The Meaning of the Phrase τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου in Gal. iv. 3 and Col. ii. 8.

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THE nouns combined in this phrase are each frequently used both in a physical and an ethical sense ('elements of nature,' or 'elements of knowledge,' 'world which men inhabit,' or 'world of which men are'). The phrase is, therefore, in itself ambiguous. In the two passages in which it is employed by St. Paul it receives no explanatory comment, nor is a choice among its various possible meanings indicated by an unmistakable contextual reference.

For these reasons the task of deciding upon the sense in which the apostle used the phrase is not an easy one, as a glance at the history of its interpretation plainly shows. Perhaps no other New Testament expression has divided commentators so evenly. In the ancient church, Clement of Alexandria, Jerome, Tertullian, Gennadius, perhaps Eusebius, appear upon one side; upon the other, Chrysostom, Epiphanius, Theodoret, Theophylact of Bulgaria. Among mediæval and modern scholars, Erasmus, Calvin, Grotius, De Wette, Meyer, Weiss, Lightfoot, Sanday, Schaubach, English-American revision, are opposed to Neander, Schneckenburger, Hilgenfeld, Klöpper, Weizsäcker, Lipsius, Spitta, Everling, and Ritschl. (It should be added that the last-named group, though united in discarding the ethical signification of the phrase adopted by the former, are not all agreed as to the meaning to be substituted for it.) Here is surely an impressive proof that the great New Testament prophet did not always write with perspicuity.

The present paper will contain, first, some patristic citations bearing on the meaning of the phrase in question, accompanied by a few words of general comment; secondly, some account of the discussion the phrase has received from modern scholars; and thirdly, an attempt to justify that one of the suggested meanings which seems to the writer probably correct.

I. Clem. Alex., *Stromata*, Lib. VI., Cap. 8 (Migne, vol. 9, 284): Ἐπεὶ καὶ Παῦλος ἐν ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς οὐ φιλοσοφίαν διαβάλλων φαίνεται, τὸν δὲ τοῦ γνωστικοῦ μεταλαμβάνοντα ὕψους, οὐκ ἔτι παλινδρομεῖν ἀξιοῖ ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν φιλοσοφίαν στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ταύτην ἀλληγορῶν, στοιχειωτικήν τινα οὖσαν, καὶ προπαιδείαν τῆς ἀληθείας. Διὸ καὶ τοῖς Ἑβραίοις γράφων, τοῖς ἐπανακάμπτουσιν εἰς νόμον ἐκ πίστεως, Ἡ πάλιν, φησί, χρείαν ἔχετε τοῦ διδάσκειν ὑμᾶς τίνα τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων τοῦ θεοῦ, κτλ. Ὡσαύτως ἄρα καὶ τοῖς ἐξ Ἑλλήνων ἐπιστρέφουσι Κολοσσαεῦσι· Βλέπετε μή τις ὑμᾶς ἔσται ὁ συλαγωγῶν διὰ τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ κενῆς ἀπάτης κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, κατὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, κτλ., δελεάζων αὖθις εἰς φιλοσοφίαν ἀναδραμεῖν, τὴν στοιχειώδη διδασκαλίαν.

Chrysostom, *Com. on Gal.* iv. 3 (Migne, vol. 61, 657): ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἔτι νηπιωδέστερον διεκείμεθα, ἀφῆκεν ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου εἶναι, τουτέστι, νουμηνίας καὶ σάββατα· αὗται γὰρ ἡμῖν αἱ ἡμέραι ἀπὸ δρόμου σελήνης καὶ ἡλίου γίνονται. On vs. 8, Ἐνταῦθα πρὸς τοὺς ἐξ ἐθνῶν πιστεύσαντας ἀποτεινόμενός φησιν, ὅτι καὶ εἰδωλολατρεία τὸ τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν, ἡ τῆς τῶν ἡμερῶν παρατηρήσεως φυλακή, καὶ ὅτι μείζονα φέρει τὴν κόλασιν νῦν. Διὸ καὶ θεοὺς οὐ φύσει τὰ στοιχεῖα ἐκάλεσε, ταῦτα αὐτά κατασκευάσαι βουλόμενος καὶ εἰς μείζονα ἀγωνίαν αὐτοὺς ἐμβάλειν.

