note) **which is under the heaven,—of  
which I Paul became a minister** (as  
Chrysostom remarks, “This enhances his  
dignity and trustworthiness, as being put  
in charge with this Gospel thus widely  
spread, and so constituted the teacher of  
the world”).

**24. ]** Transition from the mention of  
himself to *his joy in his sufferings for the  
Church, and* (25—29) *for the great object  
of his ministry* :—all with a view to enhance the glory, and establish the paramount claim of Christ.—**I now** (refers to  
what he beforetime *became* — extending  
what he is about to say down to the present time—emphatic, of *time*, not transitional merely) **rejoice in** (as the state in  
which I am when I rejoice, and the element of my joy itself. Our own idiom  
recognizes the same compound reference)  
**my sufferings on your behalf** (not, ‘as a  
substitute for you;’ but strictly ‘for your  
advantage,’ that you may be confirmed in  
the faith by [not my example merely], but  
the glorification of Christ in my sufferings), **and am filling up the deficiencies**(plural, because the *afflictions* are thought  
of individually, not as a mass: those sufferings which are wanting) **of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh** (these  
words, ‘*in my flesh,*’ belong to the verb  
*am filling up*, not to “*the afflictions of  
Christ*:” for if it were so, the clause,  
“the afflictions of Christ in my body,”  
would contain in itself that which the  
whole clause asserts, and thus make it flat  
and tautological) **on behalf of His body,  
which is the Church** (the meaning being  
this: all the tribulations of Christ’s body  
are Christ’s tribulations. Whatever the  
whole Church has to suffer, even to the  
end, she suffers for her perfection in holiness and her completion in Him: and the  
tribulations of Christ will not be complete  
till the last pang shall have passed, and the  
last tear have been shed. Every suffering  
saint of God in every age and position is  
in fact filling up, in his place and degree, the *afflictions of Christ*, in his flesh, and  
on behalf of His body. Not a pang, not a  
tear is in vain. The Apostle, as standing  
out prominent among this suffering body,  
predicates this of himself especially: the  
*filling up*, to which we all contribute, was  
on his part so considerable, as to deserve  
the name of *a compensation* itself, for so  
the remarkable word implies, which we  
render *fill up*—I am contributing *afflictions* which one after another fill up the  
*defects*. Notice that of the SUFFERINGS  
of Christ not a word is said [see however 2 Cor. i. 5]: the context does not  
concern, nor does the word *afflictions* express, those meritorious sufferings which  
He bore in His person once for all, the  
measure of which was for ever filled by the  
one sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, on the cross; He is here regarded  
as suffering with His suffering people,  
bearing them in Himself, and being as in  
Isa. lxiii. 9, “afflicted in all their affliction.” On other suggested interpretations, see in my Greek Test.):

**25.**] **of which** (in service of which, on  
behoof of which) **I** (emphatic, resuming “*I  
Paul*” above) **became a minister, according to** (so that my ministry is conducted  
in pursuance of, after the requirements  
and conditions of) **the stewardship** (see  
on 1 Cor. ix. 17; iv. 1, al.: also Eph. i. 10;  
iii. 2: not, *‘dispensation*:’ the simpler  
meaning here seems best, especially when  
taken with the word **given**. “In the  
house of God, which is the Church, I am  
steward, as it were dispensing to the whole  
family, i.e. to individual Christians, the  
goods and the gifts of God my Lord.”  
Cornelius a Lapide) **of God** (of which God  
is the source and chief) **which was given**  
(entrusted) **me towards** (so literally: i.e.,  
with a view to or for) **you** (among other  
Gentiles; but as so often, the particular  
reference of the occasion is brought out,  
and the general kept back), **to** (object and  
aim of the giving of the stewardship)  
**fulfil the word of God** (exactly as in