

2nd CORINTHIANS XII.

(Concluded from page 144.)

We find in Philippians this confidence in the flesh (not lusts of corruption) judged by the apostle. All that made Paul of undue importance to himself, or to others and so reflectively to himself, was rejected. It would have been confidence in self. Our part is to be in the presence of God, that all which is of self may be judged. But God, as I have said, helps us. Here God had, by the abundance of the revelations given to Paul, given an occasion which the flesh could use. In His mercy He meets the danger for Paul, which *he* might not, surely would not, have rightly met; for God does not afflict willingly. He lets loose this messenger of Satan at him, but to do His own work, as with Job. And Paul has some infirmity which tends to make him despicable in preaching. "My temptation, which was in my flesh, ye despised not," says he to the Galatians—a natural counterpoise to the abundance of revelations.

What can the flesh do with this then? Well, it would be spared what seemed a hindrance. To whom? Why, to Paul. Just right. Paul had to be kept down—terrible truth for us! Must we be made weak and inefficient in order to be blessed and used? Yes, if, wretched worms as we are, we are in danger of leaning as man on the flesh's efficiency and strength. The works that are done upon the earth, God doeth them Himself, and above all spiritual work. *He* gives the increase.