Theodoret (in Œcumenius; Migne, vol. 118, 1136): Ἡνίκα, φησί, νήπιοι καὶ ἀτελεῖς ἦμεν, οἷόν τινα ἐπίτροπον καὶ οἰκονόμον εἴχομεν τὸν νόμον. Στοιχεῖα γὰρ τοῦ κόσμου τὰς νομικὰς παρατηρήσεις εἶπεν. Ἐπειδήπερ ἀπὸ ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης νὺξ καὶ ἡμέρα καλεῖται, ἀπὸ δὲ ἡμερῶν ἑβδομάδες καὶ μῆνες καὶ ἐνιαυτοὶ συνίστανται, ὁ δὲ νόμος καὶ σάββατα καὶ νεομηνίας καὶ ἐνιαυσίους ἑορτὰς καὶ ἐνιαυτῶν ἑβδομάδας φυλάττειν ἐκέλευσε, τούτου χάριν εἶπεν, ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα δεδουλωμένοι, ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἐκ τούτων ὁ χρόνος συνίσταται.

Theodore of Mopsuestia (old Latin trans. *Com. on Gal.* iv. 8; ed. Swete, vol. 1, p. 64): Elementa et superius et in hoc loco solem dicit et lunam et stellas; ex quibus dies quoque et menses fiunt et anni et tempora. seruire ergo elementis dicit, eo quod illa, id est, dies et menses obseruarent, quasi ab illis facta. et quod dixit: *seruistis autem his qui non sunt natura dii;* de ipsis dicit sole et luna et stellis; eo quod adorabant illa cum essent gentes ut deos, secundum legem gentium.

Gennadius (in Œcumenius) (*Com. on Gal.*, Migne, vol. 118, 1136): Ἐν τάξει τῶν ἐπιτρόπων καὶ οἰκονόμων τῶν τοὺς ἀτελεῖς τῇ ἡλικίᾳ πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον παιδαγωγούντων, ἔλαβε τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, οἷς ἦμεν δεδουλωμένοι διὰ τὸ τῆς γνώσεως ἀτελές. Οὐκ ἂν οὖν, ὡς οἶμαι, ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην ἔλαβεν εἰς τάξιν τῶν ἐπιτρόπων, διὰ τὸ ἀσύμφορον εἶναι τὴν εἰς

ταῦτα ὑποταγὴν, ἀλλὰ στοιχειά φησι τοῦ κόσμου, ἢ τὸν στοιχειώδη καὶ εἰσαγωγικὸν νόμον. (Καὶ γὰρ τοῖς ἐξ Ἰουδαίων πιστοῖς ἔγραφε, καὶ δηλοῖ τά τε μικρὸν ἀνωτέρω εἰρημένα, καὶ τὸ ἔαν περιτέμηνσθε, Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει.) (I presume that what follows is from the pen of Œcumenius.) Ἡ στοιχεῖα καλεῖ ἡμέρας, ὕδωρ, πῦρ, ὧν ἦσαν ἐκ τοῦ εἰς δουλείαν ὑπαγαγόντος νόμου αἱ παρατηρήσεις. Ἡμερῶν μέν, ἔν τε σαββάτοις καὶ νεομηνίαις καὶ περιτομαῖς.

Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evang.*, Lib. IV. (Migne, vol. 22, 276): Τοιαῦτα μὲν καὶ μυρία ἄλλα θεοσεβῆ διδάγματά τε καὶ παραγγέλματα διὰ Μωϋσέως αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς λόγος τὸ πρὶν ἐνομοθέτει, ὡς ἐν εἰσαγωγαῖς τοῦ κατὰ εὐσέβειαν βίου παραδιδοὺς αὐτοῖς στοιχεῖα, διὰ συμβόλων καί τινος σκιώδους καὶ σωματικῆς λατρείας ἐν σώματος περιτομῇ καί τινων ἄλλων τοιουτοτρόπων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς συντελουμένων.

This passage apparently bears traces of the influence of Gal. iv. 3, and perhaps can be taken as showing Eusebius' interpretation of the phrase τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου. I believe it to be referred to by Œcumenius when he says in the context of the passage quoted above, ὅρα δὲ τί εἶπεν εἰς τοῦτο ξένον Εὐσέβιος ἐν τῷ τετάρτῳ λόγῳ τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς ἀποδείξεως.

