

the one or two who knew and loved him. How little did they know, how little did even he understand, that the apparent earthly failure would in reality be the most infinite success! Who that watched that obscure and miserable end could have dreamed that Rome itself would not only adopt the Gospel of that poor outcast, but even derive from his martyrdom, and that of his fellow Apostle, her chief sanctity and glory in the eyes of a Christian world; that over his supposed remains should rise a church more splendid than any ancient basilica; and that over a greater city than Rome the golden cross should shine on the dome of a mighty cathedral dedicated to his name?

How little did men recognize his greatness! Here was one to whom no single man that has ever lived, before or since, can furnish a perfect parallel. If we look at him only as a writer, how immensely does he surpass, in his most casual Epistles, the greatest authors, whether Pagan or Christian, of his own and succeeding epochs! The younger Pliny was famous as a letter-writer, yet the younger Pliny never produced any letter so exquisite as that to Philemon. Seneca as a moralist stood almost unrivalled, yet not only is clay largely mingled with his gold, but even his finest moral aphorisms are inferior in breadth and intensity to the most casual of St. Paul's. Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius furnish us with the purest and noblest specimens of Stoic loftiness of thought, yet St. Paul's chapter on charity is worth more than all they ever wrote. If we look at the Christian world, the very greatest worker in each realm of Christian service does but present an inferior aspect of one phase only of Paul's many-sided pre-eminence. As a theologian, as one who formulated the doctrines of Christianity, we may compare him with St. Augustine or St. Thomas of Aquinum; yet how should we be shocked to find in him the fanciful rhetoric and dogmatic bitterness of the one, or the scholastic aridity of the other! If we look at him as a moral reformer, we may compare him with Savonarola; but in his practical control of even the most thrilling spiritual impulses—in making the spirit of the prophet subject to the prophet—how grand an exemplar might he not have furnished to the impassioned Florentine! If we consider him as a preacher we may compare him with St. Bernard; yet St. Paul would have been incapable of the unnatural asceticism and heresy-hunting hardness of the great Abbot of Clairvaux. As a reformer who altered the entire course of human history, Luther alone resembles him; yet how incomparably is the Apostle superior to Luther in insight, in courtesy, in humility, in dignity, in self-control! As a missionary we might compare him to Xavier, as a practical organizer to St. Gregory, as a fervent lover of souls to Whitefield, and to many other saints of God in many other of his endowments. But perhaps no saint of God has ever attained the same heights in any one capacity as St. Paul has in many, or received the gifts of the Spirit in so rich an outpouring, or borne in his mortal body such evident brand-marks of the Lord. In his lifetime he was no whit behind the very chiefest of the Apostles, and he towers above the very greatest of all the saints who have since striven to follow the example of his devotion to his Lord.