace and person, and the staunch friend of Paul, died, leaving not a solitary influential person at the imperial court to defend him. Consequently, Paul was taken out of his hired house and carried to the barracks, where, surrounded by thousands of soldiers and closely guarded night and day, he dictated this beautiful, sweet, and triumphant letter to his faithful scribe.

CHAPTER 1

“Paul and Timothy, the slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the saints who are at Philippi, along with the bishops and deacons.” As Luke is the writer, he here modestly, as usual, omits his own name. In this salutatory verse, Paul declares himself, along with all saints, “the slave of Jesus Christ;” a beautiful allusion to the slavery under the law of Moses, from which all went free responsive to the jubilee trumpets; the law specifying that all who were unwilling to leave their masters might remain forever, having had their ears bored and nailed to the doorposts. All sinners are Satan’s slaves; all wholly-sanctified people are God’s love slaves; while the unsanctified Christians are hired servants in the kingdom of God; *e.g.*, preachers and others working for salaries. Sanctification blows the jubilee trumpet, the tocsin of freedom to all in a justified state; *i.e.*, they can no longer remain in that loose relation, but must heed the incoming dispensation of holiness to the Lord, or go back into the devil’s kingdom, where he will allow them all the freedom of a sinful life.

Thank God, we still find not a few who are unwilling to leave their Master, even if through the ordeal of having their ears bored amid flowing blood, they must be nailed to the door-post forever; *i.e.*, they must march up to the cross, and be nailed to it, where old Adam bleeds and dies, and they become God’s love slaves, world without end. O, the unutterable bliss of God’s love slave!—perfectly free from every care as to food, clothing, lodging, life, death, time, and eternity. He has a check on heaven’s bank for everything he needs in this and all other worlds, fully assured that it is the delight of his Heavenly Father, with the boundless resources of millions of immortal worlds, to render him prosperous and happy. We see here Paul recognizes but two offices in the leadership of the Philippian Church; *i.e.*, “bishops and deacons.” The human ecclesiasticisms have so obscured the popular mind that we actually need the clear illumination of the Holy Ghost to apprehend the simplicity of the New Testament Church. “Bishop” is *episcopos*,—from *epi*, over, and *scopeo*, to see. Hence, it simply means an overseer; *i.e.*, the pastor of the Church, the leader of those little holiness bands constituting the Apostolic Churches. Now, do not forget that the only bishop known in the New Testament is

simply the pastor of a Church. What a pity any Church has ever transcended New Testament precept and example, in the inauguration of the post-apostolic episcopacy, utterly unwarranted in the Scripture, and productive of a thousand corruptions culminating in the papacy! The deacon is the officer in charge of the temporal interests of the Church. He may be a flaming preacher, like Stephen and Philip, but he has charge of the material interest, and the pastor or bishop the spiritual.

ARGUMENT 1

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION AND THE LORD'S THE TWO HEMISPHERES CONSTITUTING THE GLOBE — APOSTOLIC INSPIRATION

4-6. *“Having confidence in this very thing, that he who began a good work in you, will thoroughly perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus.”* As none but the perfect will be ready for the rapture of the Bridehood when the Lord comes, if we are in possession of Christian perfection at that time it will suffice for our admission into the marriage supper of the Lamb. Though we have our entire probation in which to get ready, the slightest postponement is very risky, as we know neither the day nor the hour when our Lord shall descend. Perfect is from *facere*, to make, and *per*, complete. Hence, it means made complete. God made us upright; *i.e.*, perfect. Satan poisoned us with sin, thus destroying our perfection, and rendering us imperfect. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8.) The work of the devil is sin. It is conquered in regeneration, and destroyed in sanctification. The word here, *epitelesei*, is very strong; from *teleoo*, to complete; and *epi*, completely. Hence, it means to thoroughly make perfect. The Lord is liable any moment to ride down on a cloud. Are you enjoying the experience of perfect love? The Omnipotent Spirit is this moment ready to make you perfect, and prepare you for the day of the Lord. Submit to him fully, and trust him to do it this moment.

7. Paul recognizes the privilege of all the saints by their perfect consecration and recognition of the Divine will to actually participate the blessings of his persecutory sufferings.

8. *“How I long after you in all the affections of Christ Jesus.”* Grace is free for all. As Paul enjoyed the affections of Christ (or, as the word means, the heart of Christ), so can we. His heart was perfectly free from sin, He came to make our hearts like his.

9. *“I pray for this, that your Divine love may abound more and more in perfect knowledge and every sense.”* The soul has the five senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch—like the body. A dead man has eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and nerves; yet he neither sees, hears, smells, tastes, nor feels. So the sinner is utterly destitute of spiritual sense, walking blind, deaf, and senseless into hell, till he is quickened into life by the Holy Spirit.

10. *“So as to distinguish things which differ.”* Animals are provided with instinct to fortify them against destructive poisons; man has no such protection till his spiritual senses are quickened into life by the Holy Spirit. Hence, the sinner, tasting the devil’s filth, whisky, tobacco, and debauchery, walks straight into hell, neither seeing the lurid flames, hearing the groans of the damned, smelling the brimstone, nor feeling the scorching flames. *“In order that you may be pure and irreproachable in the day of Christ.”*

The word here, which I translate “pure,” simply for the want of a stronger word, is *eilikrinees*, from *eile*, a sunbeam, and *krino*, to judge, from the custom of testing purity by the sunbeam. Hence, the plain meaning: God proposes to make your heart and mine so pure, that when illuminated by the infallible Sun of righteousness the omniscient eye of God will discover no impurity in it. So, spread yourself, preaching Christian purity, and rest assured you will not get the standard above the Bible. God help us to come up to the Bible standard, by which we will be judged! “In the day of Christ;” *i.e.*, when he comes for his Bride. These two grand, salient gospel culminations were constantly moving in panorama before the illuminated spiritual eye of Paul; *i.e.*, perfect purity and the Lord’s return to the earth, the latter the goal of probationary privilege, and the former the qualification for an eternity of holy wedlock with Christ.

ARGUMENT 2

VICTORY IN THE BARRACKS

On the death of Burrus, the Praetorian prefect, Paul's only influential friend at Nero's court, the military authorities dragged him out of his city mission into the Imperial barracks. Over this Paul shouts for joy. Instead of the little mission audience, he now preaches to twenty thousand soldiers. Two years in the mission have rested and recuperated his voice. O how he enjoys preaching to the vast multitude! Though every gesture of his right hand waves the ponderous chain, he stands erect, leaps and shouts and praises God for the change, out of the little mission into the great army.

12-14. His comrades witnessing his triumph despite chains and soldiers, survive their despondency, and join Paul in a general jubilee.

