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COMMENTARY

Barnes' Notes on the Bible
Volume 14 -
2 Corinthians

By A. Barnes

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2 CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND CORINTHIANS

SECTION 1. THE DESIGN OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

In the Introduction to the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the situation and character of the city of Corinth, the history of the church there, and the design which Paul had in view in writing to them at first, have been fully stated. In order to a full understanding of the design of this Epistle, those facts should be borne in distinct remembrance, and the reader is referred to the statement there made as material to a correct understanding of this Epistle. It was shown there that an important part of Paul's design at that time was to reprove the irregularities which existed in the church at Corinth. This he had done with great fidelity. He had not only answered the inquiries which they proposed to him, but he had gone with great particularity into an examination of the gross disorders of which he had learned by some members of the family of Chloe. A large part of the Epistle, therefore, was the language of severe reproof. Paul felt its necessity; and he had employed that language with unwavering fidelity to his Master.

Yet it was natural that he should feel great solicitude in regard to the reception of that letter, and to its influence in accomplishing what he wished. That letter had been sent from Ephesus, where Paul proposed to remain until after the succeeding Pentecost (~~416B~~ 1 Corinthians 16:8); evidently hoping by that time to hear from them, and to learn what had been the manner of the reception of his Epistle. He proposed then to go to Macedonia, and from that place to go again to Corinth (~~416B~~ 1 Corinthians 16:5-7); but he was evidently desirous to learn in what manner his First Epistle had been received, and what was its effect, before he visited them. He sent Timothy and Erastus before him to Macedonia and Achaia (~~419D~~ Acts 19:22; ~~416D~~ 1 Corinthians 16:10), intending that they should visit Corinth, and commissioned Timothy to regulate the disordered affairs in the church there. It would appear also that he sent Titus to the church

there in order to observe the effect which his Epistle would produce, and to return and report to him, ~~ACTS~~ 2 Corinthians 2:13; 7:6-16.

Evidently, Paul felt much solicitude on the subject; and the manner in which they received his admonitions would do much to regulate his own future movements. An important case of discipline; his authority as an apostle; and the interests of religion in an important city, and in a church which he had himself founded, were all at stake. In this state of mind he himself left Ephesus, and went to Troas on his way to Macedonia, where it appears he had appointed Titus to meet him, and to report to him the manner in which his First Epistle had been received; see the note at ~~ACTS~~ 2 Corinthians 2:13. Then his mind was greatly agitated and distressed because he did not meet Titus as he had expected, and in this state of mind he went forward to Macedonia. There he had a direct interview with Titus (~~ACTS~~ 2 Corinthians 7:5-6), and learned from him that his First Epistle had accomplished all which he had desired, ~~ACTS~~ 2 Corinthians 7:7-16. The act of discipline which he had directed had been performed; the abuses had been in a great measure corrected, and the Corinthians had been brought to a state of true repentance for their former irregularities and disorders. The heart of Paul was greatly comforted by this intelligence, and by the signal success which had attended this effort to produce reform. In this state of mind, he wrote to them this second letter.

Titus had spent some time in Corinth. He had had an opportunity of learning the views of the parties, and of ascertaining the true condition of the church. This Epistle is designed to meet some of the prevailing views of the party which was opposed to him there, and to refute some of the prevailing slanders in regard to himself. The Epistle, therefore, is occupied to a considerable extent in refuting the slanders which had been heaped upon him, and in vindicating his own character. This letter also he sent by the hands of Titus, by whom the former had been sent, and he designed doubtless that the presence of Titus should aid in accomplishing the objects which he had in view in the Epistle; see ~~ACTS~~ 2 Corinthians 8:17-18.

SECTION 2. THE SUBJECTS TREATED IN THIS EPISTLE

It has been generally admitted that this Epistle is written without much definite arrangement or plan. It treats on a variety of topics mainly as they occurred to the mind of the apostle at the time, and perhaps without having formed any definite arrangement before he commenced writing it. Those

subjects are all important, and are all treated in the usual manner of Paul, and are all useful and interesting to the church at large; but we shall not find in this Epistle the same systematic arrangement which is apparent in the Epistle to the Romans, or which occurs in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Some of the subjects of which it treats are the following:

- (1) He mentions his own sufferings, and particularly his late trials in Asia. For deliverance from these trials, he expresses his gratitude to God; and states the design for which God called him to endure such trials to have been, that he might be better qualified to comfort others who might be afflicted in a similar manner. [2 Corinthians 1:1-12](#).
- (2) he vindicates himself from one of the accusations which his enemies had brought against him, that he was unstable and fickle-minded. He had promised to visit them; and he had not yet fulfilled his promise. They took occasion, therefore, to say that he was unstable, and that he was afraid to visit them. He shows to them, in reply, the true reason why he had not come to them, and that his real object; in not doing it, had been "to spare" them, [2 Corinthians 1:13-24](#).
- (3) the case of the unhappy individual who had been guilty of incest, had deeply affected his mind. In the First Epistle, he had treated of this case at large, and had directed that discipline should be exercised. He had felt deep solicitude in regard to the manner in which his commands on that subject should be received, and had judged it best not to visit them until he should be informed of the manner in which they had complied with his directions. Since they had obeyed him, and had inflicted discipline on him, he now exhorts them to forgive the unhappy man, and to receive him again to their fellowship, [2 Corinthians 2:1-11](#).
- (4) he mentions the deep solicitude which he had on this subject, and his disappointment when he came to Troas and did not meet with Titus as he had expected, and had not been informed as he hoped to have been of the manner in which his former Epistle had been received, [2 Corinthians 2:12-17](#). In view of the manner in which they had received his former Epistle, and of the success of his efforts, which he learned when he reached Macedonia, he gives thanks to God that all his efforts to promote the welfare of the church had been successful, [2 Corinthians 2:14-17](#).
- (5) Paul vindicates his character, and his claims to be regarded as an apostle. he assures them that he does not need letters of commendation to

them, since they were fully acquainted with his character, ~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 3:1-6. This subject leads him into an examination of the nature of the ministry and its importance, which he illustrates by showing the comparative obscurity of the Mosaic ministrations, and the greater dignity, and permanency of the gospel, ~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 3:7-18.

(6) in 2 Corinthians 4—5 he states the principles by which he was actuated in the ministry. He and the other apostles were greatly afflicted, and were subjected to great and special trials, but they had also great and unusual consolations. They were sustained with the hope of heaven, and with the assurance that there was a world of glory. They acted in view of that world, and had gone forth in view of it to entreat people to be reconciled to God.

(7) having referred in 2 Corinthians 5 to the nature and objects of the Christian ministry, he expatiates with great beauty on the temper with which he and his brethren, in the midst of great trials and afflictions, executed this important work; ~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 6:1-10.

(8) having in this manner pursued a course of remark that was calculated to conciliate their regard, and to show his affection for them, he exhorts them (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 6:11-18), to avoid those connections which would injure their piety, and which were inconsistent with the gospel which they professed to love. The connections to which he particularly referred were, improper marriages and ruinous alliances with idolaters, to which they were particularly exposed.

(9) in 2 Corinthians 7 he again makes a transition to Titus, and to the joy which he had brought him in the intelligence which he gave of the manner in which the commands of Paul in the First Epistle had been received, and of its happy effect on the minds of the Corinthians.

(10) in 2 Corinthians 8—9 Paul refers to, and discusses the subject on which his heart was so much set — the collection for the poor and afflicted Christians in Judea. He had commenced the collection in Macedonia, and had boasted to them that the Corinthians would aid largely in that benevolent work, and he now sent Titus to complete it in Corinth.

(11) in 2 Corinthians 10 he enters upon a vindication of himself, and of his apostolic authority against the accusation of his enemies; and pursues the subject through (2 Corinthians 11) by a comparison of himself with others,

and in 2 Corinthians 12 by an argument directly in favour of his apostolic authority from the favours which God had bestowed on him, and the evidence which he had given of his having been commissioned by God. This subject he pursues also in various illustrations to the end of the Epistle.

The objects of this Epistle, therefore, and subjects discussed, are various. They are, to show his deep interest in their welfare — to express his gratitude that his former letter had been so well received, and had so effectually accomplished what he wished to accomplish — to carry forward the work of reformation among them which had been so auspiciously commenced — to vindicate his authority as an apostle from the objections which he had learned through Titus they had continued to make — to secure the collection for the poor saints in Judea, on which his heart had been so much set — and to assure them of his intention to come and visit them according to his repeated promises. The Epistle is substantially of the same character as the first. It was written to a church where great dissensions and other evils prevailed; it was designed to promote a reformation; and is a model of the manner in which evils are to be corrected in a church. In connection with the First Epistle. it shows the manner in which offenders in the church are to be dealt with, and the spirit and design with which the work of discipline should be entered on and pursued. Though these were local evils, yet great principles are involved here, of use to the church in all ages; and to these Epistles the church must refer at all times, as an illustration of the proper manner of administering discipline, and of silencing the calumnies of enemies.

SECTION 3. THE TIME AND PLACE IN WHICH THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN

It is manifest that this Epistle was written from Macedonia (see ~~1~~2 Corinthians 8:1-14; 9:2), and was sent by Titus to the church at Corinth. If so, it was written probably about a year after the former Epistle. Paul was on his way to Corinth, and was expecting to go there soon. He had left Ephesus, where he was when he wrote the First Epistle, and had gone to Troas, and from thence to Macedonia, where he had met with Titus, and had from him learned what was the effect of his First Epistle. In the overflowing of his heart with gratitude for the success of that letter, and with a desire to carry forward the work of reformation in the church, and completely to remove all the objections which had been made to his

apostolic authority, and to prepare for his own welcome reception when he went there, he wrote this letter — a letter which we cannot doubt was as kindly received as the former, and which Like that accomplished the objects which he had in view.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

NOTES ON 2 CORINTHIANS 1

This chapter (2 Corinthians 1) consists of the following parts, or subjects:

- 1.** The usual salutation and benediction in the introduction of the Epistle, [2 Corinthians 1:1,2](#). This is found in all the epistles of Paul, and was at once an affectionate salutation and an appropriate expression of his interest in their welfare, and also an appropriate mode of commencing an address to them by one who claimed to be inspired and sent from God.
- 2.** He refers to the consolation which he had had in his heavy trials, and praises God for that consolation, and declares that the reason for which he was comforted was, that he might be qualified to administer consolation to others in the same or in similar circumstances, [2 Corinthians 1:3-7](#).
- 3.** He informs them of the heavy trials which he was called to experience when he was in Ephesus, and of his merciful deliverance from those trials, [2 Corinthians 1:8-12](#). He had been exposed to death, and had despaired of life, ([2 Corinthians 1:8,9](#)); yet he had been delivered ([2 Corinthians 1:10](#)); he desired them to unite with him in thanksgiving on account of it ([2 Corinthians 1:11](#)); and in all this he had endeavored to keep a good conscience, and had that testimony that he had endeavored to maintain such a conscience toward all, and especially toward them, [2 Corinthians 1:12](#).
- 4.** He refers to the design which he had in writing the former letter to them, [2 Corinthians 1:13,14](#). He had written to them only such things as they admitted to be true and proper; and such as he was persuaded they would always admit. They had always received his instructions favorably and kindly; and he had always sought their welfare.
- 5.** In this state of mind, Paul had designed to have paid them a second visit, [2 Corinthians 1:15,16](#). But he had not done it yet, and it appears that his enemies had taken occasion from this to say that he was inconstant and

fickle-minded. He, therefore, takes occasion to vindicate himself, and to convince them that he was not faithless to his word and purposes, and to show them the true reason why he had not visited them, ^{<4017>}2 Corinthians 1:17-24. He states, therefore, that his real intentions had been to visit them (^{<4015>}2 Corinthians 1:15,16); that his failure to do so had not proceeded from either levity or falsehood (^{<4017>}2 Corinthians 1:17); as they might have known from the uniform doctrine which he had taught them, in which he had inculcated the necessity of a strict adherence to promises, from the veracity of Jesus Christ his great example (^{<4018>}2 Corinthians 1:18-20); and from the fact that God had given to him the Holy Spirit, and anointed him (^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 1:21,22); and he states, therefore, that the true reason why he had not come to them was, that he wished to spare them (^{<4023>}2 Corinthians 1:23,24); he was willing to remain away from them until they should have time to correct the evils which existed in their church, and prevent the necessity of severe discipline when he should come.

^{<4016>}**2 Corinthians 1:1.** *Paul an apostle ...*; see the notes on ^{<4006>}Romans 1:1, and ^{<4001>}1 Corinthians 1:1.

By the will of God Through, or agreeably to the will of God; note, ^{<4001>}1 Corinthians 1:1.

And Timothy our brother Paul was accustomed to associate some other person or persons with him in writing his epistles. Thus, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Sosthenes was associated with him. For the reasons of this, see the note on ^{<4001>}1 Corinthians 1:1. The name of Timothy is associated with his in the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians. From the former Epistle to the Corinthians (^{<4010>}1 Corinthians 16:10), we learn that Paul had sent Timothy to the church at Corinth, or that he expected that he would visit them. Paul had sent him into Macedonia in company with Erastus (^{<4021>}Acts 19:21,22), intending himself to follow them, and expecting that they would visit Achaia. From the passage before us, it appears that Timothy had returned from this expedition, and was now with Paul. The reason why Paul joined Timothy with him in writing this Epistle may have been the following:

(1) Timothy had been recently with them, and they had become acquainted with him, and it was not only natural that he should express his friendly salutations, but his name and influence among them might serve in some degree to confirm what Paul wished to say to them; compare note, ^{<4001>}1 Corinthians 1:1.

(2) Paul may have wished to give as much influence as possible to Timothy. he designed that he should be his fellow-laborer; and as Timothy was much younger than himself, he doubtless expected that he would survive him, and that he would in some sense succeed him in the care of the churches. He was desirous, therefore, of securing for him all the authority which he could, and of letting it be known that he regarded him as abundantly qualified for the great work with which he was entrusted.

(3) The influence and name of Timothy might be supposed to have weight with the party in the church that had slandered Paul, by accusing him of insincerity or instability in regard to his purposed visit to them. Paul had designed to go to them directly from Ephesus, but he had changed his mind, and the testimony of Timothy might be important to prove that it was done from motives purely conscientious. Timothy was doubtless acquainted with the reasons; and his testimony might meet and rebut a part of the charges against him; see ^{<4013>}2 Corinthians 1:13-16.

Unto the church of God ... see the note ^{<400D>}1 Corinthians 1:2.

With all the saints which are in all Achaia Achaia, in the largest sense, included the whole of Greece. Achaia proper, however, was the district or province of which Corinth was the capital. It comprehended the part of Greece lying between Thessaly and the southern part of the Peloponnesus, embracing the whole western part of the Peloponnesus. It is probable that there were not a few Christians scattered in Achaia, and not improbably some small churches that had been established by the labors of Paul or of others. From ^{<510I>}Romans 16:1, we know that there was a church at Cenchrea, the eastern port of Corinth, and it is by no means improbable that there were other churches in that region. Paul doubtless designed that copies of this Epistle should be circulated among them.

^{<400B>}**2 Corinthians 1:2.** *Grace be to you ...* This is the usual Christian salutation; see the note, ^{<510I>}Romans 1:7; ^{<400B>}1 Corinthians 1:3.

^{<400B>}**2 Corinthians 1:3.** *Blessed be God* This is the commencement properly of the Epistle, and it is the language of a heart that is full of joy, and that bursts forth with gratitude in view of mercy. It may have been excited by the recollection that he had formerly written to them, and that during the interval which had elapsed between the time when the former Epistle was written and when this was penned, he had been called to a most severe trial, and that from that trial he had been mercifully delivered.

With a heart full of gratitude and joy for this merciful interposition, he commences this Epistle. It is remarked by Doddridge, that 11 out of the 13 epistles of Paul, begin with exclamations of praise, joy, and thanksgiving. Paul had been afflicted, but he had also been favored with remarkable consolations, and it was not unnatural that he should allow himself to give expression to his joy and praise in view of all the mercies which God had conferred on him. This entire passage is one that is exceedingly valuable, as showing that there may be elevated joy in the midst of deep affliction, and as showing what is the reason why God visits his servants with trials. The phrase “blessed be God,” is equivalent to “praised be God;” or is an expression of thanksgiving. It is the usual formula of praise (compare ~~4005~~ Ephesians 1:3); and shows his entire confidence in God, and his joy in him, and his gratitude for his mercies. it is one of innumerable instances which show that it is possible and proper to bless God in view of the trials with which he visits his people, and of the consolations which he causes to abound.

The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ God is mentioned here in the relation of the “Father of the Lord Jesus,” doubtless because it was through the Lord Jesus, and him alone, that He had imparted the consolation which he had experienced, ~~4005~~ 2 Corinthians 1:5. Paul knew no other God than the “Father of the Lord Jesus;” he knew no other source of consolation than the gospel; he knew of no way in which God imparted comfort except through his Son. That is genuine Christian consolation which acknowledges the Lord Jesus as the medium by whom it is imparted; that is proper thanksgiving to God which is offered through the Redeemer; that only is the proper acknowledgment of God which recognizes him as the “Father of the Lord Jesus.”

The Father of mercies This is a Hebrew mode of expression, where a noun performs the place of an adjective. and the phrase is synonymous nearly with “merciful Father.” The expression has however somewhat more energy and spirit than the simple phrase “merciful Father.” The Hebrews used the word “father” often to denote the author, or source of anything; and the idea in phraseology like this is, that mercy proceeds from God, that he is the source of it, and that it is his nature to impart mercy and compassion, as if he originated it; or was the source and fountain of it — sustaining a relation to all true consolation analogous to that which a father sustains to his offspring. God has the paternity of all true joy. It is one of

his special and glorious attributes that he thus produces consolation and mercy.

And the God of all comfort The source of all consolation. Paul delighted, as all should do, to trace all his comforts to God; and Paul, as all Christians have, had sufficient reason to regard God as the source of true consolation. There is no other real source of happiness but God; and he is able abundantly, and willing to impart consolation to his people.

2 Corinthians 1:4. *Who comforteth us* Paul here doubtless refers primarily to himself and his fellow apostles as having been filled with comfort in their trials; to the support which the promises of God gave; to the influences of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter; and to the hopes of eternal life through the gospel of the Redeemer.

That we may be able to comfort ... Paul does not say that this was the only design which God had in comforting them that they might be able to impart comfort to others; but he does say that this is an important and main purpose. It is an object which he seeks, that his people in their afflictions should be supported and comforted; and for this purpose he fills the hearts of his ministers with consolation; gives them personal experience of the sustaining power of grace in their trials; and enables them to speak of what they have felt in regard to the consolations of the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

By the comfort ... By the same topics of consolation; by the same sources of joy which have sustained us. They would have experience; and by that experience they would be able to minister consolation to those who were in any manner afflicted. It is only by personal experience that we are able to impart consolation to others. Paul refers here undoubtedly to the consolations which are produced by the evidence of the pardon of sin, and of acceptance with God, and the hope of eternal life. These consolations abounded in him and his fellow apostles richly; and sustained by them he was able also to impart like consolation to others who were in similar circumstances of trial.

2 Corinthians 1:5. *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us* As we are called to experience the same sufferings which Christ endured; as we are called to suffer in his cause, and in the promotion of the same object. The sufferings which they endured were in the cause of Christ and his gospel; were endured in endeavoring to advance the same object which Christ sought to promote; and were substantially of the same nature. They

arose from opposition, contempt, persecution, trial, and want, and were the same as the Lord Jesus was himself subjected to during the whole of his public life; compare ^{<small>5024</small>}Colossians 1:24. Thus, Peter says (^{<small>4043</small>}1 Peter 4:13) of Christians that they were “partakers of Christ’s sufferings.”

So our consolation also aboundeth by Christ By means of Christ, or through Christ, consolation is abundantly imparted to us. Paul regarded the Lord Jesus as the source of consolation, and felt that the comfort which he imparted, or which was imparted through him, was more than sufficient to overbalance all the trials which he endured in this cause. The comforts which he derived from Christ were those, doubtless, which arose from his presence, his supporting grace, from his love shed abroad in the heart; from the success which he gave to his gospel, and from the hope of reward which was held out to him by the Redeemer, as the result of all his sufferings. And it may be observed as an universal truth, that if we suffer in the cause of Christ, if we are persecuted, oppressed, and calumniated on his account, he will take care that our hearts shall be filled with consolation.

^{<small>4006</small>}**2 Corinthians 1:6.** *And whether we be afflicted* If we are afflicted; or, our affliction is for this purpose. This verse is designed to show one of the reasons of the sufferings which the apostles had endured; and it is a happy specimen of Paul’s skill in his epistles. He shows that all his trials were for their welfare and would turn to their benefit. He suffered that they might be comforted; he was afflicted for their advantage. This assurance would tend to conciliate their favor, and strengthen their affection for him, as it would show them that he was disinterested. We are under the deepest obligations of gratitude to one who suffers for us; and there is nothing that will bind us more tenderly to anyone than the fact that he has been subjected to great calamity and trial on our account. This is one of the reasons why the Christian feels so tenderly his obligation to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is for your consolation and salvation It will be useful for your consolation; or it is endured in order to secure your comfort, and promote your salvation. Paul had suffered in Ephesus, and it is to this that he here particularly refers. He does not mean to say that his sufferings there were particularly for the comfort of the Corinthians; but that they had been endured in the general purpose of promoting the salvation of people, and that they, together with others, would reap the benefit of his trials. He

endured them in order to spread the true religion, and they would be benefitted by that, and be sides, he would be the better able by his trials to administer to them the true consolations of the gospel in their sufferings; and his example, and experience, and counsel, would enable them to bear up under their own trials in a proper manner.

Which is effectual ... Margin, “wrought.” The Greek word ενεργουμενης ^{<1754>} denotes here “efficacious, operating to, producing;” and the phrase denotes that their salvation would be effected, worked out, or secured by the patient endurance of such sufferings. Those sufferings were necessary; and a patient endurance of them would tend to promote their salvation. The doctrine that the patient endurance of affliction tends to promote salvation, is every where taught in the Bible; see the notes on ~~<488B>~~ Romans 5:3-5.

In the enduring By your enduring; or by your patience in such sufferings. You are called to endure the same kind of sufferings; and patience in such trials will tend to promote your salvation.

Or whether we be comforted ... One design of our being comforted is, that we may be able to impart consolation to you in the times of similar trial and calamity; see ~~<480H>~~ 2 Corinthians 1:4. The sentiment of the whole passage is, that their eternal welfare would be promoted by the example of the apostles in their trials, and by the consolations which they would be able to impart as the result of their afflictions.

~~<480H>~~ **2 Corinthians 1:7.** *And our hope of you is steadfast* We have a firm and unshaken hope in regard to you; we have a confident expectation that you will be saved. We believe that you will be enabled so to bear trial as to show that you are sustained by the Christian hope; and so as to advance your own piety, and confirm your prospect of heaven.

As ye are partakers of the sufferings It is evident from this, that the Corinthians had been subjected to trials similar to those which the apostle had endured. It is not known to what afflictions they were then subjected; but it is not improbable that they were exposed to some kind of persecution and opposition. Such trials were common in all the early churches; and they served to unite all the friends of the Redeemer in common bonds, and to make them feel that they were one. They had united sorrows; and they had united joys; and they felt they were tending to the same heaven of glory. United sorrows and united consolations tend more

than anything else to bind people together. We always have a “brotherly” feeling for one who suffers as we do; or who has the same kind of joy which we have.

2 Corinthians 1:8. *For we would not have you ignorant* We wish you to be fully informed; see the note, ^{<400>}1 Corinthians 10:1; 12:1. The object of Paul here is, to give a full explanation of the nature of his trials, to which he had referred in ^{<4004>}2 Corinthians 1:4. He presumed that the Corinthians would feel a deep interest in him and in his trials; that they would sympathize with him, and would pray that those sufferings, and that this deliverance might be attended with a blessing (^{<4011>}2 Corinthians 1:11); and perhaps he wished also to conciliate their kindness toward himself by mentioning more at length the nature of the trials which he had been called to endure on account of the Christian religion, of which they were reaping so material benefits.

Of our trouble which came to us in Asia The term “Asia” is often used to denote that part of Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the capital; see the note, ^{<418>}Acts 2:9. There has been considerable diversity of opinion as to the “troubles” to which Paul here refers. Some have supposed that he refers to the persecutions at Lystra (^{<4146>}Acts 14:6,19,20), from which he had been recovered as it were by miracle; but as that happened so long before this, it seems improbable that he should here refer to it. There is every mark of freshness and recentness about this event; and Paul evidently referred to some danger from which he had been lately delivered, and which made a deep impression on his mind when he wrote this Epistle. Semler supposes that he refers to the lying in wait of the Jews for him when he was about to go to Macedonia, mentioned in ^{<418>}Acts 20:3. Most commentators have supposed that he refers to the disturbances which were made at Ephesus by Demetrius and his friends, mentioned in Acts 19, and by reason of which he was compelled to leave the city. The only objection to this is, that which is mentioned by Whitby and Macknight, that as Paul did not go into the theater there (^{<4193>}Acts 19:31), he incurred no such risk of his life as to justify the strong expressions mentioned in ^{<4009>}2 Corinthians 1:9,10. They suppose, therefore, that he refers to the danger to which he was exposed in Ephesus on another occasion, when he was compelled to fight there with wild beasts; see ^{<4652>}1 Corinthians 15:32. But nearly all these opinions may be reconciled, perhaps, by supposing that he refers to the group of calamities to which he had been exposed in Asia, and from which he had just escaped by going to Macedonia — referring perhaps

more particularly to the conflict which he had been compelled to have with the wild beasts there. There was the riot excited by Demetrius (Acts 19), in which his life had been endangered, and from which he had just escaped; and there had been the conflict with the wild beasts at Ephesus (see the note ^{<652>}1 Corinthians 15:32), which perhaps had occurred but just before; and there were the plots of the Jews against him (^{<401>}Acts 20:3), from which, also, he had just been delivered. By these trials, his life had been endangered, perhaps, more than once, and he had been called to look death calmly in the face, and to anticipate the probability that he might soon die. Of these trials; of all these trials, he would not have the Corinthians ignorant; but desired that they should be fully apprized of them, that they might sympathize with him, and that through their prayers they might be turned to his benefit.

That we were pressed out of measure see Acts 19. We were borne down, or weighed down by calamity (εβαρηθημεν)^{<916>} exceedingly (καθ' ^{<2596>}υπερβολης ^{<5236>}), supereminently. The expression denotes excess, eminence, or intensity. It is one of Paul's common and very strong expressions to denote anything that is intensive or great; see ^{<8713>}Romans 7:13; ^{<8013>}Galatians 1:13; ^{<4047>}2 Corinthians 4:17.

Above strength Beyond our strength. More than in ourselves we were able to bear.

Insomuch that we despaired even of life Either expecting to be destroyed by the wild beasts with which he had to contend, or to be destroyed by the people. This was one of the instances undoubtedly, to which he refers in ^{<47123>}2 Corinthians 11:23, where he says he had been "in death oft." And this was one of the many cases in which Paul was called on to contemplate death as near. It was doubtless one cause of his fidelity, and of his great success in his work, that he was thus called to regard death as near at hand, and that, to use the somewhat unpoetical, but deeply affecting lines of Baxter, expressing a sentiment which guided all his ministry, and which was one source of his eminent success,

*He preach'd as though he ne'er would preach again,
As a dying man to dying men.*

^{<4000>}**2 Corinthians 1:9.** *But we had the sentence of death in ourselves* Margin, "answer." The word rendered "sentence" (αποκριμα ^{<610>}) means properly an answer, judicial response, or sentence; and is here synonymous

with verdict. It means that Paul felt that he was condemned to die; that he felt as if he were under sentence of death and with no hope of acquittal; he was called to contemplate the hour of death as just before him. The words “in ourselves,” mean, against ourselves; or, we expected certainly to die. This seems as if he had been condemned to die, and may either refer to some instance when the popular fury was so great that he felt it was determined he should die; or more probably to a judicial sentence that he should be cast to the wild beasts, with the certain expectation that he would be destroyed, as was always the case with those who were subjected to the execution of such a sentence.

That we should not trust in ourselves This is an exceedingly beautiful and important sentiment. It teaches that in the time to which Paul refers, he was in so great danger, and had so certain a prospect of death, that he could put no reliance on himself. He felt that he must die; and that human aid was vain. According to every probability he would die; and all that he could do was to cast himself on the protection of that God who had power to save him even then, if he chose, and who, if he did it, would exert power similar to that which is put forth when the dead are raised. The effect, therefore, of the near prospect of death was to lead him to put increased confidence in God. He felt that God only could save him; or that God only could sustain him if he should die. Perhaps also he means to say that the effect of this was to lead him to put increased confidence in God after his deliverance; not to trust in his own plans, or to confide in his own strength; but to feel that all that he had was entirely in the hands of God. This is a common, and a happy effect of the near prospect of death to a Christian; and it is well to contemplate the effect on such a mind as that of Paul in the near prospect of dying, and to see how instinctively then it clings to God. A true Christian in such circumstances will rush to His arms and feel that there he is safe.

But in God which raiseth the dead Intimating that a rescue in such circumstances would be like raising the dead. It is probable that on this occasion Paul was near dying; that he had given up all hope of life — perhaps, as at Lystra (⁴⁴⁴⁹Acts 14:19), he was supposed to be dead. He felt, therefore, that he was raised up by the immediate power of God, and regarded it as an exertion of the same power by which the dead are raised. Paul means to intimate that so far as depended on any power of his own, he was dead. He had no power to recover himself, and but for the gracious interposition of God he would have died.

2 Corinthians 1:10. *Who delivered us from so great a death* From a death so terrible, and from a prospect so alarming. It is intimated here by the word which Paul uses, that the death which he apprehended was one of a character especially terrific — probably a death by wild beasts; note, **2 Corinthians 1:8**. He was near to death; he had no hope of rescue; and the manner of the death which was threatened was especially frightful. Paul regarded rescue from such a death as a kind of resurrection: and felt that he owed his life to God as if he had raised him from the dead. All deliverance from imminent peril, and from dangerous sickness, whether of ourselves or our friends, should be regarded as a kind of resurrection from the dead. God could with infinite ease have taken away our breath, and it is only by his merciful interposition that we live.

And doth deliver Continues yet to deliver us; or preserve us — intimating perhaps that danger had continued to follow him after the signal deliverance to which he particularly refers, and that he had continued to be in similar peril of his life. Paul was daily exposed to danger; and was constantly preserved by the good providence of God. In what manner he was rescued from the peril to which he was exposed he has no where intimated. It is implied, however, that it was by a remarkable divine interposition; but whether by miracle, or by the ordinary course of providence, he no where intimates. Whatever was the mode, however, Paul regarded God as the source of the deliverance, and felt that his obligations were due to him as his kind Preserver.

In whom we trust that he will yet deliver us That he will continue to preserve us. We hope; we are accustomed to cherish the expectation that he will continue to defend us in the perils which we shall yet encounter. Paul felt that he was still exposed to danger. Everywhere he was liable to be persecuted (compare note, **Acts 20:23**), and everywhere he felt that his life was in peril. Yet he had been thus far preserved in a most remarkable manner; and he felt assured that God would continue to interpose in his behalf, until his great purpose in regard to him should be fully accomplished, so that at the close of life he could look to God as his Deliverer, and feel that all along his perilous journey he had been his great Protector.

2 Corinthians 1:11. *Ye also helping together by prayer for us* Tyndale renders this in connection with the close of the previous verse; “we trust that yet hereafter he will deliver us, by the help of your prayer for

us.” The word rendered “helping together,” means cooperating, aiding, assisting; and the idea is, that Paul felt that his trials might be turned to good account, and give occasion for thanksgiving; and that this was to be accomplished by the aid of the prayers of his fellow Christians. He felt that the church was one, and that Christians should sympathize with one another. He evinced deep humility and tender regard for the Corinthians when he called on them to aid him by their prayers. Nothing would be better calculated to excite their tender affection and regard than thus to call on them to sympathize with him in his trials, and to pray that those trials might result in thanksgiving throughout the churches.

That for the gift bestowed upon us The sentence which occurs here is very perplexing in the original, and the construction is difficult. But the main idea is not difficult to be seen. The “gift” here referred to (το ^{<588>} χαρισμα ^{<586>}) means doubtless the favor shown to him in his rescue from so imminent a peril; and he felt that this was owing to the prayers of many persons on his behalf. He believed that he had been remembered in the petitions of his friends and fellow Christians, and that his deliverance was owing to their supplications.

By the means of many persons Probably meaning that the favor referred to had been imparted by means of the prayers of many individuals who had taken a deep interest in his welfare. But it may also imply perhaps that he had been directly assisted, and had been rescued from the impending danger by the interposition of many friends who had come to his relief. The usual interpretation is, however, that it was by the prayers of many in his behalf.

Thanks may be given by many on our behalf Many may be induced also to render thanks for my deliverance. The idea is, that as he had been delivered from great peril by the prayers of many persons, it was proper also that thanksgiving should be offered by as many in his behalf, or on account of his deliverance.

“Mercies that have been obtained by prayer should be acknowledged by praise” — Doddridge.

God had mercifully interposed in answer to the prayers of his people; and it was proper that his mercy should be as extensively acknowledged. Paul was desirous that God should not be forgotten: and that those who had sought his deliverance should render praise to God, perhaps intimating here

that those who had obtained mercies by prayer are prone to forget their obligation to return thanks to God for his gracious and merciful interposition.

2 Corinthians 1:12. *For our rejoicing is this* The source or cause of our rejoicing. "I have a just cause of rejoicing, and it is, that I have endeavored to live a life of simplicity and godly sincerity, and have not been actuated by the principles of worldly wisdom." The connection here is not very obvious, and it is not quite easy to trace it. Most expositors, as Doddridge, Locke, Macknight, Bloomfield, etc., suppose that he mentions the purity of his life as a reason why he had a right to expect their prayers, as he had requested in **2 Corinthians 1:11**. They would not doubt, it is supposed, that his life had been characterized by great simplicity and sincerity, and would feel, therefore, a deep interest in his welfare, and be disposed to render thanks that he had been preserved in the day of peril. But the whole context and the scope of the passage is rather to be taken into view. Paul had been exposed to death. He had no hope of life. Then the ground of his rejoicing, and of his confidence, was that he had lived a holy life. He had not been actuated by "fleshly wisdom," but he had been animated and guided by "the grace of God." His aim had been simple, his purpose holy, and he had the testimony of his conscience that his motives had been right, and he had, therefore, no concern about the result. A good conscience, a holy life through Jesus Christ, will enable a man always to look calmly on death. What has a Christian to fear in death? Paul had kept a good conscience toward all; but he says that he had special and unique joy that he had done it toward the Corinthians. This he says, because many there had accused him of fickleness, and of disregard for their interests. He declares, therefore, that even in the prospect of death he had a consciousness of rectitude toward them, and proceeds to show (**2 Corinthians 1:13-23**) that the charge against him was not well founded. I regard this passage, therefore, as designed to express the fact that Paul, in view of sudden death, had a consciousness of a life of piety, and was comforted with the reflection that he had not been actuated by the "fleshly wisdom" of the world.

The testimony of our conscience An approving conscience. It does not condemn me on the subject. Though others might accuse him, though his name might be calumniated, yet he had comfort in the approval which his own conscience gave to his course. Paul's conscience was enlightened, and its decisions were correct. Whatever others might charge him with he knew

what had been the aim and purpose of his life; and the consciousness of upright aims, and of such plans as the “grace of God” would prompt to, sustained him. An approving conscience is of inestimable value when we are calumniated; and when we draw near to death.

That in simplicity (εν ^{<172>} ἀπλοτητι ^{<57>}.) Tyndale renders this forcibly “without doubleness.” The word means sincerity, candor, probity, plain-heartedness, Christian simplicity, frankness, integrity; see ^{<4103>}2 Corinthians 11:3. It stands opposed to double-dealings and purposes; to deceitful appearances, and crafty plans; to mere policy, and craftiness in accomplishing an object. A man under the influence of this, is straightforward, candid, open, frank; and he expects to accomplish his purpose by integrity and fair-dealing, and not by stratagem and cunning. Policy, craft, artful plans, and deep-laid schemes of deceit belong to the world; simplicity of aim and purpose are the true characteristics of a real Christian.

And godly sincerity Greek “sincerity of God.” This may be a Hebrew idiom, by which the superlative degree is indicated, when, in order to express the highest degree, they added the name of God, as in the phrases “mountains of God,” signifying the highest mountains, or “cedars of God,” denoting lofty cedars. Or it may mean such sincerity as God manifests and approves such as he, by his grace, would produce in the heart; such as the religion of the gospel is suited to produce. The word used here, ^{<1505>}ἐιλικρινεια, and rendered sincerity, denotes, properly, clearness, such as is judged of or discerned in sunshine (from ^{<2919>}ἐιλη) and κρινω), and thence pureness, integrity. It is most probable that the phrase here denotes that sincerity which God produces and approves; and the sentiment is, that pure religion, the religion of God, produces entire sincerity in the heart. Its purposes and aims are open and manifest, as if seen in the sunshine. The plans of the world are obscure, deceitful, and dark, as if in the night.

Not with fleshly wisdom Not with the wisdom which is manifested by the people of this world; not by the principles of cunning, and mere policy, and expediency, which often characterize them. The phrase here stands opposed to simplicity and sincerity, to openness and straightforwardness. And Paul means to disclaim for himself, and for his fellow-laborers, all that carnal policy which distinguishes the mere people of the world. And if Paul deemed such policy improper for him, we should deem it improper for us;

if he had no plans which he wished to advance by it, we should have none; if he would not employ it in the promotion of good plans, neither should we. It has been the curse of the church and the bane of religion; and it is to this day exerting a withering and blighting influence on the church. The moment that such plans are resorted to, it is proof that the vitality of religion is gone, and any man who feels that his purposes cannot be accomplished but by such carnal policy, should set it down as full demonstration that his plans are wrong, and that his purpose should be abandoned.

But by the grace of God This phrase stands opposed, evidently, to “fleshly wisdom.” It means that Paul had been influenced by such sentiments and principles as would be suggested or prompted by the influence of his grace. Locke renders it, “by the favor of God directing me.” God had shown him favor; God had directed him; and he had kept him from the crooked and devious ways of mere worldly policy. The idea seems to be not merely that he had pursued a correct and upright course of life, but that he was indebted for this to the mere grace and favor of God, an idea which Paul omitted no opportunity of acknowledging.

We have had our conversation We have conducted ourselves (*αναστραφημεν* ^{<390>}). The word used here means literally, “to turn up, to overturn”; then “to turn back, to return,” and in the middle voice, “to turn oneself around, to turn oneself to anything, and, also, to move about in, to live in, to be conversant with, to conduct oneself.” In this sense it seems to be used here; compare ^{<581B>}Hebrews 10:33; 13:18; ^{<54BIS>}1 Timothy 3:15; ^{<6017>}1 Peter 1:17. The word “conversation,” we usually apply to oral discourse, but in the Scriptures, it means “conduct,” and the sense of the passage is, that Paul had conducted himself in accordance with the principles of the grace of God, and had been influenced by that.

In the world Everywhere; wherever I have been. This does not mean in the world as contradistinguished from the church, but in the world at large, or wherever he had been, as contradistinguished from the church at Corinth. It had been his common and universal practice.

And more abundantly to you-ward Especially toward you. This was added doubtless because there had been charges against him in Corinth, that he had been crafty, cunning, deceitful, and especially that he had deceived them (see ^{<6017>}2 Corinthians 1:17), in not visiting them as he had promised. He affirms, therefore, that in all things he had acted in the manner to which

the grace of God prompted, and that his conduct, in all respects, had been that of entire simplicity and sincerity.

~~2~~ **2 Corinthians 1:13.** *For we write none other things ...* There has been much variety in the interpretation of this passage; and much difficulty felt in determining what it means. The sense seems to me to be this. Paul had just declared that he had been actuated by pure intentions and by entire sincerity, and had in all things been influenced by the grace of God. This he had shown everywhere, but more particularly among them at Corinth. That they fully knew. In making this affirmation they had full evidence from what they had known of him in former times that such had been his course of life; and he trusted that they would be able to acknowledge the same thing to the end, and that they would never have any occasion to form a different opinion of him. It will be recollected that it is probable that some at Corinth had charged him with insincerity; and some had accused him of fickleness in having promised to come to Corinth and then changing his mind, or had charged him with never having intended to come to them. His object in this verse is to refute such slanders, and he says, therefore, that all that he affirmed in his writings about the sincerity and simplicity of his aims, were such as they knew from their past acquaintance with him to be true; and that they knew that he was a man who would keep his promises. It is an instance of a minister who was able to appeal to the people among whom he had lived and labored in regard to the general sincerity and uprightness of his character — such an appeal as every minister ought to be able to make to refute all slanders; and such as he will be able to make successfully, if his life, like that of Paul, is such as to warrant it. Such seems to me to be the sense of the passage. Beza, however, renders it, "I write no other things than what ye read, or may understand," and so Rosenmuller, Wetstein, Macknight, and some others interpret it; and they explain it as meaning,

"I write nothing secretly, nothing ambiguously, but I express myself clearly, openly, plainly, so that I may be read and understood by all." Macknight

supposes that they had charged him with using ambiguous language, that he might afterward interpret it to suit his own purpose. The objection to this is, that Paul never adverts to the obscurity or perspicuity of his own language. It was his conduct that was the main subject on which he was writing, and the connection seems to demand that we understand him as

affirming that they had abundant evidence that what he affirmed of his simplicity of aim, and integrity of life, was true. Than what ye read (*αναγιωσκετε* ^{<314>}). This word properly means to know accurately; to distinguish; and in the New Testament usually to know by reading. Doddridge remarks, that the word is ambiguous, and may signify either to acknowledge, to know, or to read. He regards it as used here in the sense of knowing. It is probably used here in the sense of knowing accurately, or surely; of recognizing from their former acquaintance with him. They would see that the sentiments which he now expressed were such as accorded with his character and uniform course of life. “Or acknowledge” (*επιγιωσκετε* ^{<1921>}). The preposition *επι* ^{<1909>} in composition here is intensive, and the word denotes to know fully; to receive full knowledge of; to know well; or to recognize. It here means that they would fully recognize, or know entirely to their satisfaction, that the sentiments which he here expressed were such as accorded with his general manner of life. From what they knew of him, they could not but admit that he had been influenced by the principles stated.

And I trust ye shall acknowledge I trust that my conduct will be such as to convince you always that I am actuated by such principles. I trust you will never witness any departure from them — the language of a man of settled principle, and of fixed aims and honesty of life. An honest man can always use such language respecting himself.

Even to the end To the end of life; always.

“We trust that you will never have occasion to think dishonorably of us; or to reflect on any inconsistency in our behavior” —
Doddridge.

~~4014~~ **2 Corinthians 1:14.** *As also ye have acknowledged us* You have had occasion to admit my singleness of aim, and purity of intention and of life by your former acquaintance with me; and you have cheerfully done it. “In part” (*απο* ^{<575>} *μερους* ^{<3313>}). Tyndale renders this: “as ye have found us partly.” The sense seems to be, “as part of you acknowledge;” meaning that a portion of the church was ready to concede to him the praise of consistency and uprightness, though there was a faction, or a part that denied it.

That we are your rejoicing That we are your joy, and your boasting. That is, you admit me to be an apostle. You regard me as your teacher, and

guide. You recognize my authority, and acknowledge the benefits which you have received through me.

Even as ye also are ours Or, as you will be our rejoicing in the day when the Lord Jesus shall come to gather his people to himself. Then it will be seen that you were saved by our ministry; and then it will be an occasion of abundant and eternal thanksgiving to God that you were converted by our labors. And as you now regard it as a matter of congratulation and thanksgiving that you have such teachers as we are, so shall we regard it as a matter of congratulation and thanksgiving — as our chief joy — that we were the instruments of saving such a people. The expression implies that there was mutual confidence, mutual love, and mutual cause of rejoicing. It is well when ministers and people have such confidence in each other, and have occasion to regard their connection as a mutual cause of rejoicing and of **καυχῆμα** ^{<2745>} or boasting.

^{<4015>}**2 Corinthians 1:15.** *And in his confidence* In this confidence of my integrity, and that you had this favorable opinion of me, and appreciated the principles of my conduct. I did not doubt that you would receive me kindly, and would give me again the tokens of your affection and regard. In this Paul shows that however some of them might regard him, yet that he had no doubt that the majority of the church there would receive him kindly.

I was minded I willed (**εβουλομην** ^{<1014>}); it was my intention.

To come unto you before Tyndale renders this: “the other time.” Paul refers doubtless to the time when he wrote his former Epistle, and when it was his serious purpose, as it was his earnest wish, to visit them again; see ^{<4615>}1 Corinthians 16:5. In this purpose he had been disappointed, and he now proceeds to state the reasons why he had not visited them as he had purposed, and to show that it did not arise from any fickleness of mind. His purpose had been at first to pass through Corinth on his way to Macedonia, and to remain some time with them; see ^{<4016>}2 Corinthians 1:16. compare ^{<4615>}1 Corinthians 16:5,6. This purpose he had now changed; and instead of passing through Corinth on his way to Macedonia, he had gone to Macedonia by the way of Troas (^{<4712>}2 Corinthians 2:12); and the Corinthians having, as it would seem, become acquainted with this fact, had charged him with insincerity in the promise, or fickleness in regard to

his plans. Probably it had been said by some of his enemies that he had never intended to visit them.

That ye might have a second benefit Margin, grace. The word used here ($\chi\alpha\rho\iota\varsigma$ ^{<5485>}) is that which is commonly rendered grace, and means probably favor, kindness, good-will, beneficence; and especially favor to the undeserving. Here it is evidently used in the sense of gratification, or pleasure. And the idea is, that they had been formerly gratified and benefitted by his residence among them; he had been the means of conferring important favors on them, and he was desirous of being again with them, in order to gratify them by his presence, and that he might be the means of imparting to them other favors. Paul presumed that his presence with them would be to them a source of pleasure, and that his coming would do them good. It is the language of a man who felt assured that he enjoyed, after all, the confidence of the mass of the church there, and that they would regard his being with them as a favor. He had been with them formerly almost two years. His residence there had been pleasant to them and to him; and had been the occasion of important benefits to them. He did not doubt that it would be so again. Tyndale renders this: "that ye might have had a double pleasure." It may be remarked here that several MSS. instead of $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\nu$ ^{<5485>}, "grace," read $\chi\alpha\rho\alpha\nu$ ^{<5479>}, "joy."

