

Apostle. Is it not infinitely more than sufficient for any merely human creature to become a member of Christ's body—a living portion of that universal temple in which God's Holy Spirit dwells?

II.

BY THE REV. PRINCIPAL H. C. G. MOULE, M.A.

I have read with care and interest Dr. Ringwood's very able paper which you have kindly sent me in proof. Its argument, and I may add its tone, commands both attention and respect, and I feel that on many points of detail it is highly instructive. But I still venture to hold that 1 Cor. vi. 19, at least includes a reference to the body of the individual Christian, and entitles us to say with proper reserve, and in remembrance of other truth, that "the body"—the physical frame, regarded in the abstract—is, in each believer's case, a temple (*ναός*) of the blessed Spirit.

My main reason is the context before and after verse 19. Just before, the Apostle has been pressing the sacred law of purity in the body (and the secret for a victorious doing of that law, by realised union with Christ); and just after, verse 20, he proceeds, "Glorify God *in your body*;" where, surely, we must understand the body in the sense of, e.g., verse 15. The whole point of the intensely practical previous argument would surely be lost if we have, in verses 19, 20, a sudden transition to the Mystical Body—a *totally* different matter under an identical term.

I would repeat, what I implied above, that "your body" is a phrase equivalent to "the body," when we use the term undistributed. "Your body," I hold, equals "The body, as you have to do with it."

Meanwhile I see no necessary contradiction between my contention about 1 Cor. vi. 19, and the great truth of the corporate life of the saints in Christ, to which Dr. Ringwood so forcibly points our attention. I seem to see running all through the Scripture imagery about the Church the principle that each *μέρος*, or *μέλος* (each part or portion), of the total is also a miniature of the total. For example, take the blessed Indwelling. We have, "I *in them* and Thou in me." We have (Eph. ii. 22) the whole Church as the Habitation of God. But *also*, "We will make our abode with *him*;" "I will come in to *him*;" "Christ dwelling in your *hearts* (surely individually) by faith." And so here (1 Cor. vi. 15) "the *members of an harlot* (i.e., the physical frame of an unhappy individual fornicator) are regarded as being by right "the members of Christ." The imagery here is not of the man's body being a *limb* but the *limbs* of Christ; suggesting the idea that, *from one point of view*, Christ *de jure* so possesses that man as to claim his frame as his Lord's *frame*.

I am compelled to write under pressure, time being scarce with me. But I trust I have at least indicated the line in which I would attempt an answer to some contentions of Dr. Ringwood's paper—of whose ability and deep reverence of tone I must again express my strong sense.

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF FIRST CORINTHIANS.

I COR. XII. 31.

"Desire earnestly the greater gifts" (R.V.).

EXPOSITION.

"*Desire earnestly.*"—Literally, *be envious or jealous of*. It is translated, "zealously affect," in Gal. iv. 17, 18. It perhaps implies an indirect rebuke of the envy felt by many Corinthians for those who possessed the best gifts. It is as though St. Paul had said, "If you are envious at all, be envious *for the gifts*, not of those who have received them."—*Shore*.

"*Greater.*"—The MSS. are divided between "better" (*κρείττονα*) and "greater" (*μείζονα*). The former seems to me preferable, taken in the sense of "more useful," the gifts most capable of producing the common edification.—*Godet*.

The gifts specially in view are prophecy and teaching.—*Godet*.

The touchstone is charity; choose those that most readily group themselves round that great centre.—*John Ker*.

CRITICAL NOTE.

Reuss asks, How can we *seek* gifts? He sees here an insoluble contradiction between the two elements of Paul's view: Divine gift and human pursuit. But (1) Prayer implies both pursuit and gift; (2) the gift may be a germ which is to be cultivated.—*Godet*.

He does not strike a middle course between the assertion of God's sovereignty and of man's freedom, or attempt to reconcile them, but fearlessly maintains both as the foundation of practical exhortation.—*Edwards*.

The Spirit takes account of the receptive capacity and mental tendency of the individual.—*Meyer*.

The effort to obtain both ordinary and extraordinary gifts would include cultivation of the corresponding natural powers, prayer and faith for the Spirit's presence and activity, and use of the spiritual power already possessed.—*Beet.*

METHODS OF TREATMENT.

I.

THE BEST GIFTS TO BE COVETED.

