

be ready when I come." The brethren were Titus and two others (8: 6, 18, 22), supposed to have been Timothy and Erastus.

4. Lest haply if they of Macedo'nia, come with me and find you unprepared, we (that we say not ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting. It was usual for some friends to go with Paul from place to place (1 Cor. 16: 6; Rom. 15: 24). As Corinth was a great commercial centre, and as the Macdonians had shewn this courtesy on a former occasion (Acts 17: 15) it was not unlikely that some of them would accompany him. "In this little sentence we may discover the extreme delicacy of Paul's feelings, and the affectionate civility which characterized his intercourse, but which are especially prominent in this most personal of all his epistles." (Besser) "He appeals to their better feelings when he calls upon them to save him from mortification, instead of exhorting them to save themselves from disgrace." (Hodge) "This is a great principle—one of the deepest you can have for life and action. Appeal to the highest motives; appeal whether they be there or no, for you make them where you do not find them. Arnold trusted his boys, and all attempts at deceiving him ceased forthwith." (F. W. Robertson).

5. Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort (R. V. intreat) the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before (R. V. your afore-promised bounty) that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness (R. V. extortion). The word for "bounty" means literally, "blessing," a token of good will. "See Questions for Study). Let it then, says Paul, be worthy of the name of "blessing," because given freely and largely, not as if exhorting by importunity.

6. But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. "Bountifully" is literally "with blessings." Giving is not throwing away, but sowing seed for a future harvest of blessing (Prov. 11: 24; Gal. 6: 7; Luke 6: 38). The best way in which to promote our temporal prosperity and happiness is to obey God and make a right use of what

we have. Selfish and avaricious people never win happiness, respect and love.

7. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver. One should give "as his heart freely prompts him." (Kling). If he exceeds that, the gift is marred, for the heart goes not with it. "Grudgingly" is, literally, "out of sorrow," from a reluctance to part with his money, or "out of necessity," compelled by circumstances, stress of conscience or fear of censure from others. "This reluctance spoils the gift." It loses all its fragrance when the incense of a free and joyful spirit is wanting." (Hodge). The word for "cheerful" is that from which "hilarity" comes, but it does not have the rollicking sense of the latter. (compare Rom. 12: 8). It means one to whom giving is a real pleasure, a joy more than a duty. The quotation is from the septuagint version of Prov. 22: 8 "a cheerful man and a giver God blesses, or loves." "Unless we feel it an honor and a joy to give, God does not accept the offering." (Hodge).

8. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. The word for "able" is emphatic and implies that God is willing and that he will abundantly provide for the cheerful giver. "The sacred writers often appeal to the power of God as a ground of confidence to his people (Rom. 16: 25; Eph. 3: 20; Jude 24). This is done especially when we are called upon to believe something which is contrary to the natural course of things. Giving is, to the natural eye, the way to lessen our store, not to increase it; the Bible says it is the way to increase it. To believe this it is only necessary to believe in the power, providence, and promise of God. God is able to make the paradox, "he that scattereth, increaseth prove true." (Hodge). By "all grace" every kind of earthly good is meant. This is clear from the context. "God is able to increase your wealth." But we need not exclude the wider sense of "grace." Spiritual prosperity is inseparable from christian liberality. As often as you practice this duty in an evangelical spirit, you must be conscious that the best part of your sanctified