inTRopucTIoN.] THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. [cu. v.   
   
   
 12. “ Secondly, he could not have described the Ephesians as a church   
 whose conversion he knew only by report” (i. 15).   
 The answer to this is very simple. First, he nowhere says that he   
 knew their conversion only by report, but what he does say is, “ having   
 heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you and [the love   
 which ye have] towards all the saints :” an expression having no refer-   
 ence whatever to their conversion, but pointing to the report which ho   
 had received of their abounding in Christian graces ;—and perfectly   
 consistent with, nay, explained as it seems to me most simply on, the   
 hypothesis of his having known their previous circumstances well. Any   
 supposition of allusion to their conversion robs the words “ among you”   
 of their fine distributive force, and misses the point of the sentence.   
 But, secondly, if there were any doubt on this point,—if any were dis-   
 posed to charge us with thus understanding the words merely as a help   
 out of the difficulty,—their meaning is decided for us by the Apostle   
 himself. Philemon was his beloved and fellow-worker (ver. 1). He was   
 his son in the faith (ver. 19). Yet he addresses him in almost the same   
 words, and in the same connexion with thanking God. He says, ‘“hear-   
 ing of thy love, and the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus   
 and toward all the saints.” It is strange that after this had been pointed   
 out, the objection should ever have been again raised.   
 13. “ Thirdly, he could not speak to them as only knowing himself (the   
 Sounder of their church) to be an Apostle by hearsay (iii. 2), so as to need   
 credentials to accredit him with them” (iii. 4).   
 This objection, as will be seen by the notes on iii. 2, is founded on   
 inattention to the force of the words in the original. The meaning is   
 not, as A. V., ‘If ye have heard,’ implying a doubt whether they ever   
 had heard, but as given in my note, ‘If, that is, ye heard,’—i. e, ‘as-   
 suming that, when I was with you, ye heard; and the words convey a   
 reminiscence of that which they did hear. The credential view of ver.   
 4 falls with this mistaken rendering of ver. 2: not to mention that it   
 could not for a moment stand, even were that other possible, the refer-   
 ence being to what was before written in ch. i.   
 14, “Fourthly, he could not describe the Ephesians as so exclusively   
 Gentiles (ii. 11; iv. 17), and so recently converted” (v.8; i. 13; ii. 18).   
 To the former objection I reply, 1) that the Ephesian church, as other   
 churches out of Judea, would naturally be composed for the most part   
 of Gentiles, and as such would be addressed in the main as Gentiles:   
 so we have him writing to the Romans, xi. 13, I say it to you Gentiles.   
 And if exception be taken to this reference, and it be understood as rather   
 marking off the Gentile portion of those to whom he was then writing,   
 the same exception cannot be taken to 1 Cor. xii. 2, where, in writing to   
 a mixed church (Acts xviii. 4, 8), he says, almost in the same words as   
 in Eph. ii. 11, “ Ye know that ye were Gentiles :” 2) that in this Epistle,   
 42