By the Rev. John Ker, D.D.

1. *What some of the best gifts are.*—Not anything external to the soul's nature—as money or power. Nor all inward gifts—as taste, culture: these are good, but not the best. He means those gifts with which the spirit of charity is connected. Reverence and humility towards God, candid and generous judgment towards our fellow-men; as regards ourselves—patience, contentment, courage; as to things around—the temperance of chastened desire. These gifts go deepest into our nature; they are the most lasting; and they are most godlike.

2. *The frame of mind we are to cherish towards these gifts*—"Covet them earnestly." It was a bold word for Paul to use, who says elsewhere, "Thou shalt not covet," first revealed to him his heart. The only coveting in which there is no sin, is the coveting of a loving spirit and the gifts that gather closest around it. We are to covet them *earnestly*, as an avaricious man pursues wealth. (1) Try to discover what is best in those around you, and rejoice in it. (2) Mingle much with those who have the best gifts in a large degree. (3) In coveting them, we never harm either ourselves or others; and (4) We are sure to gain them.

II.

THE GIFTS OF CIVILISATION.

*By the Very Rev. R. W. Church, D.C.L.,
Dean of St. Paul's.*

In these words St. Paul seems at once to put his sanction on all the great results of human civilisation, and at the same time to open a wider view beyond it, and to claim for man a higher end and a higher law of life than even it can give. I use the word "civilisation" to mean all skill and endeavour and achievement, all exercise and development of thought, restricted to the sphere of present things. The contrast between civilisation and the religion of the New Testament is sometimes openly avowed, more often secretly and importunately felt. It is true they have worked together, but they are often arrayed in opposition;

and minds under the influence of the one are apt to shrink from or grow impatient with the other. And they *are* distinct. But they have essentially one origin, and come both from Him who has made man for this world as well as intended him for another.

The world easily suggests very awful views of its own condition; but it would indeed be far more dreadful if we must not see in its civilisation the leading and guiding hand of God, the real gifts of the Author and Giver of all good things. The gifts of civilisation have been ill-used by luxury and pride for impurity and wrong. But the gifts at Corinth were foolishly and wrongly used. However our civilisation comes, and however it is used, it is one of God's ways, as real as the sun and air and rain, of doing good to men.

Look at it as it is. Observe that one great fact, the progressive refinement of our human nature. Observe how men gain in power—power over themselves, power to have larger aims, and to reach them. See how great moral habits strike their roots deep in a society, habits not necessarily belonging to religion; the sense of justice as justice; the spirit of self-devoting enterprise.

Civilisation *to us* means liberty and the power of bearing and using liberty; it means that which ensures to us a peaceful life; it means growing honour for manliness, unselfishness, sincerity—growing value for gentleness, considerateness, and respect for others; it means readiness to bear criticism, to see and amend our mistakes; it means the passion to raise the weak and low.

It is not wonderful that, when we come fresh from the New Testament, it should all seem too dazzling. It is easy to say, *Leave it*. A wiser thoughtfulness, a braver and deeper faith will say, *Use it*, only believe that there is something greater beyond. "Covet earnestly the greater, the better gifts." Covet earnestly what most raises man's part here, but remember also that there is a yet more excellent way. Covet God's gifts, but above His gifts, that which God essentially is—covet Love.

THOUGHTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

THERE is an ordinary theological distinction of the manifestation of the Holy Ghost into "gifts" and "graces." I presume it to mean that when the Holy Ghost manifests His presence in a man's moral or spiritual nature we call the result a "grace"; and when the epiphany is in his intellectual or mental nature we call it a "gift." Thus eloquence, poetic genius, musical talent, philosophical power, are called "gifts"; and gentleness, patience, chastity, "graces." I fear the distinction has exercised a narrowing influence upon the conception we form of the work of the Holy Spirit in the new creation, making us slower to recognise His presence in the graces of the saints than in the intellectual gifts of men.—*Bishop Fraser.*

IN the catalogue of gifts we discover two classes, the natural and the supernatural—personal endowments of mind *elevated* by the gift of the Spirit, and those which were *created* by the same influence. Just as if the temperature of this northern hemisphere were raised suddenly, and a mighty tropical river were to pour its fertilising inundation over the country. The result would be the impartation of a vigorous and gigantic growth to the vegetation already in existence, and, at the same time, the development of life in seeds and germs which had long lain latent in the soil, incapable of vegetation in the unkindly climate of their birth.—*F. W. Robertson.*