15-18. The great Roman Empire worshipped Jupiter, Apollo, Venus, Minerva, Diana, and other Greek and Roman gods, who, they believed, gave them the conquest of all nations and universal dominion. Hence, the preaching of Jesus Christ, a crucified man, not only provoked universal contempt, but aroused the bitterest antipathy. Many staunch votaries of these good old Roman gods sought to culminate a crisis against Paul, by their invidious and sacrilegious publicity of his religion, provoking the contempt of the rabble, and arousing popular animosity, and thus expediting the cruel fate of the bold advocate. Here we see Paul rejoicing in everything, their dark and malignant persecutions no exception. Why did he rejoice in their wicked, blasphemous, and invidious publication of Christ and his doctrine? Because he knew God would bring good out of it.

God's truth will always profit by publicity. The mere notoriety of truth will result in good to somebody. Hence, when truth is preached by wicked men and devils, God will bring good out of it. "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation," whether preached by saint, sinner, angel, or devil. When I was presiding elder twenty-four years ago, Rev. Solomon Pope venerable with years, told me that his preaching father was converted in the days of Bishop Asbury, under the ministry of Seth Meade. He gave me the notable experience of the latter, which here I relate by way of

illustration. Seth and a young comrade, both unconverted, were traveling on horseback through the wilds of the Carolinas, to their home in old Virginia. Their money all expended, they are in a dilemma. "Shall we stop and hire out to work, or beg our way?" Seth, whose father was a Methodist circuit-rider under Bishop Asbury, said, "Let us play preachers," to which his comrade acquiesced. Riding on, they meet a man, and ask him if there are "any Methodists in that country with whom we can lodge tonight." He informs them that a celebrated old class-leader lives just about the right distance. Rejoicing in their good luck, they proceed on their way, reaching the designated place as the sun is hastening through the gates of Hesperus.

Halting at the gate, a robust, elderly man walks out. "Are you the man of the house, a Methodist class leader?" "Glory to God, I am." "Then your house is the home of Methodist preachers." At this the stalwart woodsman hastens to lift them out of the saddle. Escorting them into his capacious log cabin, he shouts aloud: "Tom, run that way, Ben that way, and Sam over the hill, and tell everybody to come to meeting, for two Methodist preachers are at my house." The poor fellows, scared almost to death, do their best to keep their equilibrium, and receive the introductions to the family.

So soon as practicable, they retire and speak either to other: "Now we are in it for certain. What shall we do if we leave? We must lay out, and the Indians will get us." Seth then proposes to stay, and abide their destiny, observing that he believed he could preach quite a considerable from one of his father's old sermons, his companion consenting to do the praying. When they return to the house, the people are pouring in from all directions. Soon they begin to sing uproariously and pray vociferously, as all the Methodists at that time were Jehus. Seth's companion, who had promised to do the praying, dodges the issue altogether, amid so many volunteers. But he is forced, ere long, to face the music.

In his subsequent testimony, he said that starting off on one of his father's old sermons, he found it the hardest work he ever did. At the expiration of ten minutes he lost his whereabouts, recognizing himself and environments about midnight, when the house was roaring with the shouts of new-born souls, commingled with the groans and cries of penitents stretched out on

the floor. Among those who had passed triumphantly from death to life were he and his companion, both of whom from that notable hour became powerful Methodist preachers, and so lived and died. Seth said that the people told him that when he had preached about ten minutes, an awful conviction fell on them, pervading the entire congregation, many falling on the floor; meanwhile he spoke about two hours, literally preaching himself into the kingdom. The gospel gun is a dangerous thing for an unskillful shooter to handle, as he is very apt to shoot himself. When the Australian boomerang is thrown by an unskillful party, instead of going on and slaying the intended victim, it returns, and, fastening itself on the thrower—kills him. A town among the border ruffians was so wicked that all Christian immigrants backslid. It becomes a consummate hell den. In their impudent blasphemy they appoint a mock prayer-meeting, selecting as their leader a notorious backslider, now the devil's right-hand man. With the impudence of devils, they proceed to mock God with their diabolical pretensions. Going through the sanctimonious *modus operandi*, they kneel in mock adoration of the great God, led by this notorious reprobate. While engaged in the solemn farce, behold, their leader breaks down in his prayer, falls on the floor, and cries piteously for God to have mercy on him. An awful conviction seizes others, like a nightmare from the bottomless pit. Many are unable to get out of the house. A preacher is sent for. A great revival breaks out, and sweeps like a cyclone.

20. Here Paul exults in the assurance that Christ will be magnified in his body, whether by life or death.

21. “*For Christ is my life, and death is my gain.*” What a triumphant proclamation of his literal and personal identity with Christ!

22-25. Heaven is the climax of human aspiration, infinitely preferable to health, life, prosperity, and everything else. Frequently the Lord has wonderfully healed my body. But the time draweth nigh when I will have no faith to be healed, but plenty of faith to sweep into glory. Then I will get to go to heaven. Paul is flooded with impulses to sweep into glory, simultaneously subordinated to the Divine will in the interest of the toiling, persecuted Church, buoyant with the assurance that the glory of God will be magnified and the Church edified through his instrumentality, whether living or dying.

ARGUMENT 3

SECOND IMPRISONMENT

26. *“In order that your rejoicing may abound in Christ Jesus, in me through my coming again unto you.”* I believe with Dean Alford and the abler critics, that Paul passed through two distinct imprisonments at Rome. All the Roman authorities in Judea, Lysias, Felix, and Agrippa, pronounced a verdict of innocence in behalf of Paul, certifying to his legal manumission so far as the criminal charges against him were concerned, as they consisted only in accusations of disharmony with Jewish laws and customs, which had no criminal signification in Roman jurisdiction. The only reason for which he was carried a prisoner to Rome, was because he had appealed to Caesar. This he did, not because he cared anything about Caesar’s tribunal, but that he might verify his long-cherished aspiration of preaching the gospel in the world’s capital and metropolis, that the light of God’s truth, radiating from the center, might shine out into every land. His rights as a Roman citizen entitled him to an appeal to Caesar, thus forcing his enemies to defray his traveling expenses all the way from Jerusalem to Rome, a journey at that time greater than the circumnavigation of the globe at the present day. When finally he stood at Caesar’s tribunal, as he was charged with nothing criminal in Roman law, they could but acquit him. This took place about A.D. 63 or 64; after which he returned to Asia, visiting the Churches the last time. Having crossed the Aegean Sea again, he lands in Greece, where he wrote the first letter to Timothy and Titus, expecting to spend the winter of A.D. 68 at Nicopolis, in Southern Macedonia. About that time a great fire sweeps over Rome, wrapping the city in an ocean of flame six days and seven nights. When I was there my guide showed me the old tower on which Nero sat during the conflagration, playing his fiddle, and singing the destruction of Troy.

