

## CHAPTER IX.

### JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

Address by the Rev. John A. Broadus, D.D., of Louisville—An Analysis of the Epistle to the Romans—Deplorable State of Unregenerate Man—His Helplessness—Divine Wisdom Provides a Means of Rescue—Relation of Justification to Sanctification—How Sin can be Vanquished—Glorious Privileges of the Redeemed.

THE theme of the Epistle to the Romans is justification by faith. This theme is stated in chapter i. 16, 17. The Apostle declares that he is ready to preach the Gospel at Rome—"for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth. . . . For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." We need not stop to discuss the exact history of this term "righteousness," and its various uses. Suffice it to say at present that the Gospel reveals justification by faith, and that makes it the power of God unto salvation.

The first section of the Epistle, following this statement of its theme, is from i. 18 to iii. 20, in which the Apostle shows a necessity for justification by faith, as grounded in the guilty and condemned state of all men, Jews and Gentiles. He shows this first in regard to the Gentiles—or, as we should say, the heathen—and always combines them with the Jews in the universal conclusion. Notice in i. 18: "For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unright-

eousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." This declares that all men do have truth, or have means of knowing truth, concerning God. And he proceeds to show that this is so in regard to the heathen, "because—." Observe how frequently here the Apostle says "for" or "because." In general I am willing to make this compact with you: If you will understand every conjunction in the Apostle Paul's writings, I will be security for your understanding all the rest. His favorite conjunctions are "for," or "because," and "therefore." Look out for them. Now, the reason why the wrath of God is revealed against men is "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them." And the proof or explanation of this is—in verse 20: "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made." Ever since the creation existed it has been possible for intelligent beings to know from the creation much about the Creator. And the special statement here added is: "Even His eternal power and Godhead." He doesn't say that men might know His Divine holiness or mercy, but that they might know from the creation His almightiness and deity. And the consequence is, as he adds, that the heathen are without excuse, because (verse 40) "when they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful." They didn't live up to the knowledge they possessed, but they corrupted that knowledge by vain imaginations—foolish speculations concerning God. They devised idolatry, imagining that it would be a help in worshipping God, but really thereby changing the glory of the incorruptible God into images—not merely images of man, but of the lower animals, even of reptiles, so low did idolatry gradually sink. Now, notice what

he says in verse 24: "Wherefore, God also gave them up to" immorality, because they gave Him up, and turned from worshipping Him according to the knowledge they might have had, unto the mere worship of idols. "He gave them up." Observe that this is three times stated. Verse 24: "God also gave them up to uncleanness . . . who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." And again, verse 26: "God gave them up unto vile affections." And verse 28: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Three times over it is thus declared that because they abandoned God and plunged into idolatry, He gave them up to vile immorality. Such is the dark and sad history of the heathen world. And observe, a little later, when He is speaking of the Jews—in chapter ii. 12 and following—He declares that both Jews and Gentiles stand guilty and condemned in God's sight—"For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." Some might have said: "We can see how those who have the law and don't keep it shall be condemned; but how can the heathen be condemned who have no law?" The Apostle answers: "They *have* a law—a law written in their hearts, or their own moral nature." Whenever they do by nature the things contained in the law—as, for instance, when they reverence parents; when they condemn and abstain from anything as being wrong—they thereby show that they possess a moral nature. And this is practically a moral law, written in themselves, and for the violation of which they stand condemned. Oh, the majesty of this human sense of moral obligation! Oh, the dignity of the word

“ought”—“I ought to do this,” and “I ought to do that.” The lowest animals show some intelligence—even a rudimentary reasoning and planning; but they show no sense of feeling moral obligation. Now, the question is sometimes asked, whether Gentiles who conform to this law written in their hearts are thereby justified. It is enough to answer at the moment that the Apostle presents all this, not as a ground for their justification, but as explaining their condemnation and vindicating it.

Pass on, then, through this chapter and the 3d. Observe where in iii. 10 he makes a mournful mosaic of solemn passages from the Old Testament to show the universal sinfulness of men. Verse 19: “That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God”—the heathen guilty and the Jews guilty. None of them have any power to effect justification by their own doings. And this is his general conclusion in verse 20: “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” But here he throws out, in a manner characteristic of the Apostle, a thought to be hereafter developed: The law does not deliver from sin. It only makes us more vividly conscious of sin. Such, then, are the thoughts of this first section. Justification by faith is shown to be necessary by the fact that all mankind—heathen and Jews—stand guilty and condemned in God’s sight by their own works: by keeping the law of Moses, or the law written on the heart, that can never secure justification.