2 Corinthians 1:16. *And to pass by you* Through ($\delta\iota'$ ^{<1223>}) you; that is, through your city, or province; or to take them, as we say, in his way. His design was to pass through Corinth and Achaia on his journey. This was not the direct way from Ephesus to Macedonia. An inspection of a map (see the map of Asia Minor prefixed to the notes on the Acts of the Apostles) will show at one view that the direct way was that which he concluded finally to take — that by Troas. Yet he had designed to go out of his way in order to make them a visit; and intended also, perhaps, to make them also a longer visit on his return. The former part of the plan he had been induced to abandon.

Into Macedonia A part of Greece having Thrace on the north, Thessaly south, Epirus west and the AEgean Sea east; see the note, ^{<4143>} Acts 16:9.

And of you to be brought on my way By you; see the note, ^{<4316>} 1 Corinthians 16:6.

Toward Judea His object in going to Judea was to convey the collection for the poor saints which he had been at so much pains to collect

throughout the churches of the Gentiles; see the notes, ^{<6152>}Romans 15:25,26; compare ^{<6161>}1 Corinthians 16:3,4.

^{<6162>}**2 Corinthians 1:17.** *When I therefore was thus minded* When I formed this purpose; when I willed this, and expressed this intention.

Did I use lightness? The word ελαφρια ^{<1644>} (from ελαφρος) ^{<1645>} means properly lightness in weight. Here it is used in reference to the mind; and in a sense similar to our word levity, as denoting lightness of temper or conduct; inconstancy, changeableness, or fickleness. This charge had been probably made that he had made the promise without any due consideration, or without any real purpose of performing, it; or that he had made it in a trifling and thoughtless manner. By the interrogative form here, he sharply denies that it was a purpose formed in a light and trifling manner.

Do I purpose according to the flesh In such a manner, as may suit my own convenience and carnal interest. Do I form plans adapted only to promote my own ease and gratification, and to be abandoned when they are attended with inconvenience? The phrase “according to the flesh” here seems to mean “in such a way as to promote my own ease and gratification; in a manner such as the people of the world form; such as would be formed under the influence of earthly passions and desires, and to be forsaken when those plans would interfere with such gratifications.” Paul denies in a positive manner that he formed such plans; and they should have known enough of his manner of life to be assured that that was not the nature of the schemes which he had devised? Probably no man ever lived who formed his plans of life less for the gratification of the flesh than Paul.

That with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay? There has been a great variety in the interpretation of this passage; see Bloomfield, Critical Digest in loco. The meaning seems to be, “that there should be such inconstancy and uncertainty in my counsels and actions, that no one could depend on me, or know what they had to expect from me.” Bloomfield supposes that the phrase is a proverbial one, and denotes a headstrong, selfwilled spirit which will either do things, or not do them as pleases, without giving any reasons. He supposes that the repetition of the words “yea and nay” is designed to denote positiveness of assertion — such positiveness as is commonly shown by such persons, as in the phrases, “what I have written I have written,” “what I have done I have done.” It

seems more probable, however, that the phrase is designed to denote the ready compliance which an inconstant and unsettled man is accustomed to make with the wishes of others; his expressing a ready assent to what they propose; falling in with their views; readily making promises; and instantly, through some whim, or caprice, or wish of others, saying “yea, nay,” to the same thing; that is, changing his mind, and altering his purpose without any good reason, or in accordance with any fixed principle or settled rule of action. Paul says that this was not his character. He did not affirm a thing at one time and deny it at another; he did not promise to do a thing one moment and refuse to do it the next.

2 Corinthians 1:18. *But as God is true* Tyndale renders this in accordance more literally with the Greek, “God is faithful; for our preaching unto you was not yea and nay.” The phrase seems to have the form of an oath, or to be a solemn appeal to God as a Witness, and to be equivalent to the expression “the Lord liveth,” or “as the Lord liveth.” The idea is, “God is faithful and true. He never deceives; never promises that which he does not perform. So true is it that I am not fickle and changing in my purposes.” This idea of the faithfulness of God is the argument which Paul urges why he felt himself bound to be faithful also. That faithful God he regarded as a witness, and to that God he could appeal on the occasion.

Our word Margin, “preaching” (ὁ ³⁵⁸⁸ *λογος* ³⁰⁵⁶). This may refer either to his preaching, to his promises of visiting them, or his declarations to them in general on any subject. The particular subject under discussion was the promise which he had made to visit them. But he here seems to make his affirmation general, and to say universally of his promises, and his teaching, and of all his communications to them, whether orally or in writing, that they were not characterized by inconstancy and changeableness. It was not his character to be fickle, unsettled, and vacillating.

2 Corinthians 1:19. *For the Son of God* In this verse, and the following, Paul states that he felt himself bound to maintain the strictest veracity for two reasons; the one, that Jesus Christ always evinced the strictest veracity (**2 Corinthians 1:19**); the other, God was always true to all the promises that He made (**2 Corinthians 1:20**); and as he felt himself to be the servant of the Saviour and of God, he was bound by the most sacred obligations also to maintain a character irreproachable in

regard to veracity on the meaning of the phrase “Son of God,” see the note, ^{<6104>}Romans 1:4.

Jesus Christ It is agreed, says Bloomfield, by the best commentators, ancient and modern, that by Jesus Christ is here meant his doctrine. The sense is, that the preaching respecting Jesus Christ, did not represent him as fickle, and changeable; as unsettled, and as unfaithful; but as TRUE, consistent, and faithful. As that had been the regular and constant representation of Paul and his fellow-laborers in regard to the Master whom they served, it was to be inferred that they felt themselves bound sacredly to observe the strictest constancy and veracity.

By us ... Silvanus, mentioned here, is the same person who in the Acts of the Apostles is called Silas. He was with Paul at Philippi, and was imprisoned there with him (Acts 16), and was afterward with Paul and Timothy at Corinth when he first visited that city; ^{<44816>}Acts 18:5. Paul was so much attached to him, and had so much confidence in him, that he joined his name with his own in several of his epistles; ^{<3001>}1 Thessalonians 1:1; ^{<5001>}2 Thessalonians 1:1.

Was not yea and nay Our representation of him was not that he was fickle and changeable.

But in him was yea Was not one thing at one time, and another at another. He is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. All that he says is true; all the promises that he makes are firm; all his declarations are faithful. Paul may refer to the fact that the Lord Jesus when on earth was eminently characterized by TRUTH. Nothing was more striking than his veracity. He called himself “the truth,” as being eminently true in all his declarations. “I am the way, and THE TRUTH, and the life;” ^{<61416>}John 14:6; compare ^{<66116>}Revelation 3:7. And thus (^{<66114>}Revelation 3:14) he is called “the faithful and true witness.” In all his life he was eminently distinguished for that. His declarations were simple truth; his narratives were simple, unvarnished, uncolored, unexaggerated statements of what actually occurred. He never disguised the truth; never prevaricated; never had any mental reservation; never deceived; never used any word, or threw in any circumstance, that was suited to lead the mind astray. He himself said that this was the great object which he had in view in coming into the world. “To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth;” ^{<61837>}John 18:37. As Jesus Christ was thus distinguished for simple truth, Paul felt that he was under sacred obligations to imitate him,

and always to evince the same inviolable fidelity. The most deeply felt obligation on earth is that which the Christian feels to imitate the Redeemer.

2 Corinthians 1:20. *For all the promises of God in him* All the promises which God has made through him. This is another reason why Paul felt himself bound to maintain a character of the strictest veracity. The reason was, that God always evinced that; and that since none of His promises failed, he felt himself sacredly bound to imitate Him, and to adhere to all His. The promises of God which are made through Christ, relate to the pardon of sin to the penitent; the sanctification of his people: support in temptation and trial; guidance in perplexity; peace in death, and eternal glory beyond the grave. All of these are made through a Redeemer, and none of these shall fail.

Are yea Shall all be certainly fulfilled. There shall be no vacillation on the part of God; no fickleness; no abandoning of his gracious intention.

And in him amen In ^{<6184>}Revelation 3:14, the Lord Jesus is called the “Amen.” The word means true, faithful, certain. And the expression here means that all the promises which are made to people through a Redeemer shall be certainly fulfilled. They are promises which are confirmed and established, and which shall by no means fail.

Unto the glory of God by us Either by us ministers and apostles; or by us who are Christians. The latter, I think, is the meaning; and Paul means to say, that the fulfillment of all the promises which God has made to His people shall result in His glory and praise as a God of condescension and veracity. The fact that He has made such promises is an act that tends to His own glory — since it was of His mere grace that they were made; and the fulfillment of these promises in and through the church, shall also tend to produce elevated views of His fidelity and goodness.

2 Corinthians 1:21. *Now he which stablisheth us* He who makes us firm (^{<3588>}ὁ ^{<950>}βεβαίωv ^{<2248>}ἡμας); that is, he who has confirmed us in the hopes of the gospel, and who gives us grace to be faithful, and firm in our promises. The object of this is to trace all to God, and to prevent the appearance of self-confidence, or of boasting. Paul had dwelt at length on his own fidelity and veracity. He had taken pains to prove that he was not inconstant and fickle-minded. Here he says, that this was not to be traced to himself, or to any native goodness, but was all to be traced to God. It

was God who had given them all confident hope in Christ; and it was God who had given him grace to adhere to His promises, and to maintain a character for veracity. The first “us,” in this verse refers probably to Paul himself; the second includes also the Corinthians, as being also anointed and sealed.

And hath anointed us Us who are Christians. It was customary to anoint kings, prophets, and priests on their entering on their office as a part of the ceremony of inauguration. The word “anoint” is applied to a priest, ^{<1284>}Exodus 28:41; 40:15; to a prophet, ^{<11916>}1 Kings 19:16; ^{<2301>}Isaiah 61:1; to a king, ^{<901>}1 Samuel 10:1; 1 Samuel 15: 1; ^{<1014>}2 Samuel 2:4; ^{<1031>}1 Kings 1:34. It is applied often to the Messiah as being set apart, or consecrated to his office as prophet, priest, and king — that is, as appointed by God to the highest office ever held in the world. It is applied also to Christians as being consecrated, or set apart to the service of God by the Holy Spirit — a use of the word which is derived from the sense of consecrating, or setting apart to the service of God. Thus, in ^{<1121>}1 John 2:20, it is said, “But ye have an unction from the Holy One and know all things.” So in ^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 1:27, “But the anointing which ye have received abideth in you,” etc. The anointing which was used in the consecration of prophets, priests, and kings, seems to have been designed to be emblematic of the influences of the Holy Spirit, who is often represented as poured upon those who are under his influence (^{<1023>}Proverbs 1:23; ^{<2304>}Isaiah 43:4; ^{<2128>}Joel 2:28,29; ^{<8210>}Zechariah 12:10; ^{<4105>}Acts 10:45), in the same way as water or oil is poured out. And as Christians are everywhere represented as being under the influence of the Holy Spirit, as being those on whom the Holy Spirit is poured, they are represented as “anointed.” They are in this manner solemnly set apart, and consecrated to the service of God.

Is God God has done it. All is to be traced to him. It is not by any native goodness which we have, or any inclination which we have by nature to his service. This is one of the instances which abound so much in the writings of Paul, where he delights to trace all good influences to God.

^{<4012>}**2 Corinthians 1:22.** *Who hath also sealed us* The word used here (from $\sigmaφραγιζω$ ^{<4972>}) means to seal up; to close and make fast with a seal, or signet; as, e.g., books, letters, etc. that they may not be read. It is also used in the sense of setting a mark on anything, or a seal, to denote that it is genuine, authentic, confirmed, or approved, as when a deed, compact, or agreement is sealed. it is thus made sure; and is confirmed or

established. Hence, it is applied to persons, as denoting that they are approved, as in ^{<607B>}Revelation 7:3:

“Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads;”

compare ^{<300F>}Ezekiel 9:4; see the note, ^{<R17Z>}John 6:27, where it is said of the Saviour, “for him hath God the Father sealed;” compare ^{<R13B>}John 3:33. In a similar manner Christians are said to be sealed; to be sealed by the Holy Spirit (^{<R13B>}Ephesians 1:13; 4:30); that is, the Holy Spirit is given to them to confirm them as belonging to God. He grants them His Spirit. He renews and sanctifies them. He produces in their hearts those feelings, hopes, and desires which are an evidence that they are approved by God; that they are regarded as his adopted children; that their hope is genuine, and that their redemption and salvation are SURE — in the same way as a seal makes a will or an agreement sure. God grants to them His Holy Spirit as the certain pledge that they are His, and shall be approved and saved in the last day. In this there is nothing miraculous, or in the nature of direct revelation. It consists of the ordinary operations of the Spirit on the heart, producing repentance, faith, hope, joy, conformity to God, the love of prayer and praise, and the Christian virtues generally; and these things are the evidences that the Holy Spirit has renewed the heart, and that the Christian is sealed for the day of redemption.

And given the earnest of the Spirit The word used here (^{<728>}ἄρραβων from the Hebrew ^{<h6162>}wbr [means properly a pledge given to ratify a contract; a part of the price, or purchase money; a first payment; that which confirms the bargain, and which is regarded as a pledge that all the price will be paid. The word occurs in the Septuagint and Hebrew, in ^{<R37Z>}Genesis 38:17,18; 38:20. In the New Testament it occurs only in this place, and in ^{<R13B>}2 Corinthians 5:5, and ^{<R14B>}Ephesians 1:14, in each place in the same connection as applied to the Holy Spirit, and his influences on the heart. It refers to those influences as a pledge of the future glories which await Christians in heaven. In regard to the “earnest,” or the part of a price which was paid in a contract, it may be remarked:

- (1) That it was of the same nature as the full price, being regarded as a part of it;
- (2) It was regarded as a pledge or assurance that the full price would be paid.

So the “earnest of the Spirit,” denotes that God gives to his people the influences of his Spirit: his operation on the heart as a part or pledge that all the blessings of the covenant of redemption shall be given to them. And it implies:

(1) That the comforts of the Christian here are of the same nature as they will be in heaven. Heaven will consist of like comforts; of love, and peace, and joy, and purity begun here, and simply expanded there to complete and eternal perfection. The joys of heaven differ only in degree, not in kind, from those of the Christian on earth. That which is begun here is perfected there; and the feelings and views which the Christian has here, if expanded and carried out, would constitute heaven.

(2) These comforts, these influences of the Spirit, are a pledge of heaven. They are the security which God gives us that we shall be saved. If we are brought under the renewing influences of the Spirit here; if we are made meek, and humble, and prayerful by his agency; if we are made to partake of the joys which result from pardoned sin; if we are filled with the hope of heaven, it is all produced by the Holy Spirit, and is a pledge, or earnest of our future inheritance; as the first sheaves of a harvest are a pledge of a harvest; or the first payment under a contract a pledge that all will be payed. God thus gives to his people the assurance that they shall be saved; and by this “pledge” makes their title to eternal life sure.

~~2~~ **2 Corinthians 1:23.** *Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul* It is well remarked by Rosenmuller, that the second chapter should have commenced here, since there is here a transition in the subject more distinct than where the second chapter is actually made to begin. Here Tyndale commences the second chapter. This verse, with the subsequent statements, is designed to show them the true reason why he had changed his purpose, and had not visited them according to his first proposal. And that reason was not that he was fickle and inconstant; but it was that he apprehended that if he should go to them in their irregular and disorderly state, he would be under a necessity of resorting to harsh measures, and to a severity of discipline that would be alike painful to them and to him. Dr. Paley has shown with great plausibility, if not with moral certainty, that Paul’s change of purpose about visiting them was made before he wrote his First Epistle; that he had at first resolved to visit them, but that on subsequent reflection, he thought it would be better to try the effect of a faithful letter to them, admonishing them of their errors, and entreating

them to exercise proper discipline themselves on the principal offender; that with this feeling he wrote his First Epistle, in which he does not state to them as yet his change of purpose, or the reason of it; but that now after he had written that letter, and after it had had all the effect which he desired, he states the true reason why he had not visited them. It was now proper to do it; and that reason was, that he desired to spare them the severity of discipline, and had resorted to the more mild and affectionate measure of sending them a letter, and thus not making it necessary personally to administer discipline; see Paley's *Horae Paulinae*, on 2 Corinthians, Numbers 4 and 5. The phrase, "I call God for a record upon my soul," is in the Greek, "I call God for a witness against my soul." It is a solemn oath, or appeal to God; and implies, that if he did not in that case declare the truth, he desired that God would be a witness against him, and would punish him accordingly. The reason why he made this solemn appeal to God was, the importance of his vindicating his own character before the church, from the charges which had been brought against him.

That to spare you To avoid the necessity of inflicting punishment on you; of exercising severe and painful discipline. If he went among them in the state of irregularity and disorder which prevailed there, he would feel it to be necessary to exert his authority as an apostle, and remove at once the offending members from the church. He expected to avoid the necessity of these painful acts of discipline, by sending to them a faithful and affectionate epistle, and thus inducing them to reform, and to avoid the necessity of a resort to that which would have been so trying to him and to them. It was not, then, a disregard for them, or a lack of attachment to them, which had led him to change his purpose, but it was the result of tender affection. This cause of the change of his propose, of course, he would not make known to them in his First Epistle, but now that that letter had accomplished all he had desired, it was proper that they should be apprized of the reason why he had resorted to this instead of visiting them personally.

2 Corinthians 1:24. *Not for that we have dominion ...* The sense of this passage I take to be this: "The course which we have pursued has been chosen not because we wish to lord it over your faith, to control your belief, but because we desired to promote your happiness. Had the former been our object, had we wished to set up a lordship or dominion over you, we should have come to you with our apostolical authority, and in the severity of apostolic discipline. We had power to command obedience, and

to control your faith. But we chose not to do it. Our object was to promote your highest happiness. We, therefore, chose the mildest and gentlest manner possible; we did not exercise authority in discipline, we sent an affectionate and tender letter.” While the apostles had the right to prescribe the articles of belief, and to propound the doctrines of God, yet they would not do even that in such a manner as to seem to “lord it over God’s heritage” (οὐκ ^{<3756>} κυριευομεν ^{<2961>}); they did not set up absolute authority, or prescribe the things to be believed in a lordly and imperative manner; nor would they make use of the severity of power to enforce what they taught. They appealed to reason; they employed persuasion; they made use of light and love to accomplish their desires.

Are helpers of your joy This is our main object, to promote your joy. This object we have pursued in our plans, and in order to secure this. we forbore to come to you, when, if we did come at that time, we should have given occasion perhaps to the charge that we sought to lord it over your faith.

For by faith ye stand see the note, ^{<4658>}1 Corinthians 15:1. This seems to be a kind of proverbial expression, stating a general truth, that it was by faith that Christians were to be established or confirmed. The connection here requires us to understand this as a reason why he would not attempt to lord it over their faith; or to exercise dominion over them. That reason was, that thus far they had stood firm, in the main, in the faith (^{<4658>}1 Corinthians 15:1); they had adhered to the truths of the gospel, and in a special manner now, in yielding obedience to the commands and entreaties of Paul in the First Epistle, they had showed that they were in the faith, and firm in faith. It was not necessary or proper, therefore, for him to attempt to exercise lordship over their belief, but all that was needful was to help forward their joy, for they were firm in the faith. We may observe:

- (1) That it is a part of the duty of ministers to help forward the joy of Christians.
- (2) This should be the object even in administering discipline and reproof.
- (3) If even Paul would not attempt to lord it over the faith of Christians, to establish a domination over their belief, how absurd and wicked is it for uninspired ministers now, for individual ministers, for conferences, conventions, presbyteries, synods, councils, or for the pope, to attempt to establish a spiritual dominion in controlling the faith of people.

The great evils in the church have arisen from their attempting to do what Paul would not do; from attempting to establish a dominion which Paul never sought, and which Paul would have abhorred. Faith must be free, and religion must be free, or they cannot exist at all.

REMARKS

In view of this chapter we may remark:

1. God is the only true and real Source of comfort in times of trial, ~~FOR~~ 2 Corinthians 1:3. It is from Him that all real consolation must come, and he only can meet and sustain the soul when it is borne down with calamity. All persons are subjected to trial, and at some periods of their lives, to severe trial. Sickness is a trial; the death of a friend is a trial; the loss of property or health, disappointment, and reproach, and slander, and poverty, and want, are trials to which we are all more or less exposed. In these trials, it is natural to look to some source of consolation; some way in which they may be borne. Some seek consolation in philosophy, and endeavor to blunt their feelings and destroy their sensibilities, as the ancient stoics did. But “to destroy sensibility is not to produce comfort” — Dr. Mason. Some plunge deep into pleasures, and endeavor to drown their sorrows in the intoxicating draught; but this is not to produce comfort to the soul, even were it possible in such pleasures to forget their sorrows. Such were the ancient Epicureans. Some seek consolation in their surviving friends, and look to them to comfort and sustain the sinking heart. But the arm of an earthly friend is feeble, when God lays His hand upon us. It is only the hand that smites that can heal; only the God that sends the affliction, that can bind up the broken spirit. He is the “Father of mercies,” and He is “the God of ALL consolation;” and in affliction there is no true comfort except in Him.

2. This consolation in God is derived from many sources:

(a) He is the “Father of mercies,” and we may be assured, therefore, that He does nothing inconsistent with MERCY.

(b) We may be assured that He is right — always right, and that He does nothing but right. We may not be able to see the reason of His actions, but we may have the assurance that it is all right, and will yet be seen to be right.

(c) There is comfort in the fact, that our afflictions are ordered by an intelligent Being, by One who is all-wise, and all-knowing. They are not the result of blind chance; but they are ordered by One who is wise to know what ought to be done; and who is so fair that he will do nothing wrong. There could be no consolation in the feeling that mere chance directed our trials; nor can there be consolation except in the feeling that a being of intelligence and goodness directs and orders all. The true comfort, therefore, is to be found in religion, not in atheism and philosophy.

3. It is possible to bless God in the midst of trials, and as the result of trial. It is possible so clearly to see His hand, and to be so fully satisfied with His wisdom and goodness of His dealings even when we are severely afflicted, as to see that He is worthy of our highest confidence and most exalted praise, ~~2~~2 Corinthians 1:3. God may be seen, then, to be the “Father of mercies;” and He may impart, even then, a consolation which we never experience in the days of prosperity. Some of the purest and most elevated joys known upon earth, are experienced in the very midst of outward calamities, and the most sincere and elevated thanksgivings which are offered to God, are often those which are the result of sanctified afflictions. It is when we are brought out from such trials, where we have experienced the rich consolations and the sustaining power of the gospel, that we are most disposed to say with Paul, “Blessed be God;” and can most clearly see that he is the “Father of mercies.” No Christian will ever have occasion to regret the trials through which God has brought him. I never knew a sincere Christian who was not finally benefitted by trials.

4. Christian joy is not apathy, it is comfort; ~~2~~2 Corinthians 1:4,5. It is not insensibility to suffering; it is not stoical indifference. The Christian feels his sufferings as keenly as others. The Lord Jesus was as sensitive to suffering as any one of the human family ever was; he was as susceptible of emotion from reproach, contempt, and scorn, and he as keenly felt the pain of the scourge, the nails, and the cross, as any one could. But there is positive joy, there is true and solid comfort. There is substantial, pure, and elevated happiness. Religion does not blunt the feelings, or destroy the sensibility, but it brings in consolations which enable us to bear our pains, and to endure persecution without complaining. In this, religion differs from all systems of philosophy. The one attempts to blunt and destroy our sensibilities to suffering; the other, while it makes us more delicate and tender in our feelings, gives consolation adapted to that delicate sensibility,

and suited to sustain the soul, notwithstanding the acuteness of its sufferings.

5. Ministers of the gospel may expect to be especially tried and afflicted; ~~2~~2 Corinthians 1:5. So it was with Paul and his fellow-apostles; and so it has been since. They are the special objects of the hatred of sinners, as they stand in the way of the sinful pursuits and pleasures of the world; and they are, like their Master, especially hated by the enemy of souls. Besides, they are, by their office, required to minister consolation to others who are afflicted; and it is so ordered in the providence of God, that they are subjected to special trials often, in order that they may be able to impart special consolations. They are to be the examples and the guides of the church of God; and God takes care that they shall be permitted to show by their example, as well as by their preaching, the supporting power of the gospel in times of trial.

6. If we suffer much in the cause of the Redeemer, we may also expect much consolation; ~~2~~2 Corinthians 1:5. Christ will take care that our hearts shall be filled with joy and peace. As our trials in his cause are, so shall our consolations be. If we suffer much, we shall enjoy much; if we are persecuted much, we shall have much support; if our names are cast out among people for his sake, we shall have increasing evidence that they are written in his Book of Life. There are things in the Christian religion which can be learned only in the furnace of affliction; and he who has never been afflicted on account of his attachment to Christ, is a stranger yet to much, very much of the fullness and beauty of that system of religion which has been appointed by the Redeemer, and to much, very much, of the beauty and power of the promises of the Bible. No one will ever understand all the Bible who is not favored with much persecution and many trials.

7. We should be willing to suffer; ~~2~~2 Corinthians 1:3-5. If we are willing to be happy, we should also be willing to suffer. If we desire to be happy in religion, we should be willing to suffer. If we expect to be happy, we should also be willing to endure much. Trials suit us for enjoyment here, as well as for heaven hereafter.

8. One great design of the consolation which is imparted to Christians in the time of affliction is, that they may be able to impart consolation also to others; ~~2~~2 Corinthians 1:4,6,7. God designs that we should thus be mutual aids. And He comforts a minister in his trials, that he may, by his own experience, be able to minister consolation to the people of his charge

he comforts a parent, that he may administer consolation to his children; a friend, that he may comfort a friend. He who attempts to administer consolation should be able to speak from experience: and God, therefore, afflicts and comforts all His people, that they may know how to administer consolation to those with whom they are connected.

9. If we have experienced special consolations ourselves in times of trial, we are under obligations to seek out and comfort others who are afflicted. So Paul felt. We should feel that God has qualified us for this work; and having qualified us for it, that He calls on us to do it. The consolation which God gives in affliction is a rich treasure which we are bound to impart to others; the experience which we have of the true sources of consolation is an inestimable talent which we are to use for the promotion of his glory. No man has a talent for doing more direct good than he who can go to the afflicted, and bear testimony, from his own experience, to the goodness of God. And every one who can testify that God is good, and is able to support the soul in times of trial — and what Christian cannot do it who has ever been afflicted? — should regard himself as favored with a special talent for doing good, and should rejoice in the privilege of using it to the glory of God. For there is no talent more honorable than that of being able to promote the divine glory, to comfort the afflicted, or to be able from personal experience, to testify that God is good — always good.

“The power of doing good, always implies an obligation to do it”
— Cotton Mather.

10. In this chapter, we have a case of a near contemplation of death. ^{<7008>2} Corinthians 1:8,9. Paul expected soon to die. He had the sentence of death in himself. He saw no human probability of escape. He was called, therefore, calmly to look death in the face, and to contemplate it as an event certain and near. Such a condition is deeply interesting, it is the important crisis of life. And yet it is an event which all must soon contemplate. We all, in a short period, each one for himself, must look upon death as certain. and as near to us; as an event in which we are personally interested, and from which we cannot escape. Much as we may turn away from it in health, and unanxious as we may be then in regard to it, yet by no possibility can we long avert our minds from the subject. It is interesting, then, to inquire how Paul felt when he looked at death; how we should feel; and how we actually shall feel when we come to die.

11. A contemplation of death as near and certain, is suited to lead us to trust in God. This was the effect in the case of Paul; ~~<400>~~2 Corinthians 1:9. He had learned in health to put his trust in Him, and now, when the trial was apparently near, he had no where else to go, and he confided in him alone. He felt that if he was rescued, it could be only by the interposition of God; and that there was none but God who could sustain him if he should die. And what event can there be that is so well fitted to lead us to trust in God as death? And where else can we go in view of that dark hour? For:

(a) We know not what death is. We have not tried it; nor do we know what grace may be necessary for us in those unknown pangs and sufferings; in that deep darkness, and that sad gloom.

(b) Our friends cannot help us then. They will, they must, then, give us the parting hand; and as we enter the shades of the dark valley, they must bid us farewell. The skill of the physician will fall then. Our worldly friends will forsake us when we come to die. They do not love to be in the room of death, and they can give us no consolation if they are there. Our pious friends cannot attend us far in the dark valley. They may pray, and commend us to God, but even they must leave us to die alone. Who but God can attend us? Who but He can support us then?

(c) Only God knows what is beyond death. How do we know the way to His bar, to His presence, to His heaven? How can we direct our own steps in that dark and unknown world? None but God our Saviour can guide us there; no one else can conduct us to His abode.

(d) None but God can sustain us in the pain, the anguish, the feebleness, the sinking of the powers of body and of mind in that distressing hour. He can uphold us then; and it is an unspeakable privilege to be permitted then, “when heart and flesh faint,” to say of him, “God is the strength of” our “heart, and” our “portion forever;” ~~<9726>~~Psalm 73:26.

12. We should regard a restoration from dangerous sickness, and from imminent peril of death as a kind of resurrection. So Paul regarded it; ~~<400>~~2 Corinthians 1:9. We should remember how easy it would have been for God to have removed us; how rapidly we were tending to the grave; how certainly we should have descended there but for his interposition. We should feel, therefore, that we owe our lives to Him as really and entirely as though we had been raised up from the dead; and that the same kind of power and goodness have been evinced as would have been had God given

us life anew. Life is God's gift; and every instance of recovery from peril, or from dangerous illness, is as really an interposition of his mercy as though we had been raised up from the dead.

13. We should, in like manner, regard a restoration of our friends from dangerous sickness, or peril of any kind, as a species of resurrection from the dead. When a parent, a husband, a wife or a child has been dangerously ill, Or exposed to some imminent danger, and has been recovered, we cannot but feel that the recovery is entirely owing to the interposition of God. With infinite ease He could have consigned them to the grave; and had He not mercifully interposed, they would have died. As they were originally his gift to us, so we should regard each interposition of that kind as new gift, and receive the recovered and restored friend as a fresh gift from His hand.

14. We should feel that lives thus preserved and thus recovered from danger, belong to God. He has preserved them. In the most absolute sense they belong to Him, and to Him they should be consecrated. So Paul felt; and his whole life shows how entirely he regarded himself as bound to devote a life often preserved in the midst of peril, to the service of his kind Benefactor. There is no claim more absolute than that which God has on those whom He has preserved from dangerous situations, or whom He has raised up from the borders of the grave. All the strength which He has imparted, all the talent, learning, skill, which He has thus preserved, should be regarded in the most absolute sense as His, and should be honestly and entirely consecrated to Him. But for Him we should have died; and He has a right to our services and obedience which is entire, and which should be felt to be perpetual. And it may be added, that the right is not less clear and strong to the service of those whom He keeps without their being exposed to such peril, or raised up from such beds of sickness. Only a very few of the interventions of God on our behalf are seen by us. A small part of the perils to which we may be really exposed are seen. And it is no less owing to His preserving care that we are kept in health, and strength, and in the enjoyment of reason, than it is that we are raised up from dangerous sickness. Man is as much bound to devote himself to God for preserving him from sickness and danger as He is for raising him up when he has been sick, and defending him in danger.

15. We have here an instance of the principle on which Paul acted, [EPIII-2](#) Corinthians 1:12. In his aims, and in the manner of accomplishing his aims,

He was guided only by the principles of simplicity and sincerity, and by the grace of God. He had no sinister and worldly purpose; he had no crooked and subtle policy by which to accomplish his purposes. He sought simply the glory of God and the salvation of man; and he sought this in a manner plain, direct, honest, and straightforward. He admitted none of the principles of worldly policy which have been so often acted on since in the church; he knew nothing of “pious frauds,” which have so often disgraced the professed friends of the Redeemer; he admitted no form of deception and delusion, even for the promotion of objects which were great, and good, and desirable. He knew that all that ought to be done could be accomplished by straightforward and simple-hearted purposes; and that a cause which depended on the carnal and crooked policy of the world was a bad cause; and that such policy would ultimately ruin the best of causes. How happy would it have been if these views had always prevailed in the church!

16. We see the value of a good conscience, ^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 1:12. Paul had the testimony of an enlightened conscience to the correctness and uprightness of his course of life everywhere. He felt assured that his aims had been right; and that he had endeavored in all simplicity and sincerity to pursue a course of life which such a conscience would approve. Such a testimony, such an approving conscience is of inestimable value. It is worth more than gold, and crowns, and all that the earth can give. When like Paul we are exposed to peril, or trial, or calamity, it matters little, if we have an approving conscience. When like him we are persecuted, it matters little if we have the testimony of our own minds that we have pursued an upright and an honest course of life. When like him we look death in the face, and feel that we “have the sentence of death in ourselves,” of what inestimable value then will be an approving conscience! How unspeakable the consolation if we can look back then on a life spent in conscious integrity; a life spent in endeavoring to promote the glory of God and the salvation of the world!

17. Every Christian should feel himself sacredly bound to maintain a character of veracity, ^{<4019>}2 Corinthians 1:19,20. Christ was always true to his word; and all that God has promised shall be certainly fulfilled. And as a Christian is a professed follower of him who was “the Amen and the true Witness,” he should feel himself bound by the most sacred obligations to adhere to all his promises, and to fulfill all His word. No man can do any good who is not a man of truth; and in no way can Christians more

dishonor their profession, and injure the cause of the Redeemer, than by a lack of character for unimpeachable veracity. If they make promises which are never fulfilled; if they state that as true which is not true; if they overload their narratives with circumstances which had no existence; if they deceive, and defraud others; and if they are so loose in their statements that no one believes them, it is impossible for them to do good in their Christian profession. Every Christian should have — as he easily may have — such a character for veracity that every person shall put implicit confidence in all His promises and statements; so implicit that they shall deem his word as good as an oath; and His promise as certain as though it were secured by notes and bonds in the most solemn manner. The word of a Christian should need no strengthening by oaths and bonds; it should be such that it could really not be strengthened by anything that notes and bonds could add to it.

18. All Christians should regard themselves as consecrated to God, ~~402~~2 Corinthians 1:21. They have been anointed, or set apart to his service. They should feel that they are as really set apart to His service as the ancient prophets, priests, and kings were to their appropriate offices by the ceremony of anointing. They belong to God, and are under every sacred and solemn obligation to live to Him, and Him alone.

19. It is an inestimable privilege to be a Christian, ~~402~~2 Corinthians 1:21,22. It is regarded as a privilege to be an heir to an estate, and to have an assurance that it will be ours. But the Christian has an “earnest,” a pledge that heaven is his. He is anointed by God; he is sealed for heaven. Heaven is his home; and God is giving to him daily evidence in his own experience that he will soon be admitted to its pure and blissful abodes.

20. The joys of the Christian on earth are of the same nature as the joys of heaven. These comforts are an “earnest” of the future inheritance; a part of that which the Christian is to enjoy forever. His joys on earth are “heaven begun;” and all that is needful to constitute heaven is that these joys should be expanded and perpetuated. There will be no other heaven than that which would be constituted by the expanded joys of a Christian.

21. No one is a Christian, no one is suited for heaven, who has not such principles and joys as being fully expanded and developed would constitute heaven. The joys of heaven are not to be created for us as some new thing; they are not to be such as we have had no foretaste, no conception of; but they are to be such as will be produced of necessity by removing

imperfection from the joys and feelings of the believer, and carrying them out without alloy, and without interruption, and without end. The man, therefore, who has such a character, that if fairly developed would not constitute the joys of heaven, is not a Christian. He has no evidence that he has been born again; and all his joys are fancied and delusive.

22. Christians should be careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit; compare ~~400~~ Ephesians 4:30. It is by that Spirit that they are “anointed” and “sealed,” and it is by his influences that they have the “earnest” of their future inheritance. All good influences on their minds proceed from that Spirit; and it should be their high and constant aim not to grieve him. By no course of conduct, by no conversation, by no impure thought, should they drive that Spirit from their minds. All their peace and joy is dependent on their cherishing his sacred influences; and by all the means in their power they should strive to secure his constant agency on their souls.

NOTES ON 2 CORINTHIANS 2

In this chapter (2 Corinthians 2) Paul continues the discussion of the subject which had been introduced in the previous chapter. At the close of that chapter, he had stated the reasons why he had not visited the church at Corinth; see the notes on [2 Corinthians 1:23,24](#). The main reason was, that instead of coming to them in that disordered, and irregular state, he had preferred to send them an affectionate letter. Had he come to them personally he would have felt himself called on to exercise the severity of discipline. He chose, therefore, to try what the effect would be of a faithful and kind epistle. In this chapter, he prosecutes the same subject. He states, therefore, more at length, the reason why he had not come to them, [2 Corinthians 2:1-5](#). The reason was, that he resolved not to come to them, if he could avoid it, with severity; that his heart was pained even with the necessity of sending such a letter; that he wrote it with much anguish of spirit; yet that he cherished toward them the most tender love. In his former Epistle (1 Corinthians 5) he had directed them to exercise discipline on the offending person in the church. This had been done according to his direction; and the offender had been suitably punished for his offence. He had been excommunicated; and it would seem that the effect on him had been to induce him to forsake his sin, and probably to put away his father's wife, and he had become a sincere penitent. Paul, therefore, in the next place ([2 Corinthians 2:6-11](#)), exhorts them to receive him again into fellowship with the church. The punishment he says had been sufficient ([2 Corinthians 2:6](#)); they ought now to be kind and forgiving to him lest he should be overwhelmed with his sorrow ([2 Corinthians 2:7](#)); he says, that he had forgiven him, so far as he was concerned, and he entreated them to do the same ([2 Corinthians 2:10](#)); and says that they ought, by all means, to pursue such a course that Satan could get no advantage of them, [2 Corinthians 2:11](#). Paul then states the disappointment which he had had at Troas in not seeing Titus, from whom he had expected to learn what was the state of the church at Corinth, and what was the reception of his letter there; but that not seeing him there, he had gone on to Macedonia, [2 Corinthians 2:12,13](#). There, it would seem, he met Titus, and learned that his letter had had all the success which he could have desired. It had been kindly received; and all that he had wished in regard to discipline had been performed, [2 Corinthians 2:14](#). The hearing of this

success gives him occasion to thank God for it, as one among many instances in which his efforts to advance His cause had been crowned with success. God had made him successful everywhere; and God had made him triumph in Christ in every place. This fact gives him occasion (^{<4015>}2 Corinthians 2:15,16) to state the general effect of his preaching and his labors. His efforts, he says, were always acceptable to God — though he could not be ignorant that in some cases the gospel which he preached was the occasion of the aggravated condemnation of those who heard and rejected it. Yet he had the consolation of reflecting that it was by no fault of his, ^{<4017>}2 Corinthians 2:17. It was not because he had corrupted the Word of God; it was not because he was unfaithful; it was not because he was not sincere. He had a good conscience — a conscience which assured him that he spoke in sincerity and as in the sight of God — though the unhappy effect might be that many would perish from under his ministry.

^{<4018>}**2 Corinthians 2:1.** *But I determined this with myself* I made up my mind on this point; I formed this resolution in regard to my course.

That I would not come again to you in heaviness In grief (^{<172>} εν ^{<3077>} λυπη). “I would not come, if I could avoid it, in circumstances which must have grieved both me and you. I would not come while there existed among you such irregularities as must have pained my heart, and as must have compelled me to resort to such acts of discipline as would be painful to you. I resolved, therefore, to endeavor to remove these evils before I came, that when I did come, my visit might be mutually agreeable to us both. For that reason I changed my purpose about visiting you, when I heard of those disorders, and resolved to send an epistle. If that should be successful, then the way would be open for an agreeable visit to you.” This verse, therefore, contains the statement of the principal reason why he had not come to them as he had at first proposed. It was really from no fickleness, but it was from love to them, and a desire that his visit should be mutually agreeable, compare the notes, ^{<4013>}2 Corinthians 1:23.

^{<4019>}**2 Corinthians 2:2.** *For if I make you sorry* “If when I should come among you, I should be called on to inflict sorrow by punishing your offending brethren by an act of severe discipline as soon as I came, who would there be to give me comfort but those very persons whom I had affected with grief? How little prepared would they be to make me happy, and to comfort me, amidst the deep sorrow which I should have caused by an act of severe discipline. After such an act — an act that would spread

sorrow through the whole church, how could I expect that comfort which I should desire to find among you. The whole church would be affected with grief; and though I might be sustained by the sound part of the church, yet my visit would be attended with painful circumstances. I resolved, therefore, to remove all cause of difficulty, if possible, before I came, that my visit might be pleasant to us all." The idea is, that there was such a sympathy between him and them; that he was so attached to them, that he could not expect to be happy unless they were happy; that though he might be conscious he was only discharging a duty, and that God would sustain him in it, yet that it would mar the pleasure of his visit, and destroy all his anticipated happiness by the general grief.

2 Corinthians 2:3. *And I wrote this same unto you* The words "this same" (τοῦτο ^{<5124>} αὐτο ^{<846>}) refer to what he had written to them in the former Epistle, particularly to what he had written in regard to the incestuous person, requiring them to excommunicate him. Probably the expression also includes the commands in his former Epistle to reform their conduct in general, and to put away the abuses and evil practices which prevailed in the church there.

Lest when I came ... Lest I should be obliged if I came personally to exercise the severity of discipline, and thus to diffuse sorrow throughout the entire church.

I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice Lest I should have grief in the church. Lest the conduct of the church, and the abuses which prevail in it should give me sorrow. I should be grieved with the existence of these evils; and I should be obliged to resort to measures which would be painful to me, and to the whole church. Paul sought to avoid this by persuading them before he came to exercise the discipline themselves, and to put away the evil practices which prevailed among them.

Having confidence in you all Having confidence that this is your general character, that whatever adds to my joy, or promotes my happiness, would give joy to you all. Paul had enemies in Corinth; he knew that there were some there whose minds were alienated from him, and who were endeavoring to do him injury. Yet he did not doubt that it was the general character of the church that they wished him well, and would desire to make him happy; that what would tend to promote his happiness would also promote theirs; and therefore, that they would be willing to do

anything that would make his visit agreeable to him when he came among them. He was, therefore, persuaded that if he wrote them an affectionate letter, they would listen to his injunctions, that thus all that was painful might be avoided when he came among them.

2 Corinthians 2:4. *For out of much affliction* Possibly Paul's enemies had charged him with being harsh and overbearing. They may have said that there was much needless severity in his letter. He here meets that, and says, that it was with much pain and many tears that he was constrained to write as he did. He was pained at their conduct, and at the necessity which existed for such an epistle. This is an eminently beautiful instance of Paul's kindness of heart, and his susceptibility to tender impressions. The evil conduct of others gives pain to a good man; and the necessity of administering reproof and discipline is often as painful to him who does it, as it is to those who are the subjects of it.

And anguish of heart The word rendered "anguish" (*συνοχῆ* ^{<4928>}) means, properly, "a holding together or shutting up"; and then, "pressure, distress, anguish" — an affliction of the heart by which one feels tightened or constrained; such a pressure as great grief causes at the heart.

I wrote unto you with many tears With much weeping and grief that I was constrained to write such a letter. This was an instance of Paul's great tenderness of heart — a trait of character which, he uniformly evinced. With all his strength of mind, and all His courage and readiness to face danger, Paul was not ashamed to weep; and especially if he had any occasion of censuring his Christian brethren, or administering discipline; compare ^{<5018>}Philippians 3:18; ^{<4131>}Acts 20:31. This is also a specimen of the manner in which Paul met the faults of his Christian brethren. It was not with bitter denunciation. It was not with sarcasm and ridicule. It was not by emblazoning those faults abroad to others. It was not with the spirit of rejoicing that they had committed errors, and had been guilty of sin. It was not as if he was glad of the opportunity of administering rebuke, and took pleasure in denunciation and in the language of reproof. All this is often done by others; but Paul pursued a different course. He sent an affectionate letter to the offenders themselves; and he did it with many tears. IT WAS DONE WEeping. Admonition would always be done right if it was done with tears. Discipline would always be right, and would be effectual, if it were administered with tears. Any man will receive an admonition kindly, if he who administers it does it weeping; and the heart of an offender will be

melted, if he who attempts to reprove him comes to him with tears. How happy would it be if all who attempt to reprove should do it with Paul's spirit. How happy, if all discipline should be administered in the church in his manner. But, we may add, how seldom is this done! How few are there who feel themselves called on to reprove an offending brother, or to charge a brother with heresy or crime, that do it with tears!

Not that ye should be grieved It was not my object to give you pain.

But that ye might know the love ... This was one of the best evidences of his great love to them which he could possibly give. It is proof of genuine friendship for another, when we faithfully and affectionately admonish him of the error of his course; it is the highest proof of affection when we do it with tears. It is cruelty to suffer a brother to remain in sin unadmonished; it is cruel to admonish him of it in a harsh, severe, and authoritative tone; but it is proof of tender attachment when we go to him with tears, and entreat him to repent and reform. No one gives higher proof of attachment to another than he who affectionately admonishes him of his sin and danger.

~~405~~ **2 Corinthians 2:5.** *If any have caused grief* There is doubtless here an allusion to the incestuous person. But it is very delicately done. He does not mention him by name. There is not anywhere an allusion to his name; nor is it possible now to know it. Is this not a proof that the names of the offending brethren in a church should not be put on the records of sessions, and churches, and presbyteries, to be handed down to posterity? Paul does not here either expressly refer to such a person. He makes his remark general, that it might be as tender and kind to the offending brother as possible. They would know whom he meant, but they had already punished him, as Paul supposed, enough, and note all that he said in regard to him was as tender as possible, and suited, as much as possible, to conciliate his feelings and allay his grief. He did not harshly charge him with sin; he did not use any abusive or severe epithets; but he gently insinuates that he "had caused grief;" he had pained the hearts of his brethren.

He hath not grieved me, but in part He has not particularly offended or grieved ME. He has grieved me only in common with others, and as a part of the church of Christ. All have common cause of grief; and I have no interest in it which is not common to you all. I am but one of a great number who have felt the deepest concern on account of his conduct.