Though all the people believed that the wicked emperor had ordered the conflagration, he charged the Christians with that dark iniquity, lighting on it as a pretext for issuing that bloody edict which caused them to bleed and burn three hundred years. Though Paul was not at Rome during the conflagration, when this high crime is saddled on the Christians, they have him arrested about Nicopolis in Greece, because he was a prominent leader

of the Nazarenes. Upon his second arrest and transportation to Rome, he was incarcerated in that loathsome old Mamertine prison, not as a mere disturber of the Jewish religion, as in the first imprisonment, but as “an evil doer.” (2 Timothy 2:9.) *Kakourgos*, from *kakos*, evil, and *ergos*, work, is the word here applied to him in his second imprisonment. It is because they accused him of burning Rome, which was a crime of the darkest dye. From this prison led out, he was tried by Nero, and condemned to decapitation. This locates his martyrdom about A.D. 68.

ARGUMENT 4

UNITY OF CHRIST AND SPIRIT

27. The Lord’s salvation, when received in its fullness and power, unifies people in spirit and purpose.

28. *“And not being intimidated in anything by the adversaries, which to them is a manifestation of destruction, but of your salvation.”* Persecution has a deep and wonderful signification, a clear evidence of your salvation, and an equally decisive testimony of the persecutor’s destruction.

29,30. Here Paul assures us that to believe on Christ and to suffer in his behalf are equally fraught with blessings from God.

CHAPTER 2

1,2. His exhortation here is intensified with burning irony, enforcing the spiritual unity of the saints, either with other, and with Christ.

3,4. “—*In humility esteeming one another better than ourselves.*”—Lord, help us all in the fear of God to obey this commandment! How amiable is that perfect humility which causes me to take the lowest seat, feeling that all others are better than myself!

5. “*Let the same mind which is also in Christ Jesus.*” The sinner has none but the carnal mind. The sanctified has only the mind of Christ; while the unsanctified Christian is double-minded ^{<5008>}James 1:8, and ^{<5008>}4:8), having the mind of Christ dominant, and the carnal mind subjugated; but an exterminating war between them, till the latter is utterly consumed by the sanctifying fire of the Holy Ghost, or the former exterminated in fatal apostasy.

6-8. “—*But made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a slave: being in the likeness of men, and found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, being subject unto death, even the death of the cross.*” When it was my privilege to hold the first holiness meeting in a prominent Southern city, I visited Dr. A—, pastor of the First Methodist Church, showed myself fraternal, and invited him to attend the meetings in the court-house. Two days have elapsed, audience is large, and interest cheering; meanwhile I look in vain for my brother. Again I visit him at the parsonage, and inquire into the cause of his absence. “Brother Godbey, I am glad you have come, as I was wanting to see you. I find your congregation consists of the poor and uninfluential people of this city. They have rallied to you from the slums and the jungles. Many of them are actually the refuse and the offscouring of the earth. When I ascertained the character of your crowd, I felt that I could not attend your meeting with safety to my reputation. I have written to a prominent preacher in the Kentucky Conference, who assures me of your good standing in that body. I feel it my duty to inform you that if you do not withdraw from that meeting, you will seriously damage your reputation.” Then I respond: “Dear Brother A—, I read ^{<5000>}Philippians 2:7, that my blessed Savior ‘made himself of no reputation,’

that he might come down to this dark world of sin and sorrow, bleed and die to save my soul from death and hell. Therefore, since, in my humble way, I am trying to be his disciple, I am not willing, but anxious, to damage and destroy my reputation, world without end, and even render myself scandalous for his sake.” Brother A—, with flowing tears, responds: “Brother Godbey, I would give all the world to be where you are.” I respond: “That is just what it cost me, and you can have it.” We mutually fall on our knees, and pray. Again he promises to come to my meeting. I have never seen him since.

ARGUMENT 5

GENUFLECTION AND CONFESSION

10. *“In order that, at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things upon earth, and things beneath the earth;*

11. *“And every tongue shall confess.”* While the Bible is a great spiritual book, it has an exceedingly prominent literal signification, which we dare not ignore. “Feeble knees” (³⁸²⁴Hebrews 12:14) is paralyzed knee, in the language of the Holy Ghost.

How fearfully Satan’s paralysis disqualified the popular Churches to bend the knees! O how the stiff-kneed, starchy congregations insult God to his face, committing sins enough in their miserable, diabolical, so-called worship, to send them to hell. The angels in heaven not only bow the knee, but fall prostrate before God, not reluctantly, but with the greatest delight. The heathen and Roman Catholics all bow the knee. The Mohammedans pray five times a day, bowing the knee and even the head until it touches the earth. The downright insult and blasphemy of the stiff-kneed, starchy, popular Churches is alarming in the extreme. God Almighty says “Every knee shall bow of things in heaven, in earth, and beneath the earth.” Rest assured, his Word will never fail. Hence, it follows, as an irresistible sequence, that those that do not bow here, will all bow in hell. When I was a sinner, I bowed on my knees in public worship. Penitent sinners are always ready to bow the knee. The trouble with the proud, fashionable Churches is, that they are filled up with

impenitent sinners. No wonder they are opposed to holiness! They are equally opposed to all the work of the Holy Ghost. If they would yield to his conviction, whole congregations would be seen bowing the knee to God. Where the Holy Ghost is obeyed, the people bow the knee in prayer, and stand up testifying to the work of God in their hearts. Thus prayer and testimony are the normal differentia of worshipping congregations.

ARGUMENT 6

GOD WORKS WITHIN, AND WE WITHOUT

12,13. “—*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.*” God is the omnipotent agent in salvation, while we are instrumental.

We are not agents, but tools. The reason why people get tired in the Lord’s work, is because they are not dead. A dead man never gets tired. Your old hoe never gets tired, and says, “Let me rest.” Hence, we are but tools in the hands of Omnipotence, who is “working in us, both to will and to do;” i.e., he gives us the will, and bestows the needed power to do everything he requires at our hands. The hands of my watch revolve night and day without fatigue, and never wear out, because the internal machinery does all the work, and moves the hands in their constant peregrinations. So God is in me running the machinery, while my members simply move as they are moved. Hence, we have nothing to do in the plan of salvation, but ring out an eternal yes to the Holy Ghost, and govern ourselves accordingly. Jesus came to save, and does save all who let him. It is only by resisting the Spirit that people make their bed in hell.

14. Full salvation forever sweeps away all murmur and doubt.

15. “*In order that you may be blameless and unmixed.*” The Greek for “harmless” is *akeraioi*, from *alpha*, not, and *keranumi*; to mix. Hence, it means an unmixed experience. The sinner has nothing but depravity in his heart unmixed with grace.

The wholly sanctified have nothing but grace unmixed with sin; while the unsanctified Christians have a mixed experience of good and evil; not in the sense of a chemical combination, but like the wheat in the stack, mixed up with cheat, chaff, and straw, and needing a steam thresher to separate and prepare it for the mill. You get your crop of wheat in regeneration, but can make little use of it till sanctification eliminates the cheat, cockle, chaff, and trash; then you can take it to the Lord's mill, get it ground, and have a banquet.

