

rated in Acts 28 : 30, 31, though some think that Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon were written from Cæsarea, while Paul was a prisoner there (see Acts 24 : 27). In any case, Philippians was written from Rome, probably in A.D. 63. It is generally believed to have been the latest of the four Prison Epistles.

The church at Philippi was the first church founded in Europe. The story of Paul's first visit to this city is told in Acts, ch. 16. Two other visits are referred to in 2 Cor. 2 : 13 and Acts 20 : 6. His ill-treatment in their city drew out the more powerfully the affection of the Philippian Christian, so that "once and again" after his leaving them they sent him pecuniary aid (see v. 14 of the lesson). "Of all Paul's letters to churches this one breathes the most intimate and affectionate spirit. Here we have Paul in his most free and affectionate mood. He is writing to those who understand, appreciate and sympathize with him. He shares his inmost thoughts with them. They have been generous in gifts and lavish in love, and he is not afraid to let them see how deeply he is touched" (Century Bible).

The lesson contains Paul's thanks to the Philippians for their gifts and their many past favors. "Contented as he is with whatever God sends, he might have done without them, but they will add interest to the account of the Philippians and he gives them a receipt in full which God will acknowledge."

I. A Grateful Apostle, 10-13.

V. 1. *But*. This word marks the turning of Paul's thought to a new subject. He has not up till now, expressly thanked the Philippians for their gift which was likely the occasion of this letter. *I rejoiced*. Joy is the one of the keynotes of this beautiful epistle (see v. 1, etc.). *In the Lord*. The apostle's thought turns constantly to Christ as the source of all his strength and gladness. He it is who put into the hearts of the Philippians such care for the apostle. *Ye have revived your thought for me* (Rev. Ver.); literally, "you have shot forth (as a branch) thought in my behalf;" "you let your care for me blossom into activity again." *Wherein ye did indeed take thought* (Rev. Ver.). There had been some delay in sending the gift, because

they had lacked opportunity. They were poor (2 Cor. 8 : 1, 2), and perhaps found it difficult to find a trustworthy messenger to carry the gift so far.

V. 11. *Not that I speak*, etc. It was not the gift, but the spirit that prompted the givers, that Paul so greatly prized. *In respect of want*; "in language dictated by want" (Lightfoot); "not that I complain of want" (Moffatt). *In whatsoever state*. He was resigned to God's will under all circumstances. *To be content*; "self-sufficing," depending neither on the Philippians or any other earthly helpers. Paul's self-sufficiency had a source outside of himself in Christ. "Dr. Johnson talked with approbation of one who had attained to the state of the philosophical wise man, that is, to have no want of any thing. 'Then, sir,' said I, 'the savage is a wise man.' 'Sir,' said he, 'I do not mean simply being without—but not having a want'" (Boswell's Life of Johnson).

Vs. 12, 13. *I know*; as the result of having learned. *To be abased*; "to live humbly," in poverty. *To abound*; "to live in prosperity." *I am instructed*; "initiated into the secret" (Moffatt). Compare Ps. 25 : 14. *I can do all things*. The word *do* scarcely gives the full sense of Paul's words. Rather, "I am equal to all things—am strong for all things—through Christ who gives to me strength." It covers not doing, only, but suffering as well; anything the Lord may bring upon him. *In him that strengtheneth me* (Rev. Ver.); literally, "infuses strength into me." This was the secret of the apostle's great life.

II. A Generous Church, 14-20.

V. 14. *Notwithstanding*. Paul would not have the Philippians think that, in speaking of his self-sufficiency, he undervalues their gifts. His courtesy is conspicuous. *Ye have well done*; "ye did nobly." Their deed was not only generous but lovely; it was not only good, but was at once seen to be good. *Did communicate*; Rev. Ver., "had fellowship with;" Lightfoot, "went shares with."

Vs. 15, 16. *In the beginning of the gospel*; when the gospel was first preached to them, about ten years previously. (See Lesson Setting.) *In the matter of giving and receiving* (Rev. Ver.). Paul uses financial terms.