That I may not overcharge you all That I may not bear hard (επιβαρω ^{<1912>}) on you all; that I may not accuse you all of having caused me grief. The sense is, “Grief has been produced. I, in common with the church, have been pained, and deeply pained, with the conduct of the individual referred to; and with that of his abettors and friends. But I would not charge the whole church with it; or seem to bear hard on them, or overcharge them with lack of zeal for their purity, or unwillingness to remove the evil.” They had shown their willingness to correct the evil by promptly removing the offender when he had directed it. The sense of this verse should be connected with the verse that follows; and the idea is, that they had promptly administered sufficient discipline, and that they were not now to be charged severely with having neglected it. Even while Paul said he had been pained and grieved, he had seen occasion not to bear hard on the whole church, but to be ready to commend them for their promptness in removing the cause of the offence.

2 Corinthians 2:6. *Sufficient to such a man* The incestuous person who had been by Paul’s direction removed from the church. The object of Paul here is to have him again restored. For that purpose he says that the punishment which they had inflicted on him was “sufficient.” It was:

- (1) A sufficient expression of the evil of the offence, and of the readiness of the church to preserve itself pure; and,
- (2) It was a sufficient punishment to the offender.

It had accomplished all that he had desired. It had humbled him, and brought him to repentance; and doubtless led him to put away his “wife”; compare note, ^{<1911>}1 Corinthians 5:1. As that had been done, it was proper now that he should be again restored to the privileges of the church. No evil would result from such a restoration, and their duty to their penitent brother demanded it. Mr. Locke has remarked that Paul conducts this subject here with very great tenderness and delicacy. The entire passage from ^{<1911>}2 Corinthians 2:5 to ^{<1912>}2 Corinthians 2:10 relates solely to this offending brother, yet he never once mentions his name, nor does he mention his crime. He speaks of him only in the soft terms of “such a one” and “any one:” nor does he use an epithet which would be calculated to wound his feelings, or to transmit his name to posterity, or to communicate it to other churches. So that though this Epistle should be read, as Paul doubtless intended, by other churches, and be transmitted to future times,

yet no one would ever be acquainted with the name of the individual. How different this from the temper of those who would emblazon abroad the names of offenders, or make a permanent record to carry them down with dishonor to posterity?

Which was inflicted of many By the church in its collective capacity; see the note on ^{<410>}1 Corinthians 5:4. Paul had required the church to administer this act of discipline, and they had promptly done it. It is evident that the whole church was concerned in the administration of the act of discipline; as the words “of many” (^{<575>}απο ^{<3588>}των ^{<4119>}πλειονων) are not applicable either to a single” bishop, or a single minister, or a presbytery, or a bench of elders: nor can they be so regarded, except by a forced and unnatural construction. Paul had directed it to be done by the assembled church (^{<410>}1 Corinthians 5:4), and this phrase shows that they had followed his instructions. Locke supposes that the phrase means, “by the majority;” Macknight renders it, “by the greater number;” Bloomfield supposes that it means that the “punishment was carried into effect by all.” Doddridge paraphrases it, “by the whole body of your society.” The expression proves beyond a doubt that the whole body of the society was concerned in the act of the excommunication, and that is a proper way of administering discipline. Whether it proves, however, that that is the mode which is to be observed in all instances, may admit of a doubt, as the example of the early churches, in a particular case, does not prove that that mode has the force of a binding rule on all.¹⁹

^{<410>}**2 Corinthians 2:7.** *So that contrariwise* On the other hand: on the contrary. That is, instead of continuing the punishment. Since the punishment was sufficient, and has answered all the purpose of bearing your testimony against the offence, and of bringing him to repentance, you ought again to admit him to your communion.

Ye ought rather to forgive him Rather than continue the pain and disgrace of excommunication. It follows from this:

(1) That the proper time for restoring an offender is only when the punishment has answered the purpose for which it was designed; that is, has shown the just abhorrence of the church against the sin, and has reformed the offender; and,

(2) That when that is done the church ought to forgive the offending brother, and admit him again to their fellowship. When it can be

ascertained that the punishment has been effectual in reforming him, may depend somewhat on the nature of the offence. In this case, it was sufficiently shown by his putting away his wife, and by the manifestations of sorrow. So in other cases, it may be shown by a man's abandoning a course of sin, and reforming his life. If he has been unjust, by his repairing the evil; if he has been pursuing an unlawful business, by abandoning it; if he has pursued a course of, vice; by his forsaking it, and by giving satisfactory evidences of sorrow and of reformation, for a period sufficiently long to show his sincerity. The time which will be required in each case, must depend, of course, somewhat on the nature of the offence, the previous character of the individual, the temptations to which he may be exposed, and the disgrace which he may have brought on his Christian calling. It is to be observed, also, that then his restoration is to be regarded as an act of "forgiveness," a favor ($\chi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\alpha\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ ^{<5483>}, that is, $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\varsigma$ ^{<5485>}, favor, grace) on the part of the church. It is not a matter of justice, or of claim on his part for having once dishonored his calling, he has forfeited his right to a good standing among Christians; but it is a matter of favor, and he should be willing to humble himself before the church, and make suitable acknowledgment for his offences.

And comfort him There is every reason to think that this man became a sincere penitent. If so, he must have been deeply pained at the remembrance of his sin, and the dishonor which he had brought on his profession, as well as at the consequences in which he had been involved. In this deep distress, Paul tells them that they ought to comfort him. They should receive him kindly, as God receives to his favor a penitent sinner. They should not cast out his name as evil; they should not reproach him for his sins; they should not harrow up his recollection of the offence by often referring to it; they should be willing to bury it in lasting forgetfulness, and treat him now as a brother. It is a duty of a church to treat with kindness a true penitent, and receive him to their affectionate embrace. The offence should be forgiven and forgotten. The consolations of the gospel, adapted to the condition of penitents, should be freely administered; and all should be done that can be, to make the offender, when penitent, happy and useful in the community.

Lest perhaps such a one Still forbearing to mention his name; still showing toward him the utmost tenderness and delicacy.

Should be swallowed up ... Should be overcome with grief, and should be rendered incapable of usefulness by his excessive sorrow. This is a strong expression, denoting intensity of grief. We speak of a man's being drowned in sorrow; or overwhelmed with grief; of grief preying upon him. The figure here is probably taken from deep waters, or from a whirlpool which seems to swallow up anything that comes within reach. Excessive grief or calamity, in the Scriptures, is often compared to such waters; see ^{<BIB>}Psalm 124:2-5.

“If it had not been the LORD who was on our side when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us; then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul; then the proud waters had gone over our soul;”

see ^{<BIB>}Psalm 69:1. “Save me, O God, for the waters are come into my soul.” Paul apprehended that by excessive grief, the offending brother would be destroyed. His life would waste away under the effect of his excommunication and disgrace, and the remembrance of his offence would prey upon him, and sink him to the grave.

^{<BIB>}**2 Corinthians 2:8.** *Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him* The word rendered here as “confirm”

(^{<GRI>}κυρωσαι)^{<2964>} occurs in the New Testament only here and in ^{<BIB>}Galatians 3:15. It means to give authority, to establish as valid, to confirm; and here means that they should give strong expressions and assurances of their love to him; that they should pursue such a course as would leave no room for doubt in regard to it. Tyndale has well rendered it: “Wherefore I exhort you that love may halve strength over him.” Paul referred, doubtless, here to some public act of the church by which the sentence of excommunication might be removed, and by which the offender might have a public assurance of their favor.

^{<BIB>}**2 Corinthians 2:9.** *For to this end also did I write* The apostle did not say that this was the only purpose of his writing, to induce them to excommunicate the offender. He does not say that he wished in an arbitrary manner to test their willingness to obey him, or to induce them to do a thing in itself wrong, in order to try their obedience. But the meaning is this: This was the main reason why he wrote to them, rather than to come personally among them. The thing ought to have been done; the offender

ought to be punished; and Paul says that he adopted the method of writing to them rather than of coming among them in person, in order to give them an opportunity to show whether they were disposed to be obedient. And the sense is, “You may now forgive him. He has not only been sufficiently punished, and he has not only evinced suitable penitence, but also another object which I had in view has been accomplished. I desired to see whether you were, as a church, disposed to be obedient. That object, also, has been accomplished. And now, since everything aimed at in the case of discipline has been secured, you may forgive him, and should, without hesitation, again receive him to the bosom of the church.”

2 Corinthians 2:10. *To whom ye forgive anything* The sense here is, “I have confidence in you as a Christian society and such confidence, that if you forgive an offence in one of your members, I shall approve the act, and shall also be ready to forgive.” He refers, doubtless, to this particular case; but he makes his remark general. It is implied here, I think, that the Corinthians were disposed to forgive the offending brother; and Paul here assures them that they had his hearty assent to this, and that if they did forgive him, he was ready to join them in the act, and to forgive him also.

For if I forgave anything If I forgive anything; if I remit any of the punishments which have been inflicted by my authority.

For your sakes It is not on account of the offender alone; it is in order to promote the happiness and purity of the church. *In the person of Christ* Locke paraphrases this, “By the authority, and in the name of Christ.” Doddridge, “As in the person of Christ, and by the high authority with which he has been pleased to invest me.” Tyndale, “In the room of Christ.” The word rendered “person” (Margin, “sight,” *προσωπον* ^{<4383>}, from *προς* ^{<4314>} and *ωπς* ^{<3799>}), means properly the part toward, at, and around the eye — Robinson. Then it means the face, visage, countenance; then the presence, person, etc. Here it probably means, in the presence of Christ; with his eye upon me, and conscious that I am acting before him, and must give account to him. It implies, undoubtedly, that Paul acted by his authority, and felt that he was doing that which Christ would approve.

2 Corinthians 2:11. *Lest Satan* The devil. The name Satan denotes an adversary, an accuser, an enemy. It is the usual proper name which is given to the devil, the great adversary of God and man.

Should get an advantage of us The literal translation of the Greek would be, “That we may not be defrauded by Satan.” (ἵνα ^{<244>} μη ^{<361>} πλεονεκτηθωμεν ^{<412>} ὑπο ^{<529>} του ^{<358>} Σατανα ^{<457>}). The verb used here denotes to have more than another; then to gain, to take advantage of one, to defraud. And the idea is, that they should at once re-admit the penitent offender to their communion, lest if they did not do it, Satan would take advantage of it to do injury to him and them. It is a reason given by Paul why they should lose no time in restoring him to the church. What the advantage was which Satan might gain, Paul does not specify. It might be this: That under pretence of duty, and seeking the purity of the church, Satan would tempt them to harsh measures; to needless severity of discipline; to an unkind and unforgiving spirit; and thus, at the same time, injure the cause of religion, and ruin him who had been the subject of discipline.

For we are not ignorant of his devices We know his plans, his thoughts, his cunning, his skill. We are not ignorant of the great number of stratagems which he is constantly using to injure us, and to destroy the souls of people. He is full of wiles; and Paul had had abundant occasion to be acquainted with the means which he had used to defeat his plans and to destroy the church. The church, at all times, has been subjected to the influence of those wiles, as well as individual Christians. And the church, therefore, as well as individual Christians, should be constantly on its guard against those snares. Even the best and purest efforts of the church are often perverted, as in the case of administering discipline, to the worst results; and by the imprudence and lack of wisdom; by the rashness or overheated zeal; by the pretensions to great purity and love of truth; and by a harsh, severe, and censorious spirit, Satan often takes advantage of the church, and advances his own dark and mischievous designs.

~~<402>~~ **2 Corinthians 2:12.** *Furthermore* But (δε ^{<116>}). This particle is properly adversative; but frequently denotes transition, and serves to introduce something else, whether opposite to what precedes, or simply continuative or explanatory. Here, it is designed to continue or explain the statement before made of his deep affection for the church, and his interest in its affairs. He therefore tells them that when he came to Troas, and was favored there with great success, and was engaged in a manner most likely of all others to interest his feelings and to give him joy, yet he was deeply distressed because he had not heard, as he expected, from them; but so deep was his anxiety that he left Troas and went into Macedonia.

When I came to Troas This was a city of Phrygia, or Mysia, on the Hellespont, between Troy on the north, and Assos on the south; see note on ^{<4468>}Acts 16:8. It was on the regular route from Ephesus to Macedonia. Paul took that route because on his journey to Macedonia he had resolved, for the reasons above stated, not to go to Corinth.

To preach Christ's gospel Greek. "For (εἰς ^{<1519>}) the gospel of Christ;" that is, on account of his gospel; or to promote it. Why he selected Troas, or the region of the Troad (note, ^{<4468>}Acts 16:8), as the field of his labors, he does not say. It is probable that he was waiting there to hear from Corinth by Titus, and while there he resolved not to be idle, but to make known as much as possible the gospel.

And a door was opened unto me see the note, ^{<4669>}1 Corinthians 16:9. There was an opportunity of doing good, and the people were disposed to hear the gospel. This was a work in which Paul delighted to engage, and in which he usually found his highest comfort. It was of all things the most adapted to promote his happiness.

^{<4123>}**2 Corinthians 2:13.** *I had no rest in my spirit* I was disappointed, sad, deeply anxious. Though the work in which I was engaged was that which usually gives me my highest joy, yet such was my anxiety to learn the state of things in Corinth, and the success of my letter, and to see Titus, whom I was expecting, that I had comparatively no peace, and no comfort.

But taking my leave of them Though so many considerations urged me to stay; though there was such a promising field of labor, yet such was my anxiety to hear from you, that I left them.

I went from thence into Macedonia see the note, ^{<4469>}Acts 16:9. I went over where I expected to find Titus, and to learn the state of your affairs. This is one of the few instances in which Paul left an inviting field of labor, and where there was a prospect of signal success, to go to another place. It is adduced here to show the deep interest which he had in the church at Corinth, and his anxiety to learn what was their condition. It shows that there may be cases where it is proper for ministers to leave a field of great and inviting usefulness, to go to another field and to engage in another part of the great vineyard.

^{<4124>}**2 Corinthians 2:14.** *Now thanks be unto God ...* There seem to have been several sources of Paul's joy on this occasion. The principal was, his

constant and uniform success in endeavoring to advance the interests of the kingdom of the Redeemer. But in particular he rejoiced;

(1) Because Titus had come to him there, and had removed his distress; compare ^{<4123>}2 Corinthians 2:13.

(2) Because he learned from him that his efforts in regard to the church at Corinth had been successful, and that they had hearkened to his counsels in his first letter; and,

(3) Because he was favored with signal success in Macedonia. His being compelled, therefore, to remove from Troas and to go to Macedonia had been to him ultimately the cause of great joy and consolation. These instances of success Paul regarded as occasions of gratitude to God.

Which always causeth us Whatever may be our efforts, and wherever we are. Whether it is in endeavoring to remove the errors and evils existing in a particular church, or whether it be in preaching the gospel in places where it has been unknown, still success crowns our efforts, and we have the constant evidence of divine approbation. This was Paul's consolation in the midst of his many trials; and it proves that, whatever may be the external circumstances of a minister, whether poverty, want, persecution, or distress, he will have abundant occasion to give thanks to God if his efforts as a minister are crowned with success.

To triumph in Christ. To triumph through the aid of Christ, or in promoting the cause of Christ. Paul had no joy which was not connected with Christ, and he had no success which he did not trace to him. The word which is rendered here as "triumph" (^{<2358>}θριαμβεοντι from ^{<2358>}θριαμβεω) occurs in no other place in the New Testament, except in ^{<1015>}Colossians 2:15. It is rendered there as "triumphing over them in it," that is, triumphing over the principalities and powers which he had spoiled, or plundered; and it there means that Christ led them in triumph after the manner of a conqueror. The word is used here in a causative sense — the sense of the Hebrew Hiphil conjugation. It properly refers to a triumph; or a triumphal procession. Originally the word ^{<2358>}θριαμβος meant a hymn which was sung in honor of Bacchus; then the tumultuous and noisy procession which constituted the worship of the god of wine; and then any procession of a similar kind. — Passow. It was particularly applied among both the Greeks and the Romans to a public and solemn honor conferred on a victorious general on a return from a successful war in which he was

allowed a magnificent entrance into the capital. In these triumphs, the victorious commander was usually preceded or attended by the spoils of war; by the most valuable and magnificent articles which he had captured; and by the princes, nobles, generals, or people whom he had subdued. The victor was drawn in a magnificent chariot, usually by two white horses. Other animals were sometimes used.

“When Pompey triumphed over Africa, his chariot was drawn by elephants; that of Mark Antony was drawn by lions; that of Heliogabalus pulled by tigers; and that of Aurelius drawn by deer”
— Clark.

The people of Corinth were not unacquainted with the nature of a triumph. About 147 years before Christ, Lucius Mummius, the Roman consul, had conquered all Achaia, and had destroyed Corinth, Thebes, and Colchis, and by order of the Roman Senate was favored with a triumph, and was surnamed Achaicus. Tyndale renders this place: “Thanks be unto God which always giveth us the victory in Christ.” Paul refers here to a victory which he had, and a triumph with which he was favored by the Redeemer. It was a victory over the enemies of the gospel; it was success in advancing the interests of the kingdom of Christ; and he rejoiced in that victory, and in that success, with more solid and substantial joy than a Roman victor ever felt on returning from his conquests over nations, even when attended with the richest spoils of victory, and by humbled princes and kings in chains, and when the assembled thousands shouted *Io triumphe!*

And maketh manifest Makes known; spreads abroad — as a pleasant fragrance is diffused through the air.

The savor (οσμη ^{<3744>}). The smell; the fragrance. The word in the New Testament is used to denote a pleasant or fragrant odor, as of incense, or aromatics; ^{<812B>}John 12:3 see ^{<4112>}Ephesians 5:2; ^{<5018>}Philippians 4:18. There is an allusion here doubtless to the fact that in the triumphal processions fragrant odors were diffused around; flowers, diffusing a grateful smell, were scattered in the way; and on the altars of the gods incense was burned during the procession, and sacrifices offered, and the whole city was filled with the smoke of sacrifices, and with perfumes. So Paul speaks of knowledge — the knowledge of Christ. In his triumphings, the knowledge of the Redeemer was diffused abroad, like the odors which were diffused in the triumphal march of the conqueror. And that odor or savor was acceptable to God — as the fragrance of aromatics and of incense was

pleasant in the triumphal procession of the returning victor. The phrase “makes manifest the savor of his knowledge,” therefore, means, that the knowledge of Christ was diffused everywhere by Paul, as the grateful smell of aromatics was diffused all around the triumphing warrior and victor. The effect of Paul’s conquests everywhere was to diffuse the knowledge of the Saviour — and this was acceptable and pleasant to God — though there might be many who would not avail themselves of it, and would perish; see ^{<4025>}2 Corinthians 2:15.

^{<4025>}**2 Corinthians 2:15.** *For we are unto God* We who are his ministers, and who thus triumph. It is implied here that Paul felt that ministers were laboring for God, and felt assured that their labors would be acceptable to him. The object of Paul in the statement, in this and in the following verses, is undoubtedly to meet the charges of his detractors and enemies. He says, therefore, that whatever was the result of his labors in regard to the future salvation of people; yet, that his well-meant endeavors, and labors, and self-denials in preaching the gospel, were acceptable to God. The measure of God’s approbation in the case was not his success, but his fidelity, his zeal, his self-denial, whatever might be the reception of the gospel among those who heard it.

A sweet savor Like the smell of pleasant incense, or of grateful aromatics, such as were burned in the triumphal processions of returning conquerors. The meaning is, that their labors were acceptable to God; he was pleased with them, and would bestow on them the smiles and proofs of his approbation. The word rendered here as “sweet savor” (εὐωδία) ^{<2175>} occurs only in this place, and in ^{<4042>}Ephesians 5:2; ^{<4048>}Philippians 4:18; and is applied to persons or things well-pleasing to God. It properly means good odor, or fragrance, and in the Septuagint it is frequently applied to the incense that was burnt in the public worship of God and to sacrifices in general; ^{<4082>}Genesis 8:21; ^{<4298>}Exodus 29:18,25,41; ^{<4000>}Leviticus 1:9,13,17; 2:2,9,12; 3:5,16; 4:31, etc. Here it means that the services of Paul and the other ministers of religion were as grateful to God as sweet incense, or acceptable sacrifices.

Of Christ That is, we are Christ’s sweet savor to God: we are that which he has appointed, and which he has devoted and consecrated to God; we are the offering, so to speak, which he is continually making to God.

In them that are saved In regard to them who believe the gospel through our ministry and who are saved. Our labor in carrying the gospel to them,

and in bringing them to the knowledge of the truth, is acceptable to God. Their salvation is an object of his highest desire, and he is gratified with our fidelity, and with our success. This reason why their work was acceptable to God is more fully stated in the following verse, where it is said that in reference to them they were the “savor of life unto life.” The word “saved” here refers to all who become Christians, and who enter heaven; and as the salvation of people is an object of such desire to God, it cannot but be that all who bear the gospel to people are engaged in an acceptable service, and that all their efforts will be pleasing to him, and approved in his sight. In regard to this part of Paul’s statement, there can be no difficulty.

And in them that perish In reference to them who reject the gospel, and who are finally lost. It is implied here:

- (1) That some would reject the gospel and perish, with whatever fidelity and self-denial the ministers of religion might labor.
- (2) That though this would be the result, yet the labors of the ministers of religion would be acceptable to God. This is a fearful and awful declaration, and has been thought by many to be attended with difficulty. A few remarks may present the true sense of the passage, and remove the difficulty from it:
 - (a) It is not affirmed or implied here that the destruction of those who would reject the gospel, and who would perish, was desired by God or would be pleasing to him. This is nowhere affirmed or implied in the Bible.
 - (b) It is affirmed only that the labors of the ministers of religion in endeavoring to save them would be acceptable and pleasing to God. Their labors would be in order to save them, not to destroy them. Their desire was to bring all to heaven — and this was acceptable to God. Whatever might be the result, whether successful or not, yet God would be pleased with self-denial, and toil, and prayer that was honestly and zealously put forth to save others from death. They would be approved by God in proportion to the amount of labor, zeal, and fidelity which they evinced.
- (3) It would be by no fault of faithful ministers that people would perish. Their efforts would be to save them, and those efforts would be pleasing to God.
- (4) It would be by no fault of the gospel that people would perish. The regular and proper tendency of the gospel is to save, not to destroy men; as

the tendency of medicine is to heal them, of food to support the body, of air to give vitality, of light to give pleasure to the eye, etc. It is provided for all, and is adapted to all. There is a sufficiency in the gospel for all people, and in its nature it is as really suited to save one as another.

Whatever may be the manner in which it is received, it is always in itself the same pure and glorious system; full of benevolence and mercy. The bitterest enemy of the gospel cannot point to one of its provisions that is adapted or designed to make people miserable, and to destroy them. All its provisions are adapted to salvation; all its arrangements are those of benevolence; all the powers and influences which it originates, are those which are suited to save, not to destroy people. The gospel is what it is in itself — a pure, holy, and benevolent system, and is answerable only for effects which a pure, holy, and benevolent system is suited to produce. To use the beautiful language of Theodoret, as quoted by Bloomfield:

“We indeed bear the sweet odor of Christ’s gospel to all; but all who participate in it do not experience its salutiferous effects. Thus, to diseased eyes even the light of heaven is noxious; yet the sun does not bring the injury. And to those in a fever, honey is bitter; yet it is sweet nevertheless. Vultures too, it is said, fly away from sweet odors of myrrh; yet myrrh is myrrh though the vultures avoid it. Thus, if some be saved, though others perish, the gospel retains its own virtue, and we the preachers of it remain just as we are; and the gospel retains its odorous and salutiferous properties, though some may disbelieve and abuse it, and perish.”

Yet:

(5) It is implied that the gospel would be the occasion of heavier condemnation to some, and that they would sink into deeper ruin in consequence of its being preached to them. This is implied in the expression in ~~2~~2 Corinthians 2:16. “to the one we are a savor of death unto death.” In the explanation of this, we may observe:

(a) That those who perish would have perished at any rate. All were under condemnation whether the gospel had come to them or not. None will perish in consequence of the gospel’s having been sent to them who would not have perished had it been unknown. People do not perish because the gospel is sent to them, but for their own sins.

(b) It is in fact by their own fault that people reject the gospel, and that they are lost. They are voluntary in this; and, whatever is their final destiny, they are not under compulsion. The gospel compels no one against his will either to go to heaven, or to hell.

(c) People under the gospel sin against greater light than they do without it. They have more to answer for. It increases their responsibility. If, therefore, they reject it, and go down to eternal death, they go from higher privileges; and they go, of course, to meet a more aggravated condemnation. For condemnation will always be in exact proportion to guilt; and guilt is in proportion to abused light and privileges.

(d) The preaching of the gospel, and the offers of life, are often the occasion of the deeper guilt of the sinner. Often he becomes enraged. He gives vent to the deep malignity of his soul. He opposes the gospel with malice and infuriated anger, His eye kindles with indignation, and his lip curls with pride and scorn. He is profane and blasphemous; and the offering of the gospel to him is the occasion of exciting deep and malignant passions against God, against the Saviour, against the ministers of religion. Against the gospel, people often manifest the same malignity and scorn which they did against the Saviour himself. Yet this is not the fault of the gospel, nor of the ministers of religion. It is the fault of sinners themselves; and while there can be no doubt that such a rejection of the gospel will produce their deeper condemnation, and that it is a savor of death unto death unto them; still the gospel is good and benevolent, and still God will be pleased with those who faithfully offer its provisions, and who urge it on the attention of people.

2 Corinthians 2:16. *To the one* To those who perish.

We are the savour of death unto death We are the occasion of deepening their condemnation, and of sinking them lower into ruin. The expression used here means literally, “to the one class we bear a death-conveying odor leading to their death” — a savor, a smell which, under the circumstances, is destructive to life, and which leads to death. Mr. Locke renders this:

“To the one my preaching is of ill savor, unacceptable and offensive, by their rejecting whereof they draw death on themselves.”

Grateful as their labors were to God, and acceptable as would be their efforts, whatever might be the results, yet Paul could not be ignorant that the gospel would in fact be the means of greater condemnation to many; see the notes on ^{<h1015>}2 Corinthians 2:15. It was indeed by their own fault; yet wherever the gospel was preached, it would to many have this result. It is probable that the language here used is borrowed from similar expressions which were common among the Jews. Thus, in Debarim Rabba, sec. 1, fol. 248, it is said,

“As the bee brings home honey to the owner, but stings others, so it is with the words of the Law.” “They (the words of the Law) are a savor of life to Israel, but a savor of death to the people of this world.”

Thus, in Taarieth, fol. 7, 1,

“Whoever gives attention to the Law on account of the Law itself, to him it becomes an aromatic of life (μyyh ^{<h2416>} μs ^{<h5561>}), but to him who does not attend to the Law on account of the Law itself, to him it becomes an aromatic of death twm ^{<h4193>} μs ^{<h5561>},”

— the idea of which is, that as medicines skillfully applied will heal, but if unskillfully applied will aggravate a disease, so it is with the words of the Law. Again, “The word of the Law which proceeds out of the mouth of God is an odor of life to the Israelites, but an odor of death to the Gentiles;” see Rosenmuller, and Bloomfield. The sense of the passage is plain, that the gospel, by the willful rejection of it, becomes the means of the increased guilt and condemnation of many of those who hear it.

And to the other To those who embrace it, and are saved.

The savor of life An odor, or fragrance producing life, or tending to life. It is a living, or life-giving savor. it is in itself grateful and pleasant.

Unto life Tending to life; or adapted to produce life. The word “life” here, as often elsewhere, is used to denote salvation. It is:

- (1) Life in opposition to the death in sin in which all are by nature;
- (2) In opposition to death in the grave — as it leads to a glorious resurrection;

(3) In opposition to eternal death; to the second dying, as it leads to life and peace and joy in heaven; see the words “life” and “death” explained in the notes on ~~6:12~~Romans 6:23. The gospel is “the savor of life unto life,” because:

(a) It is its nature and tendency to produce life and salvation. It is adapted to that; and is designed to that end.

(b) Because it actually results in the life and salvation of those who embrace it. It is the immediate and direct cause of their salvation; of their recovery from sin; of their glorious resurrection; of their eternal life in heaven.

And who is sufficient for these things? For the arduous and responsible work of the ministry; for a work whose influence must be felt either in the eternal salvation, or the eternal ruin of the soul. Who is worthy of so important a charge? Who can undertake it without trembling? Who can engage in it without feeling that he is in himself unfit for it, and that he needs constant divine grace? This is an exclamation which anyone may well make in view of the responsibilities of the work of the ministry. And we may remark:

(1) If Paul felt this, assuredly others should feel it also. If, With all the divine assistance which he had; all the proofs of the unique presence of God, and all the mighty miraculous powers conferred on him, Paul had such a sense of unfitness for this great work, then a consciousness of unfitness, and a deep sense of responsibility, may well rest on all others.

(2) It was this sense of the responsibility of the ministry which contributed much to Paul’s success. It was a conviction that the results of his work must be seen in the joys of heaven, or the woes of hell, that led him to look to God for aid, and to devote himself so entirely to his great work. People will not feel much concern unless they have a deep sense of the magnitude and responsibility of their work. People who feel as they should about the ministry will look to God for aid, and will feel that he alone can sustain them in their arduous duties.

~~2:17~~ **2 Corinthians 2:17.** *For we are not as many* This refers doubtless to the false teachers at Corinth; and to all who mingled human philosophy or tradition with the pure word of truth. Paul’s design in the statement in this verse seems to be to affirm that he had such a deep sense of the

responsibility of the ministerial office, and of its necessary influence on the eternal destiny of man, that it led him to preach the simple gospel, the pure word of God. He did not dare to dilute it with any human mixture. He did not dare to preach philosophy, or human wisdom. He did not dare to mingle with it the crude conceptions of man. He sought to exhibit the simple truth as it was in Jesus; and so deep was his sense of the responsibility of the office, and so great was his desire on the subject, that he had been enabled to do it. and to triumph always in Christ. So that, although he was conscious that he was in himself unfit for these things, yet by the grace of God he had been able always to exhibit the simple truth, and his labors had been crowned with constant and signal success.

Which corrupt the word of God Margin, “deal deceitfully with.” The word used here (**καπηλευοντες** ^{<2585>}) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and does not occur in the Septuagint. The word is derived from **καπηλος**, which signifies properly a huckster, or a retailer of wine, a petty chapman; a man who buys up articles for the purpose of selling them again. It also means sometimes a vintner, or an innkeeper. The proper idea is that of a small dealer and especially in wine. Such persons were notorious, as they are now, for diluting their wines with water (compare the Septuagint in ^{<2002>}Isaiah 1:22); and for compounding wines of other substances than the juice of the grape for purposes of gain. Wine, of all substances in trade, perhaps, affords the greatest facilities for such dishonest tricks; and, accordingly, the dealers in that article have generally been most distinguished for fraudulent practices and corrupt and diluted mixtures. Hence, the word comes to denote to adulterate; to corrupt, etc. It is here applied to those who adulterated or corrupted the pure word of God in any way, and for any purpose. It probably has particular reference to those who did it either by Judaizing opinions, or by the mixtures of a false and deceitful philosophy. The latter mode would be likely to prevail among the subtle and philosophizing Greeks. It is in such ways that the gospel has been usually corrupted:

- (1) It is done by attempting to attach a philosophical explanation to the facts of revelation, and making the theory as important as the fact.
- (2) By attempting to explain away the offensive points of revelation by the aid of philosophy.
- (3) By attempting to make the facts of Scripture accord with the prevalent notions of philosophy, and by applying a mode of interpretation to the

Bible which would fritter away its meaning, and make it mean anything or nothing at pleasure.

In these, and in various other ways, people have corrupted the Word of God; and of all the evils which Christianity has ever sustained in this world, the worst have been those which it has received from philosophy, and from those teachers who have corrupted the Word of God. The fires of persecution it could meet, and still be pure; the utmost efforts of princes, and monarchs, and of Satan to destroy it, it has outlived, and has shone purely and brightly amidst all these efforts; but, when corrupted by philosophy, and by “science falsely so called,” it has been dimmed in its luster, paralyzed in its aims, and shorn of its power, and has ceased to be mighty in pulling down the strong holds of Satan’s kingdom. Accordingly, the enemy of God has ceased to excite persecution, and now aims in various ways to corrupt the gospel by the admixture of philosophy, and of human opinions. Tyndale renders this passage, “For we are not as many are which choppe and chaunge with the word of God” — an idea which is important and beautiful — but this is one of the few instances in which he mistook the sense of the original text. In general, the accuracy of his translation and his acquaintance with the true sense of the Greek text are very remarkable.

But as of sincerity Sincerely; actuated by unmingled honesty and simplicity of aim; see the note on ⁴⁰¹²2 Corinthians 1:12.

As of God As influenced by him; as under his control and direction; as having been sent by him; as acting by his command; see the note, ⁴⁰¹²2 Corinthians 1:12.

In the sight of God As if we felt that his eye was always on us. Nothing is better suited to make a person sincere and honest, than this.

Speak we in Christ In the name, and in the service of Christ. We deliver our message with a deep consciousness that the eye of the all-seeing God is on us; that we can conceal nothing from Him; and that we must soon give up our account to Him.

REMARKS

1. In this chapter, and in the management of the whole case to which Paul here refers, we have an instance of his tenderness in administering discipline. This tenderness was manifested in many ways:

- (1) He did nothing to wound the feelings of the offending party.
- (2) He did nothing in the way of punishment which a stern sense of duty did not demand.
- (3) He did it all with many tears. He wept at the necessity of administering discipline at all. He wept over the remissness of the church. He wept over the fall of the offending brother.
- (4) He did not mention even the name of the offender. He did not emblazon his faults abroad; nor has he left any clue by which it can be known; nor did he take any measures which were suited to pain, unnecessarily, the feelings of his friends. If all discipline in the church were conducted in this manner, it would probably always be effectual and successful, ~~2~~2 Corinthians 2:1-10.

2. We ought cordially to receive and forgive an offending brother, as soon as he gives evidence of repentance. We should harbor no malice against him; and if, by repentance, he has put away his sins, we should hasten to forgive him. This we should do as individuals, and as churches. God cheerfully forgives us, and receives us into favor on our repentance; and we should hail the privilege of treating all our offending brethren in the same manner, ~~2~~2 Corinthians 2:7,8.

3. Churches should be careful that Satan should not get an advantage over them, ~~2~~2 Corinthians 2:11. In every way possible he will attempt it; and perhaps in few modes is it more often done than in administering discipline. In such a case, Satan gains an advantage over a church in the following ways.

(1) In inducing it to neglect discipline. This occurs often because an offender is rich, or talented, or is connected with influential families; because there is a fear of driving off such families from the church; because the individual is of elevated rank, and the church suffers him to remain in her bosom. The laws of the church, like other laws are often like cobwebs: Large flies break through, and the smaller ones are caught. The consequence is, that Satan gains an immense advantage. Rich and influential offenders remain in the church; discipline is relaxed; the cause of Christ is scandalized; and the church at large feels the influence, and the work of God declines.

(2) Satan gains an advantage in discipline, sometimes, by too great severity of discipline. If he cannot induce a church to relax altogether, and to suffer offenders to remain, then he excites them to improper and needless severity. He drives them on to harsh discipline for small offences. He excites a spirit of persecution. He enkindles a false zeal on account of the Shibboleth of doctrine. He excites a spirit of party, and causes the church to mistake it for zeal for truth. He excites a spirit of persecution against some of the best people in the church, on account of pretended errors in doctrine, and kindles the flames of intestine war; and breaks the church up into parties and fragments. Or he urges on the church, even in cases where discipline is proper, to needless and inappropriate severity; drives the offender from its bosom; breaks his spirit; and prevents ever-onward his usefulness, his return, and his happiness. One of the chief arts of Satan has been to cause the church in cases of discipline to use severity instead of kindness; to excite a spirit of persecution instead of love. Almost all the evils which grow out of attempts at discipline might have been prevented by a spirit of LOVE.

(3) Satan gains an advantage in cases of discipline, when the church is unwilling to re-admit to fellowship an offending but a penitent member. His spirit is broken; his usefulness is destroyed. The world usually takes sides with him against the church, and the cause of religion bleeds.

4. Individual Christians, as well as churches, should be careful that Satan does not get an advantage over them, ~~see~~ 2 Corinthians 2:11. Among the ways in which he does this are the following:

(1) By inducing them to conform to the world. This is done under the plea that religion is not gloomy, and morose, and ascetic. Thence he often leads professors into all the gaieties, and amusements, and follies of which the world partake. Satan gains an immense advantage to his cause when this is done — for all the influence of the professed Christian is with him.

(2) By producing laxness of opinion in regard to doctrine. Christ intends that his cause shall advance by the influence of truth; and that his church shall be the witness of the truth. The cause of Satan advances by error and falsehood; and when professed Christians embrace falsehood, or are indifferent to truth, their whole influence is on the side of Satan, and his advantage is immense when they become the advocates of error.

(3) By producing among Christians despondency, melancholy, and despair. Some of the best people are often thus afflicted and thrown into darkness, as Job was; ~~<K208>~~ Job 23:8-9. Indeed, it is commonly the best members of a church that have doubts in this manner, and that fall into temptation, and that are left to the buffetings of Satan. Your frivolous, and worldly, and fashionable Christians have usually no such troubles — except when they lie on a bed of death. They are not in the way of Satan. They do not oppose him, and he will not trouble them. It is your humble, praying, self-denying Christians that he dreads and hates; and it is these that he is suffered to tempt, and to make sad, and to fill with gloom and doubt. And when this is done, it is an immense advantage to his cause. It produces the impression that religion is nothing but gloom and melancholy, and the people of the world are easily led to hate and avoid it. Christians, therefore, should be cheerful, and benevolent, and happy — as they may be — lest Satan should get an advantage over them.

(4) By fanaticism. For when Satan finds that he can get no advantage over Christians by inducing them to do nothing, or to do anything positively wrong or immoral, he drives them on with over-heated and ill-timed zeal; he makes them unreasonably strenuous for some single opinion or measure; he disposes them to oppose and persecute all who do not fall into their views, and feel as they feel.

(5) By contentions and strifes. Satan often gets an advantage in that way. No matter what the cause may be, whether it be for doctrines, or for any other cause, yet the very fact that there are contentions among the professed followers of “the Prince of peace” does injury, and gives Satan an advantage. No small part of his efforts, therefore, have been to excite contentions among Christians, an effort in which he has been, and is still, eminently successful.

5. Satan gets an advantage over sinners, and they should be on their guard. He does it:

(1) By producing a sense of security in their present condition; and by leading them to indifference in regard to their eternal condition. In this he is eminently successful; and when this is gained, all is gained that his cause demands. It is impossible to conceive of greater success in anything than Satan has in producing a state of indifference to the subject of religion among people.

(2) By inducing them to defer attention to religion to some future time. This is an advantage, because:

(a) It accomplishes all he wishes at present;

(b) Because it is usually successful altogether. It is usually the same thing as resolving not to attend to religion at all.

(3) By producing false views of religion. He represents it at one time as gloomy, sad, and melancholy; at another, as so easy, that it may be obtained, whenever they please; at another, by persuading them that their sins are so great that they cannot be forgiven. One great object of Satan is to blind the minds of sinners to the true nature of religion; and in this he is usually successful.

(4) He deludes the aged by telling them it is too late; and the young by telling them that now is the time for mirth and pleasure, and that religion may be attended to at some future period of life.

(5) He gains an advantage by plunging the sinner deeper and deeper in sin; inducing him to listen to the voice of temptation; by making him the companion of the wicked; and by deluding him with the promises of pleasure, honor, and gain in this world until it is too late, and he dies.

6. Ministers of the gospel may have occasion to triumph in the success of their work. Paul always met with success of some kind; always had some cause of triumph. In all his trials, he had occasion of rejoicing, and always was assured that he was pursuing that course which would lead him ultimately to triumph, ^{<4724>}2 Corinthians 2:14.

7. The gospel may be so preached as to be successful, ^{<4724>}2 Corinthians 2:14. In the hands of Paul it was successful. So it was with the other apostles. So it was with Luther, Knox, Calvin. So it was with Whitefield, Edwards Wesley, and Payson. If ministers are not successful, it is not the fault of the gospel. It is adapted to do good, and to save people; and it may be so preached as to accomplish those great ends. If all ministers were as self-denying, and laborious, and prayerful as were these people, the gospel would be as successful now as it has ever been.^{f10}

8. Much of the work of the ministry is pleasant and delightful. It is the savor of life unto life, ^{<4725>}2 Corinthians 2:15,16. There is no joy on earth of a higher and purer character than that which the ministers of the gospel

have in the success of their work. There is no work more pleasant than that of imparting the consolations of religion to the sick, and the afflicted; than that of directing inquiring sinners to the Lamb of God; no joy on earth so pure and elevated as that which a pastor has in a revival of religion. In the evidence that God accepts his labors, and that to many his message is a savor of life unto life, there is a joy which no other pursuit can furnish; a joy, even on earth, which is more than a compensation for all the toils, self-denials, and trials of the ministry.

9. In view of the happy and saving results of the work of the ministry, we see the importance of the work. Those results are to be seen in heaven. They are to enter into the eternal destiny of the righteous. They are to be seen in the felicity and holiness of those who shall be redeemed from death. The very happiness of heaven, therefore, is dependent on the fidelity and success of the ministry. This work stretches beyond the grave. It reaches into eternity. It is to be seen in heaven. Other plans and labors of people terminate at death. But the work of the ministry reaches in its results into the skies; and is to be seen ever onward in eternity. Well might the apostle ask, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

10. The ministers of the gospel will be accepted of God, if faithful, whatever may be the result of their labors; whether seen in the salvation, or the augmented condemnation of those who hear them, ^{<A0215>}2 Corinthians 2:15. They are a sweet savor to God. Their acceptance with him depends not on the measure of their success; but on their fidelity. If people reject the gospel, and make it the occasion of their greater condemnation, the fault is not that of ministers, but is their own. If people are faithful, God accepts their efforts; and even if many reject the message and perish, still a faithful ministry will not be to blame. That such results should follow from their ministry, indeed, increases their responsibility, and makes their office more awful, but it will not render them less acceptable in their labors in the sight of God.

11. We are to anticipate that the ministry will be the means of the deeper condemnation of many who hear the gospel, ^{<A0216>}2 Corinthians 2:16. The gospel is to them a savor of death unto death. We are to expect that many will reject and despise the message, and sink into deeper sin, and condemnation, and woe. We are not to be disappointed, therefore, when we see such effects follow, and when the sinner sinks into a deeper hell from under the ministry of the gospel. It always has been the case, and we

have reason to suppose it always will be. And painful as is the fact, yet ministers must make up their minds to witness this deeply painful result of their work.

12. The ministry is a deeply and awfully responsible work, ^{<FR216>2} Corinthians 2:16. It is connected with the everlasting happiness, or the deep and eternal condemnation of all those who hear the gospel. Every sermon that is preached is making an impression that will never be obliterated, and producing an effect that will never terminate. Its effects will never all be seen until the day of judgment, and in the awful solemnities of the eternal world. Well might Paul ask, “Who is sufficient for these things?”

13. It is a solemn thing to hear the gospel. If it is solemn for a minister to dispense it, it is not less solemn to hear it. It is connected with the eternal welfare of those who hear. And thoughtless as are multitudes who hear it, yet it is deeply to affect them hereafter. If they ever embrace it, they will owe their eternal salvation to it; if they continue to neglect it, it will sink them deep and forever in the world of woe. Every individual, therefore, who hears the gospel dispensed, no matter by whom, should remember that he is listening to God’s solemn message to mankind; and that it will and must exert a deep influence on his eternal doom.

14. A people should pray much for a minister. Paul often entreated the churches to which he wrote to pray for him. If Paul needed the prayers of Christians, assuredly Christians now do. Prayer for a minister is demanded because:

(1) He has the same infirmities, conflicts, and temptations which other Christians have.

(2) He has those which are special, and which grow out of the very nature of his office; for the warfare of Satan is carried on mainly with the leaders of the army of God.

(3) He is engaged in a great and most responsible work — the greatest work ever committed to mortal man.

(4) His success will be generally in proportion as a people pray for him. The welfare of a people, therefore, is identified with their praying for their minister. He will preach better, and they will hear better, just in proportion as they pray for him. His preaching will be dull, dry, heavy; will be without

unction, spirituality, and life, unless they pray for him; and their hearing will be dull, lifeless, and uninterested, unless they pray for him. No people will hear the gospel to much advantage who do not feel anxiety enough about it to pray for their minister.

15. The interview between a minister and his people in the day of judgment will be a very solemn one. Then the effect of his ministry will be seen. Then it will be known to whom it was a savor of life unto life, and to whom it was a savor of death unto death. Then the eternal destiny of all will be settled. Then the faithful minister will be attended to heaven by all to whom his ministry has been a savor of life unto life; and then he will part forever with all whom he so often warned and entreated in vain. In distant worlds — worlds forever separated — shall be experienced the result of his labors. O! how solemn must be the scene when he must give up his account for the manner in which he has preached; and they, for the manner in which they attended on his ministry!

16. Let all ministers, then, be careful that they do not corrupt the word of God, ^{<40217>}2 Corinthians 2:17. Let them preach it in simplicity and in truth. Let them not preach philosophy, or metaphysics, or their own fancy, or the tradition of human beings, or the teaching of the schools, but the simple truth as it is in Jesus. Let them preach as sent by God; as in the sight of God; as commissioned by Christ to deliver a simple, plain, pure message to mankind, whether they will hear or forbear. Their success will be in proportion to the simplicity and purity of the gospel which they present; their peace and joy in death and in heaven will be just as they shall have evidence then that in simplicity and sincerity they have endeavored to present everywhere, and to all, the pure and simple gospel of Jesus Christ. As ministers, therefore, desire acceptance with God and success in the work let them preach the pure gospel; not adulterating it with foreign admixtures; not endeavoring to change it so as to be palatable to the carnal mind; not substituting philosophy for the gospel, and not withholding anything in the gospel because people do not love it; and let the people of God everywhere sustain the ministry by their prayers, and aid them in their work by daily commending them to the God of grace. So shall they be able to perform the solemn functions of their office to divine acceptance; and so shall ministers and people find the gospel to be “a savor of life unto life.”