16. *“Unto my boasting in the day of Christ.”* Paul constantly keeps before the people the coming of the Lord, with one hand holding up entire sanctification, and with the other the Lord's return to the earth.

ARGUMENT 7

MARTYRDOM

17. *“But if truly I am offered for a sacrifice and the ministry of your faith, I rejoice, and rejoice along with you all;*

18. *“But you also rejoice, and rejoice along with me in this same thing.”* O what a contrast this triumph with the howling, shivering, cowardly religion of the present day! I have already notified my wife to wear no crape when I die. Mourning for the sainted dead belongs to a former dispensation, three thousand years behind the age, and is utterly out of harmony with the victories and triumphs of New Testament sanctification. Here while Nero's sword is hanging over Paul's neck, and he knows not what minute it will drop and amputate his head (for a part of the punishment of the martyrs was to give them no notification of their impending doom), in this precarious attitude Paul here notifies the Philippian saints to get ready to shout, and to shout along with him; for he is going to have a hallelujah time when they cut his head off, and he wants all of the saints to be ready to help him shout. Good Lord, deliver us from a lugubrious religion, that makes us weep and mourn when there is a chance to go to heaven!

19-24. In this paragraph Paul notifies them of his determination to send Timothy to them so soon as he learns more about the decision of the imperial court with reference to himself. He also here speaks of a

lamentable apostasy there in Rome. No wonder the disciples were discouraged and intimidated when they saw their great leader completely in the hands of their enemies, and the clouds of persecution accumulating and the darkness intensifying. Amid these prevailing defections he highly commends Timothy, his favorite son in the gospel, assuring them that he will send him to them when he ascertains more satisfactorily the trend of things appertaining to himself. “I trust in the Lord that I myself will quickly come to you.” This I rightly believe he did after his trial and acquittal, as he was charged with nothing criminal in Roman law, but simply disharmony with the apostate theocracy.

25-29. Before he got ready to send Timothy, who doubtless carried the good news of his acquittal along with this letter, Paul sent to them Epaphroditus, to comfort them till the convalescence of Timothy.

30. *“Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, gambling his life, that he may supply your lack of ministry to me.”* In this Paul indulges a tacit hint to the Philippian saints that should have been helping him push the battle at Rome and elsewhere with all their might. He also in this letter very highly commends them for their faithful attention to his temporal needs, which he can no longer supply, as he faintly wishes his hands were disencumbered of the prisoner’s chain. Hence, this delinquency was doubtless in the ministry of the Word and the salvation work. Here we have a beautiful statement illustrating Epaphroditus’ perfect consecration to God’s work, in the fact that he staked all he had—physical, mental, and spiritual—for God, using the gambler’s word, *paraboleusamenos*, when he stakes all he possesses in a game of dice. How many of us are like Epaphroditus, just keeping all we possess on the table staked up for God!

CHAPTER 3

1. *“Finally, brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things unto you to me is not irksome, but to you it is safe.”* Paul felt it his duty to write to them the very same truth which he had repeated over and over in his preaching while with them. This is an important argument for the sanctification of the preachers, which alone can make them utterly dead to popular opinion. Carnality is always foolishly gaping after something new, regardless of truth, sense, or salvation. A Methodist preacher, arriving on his circuit, preached on repentance, came around again and preached on repentance, and so continued preaching on repentance, till the people, awfully bored, asked him for a new subject; to whom he responded, “All right! I will give you a new sermon whenever you repent.” In the olden time they cried out to the prophets, “Why do you not give us something new? we are worn out with your old subjects; ‘line upon line, and precept upon precept.’” When a presiding elder, I always dreaded to see certain popular, high-soaring, metropolitan pastors light on a city station; for I knew they would stay the full quadrennium, and freeze the Church into an iceberg; with etiquettical negative policy, they would antagonize nothing, preach to please the people, and let them slip through their fingers into hell. The unsanctified preacher, incompetent to preach the great truths of experimental salvation over and over, with his eye on the judgment-bar, where God will require the people at his hands, when he goes to his appointment, soon preaches all of his gospel sermons. Then he must go off on wild-goose chases hunting something new, which has no gospel. in it, and lets the people starve to death in a pile on his hands.

ARGUMENT 3

COUNTERFEIT RELIGION

2. *“Beware of dogs;”* not quadruped, but biped dogs. The dog, a most unclean animal, symbolizes impurity. Holiness is purity. If you are not for holiness, you are for impurity. Hence, we here have the solemn warning, “Beware of dogs;” *i.e.*, anti-holiness people, as all such are the advocates,

if not the servitors of impurity. “Beware of the concision.” In Judaism the physical birth emblemizes regeneration; and the circumcision, eight days subsequently, signifies sanctification. (Deuteronomy 30:6.) “Concision is counterfeit circumcision;” *i.e.*, a spurious sanctification. Satan is the great counterfeiter; he spares none of God’s work, but counterfeits all of it. Passing himself for God, and his spurious work for God’s genuine, he has long ago monopolized the religions of the world, filling up Churches with his own votaries, vainly dreaming that they are worshipping God. A counterfeit sanctification is the meanest thing in the world, as counterfeit gold is so much greater loss than silver. How shall we detect this counterfeit? The next verse gives the answer.

3. “*For we are the circumcision, who worship the Spirit of God, truly rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in carnality.*”

Hence, we see that the true sanctification is a pure spiritual experience characterized by purely spiritual services, rejoicing in Christ alone, and perfectly free from carnality. O what a contrast with the carnal worship of popular religion, burdened to death with human institutions, and grossly ignorant of the pure spirituality characterizing the worshipers of God!

ARGUMENT 9

LEGALISM

8. “*—As to the law a Pharisee;” “As to the righteousness which is in the law being blameless.*” The Pharisees were the orthodox wing of the Jewish Church, the Sadducees the heterodox, and the poor Essenes living in the deserts and slums, the holiness people. Though Paul stood on the acme of orthodoxy, with an irreproachable Christian character, looked upon as an Israelite in whom there was no guile, a double graduate with a diploma from the Greek college of Tarsus, and another from the rabbinical university of Jerusalem, as a preacher in the popular Church without a peer, yet he was an alien from God and stranger to grace, traveling the broad road to hell. O the millions who are this day in the same awful dilemma, fully assured that they are *bona-fide* Christians serving God, while they are unconverted sinners, worshipping Satan! What is the

trouble? Like Paul, they are legalists. They fill pulpits and pews, and, I awfully fear, constitute the rank and file of the popular Churches at the present day. Their name is legion. You meet them in every land. Though they are very religious, they have no salvation. Like Paul, they are perfectly honest; yet they walk in Satan's midnight, and will soon drop into hell, unless God, in mercy, shall shed light on them, as in case of Saul, while he journeyed to Damascus. The Holy Ghost is the only revelator of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every soul walks in darkness till he reveals Him to him, as in case of Saul. What is this awful legalism? Satan's greased plank, on which he shoots millions through the Churches into hell. It is simply a religion of good works, such as Saul and myself had from our infancy (for my life, like his, was irreproachable from the cradle, being as good a Church member before conversion as afterwards). The great masses of Church members at the present day are dumb in the pews, from the simple fact that they have no experiences to tell; they are depending on "Church loyalty," legal obedience, and good works to save them. It is awful to contemplate the responsibility of pastors who help the devil to palm off his wholesale delusions on their members, encouraging them to believe that they are Christians, because they are true and faithful to what they call "the Church;" meanwhile they are as ignorant of the New Testament *Ecclesia*, the Church of God (consisting only of the souls called out of the world and separated unto God), as the Hottentots of Africa. All of this legalistic religion, which fills the world today, is nothing but self-righteousness, "filthy rags," in the sight of God, and a millstone around the necks of the poor, deluded devotees, dragging them down to hell.

