

clearly apprehended Christ. He was imbued with the spirit of his loving Lord; and to do the will and work of his Divine Master was the settled purpose of his mind. He was not only a Christian man, a man of prayer, of piety, and great christian knowledge and experience, he was a self-denying, and truly noble missionary of the Cross. He was called and qualified, and commanded to preach the Gospel by its glorified author and finisher; and to do it was his delight. It is true he met with opposition, he was subjected to persecution, to bonds and imprisonment, but these things did not turn him away from his work; the language of his life and his lips was, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

This passage lets us see the heart and character of Paul. It lets us see what he thought of himself, and what he thought of Christ. It tells us that Paul knew the wants of men and the adaptation of the glorious gospel to meet and satisfy those wants.

In reading this passage one would almost be disposed to think that the Apostle had great difficulty in finding words by which to express the thoughts and feelings of his heart. The word translated "*less than the least*," is not to be found in any other part of the New Testament.

Paul was not "*less than the least of all saints*," strictly speaking, for this would make him no saint at all. We know that he was a saint, an eminent saint, at the very time he was writing the Epistle to the Christians at Ephesus. But he was a very humble man; and having, as he doubtless had, a fresh and vivid recollection of the time when he was an enemy of Christ, and a bold and bitter persecutor of his followers, he felt in his innermost soul that he did not deserve either to be, or to be called, a saint. He seems to have coined a very peculiar expression to express the very low opinion which he had of himself.

When writing to Timothy he calls himself the chief of sinners. 1. Tim. i. 15. And when writing to the Corinthians he says, "For *I am* the least of the apostles, and am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God." 1 Cor. xv. 9. He seems to have looked upon himself as the chief of sinners, as the least of all saints, and as the least of the apostles because he had been a persecutor, an injurious person, a blasphemer, and for many years a despiser of the Messiah.

Is this grace given? He had long been a sinner, and it was grace