the powers of darkness, in which the  
ministers of Christ are the leaders: see  
besides ref., 2 Tim. ii. 8. **but your**)  
—the contrast is to **my** above.  
**apostle**—not in the ordinary sense of  
apostle, in Rom. xi. 13,—but as in 2 Cor.  
viii. 23 (where see note).

**26.**] Reason  
for the necessity. The past tense, imperfect, *was longing* would become true when  
they received the letter. His longing was  
then actually present: an English letter-writer would have said, “is longing.”  
**full of heaviness**] Whether there was any  
special reason, more than affection, which  
made Epaphroditus anxious to return on  
account of this, we cannot say.

**27.**  
**sorrow upon sorrow**] i.e. if to his bonds  
had been added the loss of his friend,—  
“sorrow coming upon sorrow.” The second  
*sorrow* refers to his own distress in his  
imprisonment, so often implied in this  
Epistle: see Introd. § iii. 4, 5.

**28.**]  
The **that I may be the less sorrowful** is  
one of the Apostle’s delicate touches of  
affection. If *they rejoiced* in seeing Epaphroditus, *his own* trouble would be thereby  
lessened.

**29.**] **therefore**, as accom-  
plishing the purpose just expressed. The  
stress is on the request to *receive* him.  
There certainly seems to be something  
behind respecting Epaphroditus, of which  
we are not informed. If extreme affection  
had been the sole ground of his being *full  
of heaviness*, no such exhortation as this  
would have been needed.

**30.**] **for  
the work** [of **Christ**], viz. of the Gospel,  
or of Christ (probably the original text  
had only, **for the work**) ;—part of which it  
was, to sustain the minister of the Gospel,  
**he came nigh unto death**] he incurred so serious and nearly fatal a sick-  
ness:—not to be understood, as Chrysostom and others do, of danger incurred by  
the hostility of the authorities. **that  
he might fill up** (1 Cor. xvi. 17) **your  
deficiency** (viz. on account of your absence)  
**in the ministration to me** (this ministration was the contribution of money, which  
had been sent by Epaphroditus. The only  
*deficiency* in this kind service was, their  
inability, through absence, to minister it  
to the Apostle themselves: and this Epaphroditus filled up, and in so doing risked  
his life in the way above hinted at, i.e. probably by too constant and watchful attendance on the Apostle. So that there is no