The next section is the remainder of this 3d chapter—verses 21–31. Here the Apostle declares that the Gospel sets forth the Divine provision for justification: the righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ,

and which is unto all them that believe—unto all men, whether Jews or Gentiles. “For all have sinned,” and men of every class can be justified only by faith in Christ. Notice how strong is his expression: “being justified freely”—that is, gratis, without merit of any kind—“by this grace”; yet not without ground, for they are justified “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” And this redemption—this propitiation by His blood—not only furnishes the ground of forgiveness for men who believe in it, but it furnishes an explanation of God’s having heretofore passed over the sins of men, instead of smiting them with utter destruction. The word “remission” in verse 25 is a wrong translation. It should be rather “pretermission”; or, as in the original and in the Revised Version, “passing over.” How could it be right for the just God so long to pass over the sins of men, and let the guilty race live on in successive ages? The work of Christ explains this Divine forbearance, and offers the ground of present salvation to those who believe. And see the conclusion in verse 26: “That He might be just, and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus”—that He might be just while justifying, because He justifies without ground in us, but with ample ground in the redemption, the propitiation, that is in Christ Jesus.

The next section is chapters iv. and v., in which the Apostle gives further illustration and proof of justification by faith. Chapter iv. refers to Abraham. He says that Abraham was justified by faith. The Jews derived all their hopes from Abraham, and took pride in their descent from him; and yet they were clinging to the notion that they were to be justified in keeping the law. Abraham, says the Apostle, was justified by faith. He was not justified by being circumcised. He was justified

before circumcision, and the circumcision was given him as a sign and seal of the justification he had already received. The Scripture expressly declares that Abraham was justified on the ground of believing, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. If his belief was accounted to him for righteousness, he was justified by faith. Ah, that seemed to the Jews, I suppose, like upturning the very foundations of the solid earth—to say that Abraham himself was justified by believing. The Apostle proves it, you see. He proves it out of Genesis, and goes on to explain it through the chapter.

In chapter v., verses 1-11, he sets forth in a general way the blessed results of justification by faith. We have peace with God, and access into the possession of grace—favor in God's sight—rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, because to a Christian—one who is justified by faith—tribulations will be made a blessing. "Tribulation worketh patience"—not necessarily by any natural law. We talk about the furnace of affliction. Put clay into a furnace that has some impurities—does it come out purified? It comes out with the impurities burned in so that you never can get them out afterward. Put gold into the furnace, and let it stay there long enough; it will come out purified. Tribulation doesn't work patience through natural law. "Tribulation worketh patience" in the believer through the work of God. It is a remarkable thing that three of the Apostles have set forth the same idea on this subject; and it was a brand-new idea in the world. When the liberties of Greece had perished—when Rome had become a great iron machine that ruled the world—there was much speculation among men as to how a man had best try to live in evil times; and there were two great

schools of opinion that arose—the Epicureans and the Stoics. Paul met them both in the agora at Athens. The Epicureans said: “We don’t know whether there are any gods, and if there are, we don’t know that they care anything about us. This world is full of trials. The best thing you can do is to have a good time and enjoy yourself.” That was the teaching; but the followers of Epicurus ran it down at the heel in a frightful fashion. The Stoics said: “There are trials in life?—yes. But let me live myself in all life’s trials to fight and conquer.” The sublimest spectacle in human existence is that of a good man struggling against fate—vainly struggling, and struggling well. And some of the grandest of the Romans took up that idea—Marcus Antoninus, for example. A grand idea it was for men that were grand enough in their make-up to believe in it and practise it. That was the option that men had offered them: either the Epicurean advice—“Take it easy, and have a good time if you can get it”; or the Stoic notion of struggling against fate, “and if you can’t conquer, you can kill yourself, at least, like a Roman and a man.” Into the midst of this uncertainty a new note sounds out: that the trials of life by the grace of God may make us better. You have it three times in three of the Epistles. Here we have it in the beginning of this 5th chapter of Romans. Turn to James i. 1, 2: “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.” “Temptations and trials”—it takes both of these in English ears to express the idea here. “Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” Notice: the Epistle of James actually declares that if a man has perfect patience, he has a perfect char-