Theophylact of Bulgaria, *Com. on Gal.* iv. 3 (Migne, vol. 124, 996): Στοχεῖα δὲ τοῦ κόσμου τὰς νουμηνίας καὶ τὰ σάββατα λέγει· αὗται γὰρ αἱ ἡμέραι ἀπὸ δρόμου σελήνης καὶ ἡλίου ἡμῖν γίνονται. . . . Τινὲς δὲ στοιχεῖα, τὸν στοιχειώδη καὶ εἰσαγωγικὸν νόμον ἐνόησαν.

Tertullian against Marcion, Lib. V., Cap. 19 (Migne, *Patr. Lat.*, vol. 2, 553): At cum monet *cavendum a subtiloquentia et philosophia et inani seductione, quae sit secundum elementa mundi*, id non secundum coelum aut terram dicens, sed secundum literas saeculares. . . .

Jerome, *Com. on Gal.*, Lib. II., on iv. (Migne, *Patr. Lat.*, vol. 26, 397): Elementa mundi, eosdem quos supra tutores et actores dixerat, appellavit; quod sub ipsis primum praesidibus constituti, quia necdum Dei filii capere ad nos poteramus adventum, erudiebamur in mundo. . . . Elementa mundi caelum et terram, et ea quae intra haec sunt, plerique appellata putant. . . . Alii elementa mundi legem interpretantur Moysi et eloquia prophetarum; quod per haec, quasi initia et exordia litterarum, Dei timorem, qui sapientiae principium est, suscipiamus. Jerome quotes Heb. v. 12 to sustain the latter interpretation, and goes on: Potest igitur, ut diximus, Moysi lex et prophetae pro elementis accipi litterarum, quod per eas syllabae jungantur et nomina, et non tam sui quam alterius rei utilitate discantur. Still further on he says: Mundus pro his qui in mundo sunt accipi solet.

Augustine, *Exposit. Gal.*, Lib. I., Par. 34 (Migne, *Patr. Lat.*, vol. 35, 2130): Manifestum est enim, volumina temporum per elementa hujus mundi, hoc est, coelum et terram et motus atque ordinem siderum administrari. Quae *infirma* appellat, ex eo quod infirma et instabili specie variantur; *egena* vero, ex eo quod egent summa et stabili specie Creatoris, ut quomodo sunt, esse possint.

No other reason is apparent for the disagreement in interpretation shown by the above extracts than the ambiguity of the phrase in question. What other explanation, indeed, can be given of the fact that both the Greek and the Latin Fathers are divided among themselves as to its meaning?

Bishop Lightfoot suggests (*Com. on Gal.*, iv. 3) that the "agreement" (he understates his own case in using this word) in favor of the physical sense of στοιχεῖα may be due to the influence of a passage in the *Praedicatio Petri* quoted in Clem. Alex., *Strom*, Lib. VI., Cap. 5 (Migne, vol. 9, 260); also cited by Origen *in Joan.* iv. 22.

The text of the passage as cited by Clement is in part as follows: Τοῦτον τὸν θεὸν σέβεσθε, μὴ κατὰ τοὺς Ἕλληνας . . . ὅτι ἀγνοίᾳ φερόμενοι, καὶ μὴ ἐπιστάμενοι τὸν θεὸν (ὡς ἡμεῖς κατὰ τὴν γνῶσιν τὴν τελείαν), ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν εἰς χρῆσιν, μορφώσαντες ξύλα καὶ λίθους, χαλκὸν καὶ σίδηρον, χρυσὸν καὶ ἄργυρον, τῆς ὕλης αὐτῶν καὶ χρήσεως, τὰ δοῦλα τῆς ὑπάρξεως ἀναστήσαντες, σέβονται.

As against this opinion of Lightfoot it may be urged: 1. That it is *a priori* improbable that the exegesis of several of the great Greek Fathers should in this or any instance have been dominated by a sentiment of the *Praedicatio Petri*; 2. That Clement, who cites the passage, gives to the τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου of Gal. iv. 3, the ethical, not the physical meaning. If the *Praedicatio Petri* so strongly influenced the Fathers in their interpretation of Gal. iv. 3 and 9, why does not Clement, who honored the book by quoting from it, show this influence? 3. It is by no means unlikely that, as Dobschütz (in Gebhardt and Harnack's *Texte und Untersuchungen*, vol. xi.) suggests, the passage of the *Praedicatio Petri* was formed upon Gal. iv. 3 and 9. If now the author of the *Praedicatio* believed that Paul there used τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου in the physical sense, why may not the Greek Fathers have independently held the same belief?