9. *"And may be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is, through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is from God, upon faith."* Nothing but the righteousness of Christ will ever fortify a soul against the severities of the Divine judgments. Can I have the righteousness of Christ? Our wonderful Christ has three righteousnesses. He has a righteousness peculiar to his Divinity and essential to it, which he will ever retain, and never impart to you or me. He also has a righteousness peculiar to his humanity and essential to it. This he will never confer on you or me. Besides, he has a third righteousness, arising from perfect obedience to the Divine law, actively throughout his probationary life, and passively when he suffered the full penalty of the

violated law as our substitute. This third righteousness, which is neither essential to his humanity nor Divinity, nor in any way necessary to his perfect mediatorial Messiahship, he procured for you and me and all of Adam's ruined race. This perfect righteousness God is delighted freely to impute to every sinner who, in hearty repentance and radical abandonment of all sin, in the profound realization of his utter fitness only for hellfire, by simple faith alone casts himself, in a moment of despair, on the mercy of God in Christ. These sinning-religion people have never learned the first principles; but poor, deluded legalists, like Saul before he was converted, "having a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge," having no personal acquaintance with God, they walk in spiritual night, die as they live, honored with complimentary funerals over their dead bodies, while their souls are in hell.

ARGUMENT 10

PAULINE EXPERIENCE

10. *"To know him."* Paul, standing in the front of the ministry, enjoying the most gigantic intellect, highest culture, and greatest human honors, was utterly ignorant of God till that wonderful introduction on the Damascus road. In a similar manner all souls, who ever reach the kingdom, must become personally acquainted with Christ. *"And the dynamite of his resurrection."* In regeneration the very same power that raised the dead body of Christ into life must resurrect your dead soul. When Lazarus had been raised from the dead, he knew it better than anybody else. Hence, the Lord's salvation is the most knowable thing in all the world. *"And the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death."* In regeneration, we are raised from the dead; in sanctification, we die. None but disciples ever go to heaven. We must not only follow Christ to the manger, and be born of the Spirit in utter obscurity, but we must follow him to Gethsemane, and there make our complete and final consecration, enduring the agony of the bloody sweat, when our human will gives up the world, and consents to die. Then you must see Barabbas go up, and you go down. If you get sanctified, you must consent to be misunderstood; yes, and misjudged by all the influential people in the world. You need not

be surprised if the community look upon the saloonkeeper as a better man than yourself. You must also be nailed to the cross between two thieves; .i.e., you must consent to render yourself scandalous for Christ's sake. They will consign you a place with the slumites, rustics, and outlandish of the earth, when you get saved from jewelry, style, needless ornamentation, foolish fashions, and all sorts of worldly conformity. You must die so dead to everything but God, that when a non-sympathizing world plunges the spear of persecution or scandal into your heart, you will not kick. The Lord needs an army of dead people to conquer the world for Christ. You can plug a dead man full of bullets; instead of hurting him, you will only lose your ammunition. You can not depend on the unsanctified to stand in front of the battle. They are all afraid of getting hurt. You can make breastworks of dead men, and they will never flicker. It was Paul's privilege, like Jesus, to seal his faith with his blood. You and I may not enjoy this honor; but we must certainly have the experience which qualifies us for it.

ARGUMENT 11

THE GOAL

11. *"If, perchance, I may attain unto the resurrection, which is out from the dead."* Here is a positive allusion to the first resurrection conferred on the bridehood of Christ at the premillennial rapture of the saints. It is much to be deplored that this most inspiring theme of apostolic preaching was permitted to drop out of the pulpit as one of the mournful results of the Constantinian apostasy, and by some means this wonderful passage was spoliated of its beauty and force during the Dark Ages, and brought to light in the Sinaic manuscript discovered by Tischendorf in 1859, which I now hold in my hand. The English reading of this wonderful passage is not only destitute of force, but intelligence. Modern theologians have vainly attempted to explain away the first resurrection by identifying it with regeneration. Such a construction is utterly untenable, running into Swedenborgianism, making the second resurrection also spiritual, and altogether doing away with the resurrection of the body. We see here that this premillennial resurrection, when our Lord rides down on the clouds

and calls his bride to meet him in the air, is the goal on which Paul's eye was fixed in his indefatigable race for glory. This qualification for the transfiguration and consequent readiness for the Lord's return to the earth, was the most inspiring theme of the apostolic age, thrilling Paul and his comrades with an irrepressible enthusiasm amid all their persecutions, privations, and conflicts. It is a significant fact that the popular Churches are silent on the two most absorbing themes of the apostolic ministry; *i.e.*, entire sanctification and the Lord's return to the earth.

ARGUMENT 12

PERFECTION OF GLORY VERSUS PERFECTION OF GRACE

12. *“Not that I have already received, or have already been made perfect; but I persevere, if I may receive that for which I was also received by Christ Jesus.”* Foolish people quote this passage against Christian perfection, making Paul flatly contradict himself in the fifteenth verse, where he claims perfection for himself and others. In the twelfth verse he is speaking of glory, which he will not receive till the end of probation. This he disclaims. In the fifteenth verse he speaks of the perfection of grace, which he claims for himself and others. Christ took him into hand for his complete and final restitution, which will not take place till this mortal puts on immortality. Paul, with contemporary saints, was on the constant outlook for the Lord to come and transfigure his body, taking him up with his bride. Sanctification is Christian perfection, which Paul, in the fifteenth verse, positively claims for himself and others; while transfiguration is ultimate perfection involved in the restitutionary work of Christ, which he has undertaken for Paul and all of his saints. When Paul lost his head at Nero's block, his soul was glorified, and thus made perfect in the final sense here involved. In the first resurrection, for which I am now looking, his body will leap into glory from the soil of Italy.

