

and they would have said, "If only Paul came back again we would be alive again." Their faith would have been founded on his wisdom. But when there was no Paul at all, when he could say, "Not I, but Christ in me," then their faith was founded on the power of God; and the same power that convinced them of sin, that same power that comforted them, and strengthened them, and filled them with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, was always with them. Therefore, when he went they lost the pleasure of hearing him, but they did not lose the power of his preaching.

"Howbeit we speak wisdom." It is not the wisdom of men, but it is not foolishness. The world thinks the whole thing absurd, that we should be reconciled to God because some one died outside the gates of Jerusalem eighteen centuries ago, and still more absurd that we should be able to do and love what is right by ceasing from ourselves, and receiving our life from God. The world thinks it is perhaps respectable if we are sincere in holding that belief; but "Really now, between ourselves," they say, "there is no sense in it." And yet there is great sense in it: there is God's wisdom in it. "Howbeit, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect." I will just remind you that Christ says, "Be ye perfect, as your father which is in heaven is perfect." I would also point you to what Paul says, that the aim of his whole work is, "Warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." What I think he means is, that he brings every man into the truth, and then into a growth of progress in that life of Christ, until the man becomes a perfect man. If a mother shows me a beautiful baby, and I say it is a perfect baby, that does not mean that it is not going to grow; it means just the reverse—that it is a beautifully healthy child, that will grow into a strong man.

"Yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of the world, that comes to naught." Don't you think that we Christians have given a great deal too much of our time and thoughts to the princes of this world, thinking to ourselves, "what kind of figure do we make in the eyes of the great men of the world, the intelligent men?" We have nothing at all to do with them, but to bear our witness to them, and through Christian love to bring them to the Lord Jesus Christ. "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." God wants us to glory in Him, and the wisdom is hidden, and if we would find it out we must go and hide just where it is hidden,—*"hidden with Christ in God."* We have here to search into the deep things of God, and how are we going to do it? In a very simple way. If you wanted to know what I think on a given subject, you might ponder over it for many days and never guess aright; but if you ask *me*, and I tell you, you will know my