acter. I wish I had a voice that could ring over our run-mad country, in this end of the nineteenth century, when men are tumbling over each other, rushing after nothing and finding it. I would like to proclaim this lesson: Whoever has perfect patience has a perfect character. And the trials of life by God's grace promote patience. Look now at 1 Peter i. 6, 7: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." James and Paul and Peter—all three—set forth this new, strange, blessed thought: that the trials of life by God's grace may make us better. I can say no more about this section of Romans—chapters iv. and v. 1-11—although there are in it many delightful thoughts that I would like to dwell upon. Let us examine the remainder of this chapter—verses 12-21. The Apostle has been setting forth that justification by faith existed in the case of Abraham. He here declares that justification by faith in the one Redeemer may be compared to the effect of Adam's sin upon his posterity. As Adam's sin involved all his posterity, so there need be no difficulty in believing that Christ's work in salvation may bring blessing to all that believe in Him. The Jews were familiar with the idea that Adam's sin involved all his posterity. It is taught in some of the early books of the Talmud. Taking that as an illustration, the Apostle uses it, and says: "You needn't think it strange that the work of the one Redeemer may bring blessing to many, when you remember that the guilty sin of Adam brought ruin upon all his posterity."



We thus find that chapters i. to v. give the Apostle's whole discussion as to the necessity for justification by faith, with the proofs that it exists and some of its blessed results. Now we meet an entirely new section of the Epistle—chapters vi. to viii. Here the Apostle presents the bearing of justification by faith upon the work of sanctification—the work of making men personally holy. Many were ready to say, as many say now, that a provision for justification by faith by mere believing in Christ will encourage men to live on in sin. We will sometimes hear a moral man complaining that according to our teachings some wretched criminal or vilely wicked person may be forgiven and saved by simply believing, while he, forsooth, with all his moral propriety may be condemned. There were such persons in Paul's time. The trouble with them was and is, a failure to understand what a real and mighty thing is believing in God—believing in Christ. And the Apostle, at the outset of this section, shows the absurdity of supposing that justification by faith will encourage men to live in sin. He does this by three illustrations—arguments from analogy. First, in chapter vi., verses 3 to 14, he says that if men are believers they are dead to sin, and risen to live a new life. That doesn't look like encouraging them to live on in the old life. The second image is in verses 15 to 23: If a man is a believer, he has ceased to be a slave to sin, and become a slave, so to speak, to holiness—a servant of God—and all his present work is for the new Master, and not for the old. The third image is in chapter vii., verses 1 to 6: If a man is a believer, he is like a woman whose husband died, and who is now married to a new husband. The fruit of this union will be the children of the new husband, and not at all of the old. So, then, it means much to

be a believer. It means as great a change in a man's relations to sin, on the one hand, and on the other, to holiness in God's service, as is involved in the idea of being dead and risen again—of being transferred from one master to another, or from one husband to another. It is thus absurd to say that justification by faith will encourage men to live on in sin, for really believing in Christ involves a very great change in a man's whole relations to sin and holiness. The Apostle next passes to show in chapter vii. 7-25, what is the best that the law can do towards making a man holy. We cannot here give all the details, but the main points are not numerous. First, the law makes us conscious of sin. He says: "I had not known sin but through the law; as, for example, I had not known coveting except through the law that said, 'Thou shalt not covet.' But that commandment not only made me conscious of my departures from its requirement, but—" He immediately adds that it did something terrible: "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of coveting." The restraints which God's law imposes actually stimulate man's sinful propensities. That is a solemn and awful fact of human nature. You can see it in a little child. When the parent says, "You shall not do this," the child is thereby excited to greater desire—so reluctant is human nature to be restrained by authority. In like manner, God's law, instead of keeping men from doing wrong, stimulates them to do worse. Yet this does not show the law to be evil, or defective—for the law is holy and just and good. It only shows what a bad thing sin is, that it should actually seize upon the holy law of God, which ought to restrain, and make it an occasion of still greater wrong-doing. To this the Apostle adds that there is a

divorce in human nature. There is something in a man which approves God's holy law—admits its claims—sometimes reaches up towards obeying it; but there is an opposing tendency in man which by the law of God is only stimulated to do worse, and so the man is divided against himself. And he says—verse 15: “For that which I do, I know not.” Our version has the term “allow,” but the margin says “know,” which is the only correct translation. “That which I do, I know not. I don't know what I am doing. I practise what I don't wish. I fail to practise what I do wish. I am unable to act out my aims. I don't know what I am about.” So there is a great conflict in a man's soul—between the better and the worse in him. And the Apostle goes on to state this over and over again: the struggle in our bosoms. In verse 21 he says that it is a law—using the term law in a peculiar sense—it is a law of our moral nature and history that this conflict exists. There is a battle going on between the better in me which delights in the law of God, and another tendency in me which he calls “another law in my members.” And, alas! this evil law gains the upper hand, and the man becomes a captive slave—as he had said above, sold under sin. Thus the very best that the law can do towards making any man holy is to make him cry out in agony and almost despair: “Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this sinful nature, which is leading me to death?” The question has been long and constantly disputed whether this picture is that of a renewed man, or of an unrenewed. I think the true view is that of Meyer and others, that it is not a picture distinctively of a renewed, nor distinctively of an unrenewed man; but that it describes the best that the law can do towards making any man holy. Many who are without spiritual