ARGUMENT 13

SPIRITUAL OBLIVION

14. “*—Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forward to those which are before, I press toward the mark unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*” God, in great mercy by the wonderful power of his Spirit, drops the black curtain, hiding forever the distressing sins, awful crimes, dark iniquities, silly follies, and egregious blunders of the wretched past; thus translating his people into a new world, flooded with light and cheered with light, and with ten thousand auspicious omens beckoning them on to ever-brightening scenes and engrossing themes, culminating in enterprises broadening and towering, destined to sweep on through the flight of eternal ages. This happy forgetfulness of the dark past is not merely mental, but a blessed Divine intervention wrought by the Holy Spirit. When I was in Athens, Greece, in 1895, I visited the old Stadium, the scenes of those Olympic races to which Paul makes so frequent allusion. The amphitheater accommodated about one hundred thousand spectators, at the base of Mount Parnassus, from which millions could contemplate the scene. The goal to which Paul and his comrades were running is none other than his glorified Lord coming back to the earth, and calling his saints to rise in transfigured glory to meet him in the air. What an awful pity the Church ever gave up that beautiful and inspiring goal of the glorified Savior, and substituted the repellent old grim monster!

15. “*God will indeed reveal this to you.*” Here Paul assures us that all the perfect saints are in this precipitate race, to meet their glorified Savior and enter the transfigured state, assuring us that if they are not on that line, God will reveal it to them.

17. “*Be ye imitators of me, brethren.*” None but the wholly sanctified could talk that way.

ARGUMENT 14

CARNAL ECCLESIASTICISM

18. *“For many walk around, whom I frequently mention to you, and now speak of them even weeping, the enemies of the cross of Christ.”* As Christ was crucified on the cross, so must Adam the first, the body of sin in us, be crucified, so that we will be (dead to sin and free from it. (Romans 6:22.) This is the work of entire sanctification. Hence, all who oppose it *“are enemies of the cross of Christ.”* If you are not for entire sanctification, you compromise with sin, and consent for it still to live in your soul. This is the awful attitude of all anti-holiness people.

19. *“Whose end is destruction.”* There is in very soul an irrepressible conflict between sin and spiritual life. If sin dies, you live forever. If sin lives, you die, world without end. *“Whose God is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.”* These people are blind to what does not glisten, and deaf to what does not jingle. Money will always buy the things of temporal life. Hence, finances with them are all the go. How shall we ever get back to New Testament simplicity? When money comes in, carnality enters. Then the devil is sure to present himself *“among the sons of God.”* The apostolic Churches owned no edifices, and paid no salaries. Hence, their finances were simple, like our holiness missions. What a pity there ever was a departure from primitive simplicity! In the days of the Methodistic fathers, soul-saving was the great salient work. Now, sad to say, it is raising money. The people are run into legal bondage with human institutions, unheard of in the Bible, with money the *ultima thule*. The preacher who does not raise the finances is dishonored and discounted, though he may be “a good man” like Barnabas, and “much people added unto the Lord” under his ministry. What is to be the result? for institutions are multiplying and financial burdens increasing every year. *Mirabile dictu!* The Protestant Churches are going at racehorse speed back to Romanism, constantly magnifying temporal things, to the fatal depreciation of the spiritual. It is an easy matter for an educated sinner, who is a good socialist and financier, to occupy the metropolitan pulpits in any of the denominations with

marvelous acceptability. This is a fearful trend, and who can predict the end?

ARGUMENT 15

HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP

20. “For our citizenship is in the heavens.” O blessed consolation, that I am not a citizen of this vain, vile world, but of heaven! We are all sojourners here: the saints, citizens of heaven; and the sinners, citizens of hell. Truly it has been said, that “every man speaks the language of his own country.” Christians in prayer and praise speak the language of heaven, while sinners in profanity and obscenity speak the language of hell. All the governments of earth consider it a *sine qua non* to protect their own citizens. About forty years ago, while cruel Austria was crushing the political life out of downtrodden Hungary, the citizens of the latter fled into all the countries of Europe, and many to America. Among the latter, Martin Cozta came to our country, passing through the ceremonies of naturalization, became a citizen of the United States. After this, having returned to Hungary to bring his father and mother, and being arrested by the Austrian authorities at Smyrna on the Mediterranean, as a rebel and refugee, he was cast into prison under sentence of death. In this awful dilemma he sends for Captain Ingram, who happened to be in that port in command of the United States war-sloop St. Louis. When the captain waits on him, he hands him his naturalization papers, satisfying him that he is an adopted citizen of the United States. The captain appeals to the Austrian authorities for his release in vain. They treat him with contempt, bidding him to help himself. But what can he do with a single sloop and a hundred men in presence of the Austrian general in command of an army of one hundred thousand? The heroic captain, true to his oath to protect United States citizens in every land and clime, clears his sloop, and prepares to fire on the Austrian fleet. They see the emergency pending, and release Martin Cozta. They could not afford to get into war with the United States over one little man. All the nations of Greece rallied, sailed over the Aegean Sea, and besieged old Troy ten long years, winding up in its capture and destruction, through the famous stratagem of

the wooden horse invented by Ulysses. All this, because Paris, the son of Priam, the king of Troy, had come over to Greece, and purloined Helen, the beautiful wife of Menelaus. If the governments of earth thus so wonderfully protect their citizens, how much more does the government of heaven protect every saint in all the world? *“Truly the angel of the Lord encampeth around and about them that fear him, and delivereth them.”*

ARGUMENT 16

THE TRANSFIGURATION

“Whence we also look for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

21. *“Who will fashion the body of our humiliation similitudinous to the body of his glory.”* Entire sanctification takes all of the world out of us, literally making us unearthly, putting us in the heavenlies; *i.e.*, investing us with the heavenly nature, the peace, rest, loyalty, faith, obedience, victory, and happiness peculiar to the inmates of heaven. These citizens of heaven, while on earth, live constantly watching and waiting the return of their King, “who shall fashion the bodies of our humiliation,” not “vile bodies.” We are humiliated while on probation in these mortal bodies. This transfiguration consists in the elimination of all the gross materiality out of our bodies, so as to render them imponderable. In that case the Spirit will be the controlling element, and the body responsive to its incentives, will move with angelic velocity toward God. We will be transformed and translated independently of volition, and before we are aware. Doubtless, translation was the original economy in Eden. If the race had not fallen, they would have passed their probation and been translated, instead of dying. How fortunate we are, living away down in the last days of the last age, amid the aurora of the coming kingdom, when our chances for translation are so favorable. The true attitude of saintship in the old dispensation was constant expectancy of Christ. Since he ascended from Mount Olivet, the inspiration of faith for his return has been infinitely greater than before his incarnation. The apostles lived in constant outlook. We are certainly eighteen hundred years nearer this glorious coming than they. Hence, I am looking for him night and day. Jesus pronounces an awful woe on that servant who says, “My Lord delayeth his coming.” The

expectancy is certainly a powerful inspiration to be ready. Entire sanctification is the only needed qualification. All whose vessels were filled with oil, went in with a shout of victory. When our Lord comes for his bride, all of the heavenly citizens will be transfigured and caught up with the risen saints, to meet the Lord in the air. This transfiguration will make our bodies like his glorified body, which flew up to heaven from Mount Olivet. It is wonderful, yet it is true. Lord, help us to be ready, according to the working of him who is able even to subordinate all things to himself! Our Omnipotent Christ is not going to leave anything Over which the enemy can boast, for everything is coming into his glorious restitution. The soul is restored in sanctification, the body in transfiguration, den in the millennium, and the heavenly state of this world in the new creation, following the fiery sanctification simultaneously with the final judgment at the end of time. (~~610~~ Romans 11:1.)