NOTES ON 2 CORINTHIANS 3

This chapter (2 Corinthians 3) is closely connected in its design with the preceding. Paul had said in that chapter (~~2~~2 Corinthians 2:14), that he had always occasion to triumph in the success which he had, and that God always blessed his labors; and especially had spoken, in the close of the previous chapter (~~2~~2 Corinthians 2:17), of his sincerity as contrasted with the conduct of some who corrupted the Word of God. This might appear to some as if he designed to commend himself to them, or that he had said this for the purpose of securing their favor. It is probable also, that the false teachers at Corinth had been introduced there by letters of recommendation, perhaps from Judea. In reply to this, Paul intimates (~~2~~2 Corinthians 3:1) that this was not his design; (~~2~~2 Corinthians 3:2) that he had no need of letters of recommendation to them, since (~~2~~2 Corinthians 3:2,3) they were his commendatory epistle; they were themselves the best evidence of his zeal, fidelity, and success in his labors. He could appeal to them as the best proof that he was qualified for the apostolic office. His success among them, he says (~~2~~2 Corinthians 3:4), was a ground of his trusting in God, an evidence of his acceptance. Yet, as if he should seem to rely on his own strength, and to boast of what he had done, he says (~~2~~2 Corinthians 3:5) that his success was not owing to any strength which he had, or to any skill of his own, but entirely to the aid which he had received from God. It was God, he says (~~2~~2 Corinthians 3:6), who had qualified him to preach, and had given him grace to be an able minister of the New Testament.

It is not improbable that the false teachers, being of Jewish origin, in Corinth, had commended the laws and institutions of Moses as being of superior clearness, and even as excelling the gospel of Christ. Paul takes occasion, therefore (~~2~~2 Corinthians 3:7-11), to show that the laws and institutions of Moses were far inferior in this respect to the gospel. His was a ministration of death (~~2~~2 Corinthians 3:7); though glorious it was to be done away (~~2~~2 Corinthians 3:7); the ministration of the Spirit was therefore to be presumed to be far more glorious (~~2~~2 Corinthians 3:8); the one was a ministration to condemnation, the other of righteousness (~~2~~2 Corinthians 3:9); the one had comparatively no glory, being so much surpassed by the other (~~2~~2 Corinthians 3:10); and the former was to be

done away, while the latter was to remain, and was therefore far more glorious, ^{<A081>}2 Corinthians 3:11.

This statement of the important difference between the laws of Moses and the gospel, is further illustrated by showing the effect which the institutions of Moses had had on the Jews themselves, ^{<A082>}2 Corinthians 3:12-15. That effect was to blind them. Moses had put a veil over his face (^{<A083>}2 Corinthians 3:13); and the effect had been that the nation was blinded in reading the Old Testament, and had no just views of the true meaning of their own Scriptures, ^{<A084>}2 Corinthians 3:14,15.

Yet, Paul says, that that veil should be taken away, ^{<A086>}2 Corinthians 3:16-18. It was the intention of God that it should be removed. When that people should turn again to the Lord, it should be taken away, ^{<A086>}2 Corinthians 3:16. It was done where the Spirit of the Lord was, ^{<A087>}2 Corinthians 3:17. It was done in fact in regard to all true Christians, ^{<A088>}2 Corinthians 3:18. They were permitted to behold the glory of the Lord as in a glass, and they were changed into the same image. The same subject is continued in 2 Corinthians 4, where Paul illustrates the effect of this clear revelation of the gospel as compared with the institutions of Moses, on the Christian ministry.

^{<A081>}**2 Corinthians 3:1.** *Do we begin again* This is designed evidently to meet an objection. He had been speaking of his triumph in the ministry (^{<A084>}2 Corinthians 2:14), and of his sincerity and honesty, as contrasted with the conduct of many who corrupted the Word of God, ^{<A087>}2 Corinthians 2:17. It might be objected that he was magnifying himself in these statements, and designed to commend himself in this manner to the Corinthians. To this he replies in the following verses.

To commend ourselves? To recommend ourselves; do we speak this in our own praise, in order to obtain your favor.

Or need we, as some others Probably some who had brought letters of recommendation to them from Judea. The false teachers at Corinth had been originally introduced there by commendatory letters from abroad. These were letters of introduction, and were common among the Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews, as they are now. They were usually given to persons who were about to travel, as there were no inns. and as travelers were dependent on the hospitality of those among whom they traveled.

Of commendation from you To other congregations. It is implied here by Paul, that he sought no such letter; that he traveled without them; and that he depended on his zeal, and self-denial, and success to make him known, and to give him the affections of those to whom he ministered — a much better recommendation than mere introductory letters. Such letters were, however, sometimes given by Christians, and are by no means improper, ~~4187~~ Acts 18:27. Yet, they do not appear to have been sought or used by the apostles generally. They depended on their miraculous endowments, and on the attending grace of God to make them known.

~~4188~~ **2 Corinthians 3:2.** *Ye are our epistle* compare ~~4189~~ 1 Corinthians 9:2. This is a most beautiful and happy turn given to the whole subject. The sense is plain. It is, that the conversion of the Corinthians, under the faithful labors of the apostle, was a better testimonial of his character and fidelity than any letters could be. To see the force of this, it must be remembered:

- (1) That Corinth was an exceedingly dissolute and abandoned place (see the introduction to the First Epistle);
- (2) That a large number of them had been converted, and a church organized;
- (3) That their conversion, and the organization of a church in such a city were events that would be known abroad; and,
- (4) That it had been accomplished entirely under the labor of Paul and his companions.

To their knowledge of him, therefore, and to his success there, he could confidently appeal as a testimonial of his character. The characteristics of this commendatory epistle, he proceeds immediately to state. The general sense is, that they were the letter of recommendation which God had given to him; and that their conversion under his ministry was the public testimonial of his character which all might see and read.

Written in our hearts A few MSS. and versions read thus, “your hearts;” and Doddridge has adopted this reading, and supposes that it means that the change produced not only in their external conduct, but in their inward temper, was so great, that all must see that it was an unanswerable attestation to his ministry. But there is not sufficient authority for changing the text; nor is it necessary. The sense is, probably, that this letter was, as it

were, written on his heart. It was not merely that Paul had a tender affection for them, as Clarke supposes; nor was it that he regarded them as “a copy of the letter of recommendation from Christ written in his heart,” according to the fanciful conceit of Macknight; but Paul’s idea seems to have been this. He is speaking of the testimonial which he had from God. That testimonial consisted in the conversion of the Corinthians. This he says was written on his heart. It was not a cold letter of introduction, but it was such as, while it left him no room to doubt that God had sent him, also affected his feelings, and was engraved on his soul. It was to him, therefore, far more valuable than any mere letter of commendation or of introduction could be. It was a direct testimonial from God to his own heart of his approbation, and of his having appointed him to the apostolic office. All the difficulty, therefore, which has been felt by commentators in this passage, may be obviated by supposing that Paul here speaks of this testimonial or epistle as addressed to himself, and as satisfactory to him, In the other characteristics which he enumerates, he speaks of it as suited to be a letter commendatory of himself to others.

Known and read of all men Corinth was a large, splendid, and dissipated city. Their conversion, therefore, would be known afar. All people would hear of it; and their reformation, their subsequent life under the instruction of Paul, and the attestation which God had given among them to his labors, was a sufficient testimonial to the world at large, that God had called him to the apostolic office.

◀**2 Corinthians 3:3.** *Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared* You are made manifest as the epistle of Christ; or you, being made manifest, are the epistle, etc. They had been made manifest to be such by their conversion. The sense is, it is plain, or evident, that ye are the epistle of Christ.

To be the epistle of Christ That which Christ has sent to be our testimonial. He has given this letter of recommendation. He has converted you by our ministry, and that is the best evidence which we can have that we have been sent by him, and that our labor is accepted by him. Your conversion is his work, and it is his public attestation to our fidelity in his cause.

Ministered by us The idea here is, that Christ had employed their ministry in accomplishing this. They were Christ’s letter, but it had been prepared by the instrumentality of the apostles. It had not been prepared by him independently of their labors, but in connection with, and as the result of

those labors. Christ, in writing this epistle, so to speak, has used our aid; or employed us as amanuenses (copyists).

Written not with ink Paul continues and varies the image in regard to this “epistle,” so that he may make the testimony borne to his fidelity and success more striking and emphatic. He says, therefore, that that it was not written as letters of introduction are, with ink — by traces drawn on a lifeless substance, and in lines that easily fade, or that may become easily illegible, or that can be read only by a few, or that may be soon destroyed.

But with the Spirit of the living God In strong contrast thus with letters written with ink. By the Spirit of God moving on the heart, and producing that variety of graces which constitute so striking and so beautiful an evidence of your conversion. If written by the Spirit of the living God, it was far more valuable, and precious, and permanent than any record which could be made by ink. Every trace of the Spirit’s influences on the heart was an undoubted proof that God had sent the apostles; and was a proof which they would much more sensibly and tenderly feel than they could any letter of recommendation written in ink.

Not in tables of stone It is generally admitted that Paul here refers to the evidences of the divine mission of Moses which was given by the Law engraved on tablets of stone, compare ~~4COR~~2 Corinthians 3:7. Probably those who were false teachers among the Corinthians were Jews, and had insisted much on the divine origin and permanency of the Mosaic institutions. The Law had been engraved on stone by the hand of God himself; and had thus the strongest proofs of divine origin, and the divine attestation to its pure and holy nature. To this fact the friends of the Law, and the advocates for the permanency of the Jewish institutions, would appeal. Paul says, on the other hand, that the testimonials of the divine favor through him were not on tablets of stone. They were frail, and easily broken. There was no life in them (compare ~~4COR~~2 Corinthians 3:6 and ~~4COR~~2 Corinthians 3:7); and valuable and important as they were, yet they could not be compared with the testimonials which God had given to those who successfully preached the gospel.

But in fleshly tables of the heart In truths engraved on the heart. This testimonial was of more value than an inscription on stone, because:

(1) No hand but that of God could reach the heart, and inscribe these truths there.

(2) Because it would be attended with a life-giving and living influence. It was not a mere dead letter.

(3) Because it would be permanent. Stones, even where laws were engraved by the finger of God, would moulder and decay, and the inscription made there would be destroyed. But not so with that which was made on the heart. It would live forever. It would abide in other worlds. It would send its influence into all the relations of life; into all future scenes in this world; and that influence would be seen and felt in the world that shall never end. By all these considerations, therefore, the testimonials which Paul had of the divine approbation were more valuable than any mere letters of introduction, or human commendation could have been; and more valuable even than the attestation which was given to the divine mission of Moses himself.

2 Corinthians 3:4. *And such trust have we* Such confidence have we that we are appointed by God, and that he accepts our work. Such evidence have we in the success of our labors; such irrefragable proof that God blesses us; that we have trust, or confidence, that we are sent by God, and are owned by him in our ministry. His confidence did not rest on letters of introduction from people, but in the evidence of the divine presence, and the divine acceptance of his work.

Through Christ By the agency of Christ. Paul had no success which he did not trace to him; he had no joy of which he was not the source; he had no confidence, or trust in God of which Christ was not the author; he had no hope of success in his ministry which did not depend on him.

To God-ward Toward God; in regard to God (προς ^{<4314>} τον ^{<3588>} Θεον ^{<2316>}). Our confidence relates to God. It is confidence that he has appointed us, and sent us forth; and confidence that he will still continue to own and to bless us.

2 Corinthians 3:5. *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves* This is evidently designed to guard against the appearance of boasting, or of self-confidence. He had spoken of his confidence; of his triumph; of his success; of his undoubted evidence that God had sent him. He here says, that he did not mean to be understood as affirming that any of his success came from himself, or that he was able by his own strength to accomplish the great things which had been effected by his ministry. He well knew that he had no such self-sufficiency; and he would not insinuate, in the slightest

manner, that he believed himself to be invested with any such power, compare note on ^{<615>}John 15:5.

To think anything (λογισασθαι ^{<3049>} τι ^{<5100>}). The word used here means properly to reason, think, consider; and then to reckon, count to, or impute to anyone. It is the word which is commonly rendered impute; see it explained more fully in the note on ^{<6045>}Romans 4:5. Robinson (Lexicon) renders it in this place, “to reason out, to think out, to find out by thinking.” Doddridge renders it, “to reckon upon anything as from ourselves.” Whitby renders it, “to reason; as if the apostle had said, We are unable by any reasoning of our own to bring people to conversion. Macknight gives a similar sense. Locke renders it, “Not as if I were sufficient of myself, to reckon upon anything as from myself:” and explains it to mean that Paul was not sufficient of himself by any strength of natural parts to attain the knowledge of the gospel truths which he preached. The word may be rendered here, to reckon, reason, think, etc.; but it should be confined to the immediate subject under consideration. It does not refer to thinking in general; or to the power of thought on any, and on all subjects — however true it may be in itself but to the preaching the gospel. And the expression may be regarded as referring to the following points, which are immediately under discussion:

- (1) Paul did not feel that he was sufficient of himself to have reasoned or thought out the truths of the gospel. They were communicated by God.
- (2) He had no power by reasoning to convince or convert sinners. That was all of God.
- (3) he had no right to reckon on success by any strength of his own.

All success was to be traced to God. It is, however, also true, that all our powers of thinking and reasoning are from God; and that we have no ability to think clearly, to reason calmly, closely, and correctly, unless he shall preside over our minds and give us clearness of thought. How easy is it for God to disarrange all our faculties, and produce insanity! How easy to suffer our minds to become unsettled, bewildered, and distracted with a multiplicity of thoughts! How easy to cause every thing to appear cloudy, and dark, and misty! How easy to affect our bodies with weakness, langor, disease, and through them to destroy all power of close and consecutive thought! No one who considers on how many things the power of close thinking depends, can doubt that all our sufficiency in this is from God; and

that we owe to him every clear idea on the subjects of common life, and on scientific subjects, no less certainly than we do in the truths of religion, compare the case of Bezaleel and Aholiab in common arts, ^{<4301>}Exodus 31:1-6, and ^{<18318>}Job 32:8.

^{<4016>}**2 Corinthians 3:6.** *Who also hath made us able ministers ...* This translation does not quite meet the force of the original. It would seem to imply that Paul regarded himself and his fellowlaborers as people of talents, and of signal ability; and that he was inclined to boast of it. But this is not the meaning. It refers properly to his sense of the responsibility and difficulty of the work of the ministry; and to the fact that he did not esteem himself to be sufficient for this work in his own strength (^{<40216>}2 Corinthians 2:16; 3:5); and he here says that God had made him sufficient: not able, talented, learned, but sufficient (^{<2427>}ἰκανώσεν ^{<2248>}ἡμᾶς); he has supplied our deficiency; he has rendered us competent, or fit; if a word may be coined after the manner of the Greek here, “he has sufficiencyed us for this work.” There is no assertion, therefore, here, that they were people of talents, or special ability, but only that God had qualified them for their work, and made them by his grace sufficient to meet the toils and responsibilities of this arduous office.

Of the New Testament Of the new covenant (note, ^{<4158>}Matthew 25:28), in contradistinction from the old covenant, which was established through Moses. They were appointed to go forth and make the provisions of that new covenant known to a dying world.

Not of the letter Not of the literal, or verbal meaning, in contradistinction from the Spirit; see the notes on ^{<8127>}Romans 2:27,29; 7:6. This is said, doubtless, in opposition to the Jews, and Jewish teachers. They insisted much on the letter of the Law, but entered little into its real meaning. They did not seek out the true spiritual sense of the Old Testament; and hence, they rested on the mere literal observance of the rites and ceremonies of religion without understanding their true nature and design. Their service, though in many respects conformed to the letter of the Law, yet became cold, formal, and hypocritical; abounding in mere ceremonies, and where the heart had little to do. Hence, there was little pure spiritual worship offered to God; and hence also they rejected the Messiah whom the old covenant prefigured, and was designed to set forth.

For the letter killeth compare notes on ^{<6045>}Romans 4:15; 7:9,10. The mere letter of the Law of Moses. The effect of it was merely to produce

condemnation; to produce a sense of guilt, and danger, and not to produce pardon, relief, and joy. The Law denounced death; condemned sin in all forms; and the effect of it was to produce a sense of guilt and condemnation.

But the spirit giveth life The spirit, in contradistinction from the mere literal interpretation of the Scriptures. The Spirit, that is, Christ, says Locke, compare ^{<A0B17>}2 Corinthians 3:17. The spirit here means, says Bloomfield, that new spiritual system, the gospel. The Spirit of God speaking in us, says Doddridge. The spirit here seems to refer to the New Testament, or the new dispensation in contradistinction from the old. That was characterized mainly by its strictness of Law, and by its burdensome rites, and by the severe tone of its denunciation for sin. It did not in itself provide a way of pardon and peace. Law condemns; it does not speak of forgiveness. On the contrary, the gospel, a spiritual system, is designed to impart life and comfort to the soul. It speaks peace. It comes not to condemn, but to save. It discloses a way of mercy, and it invites all to partake and live. It is called “spirit,” probably because its consolations are imparted and secured by the Spirit of God — the source of all true life to the soul. It is the dispensation of the Spirit; and it demands a spiritual service — a service that is free, and elevated, and tending eminently to purify the heart, and to save the soul; see the note on ^{<A0B17>}2 Corinthians 3:17.

^{<A0B17>}2 Corinthians 3:7. *But if the ministration of death* In the previous verses, Paul had referred incidentally to the institutions of Moses, and to the superiority of the gospel. He had said that the former were engraved on stones, but the latter on the heart (^{<A0B17>}2 Corinthians 3:3); that the letter of the former tended to death, but the latter to life (^{<A0B17>}2 Corinthians 3:6). This sentiment he proceeds further to illustrate, by showing in what the superior glory of the gospel consisted. The design of the whole is, to illustrate the nature, and to show the importance of the ministerial office; and the manner in which the duties of that office were to be performed. That the phrase “ministration of death” refers to the Mosaic institutions, the connection sufficiently indicates, ^{<A0B17>}2 Corinthians 3:13-15. The word “ministration” (^{<A0B17>}διακονία ^{<1248>}) means, properly, ministry; the office of ministering in divine things. It is usually applied to the officers of the church in the New Testament, ^{<A0B17>}Acts 1:17,25; ^{<A0B17>}Romans 9:13; ^{<A0B17>}1 Corinthians 12:5. The word here, however, seems to refer to the whole arrangement under the Mosaic economy, by which his laws were

promulgated, and perpetuated. The expression “a ministration — written and engraved on stone,” is somewhat harsh; but the sense evidently is, the ministration of a covenant, or of laws written on stones. The word “ministration” there refers to the arrangement, office, etc. by which the knowledge of these laws was maintained; the ministering under a system like that of the Jewish; or, more strictly, the act and occasion on which Moses himself ministered, or promulgated that system to the Jews, and when the glory of the work was irradiated even from His countenance. And the purpose of the apostle is to show that the ministry of the gospel is more glorious than even the ministry of Moses, when he was admitted near to God on the holy mountain; and when such a glory attended his receiving and promulgating the Law. It is called the “ministration of death,” because it tended to condemnation; it did not speak of pardon; it was suited only to deepen the sense of sin, and to produce alarm and dread; see the note on ¹²³⁶2 Corinthians 3:6.

Written and engraven in stones The Ten Commandments — the substance of all the Mosaic institutes, and the principal laws of his economy — were written or engraved on tables of stone.

Was glorious Was attended with magnificence and splendor. The glory here referred to, consisted in the circumstance of sublimity and grandeur in which the Law of Moses was given, It was:

- (1) The glory of God as he was manifested on Mount Sinai, as the Lawgiver and Ruler of the people.
- (2) The glory of the attending circumstances, of thunder, fire, etc. in which God appeared. The Law was given in these circumstances. Its giving — called here the “ministration” — was amidst such displays of the glory of God. It was,
- (3) A high honor and glory for Moses to be permitted to approach so near to God; to commune with him; and to receive at his hand the Law for his people, and for the world. These were circumstances of imposing majesty and grandeur, which, however, Paul says were eclipsed and surpassed by the ministry of the gospel.

So that the children of Israel ... In ¹²³⁷Exodus 34:29,30, it is said, that “When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses’ hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone, while He talked with

him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.” The word rendered “steadfastly behold” (ἀτενίσαι ^{<816>}), means to gaze intently upon; to look steadily, or constantly, or fixedly; see the note on ^{<4110>}Acts 1:10. There was a dazzling splendor, an irradiation; a diffusion of light, such that they could not look intently and steadily upon it — as we cannot look steadily at the sun. How this was produced, is not known. It cannot be accounted for from natural causes, and was doubtless designed to be to the Israelites an attestation that Moses had been with God, and was commissioned by him. They would see:

- (1) That it was unnatural, such as no known cause could produce; and,
- (2) Not improbably they would recognize a resemblance to the manner in which God usually appeared — the glory of the Shechinah in which he so frequently manifested himself to them. It would be to them, therefore, a demonstration that Moses had been with God.

Which glory was to be done away The splendor of that scene was transitory. It did not last. It was soon destroyed (την ^{<3588>} καταργουμένην ^{<2673>}). It was not adapted or designed long to continue. This does not mean, as Doddridge supposes, “soon to be abolished in death;” or, as others, “ceasing with youth;” but it means, that the shining or the splendor was transitory; it was soon to cease; it was not designed to be permanent. Neither the wonderful scenes accompanying the giving of the Law on Sinai, nor the shining on the countenance of Moses, was designed to abide. The thunders of Sinai would cease to roll; the lightnings to play; the visible manifestations of the presence of God would all be gone; and the supernatural illumination of the face of Moses also would soon cease — perhaps as Macknight, Bloomfield, and others suppose, as a prefiguration of the abrogation of the glory of the whole system of the Levitical law. Paul certainly means to say, that the glory of Moses, and of his dispensation, was a fading glory; but that the glory of the gospel would be permanent, and increasing forever.

^{<4110>}**2 Corinthians 3:8.** *How shall not the ministration of the Spirit* This is an argument from the less to the greater. Several things in it are worthy of notice:

- (1) The proper contrast to the “ministration of death” (^{<4110>}2 Corinthians 3:7), would have been ‘ministration of life.’ But Paul chose rather to call it

the ‘ministration of the spirit;’ as the source of life; or as conferring higher dignity on the gospel than to have called it simply the ministration of life.

(2) By the “Spirit” here is manifestly meant the Holy Spirit; and the whole phrase denotes the gospel, or the preaching of the gospel, by which eminently the Holy Spirit is imparted.

(3) It is the high honor of the gospel ministry, that it is the means by which the Holy Spirit is imparted to human beings. It is designed to secure the salvation of people by his agency; and it is through the ministry that the Holy Spirit is imparted, the heart renewed, and the soul saved. The work of the ministry is, therefore, the most important and honorable in which man can engage.

Be rather glorious

(1) Because that of Moses tended to death; this to life.

(2) Because that was engraved on stone; this is engraved on the heart.

(3) Because that was the mere giving of a law; this is connected with the renovating influences of the Holy Spirit.

(4) Because that was soon to pass away.

All the magnificence of the scene was soon to vanish. But this is to remain. Its influence and effect are to be everlasting. It is to stretch into eternity; and its main glory is to be witnessed in souls renewed and saved; and amidst the splendors of heaven.

“The work of the Spirit of God on the heart of a rational being, is much more important than any dead characters which can be engraved on insensible stones” — Doddridge.

2 Corinthians 3:9. *For if the ministration of condemnation* Of Moses in giving the Law, the effect of which is to produce condemnation. Law condemns the guilty; it does not save them. It denounces punishment; it contains no provisions of pardon. To pardon is to depart from the Law; and must be done under the operation of another system — since a law which contains a provision for the pardon of offenders, and permits them to escape, would be a burlesque in legislation. The tendency of the Mosaic institutions, therefore, was to produce a sense of condemnation. And so it

will be found by all who attempt to be justified by the Law. It will tend to, and result in, their condemnation.

Be glory Be glorious; or be glory itself — It was glorious as a manifestation of the holiness and justice of God; and glorious in the attending circumstances. No event in our world has been more magnificent in the circumstances of external majesty and splendor than the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai.

The ministration of righteousness The gospel; the promulgation of the plan of mercy. It is called “the ministration of righteousness,” in contradistinction from the Law of Moses, which was a “ministration of condemnation.” The word “righteousness,” however, does not exactly express the force of the original word. That word is δικαιοσύνης ^{<1343>}, and it stands directly opposed to the word κατακρίσεως ^{<2633>}, “condemnation.” It should be rendered ‘the ministration of justification;’ the plan by which God justifies people; see the note, ^{<4017>}Romans 1:17. The Law of Moses condemns; the gospel is the plan by which man is justified. And if that which condemns could be glorious, much more must that be by which people can be justified, acquitted, and saved. The superior glory of the gospel, therefore, consists in the fact that it is a scheme to justify and save lost sinners. And this glory consists:

- (1) In the fact that it can be done when all law condemns.
- (2) In the showing forth of the divine character while it is done, as just, and merciful, and benevolent in doing it — blending all his great and glorious attributes together — while the Law disclosed only one of His attributes — His justice.
- (3) In the manner in which it is done. It is by the incarnation of the Son of God — a far more glorious manifestation of deity than was made on Mount Sinai. It is by the toils, and sufferings, and death of him who made the atonement, and by the circumstances of awful and imposing grandeur which attended his death, when the sun was darkened. and the rocks were rent — far more grand and awful scenes than occurred when the Law was given. It is by the resurrection and ascension of the Redeemer — scenes far more sublime than all the external glories of Sinai when the Law was given.
- (4) In the effects, or results. The one condemns; the other justifies and saves. The effect of the one is seen in the convictions of conscience, in

alarm, in a sense of guilt, in the conscious desert of condemnation, and in the apprehension of eternal punishment. The other is seen in sins forgiven; in peace of conscience; in the joy of pardon; in the hope of heaven; in comfort and triumph on the bed of death, and amidst the glories of heaven.

2 Corinthians 3:10. *For even that which was made glorious* (το ^{<3588>} **δεδοξασμενον** ^{<1392>}). That was splendid, excellent, or glorious. This refers doubtless, to the laws and institutions of Moses, especially to the primary giving of the Law. Paul does not deny that it had an honor and majesty such, in some respects, as the Jews claimed for it. It was glorious in the manner in which it was given; it was glorious in the purity of the Law itself; and it was glorious, or splendid in the magnificent and imposing ritual in which the worship of God was celebrated. But all this was surpassed in the brighter glory of the gospel.

Had no glory Greek: “Was not glorious, or splendid” (ουδε ^{<3761>} **δεδοξασται** ^{<1392>}). It had comparatively no glory or splendor. Its glory was all eclipsed. It was like the splendor of the moon and stars compared with the bright light of the sun.

By reason of the glory that excelleth In the gospel; in the incarnation, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus; in the pardon of sin; in the peace and joy of the believer; and in the glories of the heavenly world to which the gospel elevates dying men.

2 Corinthians 3:11. *For if that which is done away ...* The splendor that attended the giving of the Law; the bright shining of the face of Moses; and the ritual institutions of his religion. It was to be done away. It was never designed to be permanent. Everything in it had a transient existence, and was so designed. Yet it was attended, Paul admits, with much that was magnificent, and splendid. He had, in the previous verses, stated several important differences between the Law and the gospel. He here states another. The Law he calls (το ^{<3588>} **καταργουμενον** ^{<2673>}) the thing which was to be made to cease; to be put an end to; to be done away with; to be abolished. It had no permanency; and it was designed to have none. Its glory, therefore, great as in many respects it might be, could not be compared with that which was to be permanent — as the light of the stars fades away at the rising sun. It is implied here, that it was originally designed that the Mosaic institutions should not be permanent; that they should be mere shadows and types of better things; and that when the

things which they adumbrated should appear, the shadows would vanish of course. This idea is one which prevails everywhere in the New Testament, and which the sacred writers are often at great pains to demonstrate.

Was glorious Greek “By glory” ($\delta\iota\alpha$ ^{<1223>} $\delta\omicron\zeta\eta\varsigma$ ^{<1391>}). That is, it was attended by glory; it was introduced by glory, it was encompassed with glory when it was established. The idea here is, not that it was glorious in itself, but that it was accompanied with splendor and majesty.

That which remaineth The gospel ($\tau\omicron$ ^{<3588>} $\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\nu$ ^{<3306>}). The thing that is to remain; that is permanent, abiding, perpetual; that has no principle of decay, and whose characteristic it is, that it is everlasting. The gospel is permanent, or abiding:

- (1) Because it is designed to remain immutable through the remotest ages. It is not to be superseded by any new economy, or institution. It is the dispensation under which the affairs of the world are to be wound up, and under which the world is to close; see the note, ^{<415>}1 Corinthians 15:51.
- (2) Its effects on the heart are permanent. It is complete in itself. It is not to be succeeded by any other system, and it looks to no other system in order to complete or perfect its operations on the soul.
- (3) Its effects are to abide forever. They will exist in heaven. They are to be seen in the soul that shall be recovered from sin, and that shall be glorious in the bosom of God forever and ever. The Mosaic system — glorious as it was — shall be remembered as introducing the gospel; the gospel shall be remembered as directly fitting for heaven. Its most great and glorious results shall be seen in the permanent and eternal joys of heaven. The gospel contemplates a great, permanent, and eternal good, adapted to all ages, all climes, all people, and all worlds. It is, therefore, so much more glorious than the limited, temporary, and partial good of the Mosaic system, that that may be said in comparison to have had no glory.

^{<4182>}**2 Corinthians 3:12.** *Seeing then that we have such hope* Hope properly is a compound emotion, made up of a desire for an object, and an expectation of obtaining it. If there is no desire for it; or if the object is not pleasant and agreeable, there is no hope, though there may be expectation — as in the expectation of the pestilence, of famine, or sickness, or death. If there is no expectation of it, but a strong desire, there is no hope, as in cases where there is a strong desire of wealth, or fame, or pleasure; or

where a man is condemned for murder, and has a strong desire but no prospect of pardon; or where a man is shipwrecked, and has a strong desire, but no expectation of again seeing his family and friends. In such cases, despondency or despair are the results. It is the union of the two feelings in proper proportions which constitutes hope. There has been considerable variety of views among expositors in regard to the proper meaning of the word in this place. Mr. Locke supposes that Paul here means the honorable employment of an apostle and minister of the gospel, or the glory belonging to the ministry in the gospel; and that his calling it “hope,” instead of “glory,” which the connection would seem to demand, is the language of modesty. Rosenmuller understands it of the hope of the perpetual continuance of the gospel dispensation. Macknight renders it “persuasion,” and explains it as meaning the full persuasion or assurance that the gospel excels the Law in the manner of its introduction; its permanency, &c, A few remarks may, perhaps, make it clear:

- (1) It refers primarily to Paul, and the other ministers of the gospel. It is not properly the Christian hope as such to which he refers, but it is that which the ministers of the gospel had.
- (2) It refers to all that he had said before about the superiority of the gospel to the Law; and it is designed to express the result of all that on his mind, and on the minds of his fellow-laborers.
- (3) It refers to the prospect, confidence, persuasion, anticipation which he had as the effect of what he had just said. It is the prospect of eternal life; the clear expectation of acceptance, and the anticipation of heaven, based on the fact that this was a ministry of the Spirit (~~FORB~~ 2 Corinthians 3:8): that it was a ministry showing the way of justification (~~FORB~~ 2 Corinthians 3:9): and that it was never to be done away, but to abide forever (~~FORB~~ 2 Corinthians 3:11). On all these this strong hope was founded; and in view of these, Paul expressed himself clearly, not enigmatically; and not in types and figures, as Moses did. Everything about the gospel was clear and plain; and this led to the confident expectation and assurance of heaven. The word “hope,” therefore, in this place will express the effect on the mind of Paul in regard to the work of the ministry, produced by the group of considerations which he had suggested, showing that the gospel was superior to the Law; and that it was the ground of more clear and certain confidence and hope than anything which the Law could furnish.

We use We employ; we are accustomed to. He refers to the manner in which he preached the gospel.

Great plainness of speech Margin, boldness. We use the word “plainness” as applied to speech chiefly in two senses:

- (1) To denote boldness, faithfulness, candor; in opposition to trimming, timidity, and unfaithfulness; and,
- (2) To denote clearness, intelligibleness, and simplicity, in opposition to obscurity, mist, and highly-worked and labored forms of expression.

The connection here shows that the latter is the sense in which the phrase here is to be understood: see ^{<40B3>}2 Corinthians 3:13. It denotes openness, simplicity, freedom from the obscurity which arises from enigmatical and parabolical, and typical modes of speaking. This stands in opposition to figure, metaphor, and allegory — to an affected and labored concealment of the idea in the manner which was common among the Jewish doctors and pagan philosophers, where their meaning was carefully concealed from the common, and from all except the initiated. It stands opposed also to the necessary obscurity arising from typical institutions like those of Moses. And the doctrine of the passage is, that such is the clearness and fulness of the Christian revelation, arising from the fact, that it is the last economy, and that it does not look to the future, that its ministers may and should use clear and intelligible language. They should not use language abounding in metaphor and allegory. They should not use unusual terms. They should not draw their words and illustrations from science. They should not use mere technical language. They should not attempt to veil or cloak their meaning. They should not seek a refined and overworked style. They should use expressions which other people use; and express themselves as far as possible in the language of common life. What is preaching worth that is not understood? Why should a man talk at all unless he is intelligible? Who was ever more plain and simple in his words and illustrations than the Lord Jesus?

^{<40B3>}**2 Corinthians 3:13.** *And not as Moses* Our conduct is not like that of Moses. We make no attempt to conceal anything in regard to the nature, design, and duration of the gospel. We leave nothing designedly in mystery.

Which put a veil over his face That is, when he came down from Mount Sinai, and when his face shone. ^{<0343>}Exodus 34:33, “And until Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.” He put off this veil whenever he went to speak with God, but put on again when he delivered his commands to the people, What was the design of this, Moses has not himself declared. The statement which he makes in Exodus would lead us to suppose that it was on account of the exceeding brightness and dazzling splendor which shone around him, and which made it difficult to look intently upon him; and that this was in part the reason, even Paul himself seems to intimate in ^{<4007>}2 Corinthians 3:7. He, however, in this verse intimates that there was another design, which was that he might be, as Doddridge expresses it, “a kind of type and figure of his own dispensation.”

That the children of Israel Mr. Locke understands this of the apostles, and supposes that it means, “We do not veil the light, so that the obscurity of what we deliver should hinder the children of Israel from seeing in the Law which was to be done away, Christ who is the end of the Law.” But this interpretation is forced and unnatural. The phrase rendered “that” (^{<4314>}προς ^{<3588>}το) evidently connects what is affirmed here with the statement about Moses; and shows that the apostle means to say that Moses put the veil on his face in order that the children of Israel should not be able to see to the end of his institutions. That Moses had such a design, and that the putting on of the veil was emblematic of the nature of his institutions, Paul here distinctly affirms. No one can prove that this was not his design; and in a land and time when types, and emblems, and allegorical modes of speech were much used, it is highly probable that Moses meant to intimate that the end and full purpose of his institutions were designedly concealed.

Could not stedfastly look Could not gaze intently upon (^{<816>}ατενισαι); see the note on ^{<4007>}2 Corinthians 3:7. They could not clearly discern it; there was obscurity arising from the fact of the designed concealment. He did not intend that they should clearly see the full purport and design of the institutions which he established.

To the end (^{<1519>}εις ^{<3588>}το ^{<5056>}τελος). Unto the end, purpose, design, or ultimate result of the Law which he established. A great many different interpretations have been proposed of this. The meaning seems to me to be this: There was a glory and splendor in that which the institutions of Moses typified, which the children of Israel were not permitted then to behold.

There was a splendor and luster in the face of Moses, which they could not gaze upon, and therefore he put a veil over it to diminish its intense brightness. In like manner there was a glory and splendor in the ultimate design and scope of his institutions, in that to which they referred, which they were not then “able,” that is, prepared to look on, and the exceeding brightness of which he of design concealed. This was done by obscure types and figures, that resembled a veil thrown over a dazzling and splendid object. The word “end,” then, I suppose, does not refer to termination, or close, but to the “design, scope, or purpose” of the Mosaic institutions; to that which they were intended to introduce and adumbrate. THAT END was the Messiah, and the glory of his institutions; see the note on Romans 10: “Christ is the end of the Law.” And the meaning of Paul, I take to be, is, that there was a splendor and a glory in the gospel which the Mosaic institutions were designed to typify, which was so great that the children of Israel were not fully prepared to see it, and that he designedly threw over that glory the veil of obscure types and figures; as he threw over his face a veil that partially concealed its splendor. Thus, interpreted there is a consistency in the entire passage, and very great beauty. Paul, in the following verses, proceeds to state that the veil to the view of the Jews of his time was not removed; that they still looked to the obscure types and institutions of the Mosaic Law rather than on the glory which they were designed to adumbrate; AS IF they should choose to look upon the veil on the face of Moses rather than on the splendor which it concealed.

Of that which is abolished Or rather to be abolished, (του ^{<3588>} καταργουμενου ^{<2673>}), whose nature, design, and intention it was that it should be abolished. It was never designed to be permanent; and Paul speaks of it here as a thing that was known and indisputable that the Mosaic institutions were designed to be abolished.

~~4084~~ **2 Corinthians 3:14.** *But their minds were blinded* The word used here (πωρωω ^{<4456>}) means rather to harden; to make hard like stone; and then to make dull or stupid. It is applied to the heart, in ~~4062~~ Mark 6:52; 8:17; to persons, in ~~5107~~ Romans 11:7; and to the eyes, in ~~1870~~ Job 17:7. Paul refers here to the fact that the understandings of the Jews were stupid, dull, and insensible, so that they did not see clearly the design and end of their own institutions. He states simply the fact; he does not refer to the cause of it. The fact that the Jews were thus stupid and dull is often affirmed in the New Testament.

For until this day ... The sense of this is, that even to the time when Paul wrote, it was a characteristic of the great mass of the Jewish people, that they did not understand the true sense of their own Scriptures. They did not understand its doctrines in regard to the Messiah. A veil seems to be thrown over the Old Testament when they read it, as there was over the face of Moses, so that the glory of their own Scriptures is concealed from their view, as the glory of the face of Moses was hidden.

Of the Old Testament Greek, “of the old covenant.” See this word “testament,” or covenant, explained in the notes on [1 Corinthians 11:25](#). This, I believe, is the only instance in which the Scriptures of the Jews are called the “Old Testament,” or covenant, in the Bible. It was, of course, not a name which they used, or would use; but it is now with Christians the common appellation. No doubt can be entertained but that Paul uses the terms in the same manner in which we now do, and refers to all the inspired writings of the Jews.

Which veil is done away in Christ In the manifestation, or appearance of Jesus the Messiah, the veil is removed. The obscurity which rested on the prophecies and types of the former dispensation is withdrawn; and as the face of Moses could have been distinctly seen if the veil on his face had been removed, so it is in regard to the true meaning of the Old Testament by the coming of the Messiah. What was obscure is now made clear; and the prophecies are so completely fulfilled in him, that his coming has removed the covering, and shed a clear light over them all. Many of the prophecies, for example, until the Messiah actually appeared, appeared obscure, and almost contradictory. Those which spoke of him, for illustration, as man and as God; as suffering, and yet reigning; as dying, and yet as ever-living; as a mighty Prince, a conqueror, and a king, and yet as a man of sorrows; as humble, and yet glorious: all seemed difficult to be reconciled until they were seen to harmonize in Jesus of Nazareth. Then they were plain, and the veil was taken away. Christ is seen to answer all the previous descriptions of him in the Old Testament; and his coming casts a clear light on all which was before obscure.

[2 Corinthians 3:15](#). *But even unto this day* To the time when Paul wrote this Epistle, about 30 years after Christ was put to death. But it is still as true as it was in the time of Paul; and the character and conduct of the Jews now so entirely accords with the description which he gives of them in his time, as to show that he drew from nature, and as to constitute

one of the strong incidental proofs that the account in the New Testament is true. Of no other people on earth, probably, would a description be accurate eighteen hundred years after it was made.

When Moses is read When the five books of Moses are read, as they were regularly and constantly in their synagogues; see the note on ^{<4016>}Luke 4:16.

The veil is upon their heart They do not see the true meaning and beauty of their own Scriptures — a description as applicable to the Jews now as it was to those in the time of Paul.

^{<4016>}**2 Corinthians 3:16.** *Nevertheless* This is not always to continue. The time is coming when they shall understand their own Scriptures, and see their true beauty.

When it shall turn to the Lord When the Jewish people shall be converted. The word “it” here refers undoubtedly to “Israel” in ^{<4013>}2 Corinthians 3:13; and the sense is, that their blindness is not always to remain; there is to be a period when they shall turn to God, and shall understand his promises, and become acquainted with the true nature of their own religion. This subject the apostle has discussed at much greater length in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; see the notes on that chapter.

The veil shall be taken away They shall then understand the true meaning of the prophecies, and the true nature of their own institutions. They shall see that they refer to the Lord Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, and the true Messiah. The genuine sense of their sacred oracles shall break upon their view with full and irresistible light. There may be an allusion in the language here to the declaration in ^{<2877>}Isaiah 25:7,

“And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.”

This verse teaches:

(1) That the time will come when the Jews shall be converted to Christianity; expressed here by their turning unto the Lord, that is, the Lord Jesus; see the note, ^{<4013>}Acts 1:24.

(2) It seems to be implied that their conversion will be a conversion of “the people” at large; a conversion that shall be nearly simultaneous; a conversion “en masse.” Such a conversion we have reason to anticipate of the Jewish nation.

(3) The effect of this will be to make them acquainted with the true sense of their own Scriptures, and the light and beauty of the sayings of their own prophets, Now they are in deep darkness on the subject; then they will see how entirely they meet and harmonize in the Lord Jesus.

(4) The true and only way of having a correct and full meaning of the Bible is by turning unto God. Love to Him, and a disposition to do His will, is the best means of interpreting the Bible.

2 Corinthians 3:17. *Now the Lord is that Spirit* The word “Lord” here evidently refers to the Lord Jesus; see 2 Corinthians 3:16. It may be observed in general in regard to this word, that where it occurs in the New Testament unless the connection require us to understand it of God, it refers to the Lord Jesus. It was the common name by which he was known; see John 20:13; 21:7,12; Ephesians 4:1,5. The design of Paul in this verse seems to be to account for the “liberty” which he and the other apostles had, or for the boldness, openness, and plainness (2 Corinthians 3:12) which they evinced in contradistinction from the Jews, who so little understood the nature of their institutions. He had said (2 Corinthians 3:6), that he was a minister “not of the letter, but of the Spirit;” and he had stated that the Old Testament was not understood by the Jews who adhered to the literal interpretation of the Scriptures. He here says, that the Lord Jesus was “the Spirit” to which he referred, and by which he was enabled to understand the Old Testament so as to speak plainly, and without obscurity. The sense is, that Christ was the Spirit; that is, the sum, the substance of the Old Testament. The figures, types, prophecies, etc. all centered in him, and he was the end of all those institutions. If contemplated as having reference to him, it was easy to understand them. This I take to be the sentiment of the passage, though expositors have been greatly divided in regard to its meaning. Thus explained, it does not mean absolutely and abstractly that the Lord Jesus was “a Spirit,” but that he was the sum, the essence, the end, and the purport of the Mosaic rites, the spirit of which Paul had spoken in 2 Corinthians 3:6, as contradistinguished from the letter of the Law.

And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty This is a general truth designed to illustrate the particular sentiment which he had just advanced. The word “liberty” here (ἐλευθερία ^{<1657>}) refers, I think, to freedom in speaking; the power of speaking openly, and freely, as in 2 Corinthians 3:12. It states the general truth, that the effect of the Spirit of God was to

give light and clearness of view; to remove obscurity from a subject, and to enable one to see it plainly. This would be a truth that could not be denied by the Jews, who held to the doctrine that the Spirit of God revealed truth, and it must be admitted by all. Under the influence of that Spirit, therefore, Paul says, that he was able to speak with openness, and boldness; that he had a clear view of truth, which the mass of the Jews had not; and that the system of religion which he preached was open, plain, and clear. The word “freedom,” would perhaps, better convey the idea. “There is freedom from the dark and obscure views of the Jews; freedom from their prejudices, and their superstitions; freedom from the slavery and bondage of sin; the freedom of the children of God, who have clear views of him as their Father and Redeemer and who are enabled to express those views openly and boldly to the world.”

2 Corinthians 3:18. *But we all* All Christians. The discussion in the chapter has related mainly to the apostles; but this declaration seems evidently to refer to all Christians, as distinguished from the Jews.

With open face compare note on ^{<4632>}1 Corinthians 13:12. Tyndale renders this: “and now the Lord’s glory appeareth in us all as in a glass.” The sense is, “with unveiled face,” alluding to the fact (^{<4083>}2 Corinthians 3:13) that the face of Moses was veiled, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look on it. In contradistinction from that, Paul says that Christians are enabled to look upon the glory of the Lord in the gospel without a veil — without any obscure intervening medium.

Beholding as in a glass On the word “glass, and the sense in which it is used in the New Testament, see the note on ^{<4632>}1 Corinthians 13:12. The word used here (**κατοπτριζομενοι** ^{<2734>}) has been very variously rendered. Macknight renders it, “we all reflecting as mirrors the glory of the Lord.” Doddridge, “beholding as by a glass.” Locke, “with open countenances as mirrors, reflecting the glory of the Lord.” The word **κατοπτριζω** occurs no where else in the New Testament. It properly means to look in a mirror; to behold as in a mirror. The mirrors of the ancients were made of burnished metal, and they reflected images with great brilliancy and distinctness. And the meaning is, that the gospel reflected the glory of the Lord; it was, so to speak, the mirror — the polished, burnished substance in which the glory of the Lord shone, and where that glory was irradiated and reflected so that it might be seen by Christians. There was no veil over it; no obscurity; nothing to break its

dazzling splendor, or to prevent its meeting the eye. Christians, by looking on the gospel, could see the glorious perfections and plans of God as bright, and clear, and brilliant as they could see a light reflected from the burnished surface of the mirror. So to speak, the glorious perfections of God shone from heaven; beamed upon the gospel, and were thence reflected to the eye and the heart of the Christian, and had the effect of transforming them into the same image. This passage is one of great beauty, and is designed to set forth the gospel as being “the reflection” of the infinite glories of God to the minds and hearts of people.

The glory of the Lord The splendor, majesty, and holiness of God as manifested in the gospel, or of the Lord as incarnate. The idea is, that God was clearly and distinctly seen in the gospel. There was no obscurity, no veil, as in the case of Moses. In the gospel they were permitted to look on the full splendor of the divine perfections — the justice, goodness, mercy, and benevolence of God — to see him as he is with undimmed and unveiled glory. The idea is, that the perfections of God shine forth with splendor and beauty in the gospel, and that we are permitted to look on them clearly and openly.