renewal have been painfully conscious of this divorce and conflict in the bosom. Remarkable statements of it are to be found in the Greek and Roman writers ; and examples might be found in our own time. Any man who honestly tries to do right merely according to his sense of right, and in his own strength, or who honestly tries in his own strength to live according to the laws of God, will find that his efforts can result in nothing better than a painful sense of his sinfulness. But having given this outcry of agony, the Apostle turns with one of the quick transitions only of passion, and says : “ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” There the deliverance is indicated. Before proceeding to develop this thought, he sums up at the end of verse 25 : “ So, then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God ; but with the flesh the law of sin.” And thus the law cannot deliver from sin. It takes hold of part of us ; but that part is overcome by the stronger sinful part of our nature, and the law fails—not through any fault of its own, but because sin is by the law unconquerable.

Now, the Apostle turns in the early part of chapter viii., to show what the Gospel can do towards making a man holy. There are here three points : First, the Gospel sets us free from condemnation for the sins of the past. It pays the bankrupt’s debts, and gives him a chance to set out again. Second, it introduces into the conflict in the human bosom a new moral force : that of the Holy Spirit. Verse 2 : Having spoken above of the two contending forces as the law of God and the law in the members, he calls this third force a law also. He says : “ The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath emancipated me from the law of sin and death.” Above he was a captive slave ; but the new moral force that enters into the conflict sets free from this bondage, and turns

the tide of battle, and is able to give victory over our sinful propensities. So then, the Gospel, by introducing the Spirit of God, brings in a conquering force to decide the battle in man's bosom. "That the requirement of the law"—for the word "righteousness" in verse 4 is not the term as rendered above in the Epistle, but means, as in the margin and the Revised Version, the "requirement." "That the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"—that is, after the Spirit of God dwelling in us and giving us the victory. Now, just in proportion as any man does truly walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, he does fulfil the requirement of the law, and only thus is this possible. But there is a third thing which the Gospel does as bearing upon the work of making us holy. It introduces a new and blessed motive, namely, the motive of grateful love to God. Those whom God's Spirit is leading (verse 14) are God's sons, and in the spirit of sonship they are moved to serve Him. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear." The Christian does not serve God as a trembling slave serves a hard master—for fear he will be punished. Nor does he serve God as a mere hireling, giving so much work for so much pay. The Christian is a loving son, who gladly serves a loving Father. "Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Truly a great thought is this. The new Gospel motive of obedience is grateful love to Him who saves us. And, full of this great thought of sonship to the Heavenly Father, the Apostle hasn't been content to express it in the Greek alone; he falls back upon the language of his childhood and says: "Whereby we cry, Abba"—a word with which he used to address his own father. It is as if you were

speaking some foreign language, and beginning to make a moving statement about your mother, you should feel that at that point you must take the English word that you used to speak when a child. Young men are more familiar with the idea of the tender love of mother. Perhaps it is only as we grow old that there is developed the full tenderness towards father. Some day when your father is dead and gone, you may be able to read this saying of the Apostle with a greater depth of feeling and passion than would now be possible. O Father—Father in Heaven—I wish to know, and lovingly to do, Thy holy will.

In three great ways, then, does the Gospel act towards making men holy, which the law cannot do. The remaining portion of this section occupies itself with the thoughts growing out of this grand conception that we are the children of God. "If children," says the Apostle, "then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." That leads to the thought that as we are hereafter to be joint-heirs with Christ, so here already we are joint sufferers with Christ. And so the Apostle proceeds to consider the question why God leaves His dear children to a life of suffering. Why doesn't He take them at once away from all earthly sin and sorrow to the pure and blessed life? Now, he gives various reasons for this. The first is already implied: We suffer in union with Christ, that in union with Christ we may hereafter be glorified. That is surely a consolation in suffering. A second explanation is given in verse 18, namely: that the present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory—these are so slight and that will be so great. The third point is (verses 19 to 23): We live in a world of suffering. The whole creation shows signs of suffering, and seems looking for-