CHAPTER 4

2. The Greek reveals that Euodias and Syntyche were women. Paul exhorts them to harmony in the Lord. The presumption is they differed on some nonessential points. This is admissible, but in the Church there must be harmony.

3. *“I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow,”*—not revealed who he was; perhaps Timothy, who carried the letter,—*“assist those women who labored with me in the gospel with Clement.”* We see here that the women assisted Paul in his gospel work at Philippi. He found the first open door in the woman’s meeting by the riverside. Here, evidently, Lydia, Euodias, Syntyche, and other godly women did preach the gospel and labor in the Lord’s vineyard, saving souls. We are the last people to oppose women’s ministry, when our gospel came in that way. We are all Europeans, disciples of Paul, who first preached to our ancestors in that women’s meeting. In harmony with this fact, we see in this letter how very prominent he renders the women, even more so than the men, specifying that they assisted him in his evangelistic labors when he was there, ordering a special message to Euodias and Syntyche, that they should agree on the essentials of salvation, despite differences on non-essentials.

5. *“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice.”* Of all the Pauline epistles, this is the most jubilant; yet it was written amid the most afflictive and alarming environments. Ruthlessly dragged away from his city mission, guarded by soldiers in the barracks, with Nero’s sword hanging over his neck, ready to drop any moment and sever his head from his body, yet this letter rings out a shout of victory from beginning to end. Lord, help us to do likewise! Paul did not rejoice in his environments, but in the Lord. If your joy is manward, circumstanceward, or moneyward, it will be transitory, like the *ignis fatuus*, whose delusive ray lights up unreal worlds, and glows but to betray.

I was born and reared in the back hills of Southern Kentucky. Our farm, containing about one hundred acres, was sterile, filthy, hard to cultivate, and yielding a stunted harvest to the hand of industry. The debts with which we began grew on us till the home had to go. It was a sad epoch in

our history when we had to give up the home of our childhood, with no prospect of ever owning another. I look upon that emergency in our history now, as one of the brightest and most merciful interventions of God's providence. We read of the eagle "stirring up her nest;" *i.e.*, tearing it all to pieces, so the eaglets, which are old enough to fly and seek their fortunes, but too cowardly, are forced to leave their old nest, where they were hatched, and fly whithersoever the unerring One leadeth them. So it was with our family. Consequently we four boys all turned preachers, and have been going to the ends of the earth, blowing the silver trumpet. So, mark it down, you can always rejoice in the Lord. When there is no Joy in your environments, then God is showing you his most signal mercy. When your little child gets hurt, then you give it candy. So, when trouble comes on you in a Niagara of disappointment, bereavement, and sorrow, then look out! God is going to surprise you with sunshine and victory.

"Let your clemency be made known to all men; the Lord is nigh." Our time here is but a moment, when contrasted with eternity. Hence, we should constantly walk in the perennial sunbeams of kindness and philanthropy to all who come within our influence.

6. *"Be careful for nothing; but in everything with prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God."* Lord, help us all to obey this wonderful commandment! The world is dying prematurely, crushed under intolerable burdens of care. Like the man tottering under his load, overtaken by the wagon, responsive to the kind invitation, gets in, but still carries his load on his shoulder: so we give ourselves to the Lord, but hold to our burdens of care, still crushed beneath our loads. Remember your Omnipotent Savior can not feel your insignificant burden, though it be heavy as Pike's Peak. You compliment him by letting him carry it. When the clerk came to Alexander the Great, sitting on the throne of the world, and said: "I think there is a mistake in the order for this immense sum of money, certainly too great to be paid; so I thought I would bring it to you for correction." The prince of all the earth read the order, and, handing it back to the clerk, thus reprimanded his hesitation: "Why, sir, do you think anything is too great for me to pay? Do I not own the nations of the earth, with their treasures, which have been accumulating a thousand years? Do not the mines of silver, gold, and diamonds in all the earth belong to me? Of Course, you will pay this order. The honor of my kingdom is at stake.

The greater the amount, the more my kingdom is honored.” If this was true of Alexander the Great, how infinitely more so of the King of kings! O how bright this world would be if the people would disencumber themselves of every burden, casting all their cares on the Lord! Do this, and your life becomes a cloudless sunshine.

8,9. In this paragraph we have a gorgeous constellation of celestial diamonds, radiating their beauties to every point of the compass, and bespangling the hemisphere down to either horizon with glories and splendors beggaring all human utterance. Bunyan’s Pilgrim saw an old man bent like the semi-circumference of a wagon-wheel, wearing himself out with a muck-rake, turning over the trash and filth, looking after gold; meanwhile, a bright angel on celestial wing is hovering over him, with a crown of gold ready to place it on his head if he will only straighten up. O that people would only look on the bright side and talk about bright things; then they would soon be bright themselves! But they will look on the dark side, persist in blue talk, and consequently they are blue as indigo, and they blue everybody about them. Lord, help you to lift up your head, and see this charming cluster of bright and beautiful graces, and gaze on them till the splendors of the bright upper world shine through you, flooding you with light, victory, and glory, and curing the blues, world without end! If Paul, wearing the prisoner’s chain in Nero’s barracks in full view of the executioner’s block, could roar out night and day the shout of victory without a solitary wail of sorrow, good Lord deliver you and me from every murmur, and sweep from our constitution every symptom of despondency!

10. “*But in whatsoever you were thoughtful about me, you lacked opportunity.*” The Philippian saints were the first-fruits of the European gospel. True to their responsibilities as the *Alma Mater* Church, they promptly sent supplies to Paul, pursuant to their opportunities, which, of course, were meager, as there were no railroads, and the Adriatic Sea always terrific for storms, thunders between Greece and Italy. Paul being so far away, they were much afflicted when they could not reach him with temporal sustenance, knowing that chains and soldiers disqualified him for making tents, and thus earning material support for himself and evangelistic comrades.

11. *“I do not speak concerning deficiency; for I have learned to be content in whatsoever I am.”* See how independently of all human resources Paul talks, though now utterly disqualified as formerly to labor with his own hands!

*“Our Father is rich in houses and lands:
He holdeth the wealth of the world in his hands.”*

God forbid that we should dishonor him by even telling the world of our needs! Tell Jesus only.