II. Among modern scholars (after Erasmus, Beza, Calvin, and Grotius), De Wette, Meyer, B. Weiss (*Bib. Theol.*), Schaubach, (*Commentatio qua exponitur quid στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου sibi velint*), Ellicott, Lightfoot, and Sanday (in Colossians at least) give the phrase the ethical meaning.

On the other hand, Neander (*Planting and Training*), Schneckenburger (*Theol. Jahrb.*, 1848), Klöpper (Com. on Colossians), Weizsäcker (trans. N. T.), Lipsius (*Hand-Com., Gal.*), Spitta (Com. on 2d Pet. and Jude), Hilgenfeld, Ritschl, prefer the physical meaning. Baur (*Paulus*, II. 227) tried to combine the two significations.

A number of these last-named scholars, it should be added, find in vs. 9 of Gal. iv. a limitation of the meaning of the phrase. Believing that the στοιχεῖα are there identified with the beings whom the Galatians are said to have worshipped when ignorant of God, Hilgenfeld, Klöpper, Lipsius, Spitta, and Everling believe that the phrase means spirits of the stars or of the elements. Everling presents this interpretation in an able monograph, *Die paulinische Angelologie und Dämonologie*, to which I acknowledge special obligations.

III. We now venture to ask the meaning of the obscure phrase in question. It is not presumptuous to hope that recent discussions have brought into view facts justifying a choice between conflicting hypotheses.

1. The phrase τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, if στοιχεῖα be given the physical sense, is a combination of words presenting no difficulty; κόσμος necessarily takes its physical meaning, and the phrase is unambiguous. To be sure, as the word στοιχεῖα is often used alone in the sense of the 'elements of nature,' there is a certain redundancy in the phrase (cf. 2 Pet. iii. 12: . . . οὐρανοὶ πυρούμενοι λυθήσονται καὶ στοιχεῖα καυσούμενα τήκεται). But the desire for emphasis naturally explains the fulness of expression. It was essential to insist on the nature of the elements to which the Galatians had been in bondage. The Book of Wisdom, whose influence on the Epistle to the Romans is unmistakable (see Sanday's *Romans* in the "International Series," p. 51), has a sentence in which στοιχεῖα (in the physical sense) and κόσμος are used in intimate mutual connection, though not indeed united in a single phrase (Wisd. vii. 17, Αὐτὸς γάρ μοι ἔδωκε τῶν ὄντων γνῶσιν ἀψευδῆ, εἰδέναι σύστασιν κόσμου καὶ ἐνέργειαν στοιχείων). This shows at least that the phrase taken in the sense under consideration was an entirely possible one to Paul.

How stands the case if the word στοιχεῖα be given the ethical sense? We are met at once by the question, Which meaning is to be given to κόσμος, the physical or the ethical? Did Paul mean, as Lightfoot thinks, the rudiments of religion given by the physical world; or, as Meyer holds, the elementary religious truths which belong to mankind in general? The ambiguity of the phrase thus

taken constitutes a slight objection to the suggested meaning of στοιχεῖα.

Passing over this, does the phrase give a lucid and easy meaning if we take either of the possible meanings of κόσμος? Let us render, alphabet, *i.e.* first principles or rudiments, of the physical world. Is the meaning of the expression obvious? Compare it with other combinations of στοιχεῖα ethically taken with an explanatory genitive: Heb. v. 12, τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων τοῦ θεοῦ, the a b c of the oracles, *i.e.* obviously of their teaching; Isocrates, *Ad Nicoclem*, § 5 (Teubner, p. 17), ταῦτα γὰρ στοιχεῖα πρώτα καὶ μέγιστα χρηστῆς πολιτείας ἐστιν, the elements of a good commonwealth; Plutarch, *De liberis educ.*, § 16 (Teubner, i. p. 27), δύο γὰρ ταῦτα ὥσπερεὶ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρετῆς ἐστιν, ἐλπίς τε τιμῆς καὶ φόβος τιμωρίας, prime elements of virtue. In these cases the genitive noun belongs, like the στοιχεῖα, to the ethical category, and accordingly the phrase has an obvious meaning. The phrase in question, assuming that the limiting genitive denotes the physical world and the limited noun the 'elementary ideas or principles,' is obscure. It might perhaps suggest to one ignorant of the context 'the elementary truths of physical science'; it could hardly convey the idea 'rudiments of religious truth taught by the earth.' It must be admitted, I think, that Lightfoot reads his own meaning into στοιχεῖα. The word does not mean 'elementary truths of religion,' or 'rudiments of religion,' and it cannot get that meaning from κόσμος, for this meaning is not in that word.