THOUGH the gifts enumerated by St. Paul have in these latter days, for some inscrutable purpose of the Divine counsel, ceased to be *miraculous*, they still exist, *every one of them*, as the fruit of labour and reward of toil; tokens of a great and blessed law, the necessity of man's co-operation with God, as in his spiritual so in his intellectual development; tokens of the Holy Spirit's continued presence with the Church, and that the promise of the Lord Jesus has been abundantly fulfilled.—*Bishop Fraser.*

I CONFESS myself totally unable to discover any reason for which certain of these gifts and ministries are now spoken of as extraordinary, intended only for an emergency, and for ever ceased. I do not believe this, and long ago I publicly expressed my conviction that it was erroneous. If they be restored I will greatly rejoice; that they are not with us I greatly grieve and lament. Well am I assured that they are every baptized person's privilege, as much as the forgiveness of sins.—*Edward Irving: Prophetical Works, i. p. 515.*

IF you think that the faith which could remove mountains is an extinct gift I would ask you to read the story of George Müller of Bristol, who feeds, clothes, and educates I know not how many hundreds of orphan children, *simply in faith*; dispensing with the usual eleemosynary machinery, not knowing what each day may bring forth, but finding himself, as he would say, miraculously sustained, encouraged, and provided for—mountains removed, and his way made plain.—*Bishop Fraser.*

Matthew xii. 43-45. and Psalm xxix. 6.

Two communications, not sent us as Requests for Reply, may find a place here:—

1. Matt. xii. 43-45.—Will you accept the following on that parable? The unclean spirit, representing man's nature from the Adamic birth; the cleansing the work of God alone, as seen in John xv. 3, or by the cleansing of the lepers (Luke xvii. 14); then the cleansed man takes no

COVET earnestly the best gifts, the best bodily gifts, the best intellectual gifts, the best spiritual gifts. And if you covet them, labour to win them. And if you win them, see to it how you use them. For each gift carries with it a proportionate responsibility. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to *profit withal*." "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same, *one to another*, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."—*Bishop Fraser.*

THE Spirit of Christ manifests itself not merely in the mystical convulsions of an obscure and speechless emotional excitement, but in the distinct and calm feeling of the peace and joy of a child of God conscious of being reconciled with its Father; not merely in apocalyptic visions of miraculous things in the future, but in a clear and reasonable knowledge of those things which have been given us by God, and in a wide view of the wonderful ways and judgments of God in the course of the world's history; not merely in theurgic powers and miraculous operations of an abrupt character, but in the constant moral power of love, which is the greatest of miracles.—*Pfleiderer: Hibbert Lecture.*

THE receptivity which comes with earnest and practical desire is, in the case of each individual, the determining cause as to what gift the Spirit will give.—*Shore.*

MILTON, of all our English race, is, by his diction and rhythm, the one artist of the highest rank in "the great style" whom we have. To what does he owe this supreme distinction? To nature first and foremost, to that bent of nature for inequality which to the worshippers of the average man is so unacceptable, to a gift, a Divine favour. "The older one grows," says Goethe, "the more one prizes natural gifts, because by no possibility can they be procured and stuck on." Nature formed Milton to be a great poet. But what other poet has shown so sincere a sense of the grandeur of his vocation, and a moral effort so constant and sublime to make and keep himself worthy of it? The Milton of poetry is the man, in his own magnificent phrase, of "devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit that can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of His altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom He pleases."—*Matthew Arnold: Century, May 1888.*

heed of God, as did Isaiah when cleansed by the coal from the altar, and thus the bad spirits find entrance again, and he returns, as the dog or sow, to his filth.—*F. J. PAKENHAM.*

2. In Psalm xxix. 6 the R.V. has given us—"Lebanon and Sirion like a young, wild ox." Professor Cheyne—"And Lebanon he makes to skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox." The LXX. translates the latter clause: *καὶ ὁ ἡγαπημένος ὡς υἱὸς μονοκεράτων*. Will any of your readers explain why Mount Hermon is here styled "*The Beloved*?"—*R. BALGARNIE, D.D.*