Are changed into the same image It is possible that there may be an allusion here to the effect which was produced by looking into an ancient mirror. Such mirrors were made of burnished metal, and the reflection from them would be intense. If a strong light were thrown on them, the rays would be cast by reflection on the face of him who looked on the mirror, and it would be strongly illuminated. And the idea may be, that the glory of God, the splendor of the divine perfections, was thrown on the gospel, so to speak like a bright light on a polished mirror; and that that glory was reflected from the gospel on him who contemplated it, so that he appeared to be transformed into the same image. Locke renders it: “We are changed into his very image by a continued succession of glory, as it were, streaming upon us from the Lord.” The figure is one of great beauty; and the idea is, that by placing ourselves within the light of the gospel; by contemplating the glory that shines there, we become changed into the likeness of the same glory, and conformed to that which shines there with so much splendor. By contemplating the resplendent face of the blessed Redeemer, we are changed into something of the same image. It is a law of our nature that we are moulded, in our moral feelings, by the persons with whom we associate, and by the objects which we contemplate. We become insensibly assimilated to those with whom we have social contact, and to

the objects with which we are familiar. We imbibe the opinions, we copy the habits, we imitate the manners, we fall into rite customs of those with whom we have daily conversation, and whom we make our companions and friends. Their sentiments insensibly become our sentiments, and their ways our ways. It is thus with the books with which we are familiar. We are insensibly, but certainly moulded into conformity to the opinions, maxims, and feelings which are there expressed. Our own sentiments undergo a gradual change, and we are likened to those with which in this manner we are conversant. So it is in regard to the opinions and feelings which from any cause we are in the habit of bringing before our minds. It is the way by which people become corrupted in their sentiments and feelings, in their contact with the world; it is the way in which amusements, and the company of the frivolous and the dissipated possess so much power; it is the way in which the young and inexperienced are beguiled and ruined; and it is the way in which Christians dim the luster of their piety, and obscure the brightness of their religion by their contact with the “happy and fashionable world. And it is on the same great principle that Paul says that by contemplating the glory of God in the gospel, we become insensibly, but certainly conformed to the same image, and made like the Redeemer. His image will be reflected on us. We shall imbibe his sentiments, catch his feelings, and be moulded into the image of his own purity. Such is the great and wise law of our nature; and it is on this principle, and by this means, that God designs we should be “made” pure on earth, and “kept” pure in heaven forever.

From glory to glory From one degree of glory to another.

“The more we behold this brilliant and glorious light, the more do we reflect back its rays; that is, the more we contemplate the great truths of the Christian religion, the more do our minds become imbued with its spirit” — Bloomfield.

This is said in contradistinction probably to Moses. The splendor on his face gradually died away. But not so with the light reflected from the gospel. It becomes deeper and brighter constantly. This sentiment is parallel to that expressed by the psalmist; “They go from strength to strength” (¹³⁸¹⁷Psalm 84:7); that is, they go from one degree of strength to another, or one degree of holiness to another, until they come to the full vision of God himself in heaven. The idea in the phrase before us is; that there is a continual increase of moral purity and holiness under the gospel until it

results in the perfect glory of heaven. The “doctrine” is, that Christians advance in piety; and that this is done by the contemplation of the glory of God as it is revealed in the gospel.

As by the Spirit of the Lord Margin, “Of the Lord of the Spirit.” Greek “As from the Lord the Spirit.” So Beza, Locke, Wolf, Rosenmuller, and Doddridge render it. The idea is, that it is by the Lord Jesus Christ, the spirit of the law, the spirit referred to by Paul above, ~~406~~2 Corinthians 3:6,17. It is done by the Holy Spirit procured or imparted by the Lord Jesus. This sentiment is in accordance with that which prevails everywhere in the Bible, that it is by the Holy Spirit alone that the heart is changed and purified. And the “object” of the statement here is, doubtless, to prevent the supposition that the change from “glory to glory” was produced in any sense by the “mere” contemplation of truth, or by any physical operation of such contemplation on the mind. It was by the Spirit of God alone that the heart was changed even under the gospel, and amidst the full blaze of its truth, Were it not for his agency, even the contemplation of the glorious truths of the gospel would be in vain, and would produce no saving effect on the human heart.

REMARKS

- 1.** The best of all evidences of a call to the office of the ministry is the divine blessing resting on our labors ~~401~~2 Corinthians 3:1,2. If sinners are converted; if souls are sanctified; if the interests of pure religion are advanced; if by humble, zealous, and self-denying efforts, a man is enabled so to preach as that the divine blessing shall rest constantly on his labors, it is among the best of all evidences that he is called of God, and is approved by him. And though it may be true, and is true, that people who are self-deceived, or are hypocrites, are sometimes the means of doing good, yet it is still true, as a general rule, that eminent, and long-continued success in the ministry is an evidence of God’s acceptance, and that he has called a minister to this office. Paul felt this, and often appealed to it; and why may not others also?
- 2.** A minister may appeal to the effect of the gospel among his own people as a proof that it is from God, ~~402~~2 Corinthians 3:2,3. Nothing else would produce such effects as were produced at Corinth, but the power of God. If the wicked are reclaimed; if the in temperate and licentious are made temperate and pure; if the dishonest are made honest; and the scoffer learns

to pray, under the gospel, it proves that it is from God. To such effects a minister may appeal as proof that the gospel which he preaches is from heaven. A system which will produce these effects must be true.

3. A minister should so live among a people as to be able to appeal to them with the utmost confidence in regard to the purity and integrity of his own character, ~~400B~~2 Corinthians 3:1,2. He should so live, and preach, and act, that he will be under no necessity of adducing testimonials from abroad in regard to his character. The effect of his gospel, and the tenor of his life, should be his best testimonial; and to that he should be able to appeal. A man who is under a necessity, constantly, or often, of defending his own character; of bolstering it up by testimonials from abroad; who is obliged to spend much of his time in defending his reputation, or who chooses to spend much of his time in defending it, has usually a character and reputation “not worth defending.” Let a man live as he ought to do, and he will, in the end, have a good reputation. Let him strive to do the will of God, and save souls, and he will have all the reputation which he ought to have. God will take care of his character; and will give him just as much reputation as it is desirable that he should have; see ~~437B~~Psalm 37:5,6.

4. The church is, as it were, an epistle sent by the Lord Jesus, to show his character and will, ~~400B~~2 Corinthians 3:3. It is his representative on earth. It holds his truth. It is to imitate his example. It is to show how he lived. And it is to accomplish that which he would accomplish were he personally on earth, and present among people — as a letter is designed to accomplish some important purpose of the writer when absent. The church, therefore, should be such as shall appropriately express the will and desire of the Lord Jesus. It should resemble him. It should hold his truth; and it should devote itself with untiring diligence to the great purpose of advancing his designs, and spreading his gospel around the world.

5. Religion has its seat in the heart, ~~400B~~2 Corinthians 3:3. It is engraved there. It is written not with ink, or engraved on stone, but it is written by the Spirit of God on the heart. That professed religion, therefore, which does not reach the heart, and which is not felt there, is false and delusive. There IS no true religion which does not reach and affect the heart.

6. We should feel our dependence on God in all things, ~~400B~~2 Corinthians 3:5. We are dependent on him:

(1) For revelation itself. Man had no power of originating the truths which constitute revelation. They are the free and pure gift of God.

(2) For success in saving souls. God only can change the heart. It is not done by human reasoning; by any power of man; by any eloquence of persuasion. It is by the power of God; and if a minister of religion meets with any success, it will be by the presence and by the power of God alone.

(3) We are dependent on him for the power of thought at all; for clearness of intellect; for such a state of bodily health as to permit us to think; for bright conceptions; for ability to arrange our thoughts; for the power of expressing them clearly; for such a state of mind as shall be free from vain fancies, and vagaries, and eccentricities; and for such a state as shall mark our plans as those of common sense and prudence. On such plans much of the comfort of life depends; and on such plans depends also nearly all the success which people ever meet with in any virtuous and honorable calling. And if people “felt,” as they should do, how much they are dependent on God for the power of “clear thinking,” and for the characteristics of sound sense in their schemes, they would pray for it more than they do; and would be more grateful that such a rich blessing is so extensively conferred upon people.

7. Religion has a living power, ~~FOR~~ 2 Corinthians 3:6. It is not the letter, but the spirit. It is not made up of forms and ceremonies. It does not consist in cold, external rites, however regular they may be; nor in formal prayer, or in stated seasons of devotion. All these will be dead and vain unless the heart is given to God, and to his service. If these are all, there is no religion. And if we have no better religion than that, we should at once abandon our hopes, and seek for that which does not kill, but which makes alive.

8. The office of the ministers of the gospel is glorious, and most honorable, ~~FOR~~ 2 Corinthians 3:7-9. It is “far more” honorable than was the office of Moses; and their work is far more glorious than was his. HIS consisted in giving the Law on tables of stone; in the external splendor which attended its promulgation; and in introducing a system which must be soon done away. His was a ministry “of death” and of “condemnation.” THEIRS is a ministration by which the Holy Spirit is communicated to people — THROUGH them as channels, or organs by which the saving grace of that Spirit is imparted; it is a work by which people are made righteous,

justified, and accepted; it is a work whose effects are never to fade away, but which are to live amidst the splendors of heaven.

9. The responsibility and solemnity of the work of the ministry. It was a solemn and responsible work for Moses to give the Law amidst the thunders of Sinai to the children of Israel. It is MUCH more solemn to be the medium by which the eternal truths of the gospel are made known to people. The one, imposing as it was, was designed to be temporary, and was soon to pass away. The other is to be eternal in its effects, and is to enter vitally and deeply into the eternal destiny of man. The one pertained to laws written on stone; the other to influences that are deeply and forever to affect the heart. No work can be more solemn and responsible than that through which the Holy Spirit, with renewing and sanctifying power, is conveyed to man; that which is connected with the justification of sinners; and that which in its effects is to be permanent as the soul itself, and to endure as long as God shall exist.

10. We see the folly of attempting to be justified by the Law, ~~ARRE~~2 Corinthians 3:7,9. It is the ministration of death and of condemnation. It speaks only to condemn. Law knows nothing of pardon. It is not given for that purpose; and no perfect law can contain within itself provisions for pardon. Besides, no one has ever complied with all the demands of the Law; no one ever will. All have sinned. But if ALL the demands of the Law be not complied with, it speaks only to condemn, ~~SUDO~~ James 2:10. If a man in other respects has been ever so good a citizen, and yet has committed murder, he must die. So says the Law. If a man has been ever so valiant, and fought ever so bravely, and yet is guilty of an act of treason, he must die. The question is not what he has been in in other respects, or what else he may, or may not have done, but has he committed THIS offence? If he has, the Law knows no forgiveness; and pronounces his condemnation. If pardoned, it must be by some other system than by the regular operation of Law. So with the sinner against God. If the Law is violated, it speaks only to condemn. If he is pardoned, it can be only by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

11. The danger of grieving the Holy Spirit, ~~ARRE~~2 Corinthians 3:8. The gospel is the field of the operations of the Holy Spirit in our world. It is the ministration of the Spirit. It is the channel by which his influences descend on man. To reject that gospel is to reject Him, and to cut off the soul from all possibility of being brought under his saving influence and power

forever.” He strives with people only in connection with the gospel; and all hope, therefore, of being brought under his saving power, is in attending to that gospel, and embracing its provisions. The multitudes, therefore, who are rejecting or neglecting that gospel, are throwing themselves beyond his saving influences; and placing themselves beyond the possibility of salvation.

12. We see the “guilt” of neglecting or rejecting the gospel. It is the scheme, and the only scheme for pardon, ~~408B~~ 2 Corinthians 3:8-10. It is a far more glorious manifestation of the goodness of God than the Law of Moses. It is the glorious and benevolent manifestation of God through the incarnation, the sufferings, and the death of his Son. It is the ONLY plan of pardoning mercy that has been, or that will be revealed. If people are not pardoned through that, they are not pardoned at all. If they are not saved BY that, they must die forever. What guilt is there, therefore, in neglecting and despising it! What folly is there in turning away from its provisions of mercy, and neglecting to secure an interest in what it provides!

13. The gospel is to spread around the world, and endure to the end of time, ~~408B~~ 2 Corinthians 3:11. It is not like the institutions of Moses, to endure for a limited period, and then to be done away. The cloud and tempest; the thunder and lightning on Mount Sinai which attended the giving of the Law, soon disappeared. The unusual and unnatural splendor on the countenance of Moses soon vanished away. All the magnificence of the Mosaic ritual also soon faded away. But not so the gospel. That abides. That is the “last” dispensation; the “permanent” economy: that under which the affairs of the world are to be brought to an end. That is to pervade all lands; to bless all people; to survive all revolutions; to outlive all the magnificence of courts, and all the splendor of mighty dynasties, and is to endure until this world shall come to an end, and live in its glorious effects forever and ever. It is, therefore, to be the fixed principle on which all Christians are to act, that the gospel is to be permanent, and is to spread over all lands, and yet fill all nations with joy. And if so, how fervent and unceasing should be their prayers and efforts to accomplish this great and glorious result!

14. We learn from this chapter the duty of preaching in a plain, simple, intelligible manner, ~~408B~~ 2 Corinthians 3:12. Preaching should always be characterised indeed by good sense, and ministers should show that they are not fools, and their preaching should be such as to interest thinking

people — for there is no folly or nonsense in the Bible. But their preaching should not be obscure, metaphysical, enigmatical, and abstruse. It should be so simple that the unlettered may learn the plan of salvation; so plain that no one shall mistake it except by his own fault. The “hopes” of the gospel are so clear that there is no need of ambiguity or enigma; no need of abstruse metaphysical reasoning in the “pulpit.” Nor should there be an attempt to “appear” wise or profound, by studying a dry, abstruse, and cold style and manner. The preacher should be open, plain, simple, sincere; he should “testify” what he feels; should be able to speak as himself animated by “hope,” and to tell of a world of glory to which he is himself looking forward with unspeakable joy.

15. It is the privilege of the Christian to look on the unveiled and unclouded glory of the gospel, ~~41812~~ 2 Corinthians 3:12,13. He does not look at it through types and shadows. He does not contemplate it when a veil of obscurity is drawn designedly over it. He sees it in its true beauty and splendor. The Messiah has come, and he may contemplate openly and plainly his glory, and the grandeur of his work. The Jews looked upon it in the light of “prophecy;” to us it is history. They saw it only through obscure shadows, types, and figures; we see it in open day, may survey at leisure its full beauty, and contemplate in the fullness of its splendor the gospel of the blessed God. For this we cannot be too thankful; nor can we be too anxious lest we undervalue our privileges, and abuse the mercies that we enjoy.

16. In reading the Old Testament, we see the importance of suffering the reflected light of the New Testament to be thrown upon it, in order correctly to understand it, ~~41813~~ 2 Corinthians 3:13,14. It is our privilege to “know” what the institutions of Moses meant; to see the “end” which he contemplated. And it is our privilege to see what they referred to, and how they prefigured the Messiah, and his gospel. In reading the Old Testament, therefore, there is no reason why we should not take with us the knowledge which we have derived from the New Testament, respecting the character, work, and doctrines of the Messiah; and to suffer them to influence our understanding of the laws and institutions of Moses. Thus shall we treat the Bible “as a whole,” and allow one part to throw light on another — a privilege which we always concede to any book. There is no reason why Christians in reading the Old Testament should remain in the same darkness as the ancient, or the modern Jews.

17. Thus read, the Old Testament will be to us of inestimable value, ~~4B14~~2 Corinthians 3:14. It is of value not only as INTRODUCING the gospel; as furnishing predictions whose fulfillment are full demonstration of the truth of religion; as containing specimens of the sublimest and purest poetry in the world; but it is of value as embodying, though amidst many types and shadows and much obscurity, all the great doctrines of the true religion. Though to the Jews, and to the world, there is a veil cast over it; yet to the Christian there is a beauty and splendor on all its pages — for the coming of Christ has removed that veil, and the sense of those ancient writings is now fully seen. True piety will value the Old Testament, and will find there, in the sweetest poetry in the world, the expression of feelings which the religion of the Messiah only can produce; and pure and elevated thoughts which could have been originated by nothing but his anticipated coming: It is no mark of piety or of wisdom to disparage the Jewish Scriptures. But the higher the attainments in Christian feeling, the more will the writings of Moses and the prophets be loved.

18. People may have the Bible, and may read it for a long time, and often, and yet not understand it, ~~4B15~~2 Corinthians 3:15. So it was, and is with the Jews. The Scriptures were attentively read by them, and yet they did not understand them. So it is still. There is a veil upon their heart, and they are blinded. So it is often now with others. People often read the Bible and see little beauty in it. They read, and they do not understand it. The reason is, the HEART is not right. There should be a correspondence of feeling between the heart and the Bible, or a congeniality of view in order to appreciate its value and its truth. No man can understand or appreciate Milton or Cowper who has not a taste like theirs. No man can understand and appreciate a poem or an essay on patriotism, who is not a lover of his country; or on chastity, who is impure; or on temperance, who is intemperate; or on virtue in general, who is a stranger to virtue in every form. And so in reading the Bible. To appreciate and understand fully the writings of David, Isaiah, Paul, or John, we must have their feelings: our hearts must glow with their love to God and the Redeemer; we must feel as they did the guilt and burden of sin; and we must rejoice as they did in the hope of deliverance, and in the prospect of heaven. Until people have these feelings, they are not to wonder that the Bible is to them a dead letter, or a sealed book, and that they do not understand it, or see any beauty in its pages.

19. This chapter furnishes an argument for the fidelity and truth of the statement of Paul, ~~4~~2 Corinthians 3:15. The argument is, that his description is as applicable to the Jews now as it was in his own time — and that, therefore, it must have been drawn from nature. The same veil is on their hearts now as in his time; there is the same blindness and darkness in regard to the true meaning of their Scriptures. The language of Paul will accurately express that blindness now; and his description, therefore, is not drawn from fancy, but from fact. It is true now in regard to that singular people, and it was true in his own time; and the lapse of 1,800 years (circa 1880's) has only served to confirm the truth of his description in regard to the people of his own nation and time.

20. That veil is to be removed only by their turning to God, ~~4~~2 Corinthians 3:16. It is only by true conversion that the mind can be brought to a full and clear understanding of the Scriptures; and that event will yet take place in regard to the Jews. They will still be converted to the Messiah whom their fathers killed, and whom they have so long rejected; and when that event shall occur, they will see the beauty of their own Scriptures, and rejoice in the promises and glorious hopes which they hold out to the view.

21. The duty of “meditating” much on the glory of the gospel, ~~4~~2 Corinthians 3:18. It is by that we are purified. It is by keeping it constantly before the mind; dwelling on its splendor; thinking of its glorious truths, that we become transformed into the same image, and made like God. If the character is formed by the objects which we contemplate, and with which we are familiar; if we are insensibly moulded in our feelings and principles by that with which we constantly associate, then we should “think” much of the truths of the gospel. We should pray much — for thus we come in contact with God and his truth. We should read the Scripture much. We should commune with the good and the pure. We should make our companions of those who most love the Lord Jesus, and most decidedly bear his image. We should think much of a pure heaven. Thus shall we be moulded, insensibly it may be, but certainly, into the image of a holy God and Saviour, and be prepared for a pure and truly heaven.

NOTES ON 2 CORINTHIANS 4

This chapter (2 Corinthians 4) is intimately connected with the preceding, and is indeed merely a statement of the consequences or results of the doctrine advanced there. In that chapter, Paul had stated the clearness and plainness of the gospel as contrasted with the institutions of Moses, and particularly that the Christian ministry was a ministration more glorious than that of Moses. It was more clear. It was a ministration of justification (2 Corinthians 3:9), and of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:8), and was a ministration where they were permitted to look upon the unveiled and unclouded glories of God, 2 Corinthians 3:18. In this chapter he states some of the “consequences,” or “results” of their being called to this ministry; and the design is, to magnify the office of the ministry; to show the sustaining power of the truths which they preached; the interest which the Corinthian Christians and all other Christians had in the ministry, and this to conciliate their favor; and to show what there was to comfort them in the various trials to which as ministers they were exposed. Paul states therefore in this chapter:

- 1.** That these clear and elevated views of the gospel sustained him; kept him from fainting; preserved him from deceit and all improper acts; made him open and honest; since he had no necessity for craft and guilt, but proclaimed a system of religion which could be commended to every man’s conscience, and be seen to be true, 2 Corinthians 4:1,2.
- 2.** That if any persons were lost, it was not the fault of the gospel, 2 Corinthians 4:3,4. That was clear, open, plain, glorious, and might be understood; and if they were lost, it was to be traced to the malign influence of the god of this world, and not to the gospel.
- 3.** That the great purpose of Paul and his associates was to make known this clear and glorious truth of the gospel, and that, therefore, the apostles did not preach themselves, but Christ Jesus, the revealer and source of all this glory. 2 Corinthians 4:5,6. Their sole object was to show forth this pure and glorious light of the gospel.
- 4.** That it was so arranged by God’s appointment and providence that all the glory of the results of the ministry should be his, 2 Corinthians 4:7-11. He had taken special care that they should have no cause of self-

exultation or glorying in preaching the gospel; and had taken effectual means that they should be humbled, and not lifted up with pride, from the fact that they were commissioned to make known such glorious truths, and had a ministry more honorable than that of Moses. He had, therefore, committed the treasure to earthen vessels; to frail, weak, dying people, and to people in humble life (^{<4047>}2 Corinthians 4:7), and he had called them to submit to constant trials of persecution, poverty, peril, and want, in order that they might be humbled, and that God might manifestly have all the glory, ^{<4048>}2 Corinthians 4:8-11.

5. All this was for the sake of the church, a fact which was adapted to conciliate the favor of Christians and excite their sympathy in the sufferings of the apostles, and to lead them to honor the ministry in a proper manner, ^{<4042>}2 Corinthians 4:12-15. It was not for their own welfare, happiness, honor, or emolument that they endured these trials in the ministry; it was that the church might be benefitted, and thus abundant praise redound to God.

6. These considerations sustained them in their trials, ^{<4046>}2 Corinthians 4:16-18. They had comfort in all their afflictions. They felt that they were doing and suffering these things for the salvation of souls, and the glory of God, (^{<4046>}2 Corinthians 4:16); they had inward strength given them every day, though the outward man perished (^{<4046>}2 Corinthians 4:16); they knew that the result of this would be an eternal weight of glory (^{<4047>}2 Corinthians 4:17); and they were enabled to look to another and a better world; to keep the eye on heaven, and to contemplate by faith the things which were unseen and eternal, ^{<4048>}2 Corinthians 4:18. These things supported them; and thus upheld, they went cheerfully to their great work, and met with calmness and joy all the trials which it involved.

^{<4046>}**2 Corinthians 4:1.** *Therefore* ($\Delta\iota\alpha$ ^{<1223>} $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron$ ^{<5124>}). On account of this. That is, because the light of the gospel is so clear; because it reveals so glorious truths, and all obscurity is taken away, and we are permitted to behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, ^{<4048>}2 Corinthians 3:18. Since the glories of the gospel dispensation are so great, and its effects on the heart are so transforming and purifying. The object is, to show the "effect" of being entrusted with such a ministry, on the character of his preaching.

Seeing we have this ministry The gospel ministry, so much more glorious than that of Moses (^{<4046>}2 Corinthians 3:6); which is the ministry by which

the Holy Spirit acts on the hearts of people (<408>2 Corinthians 3:8); which is the ministry of that system by which people are justified (<408>2 Corinthians 3:9); and which is the ministry of a system so pure and unclouded, <408>2 Corinthians 3:9-11,18.

As we have received mercy Tyndale renders this: “even as mercy is sure in us.” The idea is, that it was by the mere mercy and favor of God, that he had been entrusted with the ministry, and the object of Paul is doubtless to prevent the “appearance” of arrogance and self-confidence by stating that it was to be traced entirely to God that he was put into the ministry. He doubtless had his eye on the fact that he had been a persecutor and blasphemer; and that it was by the mere favor of God that he had been converted and entrusted with the ministry, <5013>1 Timothy 1:13. Nothing will more effectually humble a minister, and prevent his assuming any arrogant and self-confident airs, than to look over his past life; especially if his life was one of blasphemy, vice, or infidelity; and to remember that it is by the mere mercy of God that he is entrusted with the high office of an ambassador of Jesus Christ. Paul never forgot to trace his hope, his appointment to the ministerial office, and his success, to the mere grace of God.

We faint not This is one of the effects of being entrusted with such a ministry. The word used here (<ε<408>κ<408>κ<408>ου<408>με<408>ν <1573>) means, properly, to turn out a coward; to lose one’s courage; then to be fainthearted, to faint, to despond, in view of trial, difficulty, etc. — Robinson. Here it means, that by the mercy of God, he was not disheartened by the difficulties which he met; his faith and zeal did not flag; he was enabled to be faithful, and laborious, and his courage always kept up, and his mind was filled with cheerfulness; see note on <408>2 Corinthians 2:14. He was deterred by no difficulties; embarrassed by no opposition; driven from his purpose by no persecution; and his strength did not fail under any trials. The consciousness of being entrusted with “such” a ministry animated him; and the mercy and grace of God sustained him.

<408>2 Corinthians 4:2. *But have renounced* (<α<408>π<408>ει<408>πα<408>με<408>θα <5660> from <α<408>πο <575> and <ει<408>πον <2036>). The word means properly to speak out or off; to refuse or deny; to interdict or forbid. Here it means, to renounce, or disown; to spurn, or scorn with aversion. It occurs no where else in the New Testament; and the sense here is, that the apostles had such a view of the truth of religion, and the glory of the Christian scheme (<408>2

Corinthians 3:13-18), as to lead them to discard everything that was disguised, and artful, and crafty; everything like deceit and fraud. The religions of the pagan were made up mainly of trick, and were supported by deception practiced on the ignorant, and on the mass of people. Paul says, that he and his fellow-laborers had such views of the truth, and glory, and holiness of the Christian scheme, as to lead them solemnly to abjure and abhor all such dishonest tricks and devices. Truth never needs such arts; and no cause will long succeed by mere trick and cunning.

The hidden things of dishonesty Margin, “shame.” The Greek word most commonly means shame, or disgrace. The hidden things of shame here mean disgraceful conduct; clandestine and secret arts, which were in themselves shameful and disgraceful. They denote all “underhanded” dealings; all dishonest artifices and plans, such as were common among the pagan, and such probably as the false teachers adopted in the propagation of their opinions at Corinth. The expression here does not imply that the apostles ever had anything to do with such arts; but that they solemnly abjured and abhorred them. Religion is open, plain, straightforward. It has no alliance with cunning, and trick, and artifice. It should be defended openly; stated clearly; and urged with steady argument. It is a work of light, and not of darkness.

Not walking in craftiness Not acting craftily; not behaving in a crafty manner. The word used here ($\pi\alpha\nu\omicron\rho\upsilon\rho\gamma\iota\alpha$ ^{<3834>} from $\pi\alpha\nu$ ^{<3956>}, “all,” $\epsilon\rho\gamma\omicron\nu$ ^{<2041>}, “work,” that is, doing every thing, or capable of doing anything) denotes shrewdness, cunning, and craft. This was common; and this was probably practiced by the false teachers in Corinth. With this Paul says he had nothing to do. He did not adopt a course of carnal wisdom and policy (note, ^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 1:12); he did not attempt to impose upon them, or to deceive them; or to make his way by subtile and deceitful arts. True religion can never be advanced by trick and craftiness.

Nor handling the word of God deceitfully ($\delta\omicron\lambda\omicron\nu\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ ^{<1389>}). Not falsifying; or deceitfully corrupting or disguising the truth of God, The phrase seems to be synonymous with that used in ^{<4017>}2 Corinthians 2:17. and rendered “corrupt the word of God;” see the note on that verse. It properly means to falsify, adulterate, corrupt, by Jewish traditions, etc. (Robinson, Bloomfield, Doddridge, etc.); or it may mean, as in our translation, to handle in a deceitful manner; to make use of trick and art in

propagating and defending it. Tyndale renders it: “neither corrupt we the Word of God.”

But by manifestation of the truth By making the truth manifest; that is, by a simple exhibition of the truth. By stating it just as it is, in an undisguised and open manner. Not by adulterating it with foreign mixtures; not by mingling it with philosophy, or traditions; not by blunting its edge, or concealing anything, or explaining it away; but by an open, plain, straightforward exhibition of it as it is in Jesus. Preaching should consist in a simple exhibition of the truth. There is no deceit in the gospel itself; and there should be none in the manner of exhibiting it. It should consist of a simple statement of things as they are. The whole design of preaching is, to make known the truth. And this is done in an effectual manner only when it is simple, open, undisguised, without craft, and without deceit.

Commending ourselves to every man’s conscience That is, so speaking the truth that every man’s conscience shall approve it “as” true; every man shall see it to be true, and to be in accordance with what he knows to be right. Conscience is that faculty of the mind which distinguishes between right and wrong, and which prompts us to choose the former and avoid the latter; ^{<BIB>}John 8:9; note, ^{<BIB>}Romans 2:15; ^{<BIB>}1 Corinthians 10:25,27-29; ^{<BIB>}2 Corinthians 1:12. It is implied here:

(1) That a course of life, and a manner of preaching that shall be free from dishonesty, and art, and trick, will be such as the consciences of people will approve. Paul sought such a course of life as should accord with their sense of “right,” and thus serve to commend the gospel to them.

(2) That the gospel may be so preached as to be seen by men to be true; so as to be approved as right; and so that every man’s conscience shall bear testimony to its truth. People do not “love” it, but they may see that it is “true;” they may hate it, but they may see that the truth which condemns their practices is from heaven. This is an exceedingly important principle in regard to preaching, and vastly momentous in its bearing on the views which ministers should have of their own work. The gospel is reasonable. It may be seen to be true by every man to whom it is preached. And it should be the aim of every preacher so to preach it, as to enlist the consciences of his hearers in his layout. And it is a very material fact that WHEN so preached the conscience and reason of every man is in its favor, and they know that it is true even when it pronounces their own

condemnation, and denounces their own sins. This passage proves, therefore, the following things:

(1) That the gospel may be so preached as to be seen to be true by all people. People are capable of seeing the truth, and even when they do not love it; they can perceive that it has demonstration that it is from God. It is a system so reasonable; so well established by evidence; so fortified by miracles, and the fulfillment of prophecies; so pure in its nature; so well-adapted to man; so suited to his condition, and so well designed to make him better; and so happy in its influence on society, that people may be led to see that it is true. And this I take to be the case with almost all those people who habitually attend on the preaching of the gospel. Infidels do not often visit the sanctuary; and when they are in the habit of doing it, it is a fact that they gradually come to the conviction that the Christian religion is true. It is rare to find professed infidels in our places of worship; and the great mass of those who attend on the preaching of the gospel may be set down as speculative believers in the truth of Christianity.

(2) The consciences of people are on the side of truth, and the gospel may be so preached as to enlist their consciences in its favor. Conscience prompts to do right, and condemns us if we do wrong. It can never be made to approve of wrong, never to give a man peace if he does that which he knows to be evil. By no art or device; by no system of laws, or bad government; by no training or discipline, can it be made the advocate of sin. In all lands, at all times, and in all circumstances, it prompts a man to do what is right, and condemns him if he does wrong. It may be silenced for a time; it may be “seared as with a hot iron,” and for a time be insensible, but if it speak at all, it speaks to prompt a man to do what he believes to be right, and condemns him if he does that which is wrong. The consciences of people are on the side of the gospel; and it is only their hearts which are opposed to it. Their consciences are in favor of the gospel in the following, among other respects:

(a) They approve of it as a just, pure, holy, and reasonable system; as in accordance with what they feel to be right; as recommending that which ought to be done, and forbidding that which ought not to be done.

(b) In its special requirements on themselves. Their consciences tell them that they ought to love God with all the heart; to repent of their sins; to trust in that Saviour who died for them; and to lead a life of prayer and of

devotedness to the service of God; that they ought to be sincere and humble Christians, and prepare to meet God in peace.

(c) Their consciences approve the truth that condemns them. No matter how strict it may seem to be; no matter how loud its denunciation against their sins; no matter how much the gospel may condemn their pride, avarice, sensuality, levity, dishonesty, fraud, intemperance, profaneness, blasphemy, or their neglect of their soul, yet their consciences approve of it as right, and proclaim that these things ought to be condemned, and ought to be abandoned. The heart may love them, but the conscience cannot be made to approve them. And the minister of the gospel may “always” approach his people, or an individual man, with the assurance that however much they may “love” the ways of sin, yet that he has their consciences in his favor, and that in urging the claims of God on them, their “conscienc^{es}” will always coincide with his appeals.

(3) The “way” in which a minister is to commend himself to the consciences of people, is that which was pursued by Paul. He must:

(a) Have a clear and unwavering conviction of the truth himself. On this subject he should have no doubt. He should be able to look on it as on a burnished mirror (note, ~~4COR3~~ 2 Corinthians 3:18); and to see its glory as with open face.

(b) It should be by the simple statement of the truth of the gospel. Not by preaching philosophy, or metaphysics, or the traditions of man, or the sentiments of theologians, but the simple truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. People may be made to see that these ARE truths, and God will take care that the reason and consciences of people shall be in their favor.

(c) By the absence of all trick and cunning, and disguised and subtle arts. The gospel has nothing of these in itself, and it will never approve of them, nor will God bless them. A minister of Jesus should be frank, open, undisguised, and candid. He should make a sober and elevated appeal to the reason and conscience of man. The gospel is not “a cunningly devised fable;” it has no trick in itself, and the ministers of religion should solemnly abjure all the hidden things of dishonesty.

In the sight of God As in the immediate presence of God. We act as if we felt that His eye was upon us; and this consideration serves to keep us from

the hidden things of dishonesty, and from improper arts in spreading the true religion; see the note on ^{<4027>}2 Corinthians 2:17.

^{<4018>}**2 Corinthians 4:3.** *But if our gospel be hid* Paul here calls it his gospel, because it was that which he preached, or the message which he bore; see note, ^{<5105>}Romans 16:25. The sense here is, “if the gospel which I preach is not understood; if its meaning is obscure or hidden; if its glory is not seen.” It is “implied” here, that to many the beauty and glory of the gospel was not perceived. This was undeniable, notwithstanding the plainness and fullness with which its truths were made known. The “object” of Paul here is, to state that this fact was not to be traced to any lack of clearness in the gospel itself, but to other causes, and thus probably to meet an objection which might be made to his argument about the clearness and fullness of the revelation in the gospel. In the language which Paul uses here, there is undoubted allusion to what he had said respecting Moses, who put a veil upon his face, ^{<4013>}2 Corinthians 3:13. He had hid, or concealed his face, as emblematic of the nature of his institutions (note, ^{<4014>}2 Corinthians 3:14); and here Paul says that it was not to be denied that the gospel was “veiled” also to some. But it was not from the nature of the gospel. It was not because God had purposely concealed its meaning. It was not from any lack of clearness in itself. It was to be traced to other causes.

It is hid to them that are lost On the meaning of the word rendered here as “lost;” see the note, ^{<4015>}2 Corinthians 2:15, rendered there as “perish.” It is hid among them who are about to perish; who are perishing (*εν* ^{<172>} *τοις* ^{<3588>} *απολλυμενοις* ^{<62>}); those who deserve to perish. It is concealed only among that class who may be designated as the perishing, or as the lost. Grotius explains this, “those who deserve to perish, who foster their vices, and will not see the truth which condemns those vices.” And he adds, that this might very well be, for, “however conspicuous the gospel was in itself, yet like the sun it would not be visible to the blind.” The cause was not in the gospel, but in themselves. This verse teaches, therefore:

(1) That the beauty of the gospel may be hidden from many of the human family. This is a matter of simple fact. There are thousands and million to whom it is preached who see no beauty in it, and who regard it as foolishness.

(2) That there is a class of people who may be called, even now, “the lost.” They are lost to virtue, to piety, to happiness, to hope. They deserve to perish; and they are hastening to merited ruin. This class in the time of Paul was large; and it is large now. It is composed of those to whom the gospel is hidden, or to whom it appears to be veiled, and who see no beauty in it. It is made up indeed of all the profane, polluted, and vile; but their “characteristic” feature is, that the gospel is hidden from them, and that they see no beauty and glory in it.

(3) This is not the fault of the gospel. It is not the fault of the sun when people shut their eyes and will not see it. It is not the fault of a running stream, or a bubbling fountain, if people will not drink of it, but rather choose to die of thirst. The gospel does not obscure and conceal its own glory anymore than the sun does. It is in itself a clear and full revelation of God and his grace; and that glory is adapted to shed light upon the benighted minds of people.

2 Corinthians 4:4. *In whom* In respect to whom; among whom; or in whose hearts. The design of this verse is to account for the fact that the glory of the gospel was not seen by them. It is to be traced entirely to the agency of him whom Paul here calls “the god of this world.”

The god of this world There can be no doubt that Satan is here designated by this appellation; though some of the fathers supposed that it means the true God, and Clarke inclines to this opinion. In ~~John~~ John 12:31, he is called “the prince of this world.” In ~~Ephesians~~ Ephesians 2:2, he is called “the prince of the power of the air.” And in ~~Ephesians~~ Ephesians 6:12, the same bad influence is referred to under the names of “principalities, and powers,” “the rulers of the darkness of this world,” and “spiritual wickedness in high places.” The name “god” is here given to him, not because he has any divine attributes, but because he actually has the homage of the people of this world AS their god, as the being who is really worshipped, or who has the affections of their hearts in the same way as it is given to idols. By “this world” is meant the wicked world; or the mass of people. He has dominion over the world. They obey his will; they execute his plans; they further his purposes, and they are his obedient subjects. He has subdued the world to himself, and was really adored in the place of the true God; see the note on ~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 10:20. “They sacrificed to devils and not to God.” Here it is meant by the declaration that Satan is the god of this world:

(1) That the world at large was under his control and direction. He secured the apostasy of man, and early brought him to follow his plans; and he has maintained his scepter and dominion since. No more abject submission could be desired by him than has been rendered by the mass of people.

(2) The idolatrous world particularly is under his control, and subject to him; <400>1 Corinthians 10:20. He is worshipped there; and the religious rites and ceremonies of the pagan are in general just such as a mighty being who hated human happiness, and who sought pollution, obscenity, wretchedness, and blood would appoint; and over all the pagan world his power is absolute. In the time of Paul all the world, except the Jews and Christians, was sunk in pagan degradation.

(3) He rules in the hearts and lives of all wicked people — and the world is full of wicked people. They obey him, and submit to his will in executing fraud, and rapine, and piracy, and murder, and adultery, and lewdness; in wars and fightings; in their amusements and pastimes; in dishonesty and falsehood. The dominion of Satan over this world has been, and is still almost universal and absolute; nor has the lapse of 1,800 years rendered the appellation improper as descriptive of his influence, that he is the god of this world. The world pursues his plans; yields to his temptations; neglects, or rejects the reign of God as he pleases; and submits to his scepter, and is still full of abomination cruelty, and pollution, as he desires it to be.

Hath blinded the minds of them which believe not Of all who discern no beauty in the gospel, and who reject it. It is implied here:

(1) That the minds of unbelievers are blinded; that they perceive no beauty in the gospel. This is often affirmed of those who reject the gospel, and who live in sin; see the note on <403>2 Corinthians 2:13; <426>Matthew 23:16,17,26; <448>Luke 4:18; <499>John 9:39; 12:40; <5107>Romans 11:7. The sense is, that they did not see the spiritual beauty and glory of the plan of redemption. They act in reference to that as they would in reference to this world, if a bandage were over their eyes, and they saw not the light of the sun, the beauty of the landscape, the path in which they should go, or the countenance of a friend. All is dark, and obscure, and destitute of beauty to them, however much beauty may be seen in all these objects by others.

(2) That this is done by the agency of Satan; and that his dominion is secured by keeping the world in darkness. The affirmation is direct and

positive, that it is by his agency that it is done. Some of the “modes” in which it is done are the following:

(a) By a direct influence on the minds of people. I do not know why it is absurd to suppose that one intellect may, in some way unknown to us, have access to another, and have power to influence it; nor can it be proved that Satan may not have power to pervert the understanding; to derange its powers; to distract its attention; and to give in view of the mind a wholly delusive relative importance to objects. In the time of the Saviour it cannot be doubted that in the numerous cases of demoniacal possessions, Satan directly affected the minds of people; nor is there any reason to think that he has ceased to delude and destroy them.

(b) By the false philosophy which has prevailed — a large part of which seems to have been contrived as if on purpose to deceive the world, and destroy the peace and happiness of people.

(c) By the systems of superstition and idolatry. All these seem to be under the control of one Master Mind. They are so well conceived and adapted to prostrate the moral powers; to fetter the intellect; to pervert the will; to make people debased, sunken, polluted, and degraded; and they so uniformly accomplish this effect, that they have all the marks of being under the control of one mighty Mind, and of having been devised to accomplish His purposes over people.

(d) By producing in the minds of people a wholly disproportionate view of the value of objects. “A very small object held before the eye will shut out the light of the sun.” A piece of money of the smallest value laid on the eye will make everything appear dark, and prevent all the glory of mid-day from reaching the seat of vision. And so it is with the things of this world. They are placed directly before us, and are placed directly between us and the glory of the gospel. And the trifles of wealth and of fashion; the objects of pleasure and ambition, are made to assume an importance in view of the mind which wholly excludes the glory of the gospel, and shuts out all the realities of the eternal world. And he does it:

(e) By the blinding influence of passion and vice. Before a vicious mind all is dark and obscure. There is no beauty in truth, in chastity, or honesty, or in the fear and love of God. Vice always renders the mind blind. and the heart hard, and shrouds everything in the moral world in midnight. And in order to blind the minds of people to the glory of the gospel, Satan has

only to place splendid schemes of speculation before people; to tempt them to climb the steeps of ambition; to entice them to scenes of gaiety; to secure the erection of theaters, and gambling houses, and houses of infamy and pollution; to fill the cities and towns of a land with taverns and dram-shops; and to give opportunity everywhere for the full play and unrestrained indulgence of passion; and the glory of the gospel will be as effectually unseen as the glory of the sun is in the darkest night.

Lest the light ... This passage states the design, for which Satan blinds the minds of people. It is because he “hates” the gospel, and wishes to prevent its influence and spread in the world Satan has always hated and opposed it, and all his arts have been employed to arrest its diffusion on earth. The word “light” here means excellence, beauty, or splendor. Light is the emblem of knowledge, purity, or innocence; and is here and elsewhere applied to the gospel, because it removes the errors, and sins, and wretchedness of people, as the light of the sun scatters the shades of night. This purpose of preventing the light of the gospel shining on people, Satan will endeavor to accomplish by all the means in his power. It is his “grand” object in this world, because it is by the gospel only that people can be saved; by that that God is glorified on earth more than by anything else; and because, therefore, if he can prevent sinners from embracing that, he will secure their destruction, and most effectually show his hatred of God. And it is to Satan a matter of little importance what people “may be,” or “are,” provided they are NOT Christians. They may be amiable, moral, accomplished, rich, honored, esteemed by the world, because in the possession of all these he may be equally sure of their ruin, and because, also, these things may contribute somewhat to turn away their minds from the gospel. Satan, therefore, will not oppose plans of gain or ambition; he will not oppose purposes of fashion and amusement; he may not oppose schemes by which we desire to rise in the world; he will not oppose the theater, the ballroom, the dance, or the song; he will not oppose thoughtless mirth; but the moment the gospel begins to shine on the benighted mind, that moment he will make resistance, and then all his power will be concentrated.

The glorious gospel Greek ‘The gospel of the glory of Christ,’ a Hebraism for the glorious gospel. Mr. Locke renders it, “the glorious brightness of the light of the gospel of Christ,” and supposes it means the brightness, or clearness, of the doctrine wherein Christ is manifested in the gospel. It is all light, and splendor, and beauty, compared with the dark systems of

philosophy and paganism. It is glorious, for it is full of splendor; makes known the glorious God; discloses a glorious plan of salvation; and conducts ignorant, weak, and degraded man to a world of light. No two words in our language are so full of rich and precious meaning, as the phrase “glorious gospel.”

Who is the image of God Christ is called the image of God:

(1) In respect to his divine nature, his exact resemblance to God in his divine attributes and perfections; see ^{<S015>}Colossians 1:15; and ^{<S003>}Hebrews 1:3; and,

(2) In his moral attributes as Mediator, as showing forth the glory of the Father to people. He “resembles” God, and in him we see the divine glory and perfections embodied, and shine forth. It is from his “resemblance” to God in all respects that he is called his image; and it is through him that the divine perfections are made known to people. It is an object of special dislike and hatred to Satan that the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on people, and fill their hearts. Satan hates that image; he hates that people should become like God; and he hates all that has a resemblance to the great and glorious Yahweh.

^{<A015>}**2 Corinthians 4:5.** *For we preach not ourselves* The connection here is not very apparent, and the design of this verse has been variously understood. The connection seems to me to be this. Paul gives here a reason for what he had said in the previous parts of the Epistle respecting his conduct in the ministry. He had said that his course had been open, and pure, and free from all dishonest arts and tricks, and that he had not corrupted the Word of God, or resorted to any artifice to accomplish his designs; ^{<A017>}2 Corinthians 2:17; 4:1,2. The “reason” of this he here says is, that he had not preached himself, or sought to advance his own interest. He regarded himself as sent to make known a Saviour; himself as bound by all means to promote his cause, and to imitate him. Other people — the false teachers, and the cunning priests of the pagan religion — sought to advance their own interest, and to perpetuate a system of delusion that would be profitable to themselves; and they therefore resorted to all arts, and stratagems, and cunning devices to perpetuate their authority, and extend their influence. But the fact that Paul and his associates went forth to make known the Lord Jesus, was a reason why they avoided all such dishonest arts and artifices. “We are merely the “ambassadors” of another.

We are not “principals” in this business, and do not despatch it as a business of our own, but we transact it as the “agents” for another, that is, for the Lord Jesus, and we feel ourselves bound, therefore, to do it as he would have done it himself; and as he was free from all trick, and dishonest art, we feel bound to be also.” This seems to me to be the design of this passage. Ministers may be said to preach themselves in the following ways:

- (1) When their preaching has a primary reference to their own interest; and when they engage in it to advance their reputation, or to secure in some way their own advantage. When they aim at exalting their authority, extending their influence, or in any way promoting their own welfare.
- (2) When they proclaim their own opinions and not the gospel of Christ; when they derive their doctrines from their own reasonings, and not from the Bible.
- (3) When they put themselves forward; speak much of themselves; refer often to themselves; are vain of their powers of reasoning, of their eloquence, and of their learning, and seek to make these known rather than the simple truths of the gospel. In one word, when self is primary, and the gospel is secondary; when they prostitute the ministry to gain popularity; to live a life of ease; to be respected; to obtain a livelihood: to gain influence; to rule over a people; and to make the preaching of the gospel merely an OCCASION of advancing themselves in the world. Such a plan, it is implied here, would lead to dishonest arts and devices, and to trick and stratagem to accomplish the end in view. And it is implied here, also, that to avoid all such tricks and arts the true way is not to preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ.

