

question at issue, the apostle, like a wise physician, addresses himself first to the cause of the disease, before he begins the local application. By a variety of arguments, he disabuses both parties of all hopes of salvation from themselves, strips them of their fancied pleas, and shows them to themselves self-condemned and silent before God, while he establishes the great central truth of justification by faith in Christ. Here only could Jew and Gentile alike find peace; and here, in finding peace with God, they became one with each other. The doctrinal part of the epistle reaches to the close of the eleventh chapter. Having, at this point, completed his great argument of Christian unity, he occupies most of the remainder of the epistle in applying it. In chap. xii. he shows that such displays of mercy as Jews and Gentiles had received, should induce them, having first dedicated themselves to God, 1, 2; to think humbly of themselves, 3; to look on all Christians as forming "one body in Christ," 4, 5; to fill their respective offices in the church so as most to subserve the general good, 6—8; and to let the law of love flow out into various channels of cheerfulness, patience, hospitality, mutual sympathy, humility, peacefulness, and a readiness to forgive. In chap. xiii. he enforces the universal law of Christian love, 8—10; which turns the whole world into a neighbourhood, and the whole Church into a family; and which, so far from "working ill" to any, lives only for the good of all, and so "fulfils the whole law." From chap. xiv. we learn that in things indifferent Christians should not condemn each other, 1; particularly concerning ceremonial observances, 2—6; for Christ alone is the Lord of conscience, 7—9. Instead, therefore, of judging each other, we should prepare for our own judgment at his tribunal, 10—13. Nor should we do any thing, meantime, calculated to distress a weak or tender conscience, lest we "destroy one for whom Christ died," 14—16. Remembering that the kingdom of God consists not in outward things, but in the universal and imperishable elements of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Christians should "follow after things which make for peace," and rather deny themselves certain privileges than be the means of grieving a weak brother, 17—21.

Continuing this healing strain in chap. xv., and thus evincing, by frequent iteration, his deep anxiety to see the Church at one, he exhorts the strong to bear the infirmities of the weak, and each to please not himself but his neighbour, 1, 2. Reminding Christians that such is the example of Christ, 3, 4; that our gratitude for him should blend all hearts, and call forth a united burst of praise, as if the whole Church were only "one mind, with one mouth glorifying God;" that we should accept each other as Christ has received us, and because of the gracious regard which he has shown to Jews and Gentiles in imparting to them the Gospel according to the tenour of ancient prophecy, 8—17; beseeching them for "Christ's sake," if they will strive, to "strive together in prayer," 30; and praying that "the God of peace" may be with them all, 33. Chap. xvi. beautifully opens with a number of Christian salutations to members of each of the two parties, by which the apostle would set them an example in his own person of mutual and impartial love in Christ, 1—19. And after solemnly warning Christians to "mark them who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine" of Christ, and to avoid them; and giving an awful description of the character of such, 17, 18; he assures them that "the God of peace" shall soon enable them to trample Satan, the great disturber of the Church, under their feet, 20.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.—The very first topic on which the apostle felt himself

called to insist, in addressing the members of the church at Corinth, relates to the factions into which they had divided. For no sooner has he expressed his gratitude to God for their affluence in spiritual gifts, than he proceeds to reprove their violent dissensions, and vindicates himself from having occasioned them, 10—17. And as he well knew that a fond regard for eloquence and philosophy was a principal cause of their divisions, he reminds them how little stress is to be laid on these. Since the whole scheme of salvation is constituted on the principle "that no flesh should glory in his presence." Hence the unostentatious style, but yet supernatural character of his own preaching, and of the Gospel generally, chap. ii. And hence, too, the carnality of their "envying, and strife, and divisions," in one saying, "I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos." Chap. iii. 1—4. For he reminds them that he and his fellow-apostles are only instruments employed by God in the erection of the Christian temple; that if any man turns that temple of God into a Babel by unhalloved clamours and divisions, "him will God destroy;" and that as the Church is one, so all good is made indivisible and one, and as such is the property of the believer in Christ, 5—23. Let them on every account, then, allay their proud and factious spirit, and he would come shortly to examine and correct the abuses which had crept in among them, chap. iv.

But earnestly as the apostle would inculcate the unity of the Christian Church, not less is he concerned for its purity. Indeed he enforces the latter in order to the former. For, if he pauses in the inculcation of unity at the close of the fourth chapter, it is only that, having denounced the sins of incest, pride, litigiousness, fornication, and giving various directions concerning marriage, virginity, idolatrous fellowship, and decorum in public worship, in the following six chapters, he may return to the subject of Christian union again in the eleventh chapter, with still greater effect. That this is his scope is evident, first, from his interspersed exhortations that no man should use his Christian liberty so as to wound the conscience of a brother, chap. viii. 9—13; his accommodation of himself to the prejudices of men in order to bring about their salvation, ix. 18—23, and x. 32, 33; his representation that "we, though many, are one bread and one body," x. 17; and, secondly, from his resuming the subject of schism as of primary importance, as soon as ever he has corrected their other irregularities. "For, first of all," saith he, "when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you." xi. 18. Having endeavoured to heal this schism as far as it related to the ordinance of the Lord's supper, he proceeds to the subject of spiritual gifts, and shows that, however great the diversities of these gifts may be, they all proceed from the same Divine source, and are intended for the benefit of the same body in which all Christians are united. "For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Chap. xii. 1—14. Inculcating humility and mutual affection in the use of those gifts, he pursues the similitude of the human body still further represents Christians as so united in one body as to have a perfect identity of interests, and insists on a tender care of the least member on account of its subserviency to the good of the whole, 14—31.

But that which is of far greater importance to the welfare and unity of the Christian Church, than the greatest opulence of gifts, is *evangelical love*. This paramount principle, by its humble, hallowed, enduring, and sympathetic influence, binds the whole Church together, and assimilates earth to heaven, chap. xiii. Therefore let Christians "follow after