Let us take the other meaning of κόσμος. Now we get from our phrase 'the rudiments of men in general.' What do the words mean? 'Elementary religious ideas,' 'religious rudiments possessed by men in general,' is intelligible. But this is only gained by inventing a meaning for στοιχεῖα.

2. So far as the phrase itself goes, then, the reasons for giving τὰ στοιχεῖα its physical meaning preponderate. Let us now ask whether this signification is also supported by the context.

In Gal. iv. 8, 9, 10, we read: "But at that time, in your ignorance of God, ye were in bondage to those who have not the nature of deities. But now that ye know God, or rather are known by God, how are ye turning again to the weak and poor στοιχεῖα, to which ye wish to be in subjection once more? Do ye observe days and months and times and years? I fear for you, lest perchance I have toiled for you in vain." It is implied that the observance of days, etc., is a sign of subjection to the στοιχεῖα. As the observance of days, etc., as inherently sacred, makes the order of nature rather

than the impulses of the heart the determining factor of the religious life, the apostle seems to use στοιχεῖα in the physical sense. It is worth noting, by the way, that the passage already quoted from the Book of Wisdom as giving the word this meaning puts into immediate connection with the 'elements' the times and seasons (εἰδέναι σύστασιν κόσμου καὶ ἐνέργειαν στοιχείων, ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος καὶ μεσότητα χρόνων, τρόπων ἀλλαγὰς καὶ μεταβολὰς καιρῶν, ἐνιαυτῶν κύκλους καὶ ἀστέρων θέσεις).

In Col. ii. 20 Paul says: "If ye died with Christ from the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, why, as though living in the world, do ye submit yourselves to ordinances, 'do not handle, do not taste, do not touch' (which things are all to perish in the use)?" The ordinances deal with perishable earthly things. The life devoted to obeying them, has, the Apostle thinks, its home and interests on earth. But the believer, by death, has already entered into that world where Christ lives. He is "risen with Christ" (Col. iv. 1). Hence it becomes him "to seek the things above, not the things on the earth." To die to the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου is in Paul's mystic thought 'to die to the earth and the things upon it.'

3. We reach the conclusion, then, that in both Galatians and Colossians the phrase under consideration has the physical meaning. But we have not yet reached the goal for which we set out. Στοιχεῖα, taken physically, has not only the general meaning 'elements,' but a special one, 'heavenly bodies'; cf. Justin Martyr, *Dial.*, 23: ὁρᾶτε ὅτι τὰ στοιχεῖα οὐκ ἀργεῖ οὐδὲ σαββατίζει; Euseb., *Ecc. Hist.*, iii. 31 (extract from a letter of Polykrates): καὶ γὰρ καὶ κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν μεγάλα στοιχεῖα ('luminaries') κεκοίμηται; Epiphanius, *Adv. haer.*, Lib. I., *in haer. Pharisaeorum*, 2: "The Greek names out of the astronomy of the deceived ones they change into other names according to the Hebrew dialect, . . . οὐκ ἠδυνήθην δὲ ἀκριβῶς τὴν τούτων ἐπωνυμίαν ἐκθεῖναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ματαίως κομιζόμενα εἰς ἀριθμὸν στοιχείων παρὰ τοῖς πεπλανημένοις ὀνόματα, ἃ ζώδια καλοῦσι, καὶ ἀθεμίτως τὸν κόσμον εἰς ἀσέβειαν ἐπλάνησαν. . . . Does not Paul's assumption that the observance of days, months, etc., implies subjection to the στοιχεῖα, show that he meant by the word the heavenly bodies whose movements produce the succession of the days and seasons? This opinion, advanced by several of the Fathers, finds, as some one has said, a serious obstacle in τοῦ κόσμου of Gal. iv. 3. That the word means here 'world,' not 'universe,' is evident from the antithesis of Col. ii. 20: "If ye died with Christ from τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, why as though living ἐν κόσμῳ, do ye submit yourselves to ordinances?"

Nor does the present passage require the suggested meaning. The assumption in question is entirely consonant with the general meaning of στοιχεῖα. The alternation of day and night and the succession of the seasons are features of the world's life, and subjection to them might well have seemed to Paul subjection to 'the elements of the world.' He is not to be credited with such precision in speaking about physics as belongs to the speech of the educated man of to-day. We set aside then the suggested interpretation.