ward to future deliverance in connection with the completed salvation of God's children. We live in a world of suffering, and so it is not strange that we too are left to suffer. This impressive image has not been by any other writer so fitly developed, I think, as in Mrs. Browning's "Drama of Exile." She takes up Adam and Eve where Milton has left them, as they go forth exiles from Eden, and find scenes of suffering in the world around. Another point is the fact that "we were saved by hope" (verse 24)—for the Greek has the past tense, as in the Revised Version. When we became Christians and entered into a state of salvation, it was by hoping in Christ, and so we needn't be surprised if the full fruition remains for the future. "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Still another point: We are left amid sufferings and wickedness; but the Spirit helps our weakness (verse 26). For example, "We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us." How is this to be understood? The Greek or Roman advocate helped his client in two different ways. Sometimes he spoke for the client before the tribunal as our advocates do, and it is in this sense that Christ is called our Advocate, pleading for us before the throne. But in other cases the ancient advocate merely prepared a speech which the client might speak for himself. It is in this sense that the Holy Spirit is our Advocate. He teaches us what to pray for. The desires which the Spirit works in the heart will often be too deep to find adequate expression in human language; and so the Spirit is said to intercede with groanings which cannot be uttered. But their meaning is fully known to God (verse 27); and the prayer which the Spirit works in us is sure to be according to the will of

God—and it is as sure to be answered. Still another reason why we may be reconciled to the fact that God's children are left to suffer is the great thought of verse 28: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Here is a greater thought than we can fairly take in. Observe: He doesn't say that everything by itself works for our good. Many individual things would, if they stood alone, work us harm; but he says that all things work together for good to them that love God. And how do we know that this is so? How may we be sure of this great and blessed co-operation of all things? He proceeds to say it is because those who love God are the called according to God's eternal and unchangeable purpose; and therefore we *know* that all things do work together for their good.

The remainder of this chapter passes into a psalm—as often in the prophets the argument turns into a song. "What shall we then say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?" Men strive to be against us—proclaim themselves against us. But their opposition only co-operates with all other things to do us good. Who passes condemnation upon God's elect, when they have God's Son as their Saviour?—who died and rose again for them, and now at the right hand of God makes intercession for them. And who shall separate us from the love of that interceding Lord? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay; in all these things we are more than conquerors through God that loved us. Instead of separating us from His love, they are conquered by us through His love. And then the Apostle ends with those triumphant words which the very angels in Heaven might borrow as a song of praise before the throne of God and of the Lamb.



## CHAPTER X.

### RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

Address by Dr. Broadus—Paul's Reply to Pseudo-Christians at Corinth—The Resurrection of Christ a Great Fact—What it Secures: Revivification of the Body and Salvation of the Soul—Further Arguments—The Christian's Hope in Affliction—Boundless Variety in Nature, Animate and Inanimate—Qualities of the Spiritual Body Foreshadowed—Instant Metamorphosis of the Living—The Harvest-Home.

WILL you examine with me the 15th chapter of the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians? The subject of this grand chapter is the resurrection of the body. There were some of the professed Christians in Corinth who denied that there is any such thing as a resurrection of dead men. They might naturally do so for the obvious reasons which occur to many people now. But besides, it is probable that some of them were influenced by a curious speculative theory which in the next century is called Gnosticism. We see that theory appearing in the errors condemned by Paul in writing to the Colossians, and by John in his Epistles. It seems far away from us, but it was a very proud philosophy in its day, boasting of itself as science. The fundamental position of the Gnostics was that matter is necessarily the seat of evil: all evil resides in matter, and no matter is free from evil. We can at once see how they would deny the possibility of a resurrection of the body, because that would involve the perpetuating of evil.

However this may be as to the Corinthians, there were some of them who not merely questioned the doctrine of a general resurrection, but positively denied that there is any such thing as a resurrection of dead men. The Greek has no article. It is not strictly "resurrection of the dead"; but they said, "there is no resurrection of dead men"—as Æschylus long before had declared: "When a man has once died there is no resurrection to him."

Now, in the first section of the chapter—verses 1-19—the Apostle says: To affirm that there is no resurrection of dead men is to deny the resurrection of Christ, and thus to destroy Christianity. He begins by reminding them that the Gospel which he originally preached to them—from which they derived all their knowledge of Christianity—involved and rested upon the fact that Christ had been raised from the dead. "For I delivered unto you first of all . . . that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." Both His death and His resurrection were in accordance with the predictions of the Old Testament. Then the Apostle proceeds to speak of witnesses to the risen Christ: First, Cephas, whom we call Peter. Second, the twelve. Third, above five hundred brethren at once, "of whom," he says, "the greater part are still living." It had been no great interval of time. We know most exactly that this Epistle was written in A.D. 57—it cannot have been more than a year earlier or later. Most probably our Lord's resurrection was in A.D. 30, with a possible variation of one or two years. So it had been about twenty-seven years since His resurrection. Consider a moment. It is twenty-eight years since our great civil war began, and twenty-three