But Christ Jesus the Lord This Paul states to be the only purpose of the ministry. It is so far the sole design of the ministry that had it not been to make known the Lord Jesus, it would never have been established; and whatever other objects are secured by its appointment, and whatever other truths are to be illustrated and enforced by the ministry, yet, if this is not the primary subject, and if every other object is not made subservient to this, the design of the ministry is not secured. The word “Christ” properly means the anointed that is, the Messiah, the anointed of God for this great office (see the note, ~~1000~~ Matthew 1:1); but it is used in the New Testament as a proper name, the name that was appropriate to “Jesus.” Still it may be used with a reference to the fact of the Messiahship, and not merely as a proper name, and in this place it may mean that they preached Jesus as the

Messiah, or the Christ and defended his claims to that high appointment. The word “Lord” also is used to designate him (^{<411B>}Mark 11:3; ^{<43D>}John 20:25); and when it stands by itself in the New Testament, it denotes the Lord Jesus (note, ^{<402>}Acts 1:24); but it properly denotes one who has rule or authority, or proprietorship; and it is used here not merely as a part of the appropriate title of the Saviour, but with reference to the fact that he had the supreme headship, or lordship over the church and the world. This important passage, therefore, means, that they made it their sole business to make known Jesus the Messiah, or the Christ, as the supreme head and Lord of people that is, to set forth the Messiahship and the lordship of Jesus of Nazareth appointed to these high offices by God. To do this, or to preach Jesus Christ the Lord, implies the following things:

(1) To prove that he is the Messiah so often predicted in the Old Testament, and so long expected by the Jewish people. To do this was a very vital part of the work of the ministry in the time of the apostles, and was essential to their success in all their attempts to convert the Jews; and to do this will be no less important in all attempts to bring the Jews now or in future times to the knowledge of the truth. No man can be successful among them who is not able to prove that Jesus is the Messiah. It is not indeed so vital and leading a point now in reference to those to whom the ministers of the gospel usually preach; and it is probable that the importance of this argument is by many overlooked, and that it is not urged as it should be by those who “preach Christ Jesus the Lord.” It involves the whole argument for the truth of Christianity. It leads to all the demonstrations that this religion is from God; and the establishment of the proposition that Jesus is the Messiah, is one of the most direct and certain ways of proving that his religion is from heaven. Because:

(a) It contains the argument from the fulfillment of the prophecies — one of the main evidences of the truth of revelation; and

(b) It involves an examination of all the evidences that Jesus gave that he was the Messiah sent from God, and of course an examination of all the miracles that he performed in attestation of his divine mission. The first object of a preacher, therefore, is to demonstrate that Jesus is sent from God in accordance with the predictions of the prophets.

(2) To proclaim the truths that he taught. To make known his sentiments, and his doctrines, and not our own. This includes, of course, all that he taught respecting God, and respecting man; all that he taught respecting his

own nature, and the design of his coming; all that he taught respecting the character of the human heart, and about human obligation and duty; all that he taught respecting death, the judgment, and eternity — respecting an eternal heaven, and an eternal hell. To explain, enforce, and vindicate his doctrines, is one great design of the ministry; and were there nothing else, this would be a field sufficiently ample to employ the life; sufficiently glorious to employ the best talents of man. The minister of the gospel is to teach the sentiments and doctrines of Jesus Christ, in contradistinction from all his own sentiments, and from all the doctrines of mere philosophy. He is not to teach science, or mere morals, but he is to proclaim and defend the doctrines of the Redeemer.

(3) He is to make known THE FACTS of the Saviour's life. He is to show how he lived — to hold up his example in all the trying circumstances in which he was placed. For he came to show by his life what the Law required; and to show how people SHOULD live. And it is the office of the Christian ministry, or a part of their work in preaching "Christ Jesus the Lord," to show how he lived, and to set forth his self-denial, his meekness, his purity, his blameless life, his spirit of prayer, his submission to the divine will, his patience in suffering, his forgiveness of his enemies, his tenderness to the afflicted, the weak, and the tempted; and the manner of his death. Were "this" all, it would be enough to employ the whole of a minister's life, and to command the best talents of the world. For he was the only perfectly pure model; and his example is to be followed by all his people, and his example is designed to exert a deep and wide influence on the world. Piety flourishes just in proportion as the pure example of Jesus Christ is kept before a people; and the world is made happier and better just as that example is kept constantly in view. To the frivolous and the thoughtless, the ministers of the gospel are to show how serious and calm was the Redeemer; to the worldly-minded, to show how he lived above the world; to the avaricious, how benevolent he was; to the profane and licentious, how pure he was; to the tempted, how he endured temptation; to the afflicted, how patient and resigned; to the dying, how he died: to all, to show how holy, and heavenly-minded, and prayerful, and pure he was; in order that they may be won to the same purity, and be prepared to dwell with him in his kingdom.

(4) To set forth the design of his death. To show why he came to die; and what was the great object to be effected by his sufferings and death. To exhibit, therefore, the sorrows of his life; to describe his many trials; to

dwell upon his sufferings in the Garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross. To show WHY he died, and what was to be the influence of his death on the destiny of man. To SHOW how it makes an atonement for sin; how it reconciles God to man; how it is made efficacious in the justification and the sanctification of the sinner. And were there nothing else, this would be sufficient to employ all the time, and the best talents in the ministry. For the salvation of the soul depends on the proper exhibition of the design of the death of the Redeemer. There is no salvation but through his blood; and hence, the nature and design of his atoning sacrifice is to be exhibited to every man, and the offers of mercy through that death to be pressed upon the attention of every sinner.

(5) To set forth the truth and the design of his resurrection. To PROVE that he rose from the dead, and that he ascended to heaven; and to show the influence of his resurrection on our hopes and destiny. The whole structure of Christianity is dependent on making out the fact that he rose; and IF he rose, all the difficulties in the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead are removed at once, and his people will also rise. The influence of that fact, therefore, on our hopes and on our prospects for eternity, is to be shown by the ministry of the gospel; and were there nothing else, this would be ample to command all the time, and the best talents of the ministry.

(6) To proclaim him as “Lord.” This is expressly specified in the passage before us. “For we preach Christ Jesus THE LORD;” we proclaim him as the Lord. That is, he is to be preached as having dominion over the conscience; as the Supreme Ruler in his Church; as above all councils, and synods, and conferences, and all human authority; as having a right to legislate for his people; a right to prescribe their mode of worship; a right to define and determine the doctrines which they shall believe. He is to be proclaimed also as ruling over all, and as exalted in his mediatorial character over all worlds, and as having all things put beneath his feet; ~~<BIB6>~~ Psalm 2:6; ~~<BIB6>~~ Isaiah 9:6,7; ~~<BIB6>~~ Matthew 28:18; ~~<BIB7>~~ John 17:2; ~~<BIB2>~~ Ephesians 1:20; ~~<BIB8>~~ Hebrews 2:8.

And ourselves your servants ... So far as we make any mention of ourselves, it is to declare that we are your servants, and that we are bound to promote your welfare in the cause and for the sake of the Redeemer. That is, they were their servants in all things in which they could advance the interests of the Redeemer’s kingdom among them. The doctrine is, that they regarded themselves as under obligation not to seek their own

interest, or to build up their own reputation and cause, but to seek the welfare of the church; and promote its interests, as a servant does that of his master. They should not seek to lord it over God's heritage, and to claim supreme and independent authority. They were not masters but servants. The church at large was the master, and they were its servants. This implies the following things:

(1) That the "time" of ministers belongs to the church, and should be employed in its welfare. It is not their own; and it is not to be employed in farming, or in speculating, or in doing business, or in idleness, or in lounging, or in unprofitable visiting, or in mere science, or in reading or making books that will not advance the interests of the church. The time of the ministry is not for ease, or ambition, or self-indulgence, but is to promote the interests of the body of Christ. So Paul felt, and so he lived.

(2) Their "talents" belong to the church. All their original talents, and all that they can acquire, should be honestly devoted to the welfare of the church of the Redeemer.

(3) Their best efforts and plans, the avails of their best thoughts and purposes, belong to the church, and should be honestly devoted to it. Their strength and vigor, and influence should be devoted to it, as the vigor, and strength, and talent, and skill of a servant belong to the master; see ~~HEB~~ Psalm 137:5,6. The language of the ministry, as of every Christian, should be:

*I love thy church, O God,
Her walls before thee stand,
Dear as the apple of thine eye,
And graven on thy hand.*

*If e'er to bless thy sons
My voice or hands deny,
These hands let useful skill forsake,
This voice in silence die.*

*If e'er my heart forget
Her welfare or her wo,
Let every joy this heart forsake,
And every grief o'erflow.*

*For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend,
To her my cares and toils be given,
Until toils and cares shall end.*

And it implies:

(4) That they are the servants of the church in time of trial, temptation, and affliction. They are to devote themselves to the comfort of the afflicted. They are to be the guide to the perplexed. They are to aid the tempted. They are to comfort those that mourn, and they are to sustain and console the dying. They are to regard themselves as the servants of the church to accomplish these great objects; and are to be willing to deny themselves, and to take up their cross, and to consecrate their time to the advancement of these great interests. And they are, in all respects, to devote their time, and talents, and influence to the welfare of the church, with as much single-mindedness as the servant is to seek the interest of his master. It was in this way eminently that Paul was favored with the success with which God blessed him in the ministry; and so every minister will be successful, just in proportion to the single-mindedness with which he devotes himself to the work of preaching Jesus Christ THE Lord.

2 Corinthians 4:6. *For God, who commanded ...* The design of this verse seems to be, to give a reason why Paul and his fellow-apostles did not preach themselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord, **2 Corinthians 4:5**. That reason was, that their minds had been so illuminated by that God who had commanded the light to shine out of darkness, that they had discerned the glory of the divine perfections shining in and through the Redeemer, and they therefore gave themselves to the work of making him known among people. The doctrines which they preached they had not derived from people in any form. They had not been elaborated by human reasoning or science, nor had they been imparted by tradition. They had been communicated directly by the source of all light — the true God — who had shined into the hearts that were once benighted by sin. Having been thus illuminated, they had felt themselves bound to go and make known to others the truths which God had imparted to them.

Who commanded the light ... **Genesis 1:3**. God caused it to shine by his simple command. He said, “let there be light, and there was light.” The fact that it was produced by “his saying so” is referred to here by Paul by his use of the phrase (ὁ ^{<3588>} εἰπὼν ^{<2036>}) “Who saying,” or speaking the light

to shine from darkness. The passage in Genesis is adduced by Longinus as a striking instance of the sublime.

Hath shined in our hearts Margin, “It is he who hath.” This is more in accordance with the Greek, and the sense is, “The God who at the creation bade the light to shine out of darkness, is he who has shined into our hearts; or it is the same God who has illuminated us, who commanded the light to shine at the creation.” “Light” is every where in the Bible the emblem of knowledge, purity, and truth; as darkness is the emblem of ignorance, error, sin, and wretchedness. See note, ~~¶¶¶~~John 1:4,5. And the sense here is, that God had removed this ignorance, and poured a flood of light and truth on their minds. This passage teaches, therefore, the following important truths in regard to Christians — since it is as applicable to all Christians, as it was to the apostles:

(1) That the mind is by nature ignorant and benighted — to an extent which may be properly compared with the darkness which prevailed before God commanded the light to shine. Indeed, the darkness which prevailed before the light was formed, was a most striking emblem of the darkness which exists in the mind of man before it is enlightened by revelation, and by the Holy Spirit. For:

(a) In all minds by nature there is deep ignorance of God, of His Law, and His requirements; and

(b) This is often greatly deepened by the course of life which people lead; by their education; or by their indulgence in sin, and by their plans of life; and especially by the indulgence of evil passions. The tendency of man if left to himself is to plunge into deeper darkness, and to involve his mind more entirely in the obscurity of moral midnight.

“Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil,” ~~¶¶¶~~John 3:19.

(2) This verse teaches the fact, that the minds of Christians are illuminated. They are enabled to see things as they are. This fact is often taught in the Scriptures; see ~~¶¶¶~~1 John 2:20; ~~¶¶¶~~1 Corinthians 2:12-15. They have different views of things from their fellow-men, and different from what they once had. They perceive a beauty in religion which others do not see, and a glory in truth, and in the Saviour, and in the promises of the gospel, which they did not see before they were converted. This does not mean:

(a) That they are superior in their powers of understanding to other people — for the reverse is often the fact; nor

(b) That the effect of religion is at once to enlarge their own intellectual powers, and make them different from what they were before in this respect. But it means that they have clear and consistent views; they look at things as they are; they perceive a beauty in religion and in the service of God which they did not before. They see a beauty in the Bible, and in the doctrines of the Bible, which they did not before, and which sinners do not see. The temperate man will see a beauty in temperance, and in an argument for temperance, which the drunkard will not; the benevolent man will see a beauty in benevolence which the churl will not: and so of honesty, truth, and chastity. And especially will a man who is REFORMED from intemperance, impurity, dishonesty, and avarice, see a beauty in a virtuous life which he did not before see. There is indeed no IMMEDIATE and DIRECT enlargement of the intellect; but there is an effect on the heart which produces an appropriate and indirect effect on the understanding. It is at the same time true, that the practice of virtue, that a pure heart, and that the cultivation of piety all tend to regulate, strengthen, and expand the intellect, as the ways of vice and the indulgence of evil passions and propensities tend to enfeeble, paralyze, darken, and ruin the understanding; so that, other things being equal, the man of most decided virtue, and most calm and elevated piety, will be the man of the clearest and best regulated mind. His powers will be the most assiduously, carefully, and conscientiously cultivated and he will feel himself bound to make the most of them. The influence of piety in giving light to the mind is often strikingly manifested among unlettered and ignorant Christians. It often happens, as a matter of fact, that they have by far clearer, and more just and elevated views of truth than people of the most mighty intellects, and most highly cultivated by science and adorned with learning. but who have no piety; and a practical acquaintance with their own hearts, and a practical experience of the power of religion in the days of temptation and trial is a better enlightener of the mind on the subject of religion than all the learning of the schools.

(3) This verse teaches, that it is the “same God” who enlightens the mind of the Christian that commanded the light at first to shine. He is the source of all light. He formed the light in the natural world; he gives all light and truth on all subjects to the understanding; and he imparts all correct views of truth to the heart. Light is not originated by man; and man on the subject

of religion no more creates the light which beams upon his benighted mind than he created the light of the sun when it first shed its beams over the darkened earth. "All truth is from the sempiternal source of light divine;" and it is no more the work of man to enlighten the mind, and dissipate the darkness from the soul of a benighted sinner, than it was of man to scatter the darkness that brooded over the creation, or than he can now turn the shades of midnight to noonday. All this work lies beyond the proper province of man; and is all to be traced to the agency of God — the great fountain of light.

(4) It is taught here that it is the "same power" that gives light to the mind of the Christian which at first commanded the light to shine out of darkness. It requires the exertion of the same Omnipotence; and the change is often as remarkable, and surprising. Nothing can be conceived to be more grand than the first creation of light — when by one word the whole solar system was in a blaze. And nothing in the moral world is more grand than when by a word God commands the light to beam on the soul of a benighted sinner. Night is at once changed to day; and all things are seen in a blaze of glory. The works of God appear different; the Word of God appears different; and a new aspect of beauty is diffused over all things. If it be asked IN WHAT WAY God thus imparts light to the mind, we may reply:

(a) By his written and preached word. All spiritual and saving light to the minds of people has come through his revealed truth. Nor does the Spirit of God now give or reveal any light to the mind which is not to be found in the Word of God, and which is not imparted through that medium.

(b) God makes use of his providential dealings to give light to the minds of people. They are then, by sickness, disappointment, and pain, made to see the folly and vanity of the things of this world, and to see the necessity of a better portion.

(c) It is done especially and mainly by the influences of the Holy Spirit. It is directly by his agency that the heart becomes affected, and the mind enlightened. It is his province in the world to prepare the heart to receive the truth; to dispose the mind to attend to it: to remove the obstructions which existed to its clear perception; to enable the mind clearly to see the beauty of truth, and of the plan of salvation through a Redeemer. And whatever may be the means which may be used, it is still true that it is only by the Spirit of God that people are ever brought to see the truth clearly

and brightly. The same Spirit that inspired the prophets and apostles also illuminates the minds of people now, removes the darkness from their minds, and enables them clearly to discover the truth as it is in Jesus. See the notes, <4020>1 Corinthians 2:10-15.

To give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God This shows the “object,” or the “effect” of enlightening the mind. It is that Christians may behold the divine glory. The meaning is, that it is for the purpose of enlightening and instructing them concerning the knowledge of the glory of God — Bloomfield. Doddridge renders it, “the luster of the knowledge of God’s glory.” Tyndale, “to give the light of the knowledge of the glorious God.” The sense is, that the purpose of his shining into their hearts was to give light (προς <4314> φωτισμον <5462>) that is, unto the enlightening; and the purpose of that light was to acquaint them with the knowledge of the divine glory.

In the face of Jesus Christ That is, that they might obtain the knowledge of the divine glory as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ; or as it is reflected on the face, or the person of the Redeemer. There is undoubted allusion here to what is said of Moses (<4083>2 Corinthians 3:13) when the divine glory was reflected on his face, and produced such a splendor and magnificence that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look upon it. The sense here is, that in the face or the person of Jesus Christ the glory of God shone clearly, and the divinity appeared without a veil. The divine perfections, as it were, illuminated him, as the face of Moses was illuminated; or they shone forth through him, and were seen in him. The word rendered “face” here (προσωπον <4383>) may mean either face or person; see the note, <4020>2 Corinthians 2:10. The sense is not materially affected which ever translation is preferred. It is, that the divine perfections shone in and through the Redeemer. This refers doubtless to the following truths:

(1) That the glory of the divine “nature” is seen in him, since he is “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.” <5008>Hebrews 1:3. And it is in and through him that the glory of the divine perfections are made known,

(2) That the glory of the divine “attributes” are made known through him, since it is through him that the work of creation was accomplished (<4003>John 1:3; <5016>Colossians 1:16); and it is by him that the mercy and goodness of God have been manifested to people.

(3) That the glory of the divine “moral character” is seen through him, since when on earth he manifested the embodied divine perfections; he showed what God is when incarnate; he lived as became the incarnate God — he was as pure and holy in human nature as God is in the heavens. And there is not, that we know of, one of the divine attributes or perfections which has not at some period, or in some form, been evinced by Jesus Christ. If it be the prerogative of God to be eternal, he was eternal; ^{<2396>}Isaiah 9:6; ^{<6008>}Revelation 1:8,18. If it be the prerogative of God to be the creator, he was also the creator (^{<6003>}John 1:3); if to be omniscient, he was omniscient (^{<4017>}Matthew 11:27; ^{<2022>}Luke 10:22); if to be omnipresent, he is omnipresent (^{<4031>}Matthew 18:20); if to be almighty, he was almighty (^{<2396>}Isaiah 9:6); if to raise the dead, to give life, he did it (^{<4025>}John 5:21; 12:43,44); if to still waves and tempests, he did it (^{<4043>}Mark 4:39); if to be full of benevolence, to be perfectly holy, to be without a moral stain or spot, then all this is found in Jesus Christ. And as the wax bears the perfect image of the seal — perfect not only in the outline, and in the general resemblance, but in the filling up — in all the lines, and features, and letters on the seal, so it is with the Redeemer. There is not one of the divine perfections which has not the counterpart in him, and if the glory of the divine character is seen at all, it will be seen in and through him.

^{<4042>}**2 Corinthians 4:7.** *But we have this treasure* The treasure of the gospel; the rich and invaluable truths which they were called to preach to others. The word “treasure” is applied to those truths on account of their inestimable worth. Paul in the previous verses had spoken of the gospel, the knowledge of Jesus Christ, as full of glory, and infinitely precious. This rich blessing had been committed to him and his fellow-laborers, to dispense it to others, and to diffuse it abroad. His purpose in this and the following verses is, to show that it had been so entrusted to them as to secure all the glory of its propagation to God, and so also as to show its unspeakable value. For this purpose, he not only affirms that it is a treasure, but says that it had been so entrusted to them as to show the power of God in its propagation; that it had showed its value in sustaining them in their many trials; and “they” had showed their sense of its worth by being willing to endure all kinds of trial in order to make it everywhere known, ^{<4048>}2 Corinthians 4:8-11. The expression here is similar to that which the Saviour uses when he calls the gospel “the pearl of great price,” ^{<4036>}Matthew 13:46.

In earthen vessels This refers to the apostles and ministers of religion, as weak and feeble; as having bodies decaying and dying; as fragile, and liable to various accidents, and as being altogether unworthy to hold a treasure so invaluable; as if valuable diamonds and gold were placed in vessels of earth of coarse composition, easily broken, and liable to decay. The word “vessel” (σκευος ^{<4632>}) means properly any utensil or instrument; and is applied usually to utensils of household furniture, or hollow vessels for containing things, ^{<4816>}Luke 8:16; ^{<4819>}John 19:29. It is applied to the human body, as made of clay, and therefore frail and feeble, with reference to its “containing” anything, as, e.g., treasure; compare note on ^{<4812>}Romans 9:22,23. The word rendered “earthen,” (οστρακινοις ^{<3749>}) means that which is made of shells (from οστρακινον ^{<3749>}), and then burnt clay, probably because vessels were at first made of burnt shells. It is suited well to represent the human body; frail, fragile, and easily reduced again to dust. The purpose of Paul here is, to show that it was by no excellency of his nature that the gospel was originated; it was in virtue of no vigor and strength which he possessed that it was propagated; but that it had been, of design, committed by God to weak, decaying, and crumbling instruments, in order that it might “be seen” that it was by the power of God that such instruments were sustained in the trials to which they were exposed, and in order that it might be manifest to all that it was not originated and diffused by the power of those to whom it was entrusted. The idea is, that they were altogether insufficient of their own strength to accomplish what was accomplished by the gospel. Paul uses a metaphor similar to this in ^{<4813>}2 Timothy 2:20.

That the excellency of the power An elegant expression, denoting the exceeding great power. The great power referred to here was that which was manifested in connection with the labors of the apostles — the power of healing the sick, raising the dead, and casting out devils; the power of bearing persecution and trial, and the power of carrying the gospel over sea and land, in the midst of danger, and in spite of all the opposition which people could make, whether as individuals or as combined; and especially the power of converting the hearts of sinners, of humbling the proud, and leading the guilty to the knowledge of God, and the hope of heaven. The idea is, that all this was manifestly beyond human strength; and that God had of design chosen weak and feeble instruments “in order” that it might be everywhere seen that it was done not by human power but by his own.

The instrumentality employed was altogether “disproportionate” in its nature to the effect produced.

May be of God May evidently appear to be of God; that it may be manifest to all that it is God’s power and not ours. It was one great purpose of God that this should be kept clearly in view. And it is still done. God takes care that this shall be apparent. For:

- (1) It is “always” true, whoever is employed, and however great may be the talents, learning, or zeal of those who preach, that it is by the power of God that people are converted. Such a work cannot be accomplished by man. It is not by might or by strength; and between the conversion of a proud, haughty, and abandoned sinner, and the power of him who is made the instrument, there is such a manifest disproportion, that it is evident it is the work of God. The conversion of the human heart is not to be accomplished by man.
- (2) Ministers are frail, imperfect, and Sinful, as they were in the time of Paul. When the imperfections of ministers are considered; when their frequent errors, and their not unfrequent moral obliquities are contemplated; when it is remembered how far many of them live from what they ought to do, and how few of them live in any considerable degree as becometh the followers of the Redeemer, it is wonderful that God blesses their labor as he does; and the matter of amazement is not that no more are converted under their ministry, but it is that SO MANY are converted, or that any are converted; and it is manifest that it is the mere power of God.
- (3) He often makes use of the most feeble, and unlearned, and weak of his servants to accomplish the greatest effects. It is not splendid talents, or profound learning, or distinguished eloquence, that is always or even commonly most successful. Often the ministry of such is entirely barren; while some humble and obscure man shall have constant success, and revivals shall attend him wherever he goes. It is the man of faith, and prayer, and self-denial, that is blessed; and the purpose of God in the ministry, as in everything else, is to “stain the pride of all human glory,” and to show that he is all in all.

~~2~~ **2 Corinthians 4:8.** *We are troubled* We the apostles. Paul here refers to some of the trials to which he and his fellow laborers were subjected in making known the gospel. The “design” for which he does it seems to be to show them:

- (1) What they endured in preaching the truth;
- (2) To show the sustaining power of that gospel in the midst of afflictions; and,
- (3) To conciliate their favor, or to remind them that they had endured these things on their account, ^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 4:12-15.

Perhaps one leading design was to recover the affections of those of the Corinthians whose heart had been alienated from him, by showing them how much he had endured on their account. For this purpose he freely opens his heart to them, and tenderly represents the many and grievous pressures and hardships to which love to souls, and theirs among the rest, had exposed him — Doddridge. The whole passage is one of the most pathetic and beautiful to be found in the New Testament. The word rendered “troubled” (θλιβομενοι ^{<2346>}, from θλιβω ^{<2346>}) may have reference to wrestling, or to the contests in the Grecian games. It properly means, to press, to press together; then to press as in a crowd where there is a throng (^{<4009>}Mark 3:9); then to compress together (^{<4074>}Matthew 7:14); and then to oppress, or compress with evils, to distress, to afflict, ^{<3006>}2 Thessalonians 1:6; ^{<4006>}2 Corinthians 1:6. Here it may mean, that he was encompassed with trials, or placed in the midst of them so that they pressed upon him as persons do in a crowd, or, possibly, as a man was close pressed by an adversary in the games. He refers to the fact that he was called to endure a great number of trials and afflictions. Some of those trials he refers to in ^{<4006>}2 Corinthians 7:5.

“When we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.”

On every side In every respect. In every way. We are subjected to all kinds of trim and affliction.

Yet not distressed This by no means expresses the force of the original; nor is it possible perhaps to express it in a translation. Tyndale renders it, “yet we are not without our shift.” The Greek word used here (στενοχωρουμενοι ^{<4729>}) has a relation to the word which is rendered “troubled.” It properly means “to crowd into a narrow place; to straiten as to room; to be so straitened as not to be able to turn oneself.” And the idea is, that though he was close pressed by persecutions and trials, yet he was

not so hemmed in that he had no way to turn himself; his trials did not wholly prevent motion and action. He was not so closely pressed as a man would be who was so straitened that he could not move his body, or stir hand or foot. He had still resources; he was permitted to move; the energy of his piety, and the vigor of his soul could not be entirely cramped and impeded by the trials which encompassed him. The Syriac renders it: "In all things we are pressed, but are not suffocated." The idea is, he was not wholly discouraged, and disheartened, and overcome. He had resources in his piety which enabled him to bear up under these trials, and still to engage in the work of preaching the gospel.

We are perplexed (απορουμενοι ^{<639>}). This word (from απορος , "without resource," which is derived from α ^{<1>}, the alpha privative ("not"), and πορος ^{<4198>}, way, or exit) means to be without resource; to know not what to do; to hesitate; to be in doubt and anxiety, as a traveler is, who is ignorant of the way, or who has not the means of prosecuting his journey. It means here, that they were often brought into circumstances of great embarrassment, where they hardly knew what to do, or what course to take. They were surrounded by foes; they were in want; they were in circumstances which they had not anticipated, and which greatly perplexed them.

But not in despair In the margin, "not altogether without help or means." Tyndale renders this: "We are in poverty, but not utterly without somewhat." In the word used here, (εξαπορουμενοι ^{<1820>}) the preposition is intensive or emphatic, and means "utterly, quite." The word means to be utterly without resource; to despair altogether; and the idea of Paul here is, that they were not left "entirely" without resource. Their needs were provided for; their embarrassments were removed; their grounds of perplexity were taken away; and unexpected strength and resources were imparted to them. When they did not know what to do; when all resources seemed to fail them, in some unexpected manner they would be relieved and saved from absolute despair. How often does this occur in the lives of all Christians! And how certain is it, that in all such cases God will interpose by his grace, and aid his people, and save them from absolute despair.

2 Corinthians 4:9. *Persecuted* Often persecuted, persecuted in all places. The Book of Acts shows how true this was.

But not forsaken Not deserted; nor left by God Though persecuted by people, yet they experienced the fulfillment of the divine promise that he would never leave nor forsake them. God always interposed to aid them; always saved them from the power of their enemies; always sustained them in the time of persecution. It is still true. His people have been often persecuted. Yet God has often interposed to save them from the hands of their enemies; and where he has not saved them from their hands, and preserved their lives, yet he has never left them, but has sustained, upheld, and comforted them even in the dreadful agonies of death.

Cast down Thrown down by our enemies, perhaps in allusion to the contests of wrestlers, or of gladiators.

But not destroyed Not killed. They rose again; they recovered their strength; they were prepared for new conflicts. They surmounted every difficulty, and were ready to engage in new strifes, and to meet new trials and persecutions.

2 Corinthians 4:10. *Always bearing about in the body* The expression used here is designed to show the great perils to which Paul was exposed. And the idea is, that he had on his body the marks, the stripes and marks of punishment and persecution, which showed that he was exposed to the same violent death which the Lord Jesus himself endured; compare ^{<4167>}Galatians 6:17: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." It is a strong energetic mode of expression, to denote the severity of the trials to which he was exposed, and the meaning is, that his body bore the marks of his being exposed to the same treatment as the Lord Jesus was; and evidence that he was probably yet to die in a similar manner under the hands of persecutors; compare ^{<51024>}Colossians 1:24.

The dying of the Lord Jesus The death; the violent death. A death similar to that of the Lord Jesus. The idea is, that he was always exposed to death, and always suffering in a manner that was equivalent to dying. The expression is parallel to what he says in ^{<4151>}1 Corinthians 15:31. "I die daily;" and in ^{<47123>}2 Corinthians 11:23, where he says, "in deaths oft." It does not mean that he bore about LITERALLY the dying of the Lord Jesus, but that he was exposed to a similar death. and had marks on his person which showed that he was always exposed to the same violent death. This did not occur once only, or at distant intervals, but it occurred constantly, and wherever he was it was still true that he was exposed to violence, and liable to suffer in the same manner that the Lord Jesus did.

That the life also of Jesus ... This passage has received a considerable variety of interpretation. Grotius renders it, “such a life as was that of Christ, immortal, blessed, heavenly.” Locke, “That also the life of Jesus, risen from the dead, may be made manifest by the energy that accompanies my preaching in this frail body.” Clarke supposes that it means, that he might be able in this manner to show that Christ was risen from the dead. But perhaps, Paul does not refer to one single thing in the life of the Lord Jesus, but means that he did this in order that in all things the same life, the same kind of living which characterized the Lord Jesus might be manifested in him; or that he resembled him in his sufferings and trials, in order that in all things he might have the same life in his body. Perhaps, therefore, it may include the following things as objects at which the apostle aimed:

(1) A desire that his “life” might resemble that of the Lord Jesus. That there might be the same self-denial; the same readiness to suffer; the same patience in trials; the same meekness, gentleness, zeal, ardor, love to God, and love to people evinced in his body which was in that of the Lord Jesus. Thus understood, it means that he placed the Lord Jesus before him as the model of his life, and deemed it an object to be attained even by great self-denial and sufferings to be conformed to him.

(2) A desire to attain to the same life in the resurrection which the Lord Jesus had attained to. A desire to be made like him, and that in his body which bore about the dying of the Lord Jesus, he might again live after death as the Lord Jesus did. Thus understood, it implies an earnest wish to attain to the resurrection of the dead, and accords with what he says in ^{<1018>}Philippians 3:8-11, which may perhaps be considered as Paul’s own commentary on this passage, which has been so variously, and so little understood by expositors. “Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead;” compare ^{<1024>}Colossians 1:24. It intimates Paul’s earnest desire and longing to be made like Christ in the resurrection (compare ^{<1021>}Philippians 3:21); his longing to rise again in the last day (compare ^{<1027>}Acts 26:7); his sense of the importance of the doctrine of the resurrection and his readiness to suffer anything if he might at last attain to the resurrection of the just, and be ready to enter with the Redeemer into a world of glory. The attainment

of this is the high object before the Christian, and to be made like the Redeemer in heaven, to have a body like his, is the grand purpose for which they should live; and sustained by this hope they should be willing to endure any trials, and meet any sufferings, if they may come to that same “life” and blessedness above.

2 Corinthians 4:11. *For we which live* Those of us, the apostles and ministers of the Redeemer who still survive. James the brother of John had been put to death (^{<4112>}Acts 12:2); and it is probable also that some other of the apostles had been also. This verse is merely explanatory of the previous verse.

Are always delivered unto death Exposed constantly to death. This shows what is meant in ^{<4110>}2 Corinthians 4:10, by bearing about in the body the dying the Lord Jesus; see the note on ^{<4151>}1 Corinthians 15:31.

In our mortal flesh In our body. In our life on earth; and in our glorified body in heaven; see the note on ^{<4110>}2 Corinthians 4:10.

2 Corinthians 4:12. *So then death worketh in us* We are exposed to death. The preaching of the gospel exposes us to trials which may be regarded as death working in us. Death has an energy over us (^{<1754>}ενεργεῖται, is at work, is active, or operates); it is constantly employed in inflicting pains on us, and subjecting us to privation and trials. This is a strong and emphatic mode of saying that they were always exposed to death. We are called to serve and glorify the Redeemer, as it were, by repeated deaths and by constantly dying.

But life in you You live as the effect of our being constantly exposed to death. You reap the advantage of all our exposure to trials, and of all our sufferings. You are comparatively safe; are freed from this exposure to death; and will receive eternal life as the fruit of our toils, and exposures. Life here may refer either to exemption from danger and death; or it may refer to the life of religion; the hopes of piety; the prospect of eternal salvation. To me it seems most probable that Paul means to use it in the latter sense, and that he designs to say that while he was exposed to death and called to endure constant trial, the effect would be that they would obtain, in consequence of his sufferings, the blessedness of eternal life; compare ^{<4115>}2 Corinthians 4:15. Thus understood, this passage means, that the sufferings and self-denials of the apostles were for the good of others, and would result in their benefit and salvation; and the design of Paul here

is to remind them of his sufferings in their behalf, in order to conciliate their favor and bind them more closely to him by the remembrance of his sufferings on their account.

2 Corinthians 4:13. *We having the same spirit of faith* The same spirit that is expressed in the quotation which he is about to make; the same faith which the psalmist had. We have the very spirit of faith which is expressed by David. The sense is, we have the same spirit of faith which he had who said, "I believed," etc. The phrase, "spirit of faith," means substantially the same as faith itself; a believing sense or impression of the truth.

According as it is written This passage is found in ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 116:10. When the psalmist uttered the words, he was greatly afflicted; see ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 116:3,6-8. In these circumstances, he prayed to God, and expressed confidence in him, and placed all his reliance on him. In his affliction he spoke to God; he spoke of his confidence in him; he proclaimed his reliance on him; and his having spoken in this manner was the result of his belief, or of his putting confidence in God. Paul, in quoting this, does not mean to say that the psalmist had any reference to the preaching of the gospel; nor does he mean to say that his circumstances were in all respects like those of the psalmist. The circumstances resembled each other only in these respects:

- (1) That Paul, like the psalmist, was in circumstances of trial and affliction; and,
- (2) That the language which both used was that which was prompted by faith — faith, which led them to give utterance to the sentiments of their hearts; the psalmist to utter his confidence in God, and the holms by which he was sustained, and Paul to utter HIS belief in the glorious truths of the gospel; to speak of a risen Saviour, and to show forth the consolations which were thus set before people in the gospel. The sentiments of both were the language of faith. Both, in afflictions, uttered the language of faith; and Paul uses here, as he often does, the language of the Old Testament, as EXACTLY expressing his feelings, and the principles by which he was actuated.

We also believe ... We believe in the truths of the gospel; we believe in God, in the Saviour, in the atonement, in the resurrection, etc. The sentiment is, that they had a firm confidence in these things, and that, as the

result of that confidence they boldly delivered their sentiments. It prompted them to give utterance to their feelings. “Out of the abundance of the heart,” said the Saviour, “the mouth speaketh,” ~~<4024>~~ Matthew 12:34. No man should attempt to preach the gospel who has not a firm belief of its truths; and he who DOES believe its truths will be prompted to make them known to his fellow-men. All successful preaching is the result of a firm and settled conviction of the truth of the gospel; and when such a conviction exists, it is natural to give utterance to the belief, and such an expression will be attended with happy influences on the minds of other people; see the note on ~~<4043>~~ Acts 4:20.

~~<4044>~~ **2 Corinthians 4:14.** *Knowing* Being fully confident; having the most entire assurance. It was the assured hope of the resurrection which sustained them in all their trials. This expression denotes the full and unwavering belief, in the minds of the apostles, that the doctrines which they preached were true. They KNEW that they were revealed from heaven, and that all the promises of God would be fulfilled.

Shall raise up us also All Christians. In the hope of the resurrection they were ready to meet trials, and even to die. Sustained by this assurance, the apostles went forth amidst persecutions and opposition, for they knew that their trials would soon end, and that they would be raised up in the morning of the resurrection, to a world of eternal glory.

By Jesus By the power or the agency of Jesus. Christ will raise up the dead from their graves, ~~<4045>~~ John 5:25-29.

And shall present us with you Will present us before the throne of glory with exceeding joy and honor. He will present us to God as those who have been redeemed by his blood. He will present us in the courts of heaven, before the throne of the eternal Father, as his ransomed people; as recovered from the ruins of the fall; as saved by the merits of his blood. They shall not only be raised up from the dead; but they shall be publicly and solemnly presented to God as his, as recovered to his service, and as having a title in the covenant of grace to the blessedness of heaven.

~~<4045>~~ **2 Corinthians 4:15.** *For all things are for your sakes* All these things; these glorious hopes, and truths, and prospects; these self-denials of the apostles, and these provisions of the plan of mercy.

For your sakes On your account. They are designed to promote your salvation. They are not primarily for the welfare of those who engage in these toils and self-denials; but the whole arrangement and execution of the plan of salvation, and all the self-denial evinced by those who are engaged in making that plan known, are in order that you might be benefitted. One object of Paul in this statement, doubtless, is, to conciliate their favor, and remove the objections which had been made to him by a faction in the church at Corinth.

That the abundant grace Grace abounding, or overflowing. The rich mercy of God that should be manifested by these means. It is implied here, that grace would abound by means of these labors and self-denials of the apostles. The grace referred to here is that which would be conferred on them in consequence of these labors.

Through the thanksgiving of many That many may have occasion of gratitude to God; that by these labors more persons may be led to praise him. It was an object with Paul so to labor that as many as possible might be led to praise God, and have occasion to thank him to all eternity.

Redound to the glory of God That God may have augmented praise; that his glory in the salvation of people may abound. The sentiment of the passage is, that it would be for the glory of God that as many as possible should be brought to give praise and thanksgivings to him; and that, therefore, Paul endeavored to make as many converts as possible. He denied himself; he welcomed toil; he encountered enemies; he subjected himself to dangers; and he sought by all means possible to bring as many as could be brought to praise God. The word “redound” (περισσευη ^{<4052>}) here means abound, or be abundant; and the sense is, that the overflowing grace thus evinced in the salvation of many would so abound as to promote the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 4:16. *For which cause* With such an object in view, and sustained by such elevated purposes and desires. The sense is, that the purpose of trying to save as many as possible would make toil easy, privations welcome, and would be so accompanied by the grace of God, as to gird the soul with strength, and fill it with abundant consolations.

We faint not For an explanation of the word used here, see the note on **2 Corinthians 4:1**. We are not exhausted, desponding, or disheartened.

We are sustained, encouraged, emboldened by having such an object in view.

But though our outward man perish By outward man, Paul evidently means the body. By using the phrases, “the outward man,” and the “inward man,” he shows that he believed that man was made up of two parts, body and soul. He was no materialist. He has described two parts as constituting man, so distinct: that while the one perishes, the other is renewed; while the one is enfeebled, the other is strengthened; while the one grows old and decays, the other renews its youth and is invigorated. Of course, the soul is not dependent on the body for its vigor and strength, since it expands while the body decays; and of course the soul may exist independently of the body, and in a separate state.

Perish Grows old; becomes weak and feeble; loses its vigor and elasticity under the many trials which we endure, and under the infirmities of advancing years. It is a characteristic of the “outer man,” that it thus perishes. Great as may be its vigor, yet it must decay and die. It cannot long bear up under the trials of life, and the wear and tear of constant action, but must soon sink to the grave.

Yet the inward man The soul; the undecaying, the immortal part.

Is renewed Is renovated, strengthened, invigorated. His powers of mind expanded; his courage became bolder; he had clearer views of truth; he had more faith in God. As he drew nearer to the grave and to heaven, his soul was more raised above the world, and he was more filled with the joys and triumphs of the gospel. The understanding and the heart did not sympathize with the suffering and decaying body; but, while that became feeble, the soul acquired new strength, and was fitting for its flight to the eternal world. This verse is an ample refutation of the doctrine of the materialist, and proves that there is in man something that is distinct from decaying and dying matter, and that there is a principle which may gain augmented strength and power, while the body dies; compare note, ^{<672>}Romans 7:22.

Day by day Constantly. There was a daily and constant increase of inward vigor. God imparted to him constant strength in his trials, and sustained him with the hopes of heaven, as the body was decaying, and tending to the grave. The sentiment of this verse is, that in an effort to do good, and to promote the salvation of man, the soul will be sustained in trials, and will be comforted and invigorated even when the body is weary, grows old,

decays, and dies. It is the testimony of Paul respecting his own experience; and it is a fact which has been experienced by thousands in their efforts to do good, and to save the souls of people from death.

2 Corinthians 4:17. *For our light affliction* This verse, with the following, is designed to show further the sources of consolation and support which Paul and his fellow-laborers had in their many trials. Bloomfield remarks on this passage, that “in energy and beauty of expression, it is little inferior to any in Demosthenes himself, to whom, indeed, and to Thucydides in his orations, the style of the apostle, when it rises to the oratorical, bears no slight resemblance.” The passage abounds with intensive and emphatic expressions, and manifests that the mind of the writer was laboring to convey ideas which language, even after all the energy of expression which he could command, would very imperfectly communicate. The trials which Paul endured, to many persons would have seemed to be anything else but light. They consisted of want, and danger, and contempt, and stoning, and toil, and weariness, and the scorn of the world, and constant exposure to death by land or by sea; see ^{<4017>}2 Corinthians 4:7-10, compare ^{<47123>}2 Corinthians 11:23-27. Yet these trials, though continued through many years, and constituting, as it were, his very life, he speaks of as the lightest conceivable thing when compared with that eternal glory which awaited him. He strives to get an expression as emphatic as possible, to show that in his estimation they were not worthy to be named in comparison with the eternal weight of glory. It is not sufficient to say that the affliction was “light” or was a mere trifle; but he says that it was to endure but for a moment. Though trials had followed him ever since he began to make known the Redeemer, and though he had the firmest expectation that they would follow him to the end of life and everywhere (^{<44123>}Acts 20:23), yet all this was a momentary trifle compared with the eternal glory before him. The word rendered “light” (^{<1645>}ελαφρον) means that which is easy to bear, and is usually applied to a burden; see ^{<40113>}Matthew 11:30, compare ^{<47117>}2 Corinthians 1:17.

Which is but for a moment The Greek word used here (^{<3910>}παραυτικα) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is an adverb, from ^{<846>}αυτικα, ^{<846>}αυτος, and means properly, “at this very instant; immediately.” Here it seems to qualify the word “light,” and to be used in the sense of momentary, transient. Bloomfield renders it, “for the at present lightness of our affliction.” Doddridge, “for this momentary lightness of our affliction, which passes off so fast, and leaves so little impression that it may be called

levity itself.” The apostle evidently wished to express two ideas in as emphatic a manner as possible; first, that the affliction was light, and, secondly, that it was transient, momentary, and soon passing away. His object is to contrast this with the glory that awaited him, as being heavy, and as being also eternal.

Worketh for us see the note, ^{<404D>}2 Corinthians 4:12. Will produce, will result in. The effect of these afflictions is to produce eternal glory. This they do:

- (1) By their tendency to wean us from the world;
- (2) To purify the heart, by enabling us to ‘break off from the sins on account of which God afflicts us;
- (3) By disposing us to look to God for consolation and support in our trials;
- (4) By inducing us to contemplate the glories of the heavenly world, and thus winning us to seek heaven as our home; and,
- (5) Because God has graciously promised to reward his people in heaven as the result of their bearing trials in this life. It is by affliction that he purifies them (^{<238D>}Isaiah 48:10); and by trial that he takes their affections from the objects of time and sense, and gives them a relish for the enjoyments which result from the prospect of perfect and eternal glory.

A far more exceeding (καθ’ ^{<2596>} ὑπερβολῆν ^{<5236>} εἰς ^{<1519>} ὑπερβολῆν ^{<5236>}). There is not to be found any where a more energetic expression than this. The word (ὑπερβολῆν ^{<5236>}), used here (whence our word “hyperbole”) means properly a throwing, casting, or throwing beyond. In the New Testament it means excess, excellence, eminence; see ^{<404D>}2 Corinthians 4:7. “The excellency of the power.” The phrase καθ’ ^{<2596>} ὑπερβολῆν ^{<5236>} means exceedingly, supereminently, ^{<60713>}Romans 7:13; ^{<6121>}1 Corinthians 12:31; ^{<4008>}2 Corinthians 1:8; ^{<8013>}Galatians 1:13. This expression would have been by itself intensive in a high degree. But this was not sufficient to express Paul’s sense of the glory which was laid up for Christians. It was not enough for him to use the ordinary highest expression for the superlative to denote the value of the object in his eye. He therefore coins an expression, and adds εἰς ^{<1519>} ὑπερβολῆν ^{<5236>}. It is not merely eminent; but it is eminent unto eminence; excess unto excess; a hyperbole unto hyperbole — one hyperbole heaped upon another; and the

expression means that it is “exceeding exceedingly” glorious; glorious in the highest possible degree — Robinson. Mr. Slade renders it, “infinitely exceeding.” The expression is the Hebrew form of denoting the highest superlative; and it means that all hyperboles fail of expressing that eternal glory which remains for the just. It is infinite and boundless. You may pass from one degree to another; from one sublime height to another; but still an infinity remains beyond. Nothing can describe the uppermost height of that glory; nothing can express its infinitude.