4. Another remains for consideration. It is said by Klöpper, Spitta, Everling, and Lipsius that Paul, in verses 8 and 9 of Gal. iv., identifies the στοιχεῖα with the heathen deities. "But at that time in your ignorance of God, ye were in subjection to those who were not deities as regards their nature; but now that ye know God, or rather are known by God, how are ye turning back again to the weak and poor στοιχεῖα to which (or whom) ye desire to be once more in subjection?"

"Those not deities by nature" are of course, it is said, the heathen gods, who to Paul had real existence as δαιμόνια (1 Cor. x. 19). The Galatian believers were once subject to these beings; and now wish to be in subjection to them again; *i.e.*, he adds, to the weak and poor στοιχεῖα.

Prolonged study of the passage has led me to the conclusion, contrary to my earlier belief, that the identification in question was intended by the apostle. I believe that the clause οἷς πάλιν ἄνωθεν δουλεῦσαι θέλετε, when given its natural and obvious meaning, expresses this intention.

And I find nothing in the Pauline theology conflicting with the opinion here unmistakably (as I think) expressed, that the elemental forces of the world were spirits. The apostle regarded his malady as a 'messenger of Satan'; *i.e.*, a mischievous emissary of the 'Prince of the powers of the air' (2 Cor. xii. 7). Obstacles to his purposed visit to Thessalonica were hindrances caused by Satan (1 Thes. ii. 18). To give up the immoral member of the Corinthian church to physical chastisement would be to deliver him over to Satan, who was equipped with blighting powers (1 Cor. v. 5). Paul held that principalities and powers were actively opposing the kingdom of Christ (1 Cor. xv. 24). He believed, then, that unseen spirits acted in the forces of nature, using them for ends of their own, always in subordination to the secret providence of God (cf. 1 Cor. ii. 8). He had no idea of a system of second causes. To his Hebrew mind the force exerted by an unseen spirit in the natural world implied that

spirit present and acting, as a blow struck by a man implies the man striking. His painful malady was a minion of Satan hurting him. Death was the last of the foes whom the returning Christ would trample under foot. We have not exactly a figure of rhetoric here. In death Paul sees a personal, malignant activity and a malignant being destroying men. The blighting malady which he had thought of sending upon the Corinthian offender would be Satan, working evil upon him.

It was consonant with his conception of nature that he should speak of its elemental forces as spirits. He sees in the action of the beings the beings themselves at work. Bondage to nature is a personal subjection, slavery to the spirits who act in it and shape it. A similar identification of natural forces with unseen spirits probably appears in Heb. i. 7, in which, employing two passages from the Psalms, the writer contrasts the angels as powers working in the world with the Son, its creator and lord. Everling cites passages in Jewish literature in which the belief that nature is ruled by angels is expressed; and which therefore explain our finding this belief in the Pauline writings, *e.g.* Book of Jubilees (quoted by Everling, p. 71): "On the first day created he the heavens which are above, and the earth and the water and all spirits which serve before him, and the angel of the presence, and the angel of adoration, and the angel of the spirit of the wind, and the angel of the spirit of the clouds, of the darkness, and of the hail, and of the frost, and the angels of valleys, and of the thunder and of the lightning, and the angel of the spirits of cold and heat, of the winter and the spring, of the autumn and the summer, and all spirits of his works in the heavens and on earth, and in all valleys, and of the darkness and of the light, and of the dawn and of the evening, which he has prepared according to the discernment of his understanding." See also Enoch lxxxii. 10–14 and lx. 11 f.; *Ascensio Jesaiae* iv. 18; IV. Ezra viii. 20–22; Sibylline Oracles vii. 33–35. Everling quotes also a passage from the *Testamentum Salomonis*, in which the word στοιχεῖα is apparently used in the meaning of 'spirit' or 'angel' as proof that this meaning of the word may have been current when Paul wrote. But the late date of the *Testamentum Salomonis* forbids our attaching much importance to this passage as elucidating Paul's use of στοιχεῖα.

We find no passages, I believe, in contemporary writers, suggesting that this secondary and special meaning was current in the first century. It must be admitted that Paul said "elements," meaning "elemental spirits." But he presumably believed that misunder-

standing would be prevented by the contextual identification of these elements with the deities whom the heathen worshipped; and one who knows his imperial use of language, as shown, *e.g.*, in his use of σάρξ, or πνεῦμα, or θάνατος, can hardly wonder at his reading his angelology into στοιχεῖον.