

## ST. PAUL'S ΧΑΡΙΣ.

THERE are many places of the New Testament in which the Revisers have made alterations which to most readers it has seemed hardly worth while to make; and there are many in which they have refrained from making alterations which critical readers wish they had made. But I do not know of more than one place in which they seem to me to have altered any rendering of the Authorized Version for the worse through misapprehension.

The place to which I refer is Philippians i. 7: "Even as it is right for me to be thus minded in behalf of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as, both in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers with me of grace." So the Revisers give the last clause. But the Authorized Version has, "Ye all are partakers of my grace." I shall endeavour to show that the Authorized is right here, and that St. Paul was speaking of a particular grace bestowed on himself.

The Greek is *συνκοινωνούς μου τῆς χάριτος πάντας ὑμᾶς ὄντας*. The article before *χάριτος* is not conclusive, but it agrees better with the Authorized rendering than with the Revised. That St. Paul was accustomed to think of himself as having received a special *χάρις* is to be inferred from several passages of Epistles written at different times. The word *χάρις* he uses abundantly and in most of its senses. Its primary meaning, I suppose, is an act or movement which gives pleasure, something which charms. In its New Testament usage it means, (1) kindness, (2) active kindness, (3) beneficent spiritual influence, (4) a gift or boon; and also (5) gratitude or response awakened by kindness, and (6) thanks. The word is sown lavishly over a section of 2 Corinthians, chaps. viii. and ix., in which it occurs ten times, in addition to *εὐχαριστίαν* and *εὐχαριστιῶν*. In viii.

9 it means kindness or love; in viii. 1, and ix. 8, 14, it has the familiar sense of the Divine goodness acting with spiritual influence upon human souls. In viii. 4, τὴν χάριν is perhaps equivalent to charity, the sympathetic charity of the benevolent; in 6, 7, and 19, "this" charity is more definitely the collection for the poor at Jerusalem. In viii. 16 and ix. 15, χάρις is thanks, "Thanks be to God." When St. Paul is speaking of his χάρις, he means by the word a gift or privilege conferred by God upon himself.

He dwells upon this most fully in the Epistle to the Ephesians, which was written in the same year and under the same circumstances as the Epistle to the Philippians, so that the one may reasonably be a guide to the thoughts of the other. In the third chapter we read, "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles,—if so be that ye have heard of the dispensation of that grace of God which was given me to you-ward; how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, . . . to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Nothing could be more explicit than these last words; but the whole passage sets forth the wonderful privilege, the grace, that had been conferred upon St. Paul, when he was called to be the Apostle of the Gentiles. His particular grace, then, was his apostleship, his commission to proclaim the good news of Christ to the Gentiles.

When, some years earlier, he was writing to the Romans, he was already accustomed to speak of the commission given to him as his grace. There is a not quite definite use of the term in i. 5, "Jesus Christ our Lord, through

whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations." In xii. 3, "I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think," it is tolerably certain that St. Paul is referring distinctly to the authority with which his commission invested him. This is still plainer in xv. 15, "I write the more boldly unto you in some measure, as putting you again in remembrance, because of the grace that was given me of God, that I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles." In the Epistle to the Galatians, written at nearly the same time, there are two places in which he connects the word grace with his call and commission; but in i. 15 the grace is the Divine will to give rather than the gift itself,—“When it was the good pleasure of God who . . . called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles”; in ii. 7-9, it again means distinctly the apostolic commission, “When they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with the gospel of the circumcision; . . . and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John . . . gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision.”

We see then that it was habitual to St. Paul to describe his apostolic commission as a special privilege and favour for which God's goodness had selected him; in a single word, he called it the *χάρις* or grace given to him. To the Philippians he feels deeply grateful because they had associated themselves with his apostolic work. This association is what strikes the note of joy throughout the Epistle. It was chiefly by the sending of gifts, first in the beginning of the gospel, and then during the imprisonment at Rome, that the Christians of Philippi had made themselves his partners

in the work of spreading the gospel; their gifts of money had been consecrated to him by their being thus devoted to the cause of the gospel of which he was the commissioned preacher. And he pours forth his gratitude in these cordial words, "I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, always in every supplication of mine in behalf of you all making my supplication with joy, for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that He which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is right for me to be thus minded on behalf of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel ye all are partakers of my grace." They had proved their fellowship with St. Paul in the furthering of the gospel; they had made themselves partners of his apostleship—of his special grace—in the imprisonment, and in the defending and establishing of the gospel. If grace in this passage is taken to mean the spiritual influence shed on all believers, the preceding words lose their point. How had the Philippians shown themselves to be partakers of Divine grace in St. Paul's imprisonment? The share in furthering the gospel, the association with the imprisonment and with the active work on behalf of the gospel, involved in the sympathetic assistance they had given him, made the Philippians his partners, not only in the general Divine grace bestowed on all Christians, but in his apostleship. And St. Paul so cherished the office entrusted to him that to claim a partnership in it was the surest way to his heart.

J. LLEWELYN DAVIES.