12. *“I both know how to be humiliated, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned both how to fatten and to starve, to abound and to be destitute.”*

What is to become of the hireling ministry of the present day, who have given up God as their temporal support and taken man, thus forfeiting a thousand blessings incident to that close proximity with our wonderful Heavenly Father, only available when, like Elijah, we depend on his ravens to come and feed us? Will the ministry ever get back to the Pauline plan of self-support in the good providence of God, which never fails? When I have nothing to eat, I bless God for a fast, enjoy it exquisitely, and the longer the better. When I have a Benjamin’s mess, I give God the glory! When I have nothing, I shout his praises.

13. *“I am able to do all things through him that filleth me up with dynamite.”* Some transcriber, knowing that Christ is the only one that can do this, has here supplied the word in the English version. The Lord’s dynamite is more than a match for all the powers of earth and hell, ready every moment when ignited by a spark from heaven’s altars, responsive to faith, to blow up the devil’s batteries, blast and explode all the rock of inbred sin out of our hearts, sweeping all difficulties out of the way, whether in the realm of Providence or Grace.

14-16. Here Paul recognizes the kind benefactions of the Philippian saints in sending him temporal supplies regularly and promptly during all of his peregrinations in Greece.

17. *“Not that I seek after a donation, but I do seek the fruit which aboundeth unto your credit.”* While he was too loyal to God, and too jealous of his glory, to even insinuate his desire for a contribution; yet his

zeal for God in their behalf abundantly qualified him to appreciate their donations as indices of their spiritual health and thrift. Lord, help us to appropriate the Pauline orthodoxy on the problem of all temporal support, that it be only encouraged and appreciated as the normal and legitimate fruit of spiritual life and prosperity. Among the mournful mementos of the current apostasy is the positive and universal departure from New Testament precept and example in the temporal department of the popular Churches. We all witness to our sorrow the abandonment of the spiritual policy, and the adoption of the carnal. We no longer see a vestige of apostolic precept in the financial policy of the dominant ecclesiasticisms. Sad to say, there has been a radical tergiversation. It has been taken out of the hands of God, and turned over to men, laying on the Church a mountain of carnality, clogging the wheels of Zion till they can no longer revolve on the upgrade to the New Jerusalem, but have halted stock still on the track. Then Satan, slipping in like a weasel, cunningly manipulates the reversal of the wheels, and has gotten them revolving down to hell, instead of up to heaven. Without a radical financial revolution and return to first principles, as plainly revealed in God's Word, there is no hope of reformation in the Churches. On the contrary, they will wax worse and worse, like the antediluvian Churches ripening for destruction. How strange that preachers of the gospel, recognizing the Bible as their only guide in all things, spiritual and temporal, will deliberately close their eyes to the plain and unequivocal Word of God, take up human institutions, and obey the commands of men!

18. Whereas Timothy was the bearer of this letter from Rome—quite a long journey, which I traveled in 1895—Paul had previously sent to them Epaphroditus, preaching the gospel and bearing friendly greetings; by whom they had sent him an ample supply of temporal support. This he here recognizes, with thanksgiving to them and to God.

19. *“And my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”* If we are only true to God, he is infinitely rich and merciful to supply all our needs, temporal and spiritual. The poet has well said:

*“Man wants but little here,
Nor wants that little long.”*

The king of England, riding along the highway in his shining vehicle, sees a ragged boy digging up briars in the fence-corner, orders a halt, and says, "Boy, what do you get for your work?" "I just gets my victuals and clothes." "Go ahead, boy; I am the king of England, and that is all I get."

O how few people verify God's promise, "*The just shall live by faith!*" It is equally true, temporally and spiritually.

20-22. Though Paul was a prisoner in bonds, guarded by soldiers ready to cut his head off, he avails himself of the grand open door, and preaches the gospel in the barracks to soldiers and citizens. Nero, living in his golden palace, so despised the Christians that he undertook to feed them all to his lions. He hated Paul as a rattlesnake, and cut his head off. Though he did his utmost to exterminate Christianity from the earth, yet he could not so much as keep it out of his own family. Hence, Paul here sends to the Philippians saintly greetings from all at Rome, "and especially from Caesar's household." Nero lifted the floodgate of imperial persecution against the Christians. A red river flowed on three hundred years, only arrested by the conversion of the Emperor Constantine. When I was in Rome, I stood in the Coliseum, Nero's theater, with a seating capacity for one hundred thousand. I saw the old subterranean tunnel, through which the lions were brought down from their lairs and turned loose on the Christians, that the cruel multitude might be edified by the bloody lacerations and carnivorous revelries, as they always had the cruel monsters well starved for the occasion. Despite all these bloody trepidations, Paul's preaching struck fire, not only among others, both citizens and soldiers, but even entered the emperor's household, and there won trophies for Jesus. Amid the awful tide of blood and death, after Paul and Peter have both flown up to heaven, honored with a martyr's crown, and thousands have followed in their bloody track, history drops an item confirmatory of the blessed stickability of the work in the royal family. While martyrdom is all the go, and the devouring of the Christians in the Coliseum by the wild beasts is attracting the heathen millions daily to pour out their money for a seat in the imperial theater, behold they lead in the beautiful Julia, the royal heir of the empire, who must share the common fate of a Christian, and go down in the tide of martyr's blood, unless she will recant her faith in Christ, and resume her loyalty to the Roman gods. All possible efforts are laid under contribution to save the

life of the young queen. They think surely she will recant and live. The high priest of Jupiter compliments her with his presence, holding out the royal censer, and begging her only to drop incense on it one time, thus recognizing the worship of the Roman gods, and she shall live. They find the royal damsel immovable by all their bribes, threats, and importunities, as they point her to the imperial crown on the one side, and the roaring lions on the other. She responds:

“I have no God but Jesus. I fear not the lions. Do you not see the angels? The chariot is already lowered to bear me away to a world of bliss.” So she is abandoned to the lions.

23. *“Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”* This benediction is sweet in grace, and beautiful in brevity. It is a mistake to confine ourselves to the apostolic benediction (~~2~~^{13:14} 2 Corinthians 13:14), which has been used so excessively as to become stale. You will find a benediction at the conclusion of every epistle. God gave them to us for our free and unrestricted appropriation. Therefore, we should use a variety. When you want a short one, this is splendid; when a long one, you will find Thessalonians 5:23,24, or ~~13:20,21~~^{13:20,21} Hebrews 13:20,21, all right. Thus we should avoid monotony.

APOLOGUE

The Philippian letter is certainly pre-eminent for its beauty, brevity, vivacity, heroism, diversity in unity, comprehensibility, and especially for the shout of triumph which rings from Alpha to Omega. The rigor of the administration, the military environments, the abandonment of fainthearted friends, and the imminence of cruel martyrdom, all conspired in a pre-eminent sense to put him on shouting ground. The Bible plan is for God's saints to shout down all the Jerichos the world, the flesh, and the devil can rear up against us. Glory to God! the shout of faith will knock them all down. Paul had learned how to make them tumble. Hence, this epistle is a constant roaring shout.