years since it ended. The older persons present remember with perfect familiarity all its events from beginning to end. And there had been only the same lapse of time in the case of these witnesses whom Paul mentions. No class of skeptics at the present day will think of denying that Paul wrote this Epistle : and he declares that more than half of those five hundred witnesses were still living. Afterwards he adds that Christ appeared to James, and then again to all the Apostles, and finally to Paul himself. This statement of the testimony of our Lord's resurrection is surely remarkable, and is to be added to the evidence furnished in the four Gospels, in the Acts, and in the other Epistles. Allow me to say as a student of history desiring to speak calmly : If I don't know that Jesus of Nazareth rose from the dead, then I know nothing in the history of mankind. It is a great assured fact ; and rightly considered it carries with it the truth of Christianity in general. And not merely is our Lord's resurrection a pillar of Christian evidence, but it is a part of His work of salvation. In 2 Cor. v. 15 we read : " He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again." He did not merely die for them ; but for them He both died and rose again. And in Romans iv. 25 : " Who believe in Him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised up for our justification." I cannot now elaborate this thought ; but these passages plainly teach that our Lord's resurrection is a part of His saving work. He died and rose again for our salvation. Now, let us see the Apostle's argument : " If the resurrection of Christ is a cardinal part of Christianity, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of dead men ? " Observe :

this was not the general belief of the Corinthian Christians, but only of some, who are carefully distinguished elsewhere in the chapter also, from the general body of the brotherhood. The Apostle declares that to deny a resurrection of dead men will necessarily exclude the resurrection of Christ. Notice the argument in verse 13. He doesn't say: "Unless it is true that there is a resurrection of the dead in general, then Christ is not risen." That wouldn't be sound logic—for Christ might have risen as an isolated fact. But he says—and the Greek shows the difference plainly: "If it be true, as some among you maintain, that there is no resurrection of dead men, then Christ is not risen." He doesn't say: *εἰ μὴ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν ἔστιν*; but he says: *εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν*—"If it is true that a resurrection of dead men does not exist." Again and again he repeats this—verses 14-17—showing that to deny a resurrection of dead men is to deny Christ's resurrection, which overthrows Christianity and destroys all the hopes founded on it. And that not only as to the living, but—in verse 18—as to those who are fallen asleep in Christ. Their existence has ceased—they are perished—if what these men say be true. As to ourselves also (verse 19): "If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." The word "miserable" used to signify, not as now "wretched," but "pitiable"; and the Revised Version here says: "We are of all men most pitiable." If we have simply hoped in Christ in this life, and it will turn out to be all a delusion—there being no future life—then we are of all men most to be pitied, because we have cherished such a delusion. I have heard good men sometimes say: "If Christianity be a delusion, I should wish to cherish it still, because it makes me happy." But I say: "No!

I want no delusions—no happiness coming from delusions. I want truth—reality. My soul was born to know truth, and to love truth. And, blessed be God! He has given me the means of learning truth through His Spirit; and I don't wish to be cheated with delusive hopes." It is to that feeling the Apostle here appeals. To deny the Christian's hope of a future existence is to make his a pitiable lot.

Now comes the second section of the chapter—verses 20 to 28. Before completing his argument the Apostle turns to the other side in a manner quite characteristic of him. He says: "But now Christ *is* risen from the dead, and this secures the resurrection of His people." He proceeds to speak only of the resurrection of Christ's people. We know full well that he believed in a general resurrection of all mankind. A little more than a year later—in Acts xxiv. 15—we find him saying before Felix that he expects a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. But in our passage he confines his view to the resurrection of the just, and declares that of this Christ's resurrection is the pledge and assurance. Christ was the first-fruits, and the first-fruits of the harvest gave promise of all that should follow. So he proceeds to remind us that death came through Adam, and in like manner the resurrection comes in Christ. It is wholly beside the mark to quote as teaching universal salvation the statement in verse 22: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"; for the whole connection shows plainly that he speaks of bodily death and bodily resurrection. And so he declares that Christ's people will all rise at His coming. Having mentioned the coming of the Lord, he declares that then Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God, and will Himself also be subject to God, "that God may be

all in all." This does not conflict with the plain teaching elsewhere that Christ is Himself Divine. The reference is to the authority delegated to Him as the God-man—the Mediator. As He told the disciples just before His ascension: "All authority in Heaven and in earth was given unto Me"; so here we are told that this delegated Mediatorial authority will at last be turned back again to God who gave it, and Messianic dominion will be merged in the general dominion of God.