Eternal This stands in contrast with the affliction that is for a moment ($\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\nu\tau\iota\kappa\alpha$ ^{<3910>}). The one is momentary, transient; so short, even in the longest life, that it may be said to be an instant; the other has no limits to its duration. It is literally everlasting.

Weight ($\beta\alpha\rho\omicron\varsigma$ ^{<922>}). This stands opposed to the ($\epsilon\lambda\alpha\phi\rho\omicron\nu$ ^{<1645>}) light affliction. That was so light that it was a trifle. It was easily borne. It was like the most light and airy objects, which constitute no burden. It is not even here called a burden, or said to be heavy in any degree. This is so heavy as to be a burden. Grotius thinks that the image is taken from gold or silver articles, that are solid and heavy, compared with those that are mixed or plated. But why may it not refer to the insignia of glory and honor; a robe heavy with gold, or a diadem or crown, heavy with gold or diamonds: glory so rich, so profuse as to be heavy? The affliction was light; but the crown, the robe, the adornings in the glorious world were not trifles, or baubles, but solid, substantial, weighty. We apply the word weighty now to that which is valuable and important, compared with that which is of no value, probably because the precious metals and jewels are heavy; and it is by them that we usually estimate the value of objects.

Of glory ($\delta\omicron\zeta\eta\varsigma$ ^{<1391>}). The Hebrew word $dwbk$ ^{<13519>} denotes weight as well as glory. And perhaps Paul had that use of the word in his eye in this strong expression. It refers here to the splendor, magnificence, honor, and happiness of the eternal world. In this exceedingly interesting passage, which is worthy of the deepest study of Christians, Paul has set in most beautiful and emphatic contrast the trials of this life and the glories of heaven. It may be profitable to contemplate at a single glance the view which he had of them, that they may be brought distinctly before the mind.

THE ONE IS

1. AFFLICTION, θλιψις ^{<2347>}.
2. Light, ελαφρον ^{<1645>}.
3. For a moment, παραυτικα ^{<3910>}.

THE OTHER IS, by contrast,

- (1) GLORY, δοξη ^{<1391>}.
- (2) Weight, βαρος ^{<922>}.
- (3) Eternal, αιωνιον ^{<166>}.
- (4) Eminent, or excellent, καθ' ^{<2596>} υπερβολην ^{<5236>}.
- (5) Infinitely excellent, eminent in the highest degree, εις ^{<1519>} υπερβολην ^{<5236>}.

So the account stands in the view of Paul; and with this balance in favor of the eternal glory, he regarded afflictions as mere trifles, and made it the grand purpose of his life to gain the glory of the heavens. What wise man, looking at the account, would not do likewise?

2 Corinthians 4:18. *While we look ...* Or, rather, we not looking at the things which are seen. The design of this is, to show in what way the afflictions which they endured became in their view light and momentary. It was by looking to the glories of the future world, and thus turning away the attention from the trials and sorrows of this life. If we look directly at our trials; if the mind is fixed wholly on them, and we think of nothing else, they often appear heavy and long. Even comparatively light and brief sufferings will appear to be exceedingly difficult to bear. But if we can turn away the mind from them and contemplate future glory; if we can compare them with eternal blessedness, and feel that they will introduce us to perfect and everlasting happiness, they will appear to be transitory, and will be easily borne. And Paul here has stated the true secret of bearing trials with patience. It is to look at the things which are unseen. To anticipate the glories of the heavenly world. To fix the eye on the eternal happiness which is beyond the grave; and to reflect how short these trials are, compared with the eternal glories of heaven; and how short they will seem to be when we are there.

The things which are seen The things here below; the things of this life — poverty, want, care, persecution, trial, etc.

The things which are not seen The glories of heaven, compare ⁸⁰⁰Hebrews 11:1.

The things which are seen are temporal This refers particularly to the things which they suffered. But it is as true of all things here below. Wealth, pleasure, fame, the three idols which the people of this world adore, are all to endure but for a little time. They will all soon vanish away. So it is with pain, and sorrow, and tears. All that we enjoy, and all that we suffer here, must soon vanish and disappear. The most splendid palace will decay; the most costly pile will moulder to dust; the most magnificent city will fall to ruins; the most exquisite earthly pleasures will soon come to an end; and the most extended possessions can be enjoyed but a little time. So the acutest pain will soon be over; the most lingering disease will soon cease; the evils of the deepest poverty, want, and suffering will soon be passed. There is nothing on which the eye can fix, nothing that the heart can desire here, which will not soon fade away; or, if it survives, it is temporary in regard to us. We must soon leave it to others; and if enjoyed, it will be enjoyed while our bodies are slumbering in the grave, and our souls engaged in the deep solemnities of eternity. How foolish then to make these our portion, and to fix our affections supremely on the things of this life? How foolish also to be very deeply affected by the trials of this life, which at the furthest CAN be endured but a little longer before we shall be forever beyond their reach!

The things which are not seen are eternal Everything which pertains to that state beyond the grave:

- (1) God is eternal; not to leave us as our earthly friends do.
- (2) The Saviour is eternal — to be our everlasting friend.
- (3) The companions and friends there are eternal. The angels who are to be our associates, and the spirits of the just with whom we shall live, are to exist forever. The angels never die; and the pious dead shall die no more. There shall be then no separation, no death-bed, no grave, no sad vacancy and loss caused by the removal of a much-loved friend.
- (4) The joys of heaven are eternal; There shall be no interruption; no night; no cessation; no end. Heaven and all its joys shall be everlasting; and he

who enters there shall have the assurance that those joys shall endure and increase while eternal ages shall roll away.

(5) It may be added, also, that the woes of hell shall be eternal. They are now among the things which to us “are not seen;” and they, as well as the joys of heaven, shall have no end. Sorrow there shall never cease; the soul shall there never die; the body that shall be raised up “to the resurrection of damnation” shall never again expire. And when all these things are contemplated, well might Paul say of the things of this life — the sorrows, trials, privations, and persecutions which he endured, that they were light, and were for a moment.” How soon will they pass away; how soon shall we all be engaged amidst the unchanging and eternal realities of the things which are not seen!

REMARKS

1. Ministers of the gospel have no cause to faint or to be discouraged, ~~400~~2 Corinthians 4:1. Whatever may be the reception of their message, and whatever the trials to which they may be subjected, yet there are abundant sources of consolation and support in the gospel which they preach. They have the consciousness that they preach a system of truth; that they are proclaiming that which God has revealed; and, if they are faithful, that they have his smiles and approbation. Even, therefore, if people reject, and despise their message, and if they are called to endure many privations and trials, they should not faint. It is enough for them that they proclaim the truth which God loves, and that they meet with his approbation and smiles. Trials will come in the ministry as every where else, but there are also special consolations. There may be much opposition and resistance to the message, but we should not faint or be discouraged. We should do our duty, and commit the result to God.

2. The gospel should be embraced by those to whom it comes, ~~400~~2 Corinthians 4:2. If it has their reason and conscience in its favor, then they should embrace it without delay. They are under the most sacred obligation to receive it, and to become decided Christians. Every man is bound, and may be urged to pursue, that course which his conscience approves; and the gospel may thus be pressed on the attention of all to whom it comes.

3. If people wish peace of conscience, they should embrace the gospel, ~~400~~2 Corinthians 4:2. They can never find it elsewhere. No man’s conscience is at peace from the fact that he does not repent, and love God

and obey the gospel. His heart may love sin; but his conscience cannot approve it. That is at peace only in doing the work of God; and that can find self-approbation only when it submits to him, and embraces the gospel of his Son. Then the conscience is at ease. No man ever yet had a troubled conscience from the fact that he had embraced the gospel, and was an humble and decided Christian. Thousands and million have had a troubled conscience from the fact that they have neglected it. No man on a death-bed ever had a troubled conscience because he embraced religion too early in life. Thousands and million have been troubled when they came to die, because they neglected it so long, or rejected it altogether. No man when death approaches has a troubled conscience because he has lived too much devoted to God the Saviour, and been too active as a Christian. But O how many have been troubled then because they have been worldlyminded, and selfish, and vain, and proud? The conscience gives peace just in proportion as we serve God faithfully; nor can all the art of man or Satan give peace to one conscience in the ways of sin, and in the neglect of the soul.

4. Ministers should preach the truth — the simple truth — and nothing but the truth, ~~404B~~ 2 Corinthians 4:2. They should make use of no false art, no deception, no trick, no disguise. They should be open, sincere, plain, pure in all their preaching, and in their manner of life. Such was the course of the Saviour; such the course of Paul; and such a course only will God approve and bless.

5. This is a deluded world, ~~404B~~ 2 Corinthians 4:4. It is blinded and deceived by him who is here called the “god of this world.” Satan rules in the hearts of people; and he rules by deceiving them, and in order to deceive them. Everything which operates to prevent people from embracing the gospel has a tendency to blind the mind. The man who is seeking wealth as his only portion, is blinded and deceived in regard to its value. The man who is pursuing the objects of ambition as his main portion, is deceived in regard to the true value of things. And he, or she, who pursues pleasure as the main business of life, is deceived in regard to the proper value of objects. It is impossible to conceive of a world more deluded than this. We can conceive of a world more sinful, and more miserable, and such is hell; but there is no delusion and deception there. Things are seen as they are; and no one is deceived in regard to his character or prospects there. But here, every impenitent man is deceived and blinded. He is deceived about his own character; about the relative value of objects; about his prospects for eternity; about death, the judgment, heaven, hell. On none of these points

has he any right apprehension; and on none is it possible for any human power to break the deep delusion, and to penetrate the darkness of his mind.

6. People are in danger, ~~4004~~ 2 Corinthians 4:4. They are under deep delusion, and they tread unconcerned near to ruin. They walk in darkness — blinded by the god of this world, and are very near a precipice, and nothing will rouse them from their condition. It is like children gathering flowers near a deep gulf, when the pursuit of one more flower may carry them too far, and they will fall to rise no more. The delusion rests on every unsanctified mind; and it needs to remain but a little longer, and the soul will be lost. That danger deepens every day and every hour. If it is continued but a little longer it will be broken in upon by the sad realities of death, judgment, and hell. But then it will be too late. The soul will be lost — deluded in the world of probation; sensible of the truth only in the world of despair.

7. Satan will practice every device and art possible to prevent the gospel from shining upon the hearts of people. That light is painful and hateful to his eyes, and he will do all that can be done to prevent its being diffused. Every art which long-tried ingenuity and skill can devise, will be resorted to; every power which he can put forth will be exerted. If he can blind the minds of people, he will do it. If people can be hoodwinked, and gulled, it will be done. If error can be made to spread, and be embraced — error smooth, plausible, cunning — it will be diffused. Ministers will be raised up to preach it; and the press will be employed to accomplish it. If sinners can be deceived, and made to remain at ease in their sins, by novels and seductive poetry; by books false in sentiments, and perverse in morals, the press will be made to groan under the works of fiction. If theaters are necessary to cheat and beguile people, they will be reared; and the song, and the dance, the ball, and the splendid party will alike contribute to divert the attention from the cross of Christ, the worth of the soul, and the importance of a preparation to die. No art has been spared, or will be spared to deceive people; and the world is full of the devices of Satan to hoodwink and blind the perishing, and lead them down to hell.

8. Yet, Satan is not alone to blame for this. He does all he can, and he has consummate skill and art. Yet, let not the deluded sinner take comfort to himself because Satan is the tempter, and because he is deluded. The bitterness of death is not made sweet to a young man because he has been

deluded by the arts of the veteran in temptation; and the fires of hell will not burn any the less fiercely because the sinner suffered himself to be deluded, and chose to go there through the ballroom or the theater. The sinner is, after all, voluntary in his delusions. He does, or he might, know the truth. He goes voluntarily to the place of amusement; voluntarily forms the plans of gain and ambition which deceive and ruin the soul; goes voluntarily to the theater, and to the haunts of vice; and chooses this course in the face of many warnings, and remonstrances. Who is to blame if he is lost! Who but himself?

9. Sinners should be entreated to rouse from this delusive and false security. They are now blinded, and deceived. Life is too short and too uncertain to be playing such a game as the sinner does. There are too many realities here to make it proper to pass life amidst deceptions and delusions. Sin is real, and danger is real, and death is real, and eternity is real; and man should rouse from his delusions, and look upon things as they are. Soon he will be on a bed of death, and then he will look over the follies of his life. Soon he will be at the judgment bar, and from that high and awful place look on the past and the future, and see things as they are. But, alas, it will be too late then to repair the errors of a life; and amidst the realities of those scenes, all that he may be able to do, will be to sigh unavailingly that he suffered himself to be deluded, deceived, and destroyed in the only world of probation, by the trifles and baubles which the great deceiver placed before him to beguile him of heaven, and to lead him down to hell!

10. The great purpose of the ministry is to make known in any and every way the Lord Jesus Christ, ~~404E~~ 2 Corinthians 4:5. To this, the ministers of the gospel are to devote themselves. It is not to cultivate farms; to engage in traffic; to shine in the social circle; to be distinguished for learning; to become fine scholars; to be profoundly versed in science; or to be distinguished as authors, that they are set apart; but it is in every way possible to make known the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever other people do, or not do; however the world may choose to be employed, their work is simple and plain, and it is not to cease or be intermitted until death shall close their toils. Neither by the love of ease, of wealth, or pleasure are they to turn aside from their work, or to forsake the vocation to which God has called them.

11. We see the responsibility of the ministry, ~~404E~~ 2 Corinthians 4:5. On the ministry devolves the work of making the Saviour known to a dying world.

If they will not do it, the world will remain in ignorance of the Redeemer and will perish. If there is one soul to whom they might make known the Saviour, and to whom they do not make him known, that soul will perish, and the responsibility will rest on the minister of the Lord Jesus. And, O how great is this responsibility! And who is sufficient for these things?

12. Ministers of the gospel should submit to any self-denial in order that they may do good. Their Master did; and Paul and the other apostles did. It is sufficient for the disciple that he be as the master; and the ministers of the gospel should regard themselves as set apart to a work of self-denial, and called to a life of toil, like their Lord. Their rest is in heaven, and not on the earth. Their days of leisure and repose are to be found in the skies when their work is done, and not in a world perishing in sin.

13. The ministry is a glorious work, ^{<4016>}2 Corinthians 4:5. What higher honor is there on earth than to make known a Redeemer? What pleasure more exquisite can there be than to speak of pardon to the guilty? What greater comfort than to go to the afflicted and bind up their hearts; to pour the balm of peace into the wounded spirit, and to sustain and cheer the dying? The ministry has its own consolations amidst all its trials; its own honor amidst the contempt and scorn with which it is often viewed by the world.

14. The situation of man would have been dreadful and awful had it not been for the light which is imparted by revelation, and by the Holy Spirit, ^{<4016>}2 Corinthians 4:6. Man would have ever remained like the dark night before God said, "Let there be light;" and his condition would have been thick darkness, where not a ray of light would have beamed on his benighted way. Some idea of what this was, and would have continued to be, we have now in the pagan world, where thick darkness reigns over nations, though it has been somewhat broken in upon by the dim light which tradition has diffused there.

15. God has power to impart light to the most dark and benighted mind. There is no one to whom he cannot reveal himself and make his truth known, ^{<4016>}2 Corinthians 4:6. With as much ease as he commanded light to shine out of darkness at first can he command the pure light of truth to shine on the minds of people; and on minds most beclouded by sin he can cause the sun of righteousness to shine with healing in his beams.

16. We should implore the enlightening influence of the Spirit of truth, ⁴⁰¹⁶2 Corinthians 4:6. If God is the source of light, we should seek it at his hands. Nothing to man is so valuable as the light of truth; nothing of so much worth as the knowledge of the true God; and with the deepest solicitude, and the most fervent prayer, should we seek the enlightening influences of his Spirit, and the guidance of his grace.

17. There is no true knowledge of God except that which shines in the face of Jesus Christ, ⁴⁰¹⁶2 Corinthians 4:6. He came to make known the true God. He is the exact image of God. He resembles him in all things. And he who does not love the character of Jesus Christ, therefore, does not love the character of God; he who does not seek to be like Jesus Christ, does not desire to be like God. He who does not bear the image of the Redeemer, does not bear the image of God. To be a moral man merely, therefore, is not to be like God. To be amiable, and honest, merely, is not to be like God. Jesus Christ, the image of God, was more than this. He was religious. He was holy. He was, as a man, a man of prayer, and filled with the love of God, and was always submissive to his holy will. He sought his honor and glory: and he made it the great purpose of his life and death to make known his existence, perfections, and name. To imitate him in this is to have the knowledge of the glory of God; and no man is like God who does not bear the image of the Redeemer. No man is like God, therefore, who is not a Christian. Of course, no man can be prepared for heaven who is not a friend and follower of Jesus Christ.

18. God designs to secure the promotion of his own glory in the manner in which religion is spread in the world, ⁴⁰¹⁷2 Corinthians 4:7. For this purpose, and with this view, he did not commit it to angels, nor has he employed people of rank, or wealth, or profound scientific attainments to be the chief instruments in its propagation. He has committed it to frail, mortal people; and often to people of humble rank, and even humble attainments — except attainments in piety. In fitting them for their work his grace is manifest; and in all the success which attends their labors it is apparent that it is by the mere grace and mercy of God that it is done.

19. We see what our religion has cost, ⁴⁰¹⁸2 Corinthians 4:8,9. Its extension in the world has been everywhere connected with sufferings, and toil, and tears. It began in the labors, sorrows, self-denials, persecutions, and dying agonies of the Son of God; and to introduce it to the world cost his life. It was spread by the toils, and sacrifices, and sufferings of the

apostles. It was kept up by the dying groans of martyrs. It has been preserved and extended on earth by the labors and prayers of the Reformers, and amidst scenes of persecution everywhere, and it is now extending through the earth by the sacrifices of those who are willing to leave country and home; to cross oceans and deserts; and to encounter the perils of barbarous climes, that they may make it known to distant lands. If estimated by what it has cost, assuredly no religion, no blessing is so valuable as Christianity. It is above all human valuation: and it should be a matter of unfeigned thankfulness to us that God has been pleased to raise up people who have been willing to suffer so much that it might be perpetuated and extended on the earth; and we should be willing also to imitate their example, and deny ourselves, that we may make its inestimable blessings known to those who are now destitute. To us, it is worth all it has cost — all the blood of apostles and martyrs; to others, also, it would be worth all that it would cost to send it to them. How can we better express our sense of its worth, and our gratitude to the dying Redeemer, and our veneration for the memory of self-denying apostles and martyrs, than by endeavoring to diffuse the religion for which they died all over the world?

20. We have in this chapter an illustration of the sustaining power of religion in trials, ~~408~~2 Corinthians 4:8,9. The friends of Christianity have been called to endure every form of suffering. Poverty, want, tears, stripes, imprisonments, and deaths have been their portion. They have suffered under every form of torture which people could inflict on them. And yet the power of religion has never failed them. It has been amply tried; and has shown itself able to sustain them always, and to enable them always to triumph. Though troubled, they have not been so close pressed that they had no room to turn; though perplexed, they have not been without some resource; though persecuted by people, they have not been forsaken by God; though thrown down in the conflict, yet they have recovered strength, and been prepared to renew the strife, and to engage in new contentions with the foes of God. Who can estimate the value of a religion like this? Who does not see that it is adapted to man in a state of trial, and that it furnishes him with just what he needs in this world?

21. Christianity will live, ~~408~~2 Corinthians 4:8,9. Nothing can destroy it. All the power that could be brought to bear on it to blot it from the earth has been tried, and yet it survives. No new attempt to destroy it can prevail; and it is now settled that this religion is to live to the end of time. It

has cost much to obtain this demonstration; but it is worth all it has cost, and the sufferings of apostles and martyrs, therefore, have not been for nothing.

22. Christians should be willing to endure anything in order that they may become like Christ on earth, and be like him in heaven, ^{<FOH0>}2 Corinthians 4:10. It is worth all their efforts, and all their self-denials. It is the grand object before us; and we should deem no sufferings too severe, no self-denial or sacrifice too great, if we may become like him here below, and may live with him above, ^{<FOH0>}2 Corinthians 4:10,11.

23. In order to animate us in the work to which God has called us; to encourage us in our trials; and to prompt us to a faithful discharge of our duties, especially those who like Paul are called to preach the gospel, we should have, like him, the following views and feelings — views and feelings adapted to sustain us in all our trials, and to uphold us in all the conflicts of life:

(1) A firm and unwavering belief of the truth of the religion which we profess, and of the truth which we make known to others, ^{<FOH2>}2 Corinthians 4:12. No man can preach successfully, and no man can do much good, whose mind is vacillating and hesitating; who is filled with doubts, and who goes timidly to work, or who declares that of which he has no practical acquaintance, and no deep-felt conviction, and who knows not whereof he affirms. A man to do good must have a faith which never wavers; a conviction of truth which is constant; a belief settled like the everlasting hills, which nothing can shake or overturn. With such a conviction of the truth of Christianity, and of the great doctrines which it inculcates, he cannot but speak of it, and make known his convictions. He that believes that people ARE in fact in danger of hell, WILL tell them of it; he that believes there is an awful bar of judgment, will tell them of it; he that believes that the Son of God became incarnate and died for people, will tell them of it; he that believes that there is a heaven, will invite them to it. And one reason why professing Christians are so reluctant to speak of these things, is, that they have no very settled and definite conviction of their truth, and no correct view of their relative importance.

(2) We should have a firm assurance that God has raised up the Lord Jesus, and that we also shall be raised from the dead, ^{<FOH4>}2 Corinthians 4:14. The hope and expectation of the resurrection of the dead was one of the sustaining principles which upheld Paul in his labors, and to attain to

this was one of the grand objects of his life, ~~<4236>~~ Acts 23:6; ~~<4081>~~ Philippians 3:11. Under the influence of this hope and expectation, he was willing to encounter any danger, and to endure any trial. The prospect of being raised up to eternal life and glory was all that was needful to make trials welcome, and to uphold him in the midst of privations and toils. And so we, if we are assured of this great truth, shall welcome trial also, and shall be able to endure afflictions and persecutions. They will soon be ended, and the eternal glory in the morning of the resurrection shall be more than a compensation for all that we shall endure in this life.

(3) We should have a sincere desire to promote the glory of God, and to bring as many as possible to join in his praise, and to celebrate his saving mercy, ~~<4045>~~ 2 Corinthians 4:15. It was this which sustained and animated Paul; and a man who has this as the leading object of his life, and his great purpose and aim, will be willing to endure much trial, to suffer much persecution, and to encounter many dangers. No object is so noble as that of endeavoring to promote the divine glory; and he who is influenced by that will care little how many sufferings he is called to endure in this life.

24. Christians should have such a belief of the truth of their religion as to be willing to speak of it at all times, and in all places, ~~<4043>~~ 2 Corinthians 4:13. If we have such a belief we shall be willing to speak of it. We cannot help it. We shall so see its value, and so love it, and our hearts will be so full of it, and we shall see so much the danger of our fellow-men, that we shall be instinctively prompted to go to them and warn them of their danger, and tell them of the glories of the Redeemer.

25. Christians may expect to be supported and comforted in the trials and toils of life, ~~<4046>~~ 2 Corinthians 4:16. The “outward man” will indeed perish and decay. The body will become feeble, weary, jaded, decayed, decrepit. It will be filled with pain, and will languish under disease, and will endure the mortal agony, and will be corrupted in the tomb. But the “inward man” will be renewed. The faith will be invigorated, the hope become stronger, the intellect brighter, the heart better, the whole soul be more like God. While the body, therefore, the less important part, decays and dies, the immortal part shall live and ripen for glory. Of what consequence is it, therefore, how soon or how much the body decays; or when, and where, and how it dies? Let the immortal part be preserved, let that live, and all is well. And while this is done, we should not, we shall not “faint.” We shall be sustained; and shall find the consolations of religion to be suited to all

our needs, and adapted to all the necessities of our condition as weak, and frail, and dying creatures.

26. We learn from this chapter how to bear affliction in a proper manner, ^{<FOH7>}2 Corinthians 4:17,18. It is by looking at eternity and comparing our trials with the eternal weight of glory that awaits us. In themselves afflictions often seem heavy and long. Human nature is often ready to sink under them. The powers of the body fail, and the mortal frame is crushed. The day seems long while we suffer; and the night seems often to be almost endless, ^{<FOH7>}Deuteronomy 28:67. But compared with eternity how short are all these trials! Compared with the weight of glory which awaits the believer, what a trifle are the severest sufferings of this life. Soon the ransomed spirit will be released, and will be admitted to the full fruition of the joys of the world above. In that world all these sorrows will seem like the sufferings of childhood, that we have now almost forgotten, and that now seem to us like trifles.

27. We should not look to the things which are seen as our portion, ^{<FOH7>}2 Corinthians 4:17,18. They are light in their character, and are soon to fade away. Our great interests are beyond the grave. There all is weighty, and momentous, and eternal. Whatever great interests we have are there. Eternity is stamped upon all the joys and all the sorrows which are beyond this life. here all is temporary, changing, decaying, dying. There all is fixed, settled, unchanging, immortal. It becomes us then as rational creatures to look to that world, to act with reference to it, to feel and act as if we felt that all our interests were there. Were this life all, everything in relation to us would be trifling. But when we remember that there is an eternity; that we are near it; and that our conduct here is to determine our character and destiny there, life becomes invested with infinite importance. Who can estimate the magnitude of the interests at stake? Who can appreciate aright the importance of every step we take, and every plan we form?

28. All here below is temporary, decaying, dying; ^{<FOH7>}2 Corinthians 4:17,18. Afflictions are temporary. They are but for a moment, and will soon be passed away. Our sorrows here will soon be ended. The last sigh on earth will soon be heaved; the last tear will have fallen on the cheek; the last pain will have shot across the seat of life! The last pangs of parting with a beloved friend will soon have been endured; and the last step which we are to take in “the valley of the shadow of death,” will soon have been trod. And in like manner we shall soon have tasted the last cup of earthly

joy. All our comforts here below will soon pass from us. Our friends will die. Our sources of happiness will be dried up. Our health will fail, and darkness will come over our eyes, and we shall go down to the dead. All our property must be left, and all our honors be parted with forever. In a little time — O, how brief! we shall have gone from all these, and shall be engaged in the deep and awful solemnities of the unchanging world. How vain and foolish, therefore, the attachment to earthly objects! How important to secure an interest in that future inheritance which shall never fade away!

29. Let it not be inferred, however, that all affliction shall be light, and for a moment, or that all earthly trial shall of course work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. There are sorrows beyond the grave compared with which the most heavy and most protracted woes this side ‘the tomb, are “light,” and are “but for a moment.” And there are sorrows in this life, deep and prolonged afflictions — which by no means tend to prepare the soul for the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Such are those afflictions where there is no submission to the will of God; where there is complaining, repining, impatience, and increased rebellion; where there is no looking to God for comfort, and no contemplation of eternal glory. Such are those afflictions where people look to philosophy, or to earthly friends to comfort them; or where they plunge deeper into the business, the gaiety, or the vices of the world, to drown their sorrows and to obliterate the sense of their calamities. This is “the sorrow of the world, which worketh death,” ^{<4070>}2 Corinthians 7:10. In afflictions, therefore, it should be to us a matter of deep and anxious solicitude to know whether we have the right feelings, and whether we are seeking the right sources of consolation. And in such seasons it shall be the subject of our deep and earnest prayer to God that our trials may, by his grace, be made to work out for us “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” All are afflicted; all suffer in various ways; and all may find these trials terminate in eternal blessedness beyond the grave.

NOTES ON 2 CORINTHIANS 5

This chapter (2 Corinthians 5) is closely connected with the former, and indeed has been improperly separated from it, as is manifest from the word “For” (γάρ <1063>) with which it commences. It contains a further statement of reasons for what has been said in the previous chapter. The main subject there was the MINISTRY; the honesty and fidelity with which Paul and his fellow-laborers toiled (<1001>2 Corinthians 4:1-3); the trials and dangers which they encountered in the work of the ministry (<1001>2 Corinthians 4:7-12); and the consolations and supports which they had in its various trials, <1003>2 Corinthians 4:13-18. This chapter contains a continuation of the same subject, and a further statement of the motives which prompted them to their work, and of the supports which upheld them in the arduous duties to which they were called. It is a chapter full of exquisite beauties of sentiment and of language, and as well adapted to give consolation and support to all Christians now as it is to ministers; and the sentiments are as well adapted to sustain the humblest believer in his trials as they were to sustain the apostles themselves. The following are the points of consolation and support, and reasons for their zeal and self-denial, to which the apostle refers.

- 1.** They had the assured prospect of the resurrection, and of eternal life, <1001>2 Corinthians 5:1-4. The body might decay, and be worn out; it might sigh and groan, but they had a better home, a mansion of eternal rest in the heavens. It was their earnest desire to reach heaven; though not such a desire as to make them unwilling to endure the toils and trials which God should appoint to them here below, but still an earnest, anxious wish to reach safely their eternal home in the skies. In the prospect of their heavenly home, and their eternal rest, they were willing to endure all the trials which were appointed to them.
- 2.** God had appointed them to this; he had suited them for these trials; he had endowed them with the graces of his Spirit; and they were, therefore, willing to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord; <1001>2 Corinthians 5:5-8. They had such a view of heaven as their home that they were willing at any time to depart and enter the world of rest, and they did not, therefore, shrink from the trials and dangers which would be likely soon to bring them there.

3. They had a deep and constant conviction that they must soon appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; ^{<448>}2 Corinthians 5:9-11. They labored that they might be accepted by him (^{<448>}2 Corinthians 5:9); they knew that they must give a solemn account to him (^{<448>}2 Corinthians 5:10); they had a clear view, and a deep impression of the awful terrors of that day, and they labored, therefore, to save as many as possible from the condemnation of the great Judge of all, and endeavored to “persuade” them to be prepared for that scene; ^{<451>}2 Corinthians 5:11.

4. Though to some they might appear to be under the influence of improper excitement, and even to be deranged (^{<454>}2 Corinthians 5:14), yet they were acting only under the proper influence of the love of Christ; ^{<454>}2 Corinthians 5:14,15. They were constrained and urged on by his love; they knew that he had died for all, and that all people were dead in sin; and they felt themselves the constraining influence of that love prompting them to deny themselves, and to devote their all to his service and cause.

5. Their views of all things had been changed; ^{<456>}2 Corinthians 5:16,17. They had ceased to act under the influences which govern other people; but their own hearts had been changed, and they had become new creatures in Christ, and in their lives they evinced the spirit which should govern those who were thus renewed.

6. They had been solemnly commissioned by God as his ambassadors in this cause. They had been sent to make known the terms and the way of reconciliation, and they felt it to be their duty to proclaim those terms on as wide a scale as possible, and with the utmost zeal and self-denial. It was God’s glorious plan of reconciliation; and on the ground of the atonement made by the Redeemer, they could now offer salvation to all mankind, and as all might be saved, they felt themselves bound to offer the terms of salvation to as many as possible; ^{<458>}2 Corinthians 5:18-21. The grand argument for urging sinners to be reconciled to God, is the fact that Christ has died for their sins, and, therefore, the apostles apprized of this fact, sought to urge as many as possible to become his friends; ^{<461>}2 Corinthians 5:21.

^{<461>}**2 Corinthians 5:1.** *For we know* We who are engaged in the work of the gospel ministry. Paul is giving a reason why he and his fellow-laborers did not become weary and faint in their work. The reason was, that they knew that even if their body should die, they had an inheritance

reserved for them in heaven. The expression “we know” is the language of strong and unwavering assurance. They had no doubt on the subject. And it proves that there may be the assurance of eternal life; or such evidence of acceptance with God as to leave no doubt of a final admission into heaven. This language was often used by the Saviour in reference to the truths which he taught (^{<A011>}John 3:11; 4:22); and it is used by the sacred writers in regard to the truths which they recorded, and in regard to their own personal piety; ^{<A021>}John 21:24; ^{<A018>}1 John 2:3,5,18; 3:2,14,19,24; 4:6,13; 5:2,15,19,20.

That if our earthly house The word “earthly” here (^{<1919>}επιγειος) stands opposed to “heavenly,” or to the house eternal (^{<1722>}εν ^{<3588>}τοις ^{<3772>}ουρανοις) in the heavens.” The word properly means “upon earth, terrestrial, belonging to the earth, or on the earth,” and is applied to bodies (^{<A150>}1 Corinthians 15:40); to earthly things (^{<A012>}John 3:12); to earthly, or worldly wisdom, ^{<A015>}James 3:15. The word “house” here refers doubtless to the body, as the habitation, or the dwelling-place of the mind or soul. The soul dwells in it as we dwell in a house, or tent.

Of this tabernacle This word means a booth, or tent — a movable dwelling. The use of the word here is not a mere redundancy, but the idea which Paul designs to convey is, doubtless, that the body — the house of the soul — was not a permanent dwelling-place, but was of the same nature as a booth or tent, that was set up for a temporary purpose, or that was easily taken down in migrating from one place to another. It refers here to the body as the frail and temporary abode of the soul. It is not a permanent dwelling; a fixed habitation, but is liable to be taken down at any moment, and was suited up with that view. Tyndale renders it, “if our earthly mansion wherein we now dwell.” The Syriac renders it, “for we know that if our house on earth, which is our body, were dissolved.” The idea is a beautiful one, that the body is a mere unfixed, movable dwelling-place; liable to be taken down at any moment, and not designed, anymore than a tent is, to be a permanent habitation.

Were dissolved (^{<2647>}καταλυθη). This word means properly to disunite the parts of anything; and is applied to the act of throwing down, or destroying a building. It is applied here to the body, regarded as a temporary dwelling that might be taken down, and it refers, doubtless, to the dissolution of the body in the grave. The idea is, that if this body should moulder back to dust, and be resolved into its original elements; or if by

great zeal and, labor it should be exhausted and worn out. Language like this is used by Eliphaz, the Temanite, in describing the body of man. “How much less in those that dwell in houses of clay,” etc.; ^{<8049>}Job 4:19; compare ^{<6013>}2 Peter 1:13,14.

We have a building of God Robinson (Lexicon) supposes that it refers to “the future spiritual body as the abode of the soul.” Some have supposed that it refers to some “celestial vehicle” with which God invests the soul during the intermediate state. But the Scripture is silent about any such celestial vehicle. It is not easy to tell what was the precise idea which Paul here designed to convey. Perhaps a few remarks may enable us to arrive at the meaning:

- (1) It was not to be temporary; not a tent or tabernacle that could be taken down.
- (2) It was to be eternal in the heavens.
- (3) It was to be such as to constitute a dwelling; a clothing, or such a protection as should keep the soul from being “naked.”
- (4) It was to be such as should constitute “life” in contradistinction from “mortality.”

These things will better agree with the supposition of its referring to the future body of the saints than any thing else; and probably the idea of Paul is, that the body there will be incorruptible and immortal. When he says it is a “building of God” (ἐκ ^{<1537>}Θεοῦ ^{<2316>}), he evidently means that it is made by God; that he is the architect of that future and eternal dwelling. Macknight and some others, however, understood this of the mansions which God has prepared for His people in heaven, and which the Lord Jesus has gone to prepare for them; compare ^{<6141>}John 14:2. But see the note on ^{<4418>}2 Corinthians 5:3.

An house A dwelling; an abode; that is, according to the interpretation above, a celestial, pure, immortal body; a body that shall have God for its immediate author, and that shall be suited to dwell in heaven forever.

Not made with hands Not constructed by man; a habitation not like those which are made by human skill, and which are therefore easily taken down or removed, but one that is made by God himself. This does not imply that the “earthly house” which is to be superseded by that in heaven is made

with hands, but the idea is, that the earthly dwelling has things about it which resemble that which is made by man, or as if it were made with hands; that is it is temporary, frail, easily taken down or removed. But that which is in heaven is permanent, fixed, eternal, as if made by God.

Eternal in the heavens Immortal; to live forever. The future body shall never be taken down or dissolved by death. It is eternal, of course, only in respect to the future, and not in respect to the past. And it is not only eternal, but it is to abide forever in the heavens — in the world of glory. It is never to be subjected to a dwelling on the earth; never to be in a world of sin, suffering, and death.

☞ **2 Corinthians 5:2.** *For in this* In this tent, tabernacle, or dwelling. In our body here.

We groan compare note, ☞ **Romans 8:22.** The sense is, that we are subjected to so many trials and afflictions in the present body; that the body is subjected to so many pains and to so much suffering, as to make us earnestly desire to be invested with that body which shall be free from all susceptibility to suffering.

Earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house ... There is evidently here a change of the metaphor which gives an apparent harshness to the construction. One idea of the apostle is, that the body here, and the spiritual body hereafter, is a house or a dwelling. Here he speaks of it as a garment which may be put on or laid off and of himself as earnestly desiring to put on the immortal clothing or vestment which was in heaven. Both these figures are common in ancient writings, and a change in this manner in the popular style is not unusual. The Pythagoreans compared the body to a tent, or hut, for the soul; the Platonists liken it to a vestment — Bloomfield. The Jews speak of a vestment to the soul in this world and the next. They affirm that the soul had a covering when it was under the throne of God, and before it was clothed with the body. This vestment they say was “the image of God” which was lost by Adam. After the fall, they say Adam and all his posterity were regarded as naked. In the future world they say the good will be clothed with a vestment for the soul which they speak of as lucid and radiant, and such as no one on earth can attain — Schoettgen. But there is no reason to think that Paul referred to any such trifles as the Jews have believed on this subject. He evidently regarded man as composed of body and soul. The soul was the more important part, and the body constituted its mere habitation or dwelling. Yet a body was

essential to the idea of the complete man; and since this was frail and dying, he looked forward to a union with the body that should be eternal in the heavens, as a more desirable and perfect habitation of the soul. Mr. Locke has given an interpretation of this in which he is probably alone, but which has so much appearance of plausibility that it is not improper to refer to it. He supposes that this whole passage has reference to the fact that at the coming of the Redeemer the body will be changed without experiencing death; (compare ^{<465>}1 Corinthians 15:51,52); that Paul expected that this might soon occur; and that he earnestly desired to undergo this transformation without experiencing the pains of dying. He therefore paraphrases it, “For in this tabernacle I groan, earnestly desiring, without putting off this mortal, earthly body by death, to have that celestial body superinduced, if so be the coming of Christ shall overtake me in this life, before I put off this body.”

With our house The phrase “to be clothed upon with our house” seems to be harsh and unusual. The sense is plain, however, that Paul desired to be invested with that pure, spiritual, and undecaying body which was to be the eternal abode of his soul in heaven. That he speaks of as a house (*οικητηριον* ^{<3613>}), a more permanent and substantial dwelling than a tent, or tabernacle.

^{<488>}**2 Corinthians 5:3.** *If so be that being clothed* This passage has been interpreted in a great many different ways. The view of Locke is given above. Rosenmuller renders it, “For in the other life we shall not be wholly destitute of a body, but we shall have a body.” Tyndale renders it, “If it happen that we be found clothed, and not naked.” Doddridge supposes it to mean, “since being so clothed upon, we shall not be found naked, and exposed to any evil and inconvenience, how entirely soever we may be stripped of everything we can call our own here below.” Hammond explains it to mean, “If, indeed, we shall, happily, be among the number of those faithful Christians, who will be found clothed upon, not naked.” Various other expositions may be seen in the larger commentaries. The meaning is probably this:

- (1) The word “clothed” refers to the future spiritual body of believers; the eternal habitation in which they shall reside.
- (2) The expression implies an earnest desire of Paul to be thus invested with that body.

(3) It is the language of humility and of deep solicitude, as if it were possible that they might fail, and as if it demanded their utmost care and anxiety that they might thus be clothed with the spiritual body in heaven.

(4) It means that in that future state, the soul will not be naked; that is, destitute of any body, or covering. The present body will be laid aside. It will return to corruption, and the disembodied Spirit will ascend to God and to heaven. It will be disencumbered of the body with which it has been so long clothed. But we are not thence to infer that it will be destitute of a body; that it will remain a naked soul. It will be clothed there in its appropriate glorified body; and will have an appropriate habitation there. This does not imply, as Bloomfield supposes, that the souls of the wicked will be destitute of any such habitation as the glorified body of the saints; which may be true — but it means simply that the soul shall not be destitute of an appropriate body in heaven, but that the union of body and soul there shall be known as well as on earth.

~~¶~~ **2 Corinthians 5:4.** *For we* We who are Christians. All Christians.

That are in this tabernacle This frail and dying body; note, ~~¶~~ 2 Corinthians 5:1.

Do groan see ~~¶~~ 2 Corinthians 5:2. This is a further explanation of what is said in ~~¶~~ 2 Corinthians 5:2. It implies an ardent and earnest desire to leave a world of toil and pain, and to enter into a world of rest and glory.

Being burdened Being borne down by the toils, and trials, and calamities of this life; see the note, ~~¶~~ 2 Corinthians 3:7-10.

Not for that we would be unclothed Not that we are impatient, and unwilling to bear these burdens as long as God shall appoint. Not that we merely wish to lay aside this mortal body. We do not desire to die and depart merely because we suffer much, and because the body here is subjected to great trials. This is not the ground of our wish to depart. We are willing to bear trials. We are not impatient under afflictions. The sentiment here is, that the mere fact that we may be afflicted much and long, should not be the principal reason why we should desire to depart. We should be willing to bear all this as long as God shall choose to appoint. The anxiety of Paul to enter the eternal world was from a higher motive than a mere desire to get away from trouble.

But clothed upon To be invested with our spiritual body. We desire to be clothed with that body. We desire to be in heaven, and to be clothed with immortality. We wish to have a body that shall be pure, undecaying, ever glorious. It was not, therefore, a mere desire to be released from sufferings; it was an earnest wish to be admitted to the glories of the future world, and partake of the happiness which we would enjoy there. This is one of the reasons why Paul wished to be in heaven. Other reasons he has stated elsewhere. Thus, in ^{<5023>}Philippians 1:23, he says he had “a desire to depart and to be with Christ.” So in ^{<4088>}2 Corinthians 5:8 of this chapter, he says he was “willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” In ^{<5046>}2 Timothy 4:6-8, he speaks of the “crown of righteousness” laid up for him as a reason why he was willing to die.

That mortality might be swallowed up of life On the meaning of the word rendered “swallowed up” (**καταποθη** ^{<2666>}); see the note on ^{<4154>}1 Corinthians 15:54. The meaning here is, that it might be completely absorbed; that it might cease to be; that there might be no more mortality, but that he might pass to the immortal state — to the condition of eternal life in the heavens. The body here is mortal; the body there will be immortal; and Paul desired to pass away from the mortal state to one that shall be immortal, a world where there shall be no more death; compare ^{<4153>}1 Corinthians 15:53.

^{<4086>}**2 Corinthians 5:5.** *Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing* The phrase “self-same thing” here means this very thing, that is, the thing to which he had referred — the preparation for heaven, or the heavenly dwelling. The word “wrought” here (**κατεργασαμενος** ^{<2716>}) means that God had formed or made them for this; that is, he had by the influences of the Spirit, and by his agency on the heart, created them, as it were, for this, and adapted them to it. God has destined us to this change from corruption to incorruption; he has adapted us to it; he has formed us for it. It does not refer to the original creation of the body and the soul for this end, but it means that God, by his own renewing, and sanctifying, and sustaining agency, had formed them for this, and adapted them to it. The object of Paul in stating that it was done by God, is to keep this truth prominently before the mind. It was not by any native inclination, or strength, or power which they had, but it was all to be traced to God; compare ^{<4020>}Ephesians 2:10.

Who also hath given In addition to the fitting for eternal glory he has given us the earnest of the Spirit to sustain us here. We are not only prepared to enter into heaven, but we have here also the support produced by the earnest of the Spirit.

The earnest of the Spirit On the meaning of this, see the note on ^{<402>}2 Corinthians 1:22. He has given to us the Holy Spirit as the pledge or assurance of the eternal inheritance.

^{<406>}**2 Corinthians 5:6.** *Therefore we are always confident* The word used here (**θαρροῦντες** ^{<292>}) means to be of good cheer. To have good courage, to be full of hope. The idea is, that Paul was not dejected, cast down, disheartened, discouraged. He was cheerful and happy. He was patient in his trials, and diligent in his calling. He was full of hope, and of the confident expectation of heaven; and this filled him with cheerfulness and with joy. Tyndale renders it: “we are always of good cheer.” And this was not occasional and transitory, it was constant, it was uniform, it always (**παντοτε** ^{<384>}) existed. This is an instance of the uniform cheerfulness which will be produced by the assured prospect of heaven. It is an instance too when the hope of heaven will enable a man to face danger with courage; to endure toil with patience; and to submit to trials in any form with cheerfulness.

Knowing see ^{<406>}2 Corinthians 5:1. This is another instance in which the apostle expresses undoubted assurance.

While we are at home in the body The word used here (**ενδημουντες** ^{<1736>}) means literally to be among one’s own people, to be at home; to be present at any place. It is here equivalent to saying, “while we dwell in the body;” see ^{<406>}2 Corinthians 5:1. Doddridge renders it, “sojourning in the body;” and remarks that it is improper to render it “at home in the body,” since it is the apostle’s design to intimate that this is not our home. But Bloomfield says that the word is never used in the sense of sojourning. The idea is not that of being “at home” — for this is an idea which is the very opposite of that which the apostle wishes to convey. His purpose is not at all to represent the body here as our home, and the original word does not imply that. It means here simply to be in the body; to be present in the body; that is, while we are in the body.

We are absent from the Lord The Lord Jesus; see the notes, ^{<402>}Acts 1:24; compare ^{<502>}Philippians 1:23. Here he was in a strange world, and among

strangers. His great desire and purpose was to be with the Lord; and hence, he cared little how soon the frail tabernacle of the body was taken down, and was cheerful amidst all the labors and sufferings that tended to bring it to the grave, and to release him to go to his eternal home where he would be present forever with the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:7. *For we walk* To walk, in the Scriptures often denotes to live, to act, to conduct in a certain way; see the notes on **Romans 4:12; 6:4.** It has reference to the fact that life is a journey, or a pilgrimage, and that the Christian is traveling to another country. The sense here is, that we conduct ourselves in our course of life with reference to the things which are unseen, and not with reference to the things which are seen.

