

the Corinthians (1 Cor. ix. 13-15,) "Do ye not know, that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel;" although he adds "But I have used none of these things; neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void." In like manner, when he says to the Thessalonians, "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you;" he adds, "Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample to you to follow us."

The miraculous endowments of the Apostle gave him a peculiar advantage, where the interests of religion required it, for laying out a considerable portion of his time in thus working with his hands, without being thereby unprepared for the delivery of his message. It was not in words which man's wisdom taught him that he preached. His message was communicated to him by inspiration—he spake the words of the Holy Ghost. But although enabled thus to preach by a miraculous preparation with which the preachers of the gospel now are not favoured, he still felt the labours to which he was thus subjected as a matter of severe trial. Again and again does he refer to these labours, and the circumstances which rendered them necessary, as constituting an important part of his sufferings. Mark how he writes of this to the Corinthians, first epistle, iv. 11, 12, "*Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labour working with our own hands.*"—When, in the same epistle, chapter ninth, and verse twelfth, referring to the right which he had of obtaining a temporal provision from them, he says, "Nevertheless we have not used this power;" he immediately adds "*but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.*" Again, he asks, 2 Cor. xi. 7, "*Have I committed an offence in abusing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely.*"

Nor, even in those cases in which he refused to be supported by particular

churches among whom he laboured, did the Apostle provide entirely for himself by the work of his own hands. He says to the Corinthians, in the words following those just quoted, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service." In doing this, it was not a consideration of the comparative wealth or poverty of the respective churches that guided him. There was much wealth in the Corinthian church. It is of the Macedonian churches that the Apostle says, "their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality;" yet it was from one of these churches, that namely at Philippi, that he seems to have received most freely; and the satisfaction with which, notwithstanding their poverty, he regarded these contributions may be learned from the warm acknowledgments which he makes: Philip iv. 15-18, "Now, ye Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God." The Apostles' heart was filled with love to all the churches. He could with all sincerity say to the Corinthians, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." Who, in reading this, can help admiring the disinterested affection of Paul! But when we consider the view thus presented of these respective churches—when we hear this servant of God saying to the Corinthians, "In all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself;" and then, in contrast, read his statement to the Philippians, "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need, I can do