In the third section of the chapter—verses 29 to 34—the Apostle gives further arguments against those persons at Corinth who denied the resurrection. This section needs to be closely connected with the end of our first section at verse 19. The Apostle here practically identifies the question of a resurrection with that of a future existence. We know that he believed in and taught a conscious existence of the spirit between death and the resurrection of the body. In 2 Cor. v. 6–8 he declares: "We are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." Here he distinctly asserts a conscious existence in the presence of Christ while absent from the body; but in the passage with which we are dealing he speaks only of the re-embodied existence, and points out that for them to deny a resurrection is to deny a future existence. The Corinthians would make no distinction. The first argument he here presents has awakened much disputation, and I have thought all the trouble arises from the unwillingness of many readers to take the passage in its plain and obvious sense. I don't know how you have found it, but I think one of the commonest sources of difficulty in understanding the Bible is a certain un-

willingness to let the Bible mean what it wants to mean. We don't fancy the obvious meaning of some passage, and we say, "Oh, it cannot mean that," and proceed to look for another meaning. Then the plainer the language is, the more difficulty we find in drawing from it any other meaning; and so we call the passage extremely difficult. I do not say that you have ever done this, but certainly I have, and have become conscious of it again and again. Now, the obvious meaning of this passage—verse 29—is that some persons among this party at Corinth had been baptizing living persons instead of those who had died without baptism. There is a great disposition in human nature to magnify the externals of Christianity. This would easily arise among Jews and among Greeks. We know that a disposition to exaggerate the importance of Christian ceremony existed not many generations after this, and it might easily have existed at the beginning among some persons. And as to this particular matter, we know from several Fathers that there were in the second century certain professed Christians who did actually practise the baptism of a living person for the benefit of one who had died without baptism. Of course, that is all nonsense from the Christian's point of view; but I pray you to observe that the Apostle doesn't present this as his own argument in favor of his own teaching—he presents it as what the logicians call an argument *ad hominem*: an argument specially applying to the persons addressed. He wishes to show them how inconsistent it is for some of them to be practising this baptism for the dead when they say that dead men will never live again. He carefully distinguishes the persons who do this from himself and from the Church in general. It is not, "What shall we do who are baptized

for the dead?" but, "What shall *they* do?" Before and after he speaks of the Christians in general as "*we*." All the difficulty about this passage appears to have arisen from a failure to observe that the Apostle introduces it only as an *ad hominem* argument, to silence capacious objectors; even as he tells Titus concerning certain unruly persons, that their mouths must be stopped. Our Lord used a similar argument when they charged Him with casting out demons by a league with Beelzebub, and He said: "Well, then; by whom do your sons cast them out?" It was a mere argument *ad hominem* to silence unreasonable controversialists. The Apostle then proceeds to further considerations addressing themselves to all Christians. "Why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour—constantly exposed to peril, to death, in the service of Christ—if there be no future life?" For his part he declares that his sufferings amount to daily death. And why should he have fought with beasts at Ephesus if there be no resurrection? We don't know whether he means that he has literally fought with beasts, or means it figuratively; and it doesn't at all matter for the understanding of his argument. He had encountered great perils and sufferings in the service of Christ; and what was the use of bearing all this if there be no future? Naturally enough might one then say, as the wicked Jews had said long before—Isaiah xxii. 13: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." People would very generally say this if they abandoned all belief in a future existence. But the Apostle checks them: "Be not deceived. Don't adopt any such ruinous notion. Don't allow the people who assert that there is no resurrection to communicate their ideas to you." And then he quotes a line of a Greek poet. We don't know whether he was quoting



directly from the poet, or the saying had become proverbial. You college gentlemen may notice that it is what you call an iambic trimeter: *φθείρουσιν ἥθη χρῆσθ' ὀμιλῖαι κακῆί*. It is a little difficult to translate. "Communications" is not indeed the word. The revisers say "evil company." It means evil intercourse or conversations. And the word rendered "manners" signifies both morals and manners. We have no term that denotes both at once, as they have in German—"Sitten." The thought is surely one of great importance—perhaps especially to the young: "Evil conversations and intercourse corrupt good morals and manners." The Apostle has repeatedly quoted Greek poets, as a missionary in China now likes to quote some saying of Confucius, because that will take hold upon his hearers.

The remainder of the chapter presents a reply to objectors. The first objection, which is answered in verses 35-49, turns upon the inquiry: "How can the same body be raised?" The Apostle introduces it in a manner characteristic of his writings, by representing some individual objector as speaking. "But some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what kind of body do they come?" Now, this is not the question of a sincere and anxious inquirer wishing to have difficulties removed out of the way of his faith. It is the question of a curious and hostile objector. We see that, from the harsh term with which the Apostle introduces his reply. He says: "Thou fool!"—a strong expression, which an inspired teacher might employ because he would know that it was deserved, and could use it without improper feeling on his own part. There are occasions on which for us also this would be the most appropriate answer to use; but we feel a difficulty in making it. Apart from the matter of civility, there is danger of wrong

judgment or wrong feeling on our own part; so we sometimes have to shrink from saying: "You are a fool, and you know you are,"—or: "You are a fool, and have not sense enough to know it"—although at times that would be the only logical reply. To this silly objector the Apostle now answers that there are many different kinds of bodies in the world; and so the risen body may be very different from the present body, and yet be in some just sense the same. He illustrates this, first, from sowing wheat. The grain of wheat that we sow must die in order to be made alive. The body that grows out of it: the stalk, the leaves, the head, the blossoms, and many grains—are in one sense the same as the single seed we planted, though in another sense they are very different. Again, there are many kinds of flesh, he declares: flesh of men, flesh of beasts, flesh of fishes, flesh of birds. There are also many bodies: bodies celestial and terrestrial; and the celestial bodies widely differ in glory. You see the point of all these illustrations. The risen body may be in a true sense the same, while yet in the conditions of its existence exceedingly different. It will be incorruptible, glorious, powerful—a spiritual body. You ask just what the spiritual body is; and I answer: We don't know—we are at the end of our information on the subject. But you see at once that there is no propriety in questioning or denying the resurrection on the ground that the matter composing the body becomes widely scattered—even enters into new bodies, and that the same body contains entirely different matter at different periods of its existence, and all that. The risen body will not be in the strict sense a flesh and blood body: it will be incorruptible and spiritual; so the objection is cut off, and that is what the Apostle undertook to do. He is not attempting to

define for us the nature of the risen body, but only to meet the objector by showing that it will be exceedingly different from the present one.

The second objection—in verses 50–57—asks how it will be with those living when Christ shall appear. That difficulty might well present itself at the beginning. People would say: “Grant that the dead will rise again. How about those whom Christ finds alive? The Apostle declares that they will immediately be changed without passing through the experience of death. They must be changed, because flesh and blood unchanged cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and the corruptible must become incorruptible. So, when the dead shall have been raised, and the living at that moment shall have been changed, then all the consequences of death will have been destroyed. Then—as written in Isaiah xxv. 8—death will be swallowed up in victory. And, borrowing from the prophet Hosea, the Apostle breaks into an outburst of rejoicing: “O death, where is thy sting?—O grave, where is thy victory?” It is a triumph which Christianity warrants—a victory which Christianity promises. He adds: “The sting of death is sin; and sin cannot be overcome by the law: nay, the law gives strength to sin”—a thought here mentioned in passing, and to be developed a few months later in the 7th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. The law has no power to take away the sting of death by conquering sin; but the Gospel has this power. And so he adds: “But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The conclusion of this great chapter—in verse 58—contains a two-fold exhortation, and a great encouragement. He exhorts, first, to be fixed in Christian convictions. “Be ye steadfast, unmovable.” Second: To

be active in Christian work—"always abounding in the work of the Lord." Only fixed convictions will produce permanent Christian activity; and only those who are actively at work will maintain fixed convictions. The two may stand together: either attempted alone will fail. Observe how strong is the expression here: not merely "engaged" in the work of the Lord; but "*abounding* in the work of the Lord," and "*always* abounding." Then he adds the encouragement to steadfastness and activity: "Forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." It is not in vain, because it shall not fail of good results. Labor in the Lord is never in vain. Speak any word for Christ in public or in private, that is in accordance with the Bible, and pray God's blessing upon it, and it will, and must, and does do good. You are engaged in a cause which cannot fail—which is destined to success. Your King must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. And it is not in vain, because you shall not fail of eternal reward. There is a resurrection—a future life—and in that future life will God recompense for all sacrifice and all toil in the Saviour's service. Brother, don't talk about the sacrifices you have made for Christ; but think only of what you may do in the future. Ah, if there be sorrow in the home of the glorified, methinks the keenest sorrow with which we shall look back upon our earthly life will spring from remembering that we did not make more sacrifices and engage in greater toils for the good of men and for the glory of Christ.