By faith In the belief of those things which we do not see. We believe in the existence of objects which are invisible, and we are influenced by them. To walk by faith, is to live in the confident expectation of things that are to come; in the belief of the existence of unseen realities; and suffering them to influence us as if they were seen. The people of this world are influenced by the things that are seen. They live for wealth, honor, splendor, praise, for the objects which this world can furnish, and as if there were nothing which is unseen, or as if they ought not to be influenced by the things which are unseen. The Christian, on the contrary, has a firm conviction of the reality of the glories of heaven; of the fact that the Redeemer is there; of the fact that there is a crown of glory; and he lives, and acts as if that were all real, and as if he saw it all. The simple account of faith, and of living by faith is, that we live and act as if these things were true, and suffer them to make an impression on our mind according to their real nature; see the note on **Mark 16:16.** It is contradistinguished from living simply under the influence of things that are seen. God is unseen — but the Christian lives, and thinks, and acts as if there were a God, and as if he saw him. Christ is unseen now by the bodily eye; but the Christian lives and acts as if he were seen, that is, as if his eye were known to be upon us, and as if he was now exalted to heaven and was the only Saviour. The Holy Spirit is unseen; but he lives, and acts as if there were such a Spirit, and as if his influences were needful to renew, and purify the soul. Heaven is unseen; but the Christian lives, and thinks, and acts as if there were a heaven, and as if he now saw its glories. He has confidence in these, and in kindred truths, and he acts as if they were real. Could man see all these; were they visible to the naked eye as they are to the eye of faith, no one would doubt

the propriety of living and acting with reference to them. But if they exist, there is no more impropriety in acting with reference to them than if they were seen. Our seeing or not seeing them does not alter their nature or importance, and the fact that they are not seen does not make it improper to act with reference to them. There are many ways of being convinced of the existence and reality of objects besides seeing them; and it may be as rational to be influenced by the reason, the judgment, or by strong confidence, as it is to be influenced by sight. Besides, all people are influenced by things which they have not seen. They hope for objects that are future. They aspire to happiness which they have not yet beheld. They strive for honor and wealth which are unseen, and which is in the distant future. They live, and act — influenced by strong faith and hope — as if these things were attainable; and they deny themselves, and labor, and cross oceans and deserts, and breathe in pestilential air to obtain those things which they have not seen, and which to them are in the distant future. And why should not the Christian endure like labor, and be willing to suffer in like manner, to gain the unseen crown which is incorruptible, and to acquire the unseen wealth which the moth does not corrupt? And further still, the people of this world strive for those objects which they have not beheld, without any promise or any assurance that they shall obtain them. No being able to grant them has promised them; no one has assured them that their lives shall be lengthened out to obtain them. In a moment they may be cut off and all their plans frustrated; or they may be utterly disappointed and all their plans fail; or if they gain the object, it may be unsatisfactory, and may furnish no pleasure such as they had anticipated. But not so the Christian. He has:

- (1) The promise of life.
- (2) He has the assurance that sudden death cannot deprive him of it. It at once removes him to the object of pursuit, not from it.
- (3) He has the assurance that when obtained, it shall not disgust, or satiate, or decay, but that it shall meet all the expectations of the soul, and shall be eternal.

Not by sight This may mean either that we are not influenced by a sight of these future glories, or that we are not influenced by the things which we see. The main idea is, that we are not influenced and governed by the sight. We are not governed and controlled by the things which we see, and we do

not see those things which actually influence and control us. In both it is faith that controls us, and not sight.

<418> 2 Corinthians 5:8. *We are confident* **<416> 2 Corinthians 5:6.** We are cheerful, and courageous, and ready to bear our trial. Tyndale renders it: “we are of good comfort.”

And willing rather to be absent from the body We would prefer to die. The same idea occurs in **<502> Philippians 1:23.** “Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better.” The sense is, that Paul would have preferred to die, and to go to heaven; rather than to remain in a world of sin and trial.

To be present with the Lord The Lord Jesus; see the note on **<402> Acts 1:24;** compare **<502> Philippians 1:23.** The idea of Paul is, that the Lord Jesus would constitute the main glory of heaven, and that to be with him was equivalent to being in a place of perfect bliss. He had no idea of any heaven where the Lord Jesus was not; and to be with him was to be in heaven. That world where the Redeemer is, is heaven. This also proves that the spirits of the saints, when they depart, are with the Redeemer; that is, are at once taken to heaven. It demonstrates:

- (1) That they are not annihilated.
- (2) That they do not sleep, and remain in an unconscious state, as Dr. Priestley supposes.
- (3) That they are not in some intermediate state, either in a state of purgatory, as the Papists suppose, or a state where all the souls of the just and the unjust are assembled in a common abode, as many Protestants have supposed; but,
- (4) That they dwell WITH Christ; they are with the Lord (**προς** **<4314> του** **<3588> Κυριου** **<2962>**). They abide in his presence; they partake of his joy and his glory; they are permitted to sit with him in his throne; **<4182> Revelation 3:21.** The same idea the Saviour expressed to the dying thief, when he said, “today shalt thou be with me in paradise;” **<4238> Luke 23:43.**

<418> 2 Corinthians 5:9. *Wherefore* (**Διο** **<1352>**). In view of the facts stated above. Since we have the prospect of a resurrection and of future glory; since we have the assurance that there is a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; and since God has given to us this hope, and has

granted to us the earnest of the Spirit, we make it our great object so to live as to be accepted by him.

We labor The word used here (φιλοτιμουμεθα ^{<5389>}, from φιλος ^{<5384>} and τιμη ^{<5092>}, loving honor) means properly to love honor; to be ambitious. This is its usual Classical signification. In the New Testament, it means to be ambitious to do anything; to exert oneself; to strive, as if from a love or sense of honor. As in English, to make it a point of honor to do so and so — Robinson (Lexicon); see ^{<5150>}Romans 15:20; ^{<5040>}1 Thessalonians 4:11. It means here, that Paul made it a point of constant effort; it was his leading and constant aim to live so as to be acceptable to God, and to meet his approbation wherever he was.

Whether present or absent Whether present with the Lord (^{<4708>}2 Corinthians 5:8), or absent from him (^{<4706>}2 Corinthians 5:6); that is, whether in this world or the next; whether we are here, or removed to heaven. Wherever we are, or may be, it is, and will be our main purpose and object so to live as to secure his favor. Paul did not wish to live on earth regardless of his favor or without evidence that he would be accepted by him. He did not make the fact that he was absent from him, and that he did not see him with the physical eye, an excuse for walking in the ways of ambition, or seeking his own purposes and ends. The idea is, that so far as this point was concerned, it made no difference with him whether he lived or died; whether he was on earth or in heaven; whether in the body or out of the body; it was the great fixed principle of his nature so to live as to secure the approbation of the Lord. And this is the true principle on which the Christian should act, and will act. The fact that he is now absent from the Lord will be to him no reason why he should lead a life of sin and self-indulgence, anymore than he would if he were in heaven; and the fact that he is soon to be with him is not the main reason why he seeks to live so as to please him. It is because this has become the fixed principle of the soul; the very purpose of the life; and this principle and this purpose will adhere to him, and control him wherever he may be placed, or in whatever world he may dwell.

We may be accepted of him The phrase used here (ευαρεστοι ^{<2101>} ειναι ^{<1511>}) means to be well-pleasing; and then to be acceptable, or approved; ^{<5121>}Romans 12:1; 14:18; ^{<4650>}Ephesians 5:10; ^{<5108>}Philippians 4:18; ^{<5010>}Titus 2:9. The sense here is, that Paul was earnestly desirous of so living as to please God, and to receive from him the tokens and marks of his favor.

And the truth taught in this verse is, that this will be the great purpose of the Christian's life, and that it makes no difference as to the existence and operation of this principle whether a man is on earth or in heaven. He will equally desire it, and strive for it; and this is one of the ways in which religion makes a man conscientious and holy, and is a better guard and security for virtue than all human laws, and all the restraints which can be imposed by man.

2 Corinthians 5:10. *For we must* (δει ^{<1163>}). It is proper, fit, necessary that we should all appear there. This fact, to which Paul now refers, is another reason why it was necessary to lead a holy life, and why Paul gave himself with so much diligence and self-denial to the arduous duties of his office. There is a necessity, or a fitness that we should appear there to give up our account, for we are here on trial: we are responsible moral agents; we are placed here to form characters for eternity. Before we receive our eternal allotment it is proper that we should render our account of the manner in which we have lived, and of the manner in which we have improved our talents and privileges. In the nature of things, it is proper that we should undergo a trial before we receive our reward, or before we are punished; and God has made it necessary and certain, by his direct and positive appointment, that we should stand at the bar of the final judge; see ^{<5410>}Romans 14:10.

All Both Jews and Gentiles; old and young; bond and free; rich and poor; all of every class, and every age, and every nation. None shall escape by being unknown; none by virtue of their rank, or wealth; none because they have a character too pure to be judged. All shall be arranged in one vast assemblage, and with reference to their eternal doom; see ^{<612>}Revelation 20:12. Rosenmuller supposes that the apostle here alludes to an opinion that was common among the Jews that the Gentiles only would be exposed to severe judgments in the future world, and that the Jews would be saved as a matter of course. But the idea seems rather to be, that as the trial of the great day was the most important that man could undergo, and as all must give account there, Paul and his fellow-laborers devoted themselves to untiring diligence and fidelity that they might be accepted in that great day.

Appear (φανερωθῆναι ^{<5319>}). This word properly means, to make apparent, manifest, known; to show openly, etc. Here it means that we must be manifest, or openly shown; that is, we must be seen there, and be

publicly tried. We must not only stand there, but our character will be seen, our desert will be known, our trial will be public. All will be brought, from their graves, and from their places of concealment, and will be seen at the judgment-seat. The secret things of the heart and the life will all be made manifest and known.

The judgment-seat of Christ The tribunal of Christ, who is appointed to be the judge of quick and dead; see the note on ^{<4165>}John 5:25; ^{<4100>}Acts 10:42 17:31. Christ is appointed to judge the world; and for this purpose he will assemble it before him, and assign to all their eternal allotments; see Matthew 25.

That every one may receive The word rendered “may receive” (^{<2865>}κομισηται) means properly to take care of, to provide for; and in the New Testament, to bear, to bring (^{<4075>}Luke 7:37); to acquire, to obtain, to receive. This is the sense here. Every individual shall take, receive, or bear away the appropriate reward for the transactions of this life of probation; see ^{<4018>}Ephesians 6:8; ^{<5125>}Colossians 3:25.

The things The appropriate reward of the actions of this life. “Done in his body.” Literally, “the things by or through (^{<1223>}δία) the body.” Tyndale renders it: “the works of his body.” The idea is, that every man shall receive an appropriate reward for the actions of this life. Observe here:

(1) That it is the works done in or through the body; not which the body itself has done. It is the mind, the man that has lived in the body, and acted by it, that is to be judged.

(2) It is to be for the deeds of this life; not for what is done after death. People are not to be brought into judgment for what they do after they die. All beyond the grave is either reward or punishment; it is not probation. The destiny is to be settled forever by what is done in this world of probation.

(3) It is to be for all the deeds done in the body; for all the thoughts, plans, purposes, words, as well as for all the outward actions of the man. All that has been thought or done must come into review, and man must give an account for all.

According to that he hath done As an exact retribution for all that has been done. It is to be a suitable and proper recompence. The retribution is to be measured by what has been done in this life. Rewards shall be granted to

the friends, and punishments to the foes of God, just in proportion to, or suitably to their deeds in this life. Every man shall receive just what, under all the circumstances, he OUGHT to receive, and what will be impartial justice in the case. The judgment will be such that it will be capable of being seen to be right; and such as the universe at large, and as the individuals themselves will see OUGHT to be rendered.

Whether it be good or bad Whether the life has been good or evil. The good will have no wish to escape the trial; the evil will not be able. No power of wickedness, however great, will be able to escape from the trial of that day; no crime that has been concealed in this life will be concealed there; no transgressor of law who may have long escaped the punishment due to his sins, and who may have evaded all human tribunals, will be able to escape there.

2 Corinthians 5:11. *Knowing therefore* We who are apostles, and who are appointed to preach the gospel, having the fullest assurance of the terrors of the day of judgment, and of the wrath of God, endeavor to persuade people to be prepared to meet Him, and to give up their account.

The terror of the Lord This is, of the Lord Jesus, who will be seated on the throne of judgment, and who will decide the destiny of all people, **2 Corinthians 5:10**; compare Matthew 25. The sense is, knowing how much the Lord is to be feared; what an object of terror and alarm it will be to stand at the judgment-seat; how fearful and awful will be the consequences of the trial of that day. The Lord Jesus will be an object of terror and alarm, or it will be a subject inspiring terror and alarm to stand there on that day, because:

- (1) He has all power, and is appointed to execute judgment;
- (2) Because all must there give a strict and impartial account of all that they have done;
- (3) Because the wrath of God will be shown in the condemnation of the guilty. It will be a day of awful wailing and alarm when all the living and the dead shall be arraigned on trial with reference to their eternal destiny; and when countless hosts of the guilty and impenitent shall be thrust down to an eternal hell. Who can describe the amazing terror of the scene? Who can fancy the horrors of the hosts of the guilty and the wretched who shall then hear that their doom is to be fixed forever in a world of unspeakable

woe? The influence of the knowledge of the terror of the Lord on the mind of the apostle seems to have been two-fold; first, an apprehension of it as a personal concern, and a desire to escape it, which led him to constant self-denial and toil; and secondly, a desire to save others from being overwhelmed in the wrath of that dreadful day.

We persuade men We endeavor to persuade them to flee from the wrath to come; to be prepared to stand before the judgment-seat, and to be suited to enter into heaven. Observe here the uniqueness of the statement. It is not, we drive people; or we endeavor to alarm people; or we frighten people; or we appeal merely to their fears, but it is, we PERSUADE people, we endeavor to induce them by all the arts of persuasion and argument to flee from the wrath to come. The future judgment, and the scenes of future woe, are not proper topics for mere declamation. To declaim constantly on hell-fire and perdition; to appeal merely to the fears of people, is not the way in which Paul and the Saviour preached the gospel. The knowledge that there would be a judgment, and that the wicked would be sent to hell, was a powerful motive for Paul to endeavor to “persuade” people to escape from wrath, and was a motive for the Saviour to weep over Jerusalem, and to lament its folly, and its doom; ~~☞~~ Luke 19:41. But they who fill their sermons with the denunciations of wrath; who dwell on the words “hell” and “damnation,” for the purpose of rhetoric or declamation, to round a period, or merely to excite alarm; and who “deal damnation around the land” as if they rejoiced that people were to be condemned, and in a tone and manner as if they would be pleased to execute it, have yet to learn the true nature of the way to win people to God, and the proper effect of those awful truths on the mind. The true effect is, to produce tenderness, deep feeling, and love; to prompt to the language of persuasion and of tender entreaty; to lead people to weep over dying sinners rather than to denounce them; to pray to God to have mercy on them rather than to use the language of severity, or to assume tones as if they would be pleased to execute the awful wrath of God.

But we are made manifest unto God The meaning of this is, probably, that God sees that we are sincere and upright in our aims and purposes. He is acquainted with our hearts. All our motives are known to him, and he sees that it is our aim to promote his glory, and to save the souls of people. This is probably said to counteract the charge which might have been brought against him by some of the disaffected in Corinth, that he was influenced by improper motives and aims. To meet this, Paul says, that God knew that he

was endeavoring to save souls, and that he was actuated by a sincere desire to rescue them from the impending terrors of the day of judgment.

And I trust also ... And I trust also you are convinced of our integrity and uprightness of aim. The same sentiment is expressed in other words in ~~4:1~~ 2 Corinthians 4:2. It is an appeal which he makes to them, and the expression of an earnest and confident assurance that they knew and felt that his aim was upright, and his purpose sincere.

~~4:1~~ **2 Corinthians 5:12.** *For we commend not ourselves again unto you* This refers to what he had said in the previous verse. He had there said that he had such a consciousness of integrity that he could appeal to God, and that he was persuaded that the Corinthians also approved his course, or admitted that he was influenced by right motives. He here states the reason why he had said this. It was not to commend himself to them. It was not to boast of his own character, nor was it in order to secure their praise or favor. Some might be disposed to misrepresent all that Paul said of himself, and to suppose that it was said for mere vain-glory, or the love of praise. He tells them, therefore, that his sole aim was necessary self-defense, and in order that they might have the fullest evidence that he, by whom they had been converted, was a true apostle; and that he whom they regarded as their friend and father in the gospel was a man of whom they need not be ashamed.

But give you occasion This is a very happy turn of expression. The sense is, "You have been converted under my labors. You profess to regard me as your spiritual father and friend. I have no reason to doubt of your attachment to me. Yet you often hear my name slandered, and hear me accused of wanting the evidence of being an apostle, and of being vain-glorious, and self-seeking. I know your desire to vindicate my character, and to show that you are my friends. I, therefore, say these things in regard to myself in order that you may be thus able to show your respect for me, and to vindicate me from the false and slanderous accusations of my enemies. Thus doing, you will be able to answer them; to show that the man whom you thus respect is worthy of your confidence and esteem."

On your behalf For your own benefit, or as it were in self-vindication for adhering to me, and evincing attachment to me.

That ye may have somewhat to answer them That you may be furnished with a ready reply when you are charged with adhering to a man who has no claims to the apostleship, or who is slandered in any other way.

Which glory in appearance The false teachers in Corinth. Probably they boasted of their rank, their eloquence, their talents, their external advantages; but not in the qualities of the heart — in sincerity, honesty, real love for souls. Their consciences would not allow them to do this; and they knew themselves that their boasting was mere vain pretence, and that there was no real and solid ground for it. The margin is, “in the face.” The meaning is, probably, that their ground of boasting was external, and was such as can be seen of people, and was not rather the secret consciousness of right, which could exist only in the conscience and the heart. Paul, on the other hand, gloried mainly in his sincerity, his honesty, his desire for their salvation; in his conscious integrity before God; and not in any mere external advantages or professions, in his rank, eloquence, or talent. Accordingly, all his argument here turns on his sincerity, his conscious uprightness, and his real regard for their welfare. And the truth taught here is, that sincerity and conscious integrity are more valuable than any or all external advantages and endowments.

2 Corinthians 5:13. *For whether we be beside ourselves* This is probably designed to meet some of the charges which the false teachers in Corinth brought against him, and to furnish his friends there with a ready answer, as well as to show them the true principles on which he acted, and his real love for them. It is altogether probable that he was charged with being deranged; that many who boasted themselves of prudence, and soberness, and wisdom, regarded him as acting like a madman. It has not been uncommon, by any means, for the cold and the prudent; for formal professors and for hypocrites to regard the warm-hearted and zealous friends of religion as maniacs. Festus thought Paul was deranged, when he said, “Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad,” (~~4034~~ Acts 26:24); and the Saviour himself was regarded by his immediate relatives and friends as beside himself, ~~4035~~ Mark 3:21. And at all times there have been many, both in the church and out of it, who have regarded the friends of revivals, and of missions, and all those who have evinced any extraordinary zeal in religion, as deranged. The object of Paul here is to show, whatever might be the appearance or the estimate which they affixed to his conduct, what were the real principles which actuated him. These were zeal for God, love to the church, and the constraining influences of

the love of Christ, ^{<164>}2 Corinthians 5:14,15. The word rendered here as “be beside ourselves” (εξεστημεν ^{<1839>}, from εξιστημι ^{<1839>}) means properly, to put out of place; to be put out of place; and then to be put out of oneself, to astonish, to fill with wonder; ^{<222>}Luke 24:22; ^{<481>}Acts 8:9,11; and then to be out of one’s mind, to be deranged. Here it means that they were charged with being deranged, or that others esteemed, or professed to esteem Paul and his fellow-laborers deranged.

It is to God It is in the Cause of God, and from love to him. It is such a zeal for him; such an absorbing interest in his cause; such love prompting to so great self-denial, and teaching us to act so much unlike other people as to lead them to think that we are deranged. The doctrine here is, that there may be such a zeal for the glory of God, such an active and ardent desire to promote his honor, as to lead others to charge us with derangement. It does not prove however that a man is deranged on the subject of religion because he is unlike others, or because he pursues a course of life that differs materially from that of other professors of religion, and from the man of the world. He may be the truly sane man after all; and all the madness that may exist may be where there is a profession of religion without zeal; a professed belief in the existence of God and in the realities of eternity, that produces no difference in the conduct between the professor and other people; or an utter unconcern about eternal realities when a man is walking on the brink of death and of hell. There are a few people that become deranged by religion; there are millions who have no religion who act as madmen. And the highest instances of madness in the world are those who walk over an eternal hell without apprehension or alarm.

Or whether we be sober Whether we are sane, or of sound mind; compare ^{<1065>}Mark 5:15. Tyndale renders this whole passage:

“For if we be too fervent, to God we are too fervent; if we keep measure, for our cause keep we measure.”

The sense seems to be, “if we are esteemed to be sane, and sober-minded, as we trust you will admit us to be, it is for your sake. Whatever may be the estimate in which we are held, we are influenced by love to God, and love to man. In such a cause, we cannot but evince zeal and self-denial which may expose us to the charge of mental derangement; but still we trust that by you we shall be regarded as influenced by a sound mind. We

seek your welfare. We labor for you. And we trust that you will appreciate our motives, and regard us as truly sober-minded.”

2 Corinthians 5:14. *For the love of Christ* In this verse, Paul brings into view the principle which actuated him; the reason of his extraordinary and disinterested zeal. That was, that he was influenced by the love which Christ had shown in dying for all people, and by the argument which was furnished by that death respecting the actual character and condition of man (in this verse); and of the obligation of those who professed to be his true friends ^{<47615>} 2 Corinthians 5:15. The phrase “the love of Christ” (^{<6>} του ^{<3588>} Χριστου ^{<547>}) may denote either the love which Christ bears toward us, and which he has manifested, or our love toward him. In the former sense the phrase “the love of God” is used in ^{<4838>} Romans 5:8; ^{<4713>} 2 Corinthians 13:13, and the phrase “love of Christ” in ^{<4014>} Ephesians 3:14. The phrase is used in the latter sense in ^{<4519>} John 15:9,10, and ^{<4835>} Romans 8:35. It is impossible to determine the sense with certainty, and it is only by the view which shall be taken of the connection and of the argument which will in any way determine the meaning. Expositors differ in regard to it. It seems to me that the phrase here means the love which Christ had toward us. Paul speaks of his dying for all as the reason why he was urged on to the course of self-denial which he evinced. Christ died for all. All were dead. Christ evinced his great love for us, and for all, by giving himself to die; and it was this love which Christ had shown that impelled Paul to his own acts of love and self-denial. He gave himself to his great work impelled by that love which Christ had shown; by the view of the ruined condition of man which that work furnished; and by a desire to emulate the Redeemer, and to possess the same spirit which he evinced.

Constraineth us (^{<4912>} συνεχει). This word (^{<4912>} συνεχω) properly means, to hold together, to press together, to shut up; then to press on, urge, impel, or excite. Here it means, that the impelling, or exciting motive in the labors and self-denials of Paul, was the love of Christ — the love which he had showed to the children of men. Christ so loved the world as to give himself for it. His love for the world was a demonstration that people were dead in sins. And we, being urged by the same love, are prompted to like acts of zeal and self-denial to save the world from ruin.

Because we thus judge Greek “We judging this;” that is, we thus determine in our own minds, or we thus decide; or this is our firm conviction and belief — we come to this conclusion.

That if one died for all On the supposition that one died for all; or taking it for granted that one died for all, then it follows that all were dead. The “one” who died for all here is undoubtedly the Lord Jesus. The word “for” (ὕπερ ^{<5228>} means in the place of, instead of; see ^{<1813>}Philippians 2:13 and ^{<4151>}2 Corinthians 5:20. It means that Christ took the place of sinners, and died in their stead; that he endured what was an ample equivalent for all the punishment which would be inflicted if they were to suffer the just penalty of the Law; that he endured so much suffering, and that God by his great substituted sorrows made such an expression of his hatred of sin, as to answer the same end in expressing his sense of the evil of sin, and in restraining others from transgression, as if the guilty were personally to suffer the full penalty of the Law. If this was done, of course, the guilty might be pardoned and saved, since all the ends which could be accomplished by their destruction have been accomplished by the substituted sufferings of the Lord Jesus; see the notes on ^{<4125>}Romans 3:25,26, where this subject is considered at length. The phrase “for all,” (ὕπερ ^{<5228>} παντων ^{<3956>}) obviously means for all mankind; for every man. This is an exceedingly important expression in regard to the extent of the atonement which the Lord Jesus made, and while it proves that his death was vicarious, that is, in the place of others, and for their sakes, it demonstrates also that the atonement was general, and had, in itself considered, no limitation, and no particular reference to any class or condition of people; and no particular applicability to one class more than to another. There was nothing in the nature of the atonement that limited it to anyone class or condition; there was nothing in the design that made it, in itself, anymore applicable to one portion of mankind than to another. And whatever may be true in regard to the fact as to its actual applicability, or in regard to the purpose of God to apply it, it is demonstrated by this passage that his death had an original applicability to all, and that the merits of that death were sufficient to save all. The argument in favor of the general atonement, from this passage, consists in the following points:

(1) That Paul assumes this as a matter that was well known, indisputable, and universally admitted, that Christ died for all. He did not deem it necessary to enter into the argument to prove it, nor even to state it formally. It was so well known, and so universally admitted, that he made it a first principle — an elementary position — a maxim on which to base another important doctrine — to wit, that all were dead. It was a point which he assumed that no one would call in question; a doctrine which

might be laid down as the basis of an argument, like one of the first principles or maxims in science.

(2) It is the plain and obvious meaning of the expression — the sense which strikes all people, unless they have some theory to support to the contrary; and it requires all the ingenuity which people can ever command to make it appear even plausible, that this is consistent with the doctrine of a limited atonement; much more to make it out that it does not mean all. If a man is told that all the human family must die, the obvious interpretation is, that it applies to every individual. If told that all the passengers on board a steamboat were drowned, the obvious interpretation is, that every individual was meant. If told that a ship was wrecked, and that all the crew perished, the obvious interpretation would be that none escaped. If told that all the inmates of an hospital were sick, it would be understood that there was not an individual that was not sick. Such is the view which would be taken by 999 persons out of 1,000, if told that Christ died for all; nor could they conceive how this could be consistent with the statement that he died only for the elect, and that the elect was only a small part of the human family.

(3) This interpretation is in accordance with all the explicit declarations on the design of the death of the Redeemer. ^{<RB19>}Hebrews 2:9, “That he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man;” compare ^{<RB16>}John 3:16, “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” ^{<RB17>}1 Timothy 2:16, “Who gave himself a ransom for all.” See ^{<RB18>}Matthew 20:28, “The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many.” ^{<RB19>}1 John 2:2, “And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

(4) The fact also that on the ground of the atonement made by the Redeemer, salvation is offered to all people by God, is a proof that he died for all. The apostles were directed to go “into all the world and to preach the gospel to every creature,” with the assurance that “he that believeth and is baptized shall he saved;” ^{<RB15>}Mark 16:15,16; and everywhere in the Bible the most full and free offers of salvation are made to all mankind; compare ^{<RB16>}Isaiah 55:1; ^{<RB17>}John 7:37; ^{<RB18>}Revelation 22:17. These offers are made on the ground that the Lord Jesus died for people; ^{<RB19>}John 3:16. They are offers of salvation through the gospel, of the pardon of sin, and of eternal life to be made “to every creature.” But if Christ died only for a

part, if there is a large portion of the human family for whom he died in no sense whatever; if there is no provision of any kind made for them, then God must know this, and then the offers cannot be made with sincerity, and God is tantalizing them with the offers of that which does not exist, and which he knows does not exist. It is of no use here to say that the preacher does not know who the elect are, and that he is obliged to make the offer to all in order that the elect may be reached. For it is not the preacher only who offers the gospel. It is God who does it, and he knows who the elect are, and yet he offers salvation to all. And if there is no salvation provided for all, and no possibility that all to whom the offer comes should be saved, then God is insincere; and there is no way possible of vindicating his character.

(5) If this interpretation is not correct, and if Christ did not die for all, then the argument of Paul here is a non sequitur, and is worthless. The demonstration that all are dead, according to him is, that Christ died for all. But suppose that he meant, or that he knew, that Christ died only for a part, for the elect, then how would the argument stand, and what would be its force? “Christ died only for a portion of the human race, therefore ALL are sinners. Medicine is provided only for a part of mankind, therefore all are sick. Pardon is offered to part only, therefore all are guilty.” But Paul never reasoned in this way. He believed that Christ died for all mankind, and on the ground of that he inferred at once that all needed such an atonement; that all were sinners, and that all were exposed to the wrath of God. And the argument is in this way, and in this way only, sound. But still it may be asked, What is the force of this argument? How does the fact that Christ died for all, prove that all were sinners, or dead in sin? I answer:

(a) In the same way that to provide medicine for all, proves that all are sick, or liable to be sick; and to offer pardon to all who are in a prison, proves that all there are guilty. What insult is it to offer medicine to a man in health; or pardon to a man who has violated no law! And there would be the same insult in offering salvation to a man who was not a sinner, and who did not need forgiveness.

(b) The dignity of the sufferer, and the extent of his sufferings, prove that all were under a deep and dreadful load of guilt. Such a being would not have come to die unless the race had been apostate; nor would he have endured so great sorrows unless a deep and dreadful malady had spread over the world. The deep anxiety; the tears; the toils; the sufferings, and

the groans of the Redeemer, show what was his sense of the condition of man, and prove that he regarded them as degraded, fallen, and lost. And if the Son of God, who knows all hearts, regarded them as lost, they are lost. He was not mistaken in regard to the character of man, and he did not lay down his life under the influence of delusion and error. If to the view which has been taken of this important passage it be objected that the work of the atonement must have been to a large extent in vain; that it has actually been applied to but comparatively a small portion of the human family, and that it is unreasonable to suppose that God would suffer so great sorrows to be endured for nothing, we may reply:

(1) That it may not have been in vain, though it may have been rejected by a large portion of mankind. There may have been other purposes accomplished by it besides the direct salvation of people. It was doing much when it rendered it consistent for God to offer salvation to all; it is much that God could be seen to be just and yet pardoning the sinner; it was much when his determined hatred of sin, and His purpose to honor His Law, was evinced; and in regard to the benevolence and justice of God to other beings and to other worlds, much, very much was gained, though all the human race had rejected the plan and been lost, and in regard to all these objects, the plan was not in vain, and the sufferings of the Redeemer were not for nothing. But,

(2) It is in accordance with what we see everywhere, when much that God does seems to our eyes, though not to his, to be in vain. How much rain falls on ever sterile sands or on barren rocks, to our eyes in vain! What floods of light are poured each day on barren wastes, or untraversed oceans, to our eyes in vain! How many flowers shed forth their fragrance in the wilderness, and ‘waste their sweetness on the desert air,’ to us apparently for nothing! How many pearls lie useless in the ocean; how much gold and silver in the earth; how many diamonds amidst rocks to us unknown, and apparently in vain! How many lofty trees rear their heads in the untraversed wilderness, and after standing for centuries fall on the earth and decay, to our eyes in vain! And how much medicinal virtue is created by God each year in the vegetable world that is unknown to man, and that decays and is lost without removing any disease, and that seems to be created in vain! And how long has it been before the most valuable medicines have been found out, and applied to alleviating pain, or removing disease! Year after year, and age after age, they existed in a suffering world, and people died perhaps within a few yards of the

medicine which would have relieved or saved them, but it was unknown, or if known disregarded. But times were coming when their value would be appreciated, and when they would be applied to benefit the sufferer. So with the plan of salvation. It may be rejected, and the sufferings of the Redeemer may seem to have been for nothing. But they will yet be of value to mankind; and when the time shall come for the whole world to embrace the Saviour, there will be found no lack of sufficiency in the plan of redemption, and in the merits of the Redeemer to save all the race.^{f11}

Then were all dead All dead in sin; that is, all were sinners. The fact that he died for all proves that all were transgressors. The word “dead” is not unfrequently used in the scriptures to denote the condition of sinners; see ~~EBL~~ Ephesians 2:1. It means not that sinners are in all senses, and in all respects like a lifeless corpse, for they are not. They are still moral agents, and have a conscience, and are capable of thinking, and speaking, and acting. It does not mean that they have no more power than one in the grave, for they have more power. But it means that there is a striking similarity, in some respects, between one who is dead and a sinner. That similarity does not extend to everything, but in many respects it is very striking.

(1) The sinner is as insensible to the glories of the heavenly world, and the appeals of the gospel, as a corpse is to what is going on around or above it. The body that lies in the grave is insensible to the voice of friendship, and the charms of music, and the hum of business, and the plans of gain and ambition; and so the sinner is insensible to all the glories of the heavenly world, and to all the appeals that are made to him, and to all the warnings of God. He lives as though there were no heaven and no hell; no God and no Saviour.

(2) There is need of the same divine power to convert a sinner which is needful to raise up the dead. The same cause does not exist, making the existence of that power necessary, but it is a fact that a sinner will no more be converted by his own power than a dead man will rise from the grave by his own power. No man ever yet was converted without direct divine agency, anymore than Lazarus was raised without divine agency. And there is no more just or melancholy description which can be given of man, than to say that he is dead in sins. He is insensible to all the appeals that God makes to him; he is insensible to all the sufferings of the Saviour, and to all the glories of heaven; he lives as though these did not exist, or as though

he had no concern in them; his eyes see no more beauty in them than the sightless eyeballs of the dead do in the material world; his ear is as inattentive to the calls of God and the gospel as the ear of the dead is to the voice of friendship or the charms of melody; and in a world that is full of God, and that might be full of hope, he is living without God and without hope.

~~CHRIS~~ **2 Corinthians 5:15.** *And that he died for all ...* This verse is designed still further to explain the reasons of the conduct of the apostle. He had not lived for himself. He had not lived to amass wealth, or to enjoy pleasure, or to obtain a reputation. He had lived a life of self-denial, and of toil; and he here states the reason why he had done it. It was because he felt that the great purpose of the death of the Redeemer was to secure this result. To that Saviour, therefore, who died for all, he consecrated his talents and his time, and sought in every way possible to promote his glory.

That they which live They who are true Christians, who are made alive unto God as the result of the dying love of the Redeemer. Sinners are dead in sins. Christians are alive to the worth of the soul, the presence of God, the importance of religion, the solemnities of eternity; that is, they act and feel as if these things had a real existence and as if they should exert a constant influence upon the heart and life.^{f12}

It is observable that Paul makes a distinction here between those for whom Christ died and those who actually “live,” thus demonstrating that there may be many for whom he died who do not live to God, or who are not savingly benefitted by his death. The atonement was for all, but only a part are actually made alive to God. Multitudes reject it; but the fact that he died for all; that he tasted death for every man, that he not only died for the elect but for all others, that his benevolence was so great as to embrace the whole human family in the design of his death, is a reason why they who are actually made alive to God should consecrate themselves entirely to his service. The fact that he died for all evinced such unbounded and infinite benevolence that it should induce us who are actually benefitted by his death, and who have any just views of it, to devote all that we have to his service.

Should not henceforth live unto themselves Should not seek our own ease and pleasure; should not make it our great object to promote our own interest, but should make it the grand purpose of our lives to promote his honor, and to advance his cause. This is a vital principle in religion, and it

is exceedingly important to know what is meant by living to ourselves, and whether we do it. It is done in the following, and perhaps in some other ways:

(1) When people seek pleasure, gain, or reputation as the controlling principle of their lives.

(2) When they are regardless of the rights of others, and sacrifice all the claims which others have on them in order to secure the advancement of their own purposes and ends.

(3) When they are regardless of the needs of others, and turn a deaf ear to all the appeals which charity makes to them, and have no time to give to serve them, and no money to spare to alleviate their needs; and especially when they turn a deaf ear to the appeals which are made for the diffusion of the gospel to the benighted and perishing.

(4) When their main purpose is the aggrandizement of their own families, for their families are but a diffusion of self. And,

(5) When they seek their own salvation only from selfish motives, and not from a desire to honor God. Multitudes are selfish even in their religion; and the main purpose which they have in view, is to promote their own objects, and not the honor of the Master whom they profess to serve. They seek and profess religion only because they desire to escape from wrath, and to obtain the happiness of heaven, and not from any love to the Redeemer or any desire to honor him, Or they seek to build up the interests of their own church and party, and all their zeal is expended on that and that alone, without any real desire to honor the Saviour. Or though in the church, they are still selfish, and live wholly to themselves. They live for fashion, for gain, for reputation. They practice no self-denial; they make no effort; to advance the cause of God the Saviour.

But unto him ... Unto the Lord Jesus Christ. To live to him is the opposite to living unto ourselves. It is to seek his honor; to feel that we belong to him; that all our time and talents; all our strength of intellect and body; all the avails of our skill and toil, all belong to him, and should be employed in his service. If we have talents by which we can influence other minds, they should be employed to honor the Saviour. If we have skill, or strength to labor by which we can make money, we should feel that it all belongs to him, and should be employed in his service. If we have property, we should

feel that it is his, and that he has a claim upon it all, and that it should be honestly consecrated to his cause. And if we are endowed with a spirit of enterprise, and are suited by nature to encounter perils in distant and barbarious climes, as Paul was, we should feel like him that we are bound to devote all entirely to his service, and to the promotion of his cause. A servant, a slave, does not live to himself but to his master. His person, his time, his limbs, his talents, and the avails of his industry are not regarded as his own. He is judged incapable of holding any property which is not at the disposal of his master. If he has strength, it is his master's. If he has skill, the avails of it are his master's. If he is an ingenious mechanic, or labors in any department; if he is amiable, kind, gentle, and faithful, and adapted to be useful in an eminent degree, it is regarded as all the property of his master. He is bound to go where his master chooses; to execute the task which he assigns; to deny himself at his master's will; and to come and lay the avails of all his toil and skill at his master's feet. He is regarded as having been purchased with money; and the purchase money is supposed to give a right to his time, his talents, his services, and his soul. Such as the slave is supposed to become by purchase, and by the operation of human laws, the Christian becomes by the purchase of the Son of God, and by the voluntary recognition of him as the master, and as having a right to all that we have and are. To him all belongs; and all should be employed in endeavoring to promote his glory, and in advancing his cause.

Which died for them, and rose again Paul here states the grounds of the obligation under which he felt himself placed, to live not unto himself but unto Christ.

- (1) The first is, the fact that Christ had died for him, and for all his people. The effect of that death was the same as a purchase. It was a purchase; see the note, ^{<403>}1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; compare ^{<403>}1 Peter 1:18,19.
- (2) The second is, that he had risen again from the dead. To this fact Paul traced all his hopes of eternal life, and of the resurrection from the dead; see ^{<402>}Romans 4:25. As we have the hope of the resurrection from the dead only from the fact that he rose; as he has “brought life and immortality to light,” and hath in this way “abolished death” (^{<5010>}2 Timothy 1:10); as all the prospect of entering a world where there is no death and no grave is to be traced to the resurrection of the Saviour, so we are bound by every obligation of gratitude to devote ourselves without any reserve to

him. To him, and him alone should we live; and in his cause our lives should be, as Paul's was, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable in his sight.

2 Corinthians 5:16. *Wherefore henceforth* In view of the fact that the Lord Jesus died for all people, and rose again. The effect of that has been to change all our feelings, and to give us entirely new views of people, of ourselves, and of the Messiah, so that we have become new creatures. The word "henceforth" ($\alpha\pi\omicron$ ^{<575>} $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ ^{<3588>} $\nu\upsilon\upsilon$ ^{<3568>}) means properly from the present time; but there is no impropriety in supposing that Paul refers to the time when he first obtained correct views of the Messiah, and that he means from that time. His mind seems to have been thrown back to the period when these new views burst upon his soul; and the sentiment is, that from the time when he obtained those new views, he had resolved to know no one after the flesh.

Know we no man The word "know" here ($\omicron\iota\delta\alpha\mu\epsilon\nu$ ^{<1492>}) is used in the sense of, we form our estimate of; we judge; we are influenced by. Our estimate of man is formed by other views than according to the flesh.

After the flesh A great many different interpretations have been proposed of this expression, which it is not needful here to repeat. The meaning is, probably, that in his estimate of people he was not influenced by the views which are taken by those who are unrenewed, and who are unacquainted with the truths of redemption. It may include a great many things, and perhaps the following:

(1) He was not influenced in his estimate of people by a regard to their birth, or country. He did not form an attachment to a Jew because he was a Jew, or to a Gentile because he was a Gentile. He had learned that Christ died for all, and he felt disposed to regard all alike.

(2) He was not influenced in his estimate of people by their rank, and wealth, and office. Before his conversion he had been, but now he learned to look on their moral character, and to regard that as making the only permanent, and really important distinction among people. He did not esteem one man highly because he was of elevated rank, or of great wealth, and another less because he was of a different rank in life.

(3) It may also include the idea, that he had left his own kindred and friends on account of superior attachment to Christ. He had parted from them to preach the gospel. He was not restrained by their opinions; he was not kept

from going from land to land by love to them. It is probable that they remained Jews. It may be, that they were opposed to him, and to his efforts in the cause of the Redeemer. It may be that they would have dismissed him from a work so self-denying, and so arduous, and where he would be exposed to so much persecution and contempt. It may be that they would have set before him the advantages of his birth and education; would have reminded him of his early brilliant prospects; and would have used all the means possible to dissuade him from embarking in a cause like that in which he was engaged. The passage here means that Paul was influenced by none of these considerations. In early life he had been. He had prided himself on rank, and on talent. He was proud of his own advantages as a Jew; and he estimated worth by rank, and by national distinction, ^{<1014>}Philippians 3:4-6. He had despised Christians on account of their being the followers of the man of Nazareth: and there can be no reason to doubt that he partook of the common feelings of his countrymen and held in contempt the whole Gentile world. But his views were changed — so much changed as to make it proper to say that he was a new creature, ^{<1015>}2 Corinthians 5:17. When converted, he did not confer with flesh and blood (^{<1016>}Galatians 1:16); and in the school of Christ, he had learned that if a man was his disciple, he must be willing to forsake father and mother. and sister and brother, and to hate his own life that he might honor him, ^{<1017>}Luke 14:26. He had formed his principle of action now from a higher standard than any regard to rank, or wealth, or national distinction; and had risen above them all, and now estimated people not by these external and factitious advantages, but by a reference to their personal character and moral worth.

Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh Though in common with the Jewish nation we expected a Messiah who would be a temporal prince, and who would be distinguished for the distinctions which are valued among people, yet we have changed our estimate of him, and judge of him in this way no longer. There can be no doubt that Paul, in common with his countrymen, had expected a Messiah who would be a magnificent temporal prince and conqueror, one who they supposed would be a worthy successor of David and Solomon. The coming of such a prince, Paul had confidently expected. He expected no other Messiah. He had fixed his hopes on that. This is what is meant by the expression ‘to know Christ after the flesh.’ It does not mean that he had seen him in the flesh, but that he had formed, so to speak, carnal views of him, and such as people of this

world regard as grand and magnificent in a monarch and conqueror. He had had no correct views of his spiritual character, and of the pure and holy purposes for which he would come into the world.

Yet now henceforth know we him no more We know him no more in this manner. Our conceptions and views of him are changed. We no more regard him according to the flesh; we no longer esteem the Messiah who was to come as a temporal prince and warrior; but we look on him as a spiritual Saviour, a Redeemer from sin. The idea is, that his views of him had been entirely changed. It does not mean, as our translation would seem to imply, that Paul would have no further acquaintance with Christ, but it means that from the moment of his conversion he had laid aside all his views of his being a temporal sovereign, and all his feelings that he was to be honored only because he supposed that he would have an elevated rank among the monarchs of the earth. Locke and Macknight, it seems to me, have strangely mistaken this passage. The former renders it, "For if I myself have gloried in this, that Christ was himself circumcised as I am, and was of my blood and nation, I do so now no more any longer," The same substantially is the view of Macknight. Clarke as strangely mistakes it, when he says that it means that Paul could not prize now a man who was a sinner because he was allied to the royal family of David, nor prize a man because he had seen Christ in the flesh. The correct view, as it seems to me, is given above. And the doctrine which is taught here is, that at conversion, the views are essentially changed, and that the converted man has a view of the Saviour entirely different from what he had before. He may not, like Paul, have regarded him as a temporal prince; he may not have looked to him as a mighty monarch, but his views in regard to his person, character, work, and loveliness will be entirely changed. He will see a beauty in his character which he never saw before. Before, he regarded him as a root out of dry ground; as the despised man of Nazareth; as having nothing in his character to be desired, or to render him lovely (Isaiah 53); but at conversion the views are changed. He is seen to be the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely; as pure, and holy, and benevolent; as mighty, and great, and glorious; as infinitely benevolent; as lovely in his precepts, lovely in his life, lovely in his death, lovely in his resurrection, and as most glorious as he is seated on the right hand of God. He is seen to be a Saviour exactly adapted to the condition and needs of the soul; and the soul yields itself to him to be redeemed by him alone. There is no change of view so marked and decided as that of the sinner in

regard to the Lord Jesus Christ at his conversion; and it is a clear proof that we have never been born again if our views in reference to him have never undergone any change. “What think ye of Christ?” is a question the answer to which will determine any man’s character, and demonstrate whether he is or is not a child of God. Tyndale has more correctly expressed the sense of this than our translation. “Though we have known Christ after the flesh, now henceforth know we him so no more.”

2 Corinthians 5:17. *Therefore if any man be in Christ* The phrase to “be in Christ,” evidently means to be united to Christ by faith; or to be in him as the branch is in the vine — that is, so united to the vine, or so in it, as to derive all its nourishment and support from it, and to be sustained entirely by it. ^{<815D>}John 15:2, “Every branch in me.” ^{<815D>}John 15:4, “Abide in me, and I in you.” “The branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in me.” See also ^{<815D>}John 15:5-7, see the note on ^{<815D>}John 15:2. To be “in Christ” denotes a more tender and close union; and implies that all our support is from him. All our strength is derived from him; and denotes further that we shall partake of his fullness, and share in his felicity and glory, as the branch partakes of the strength and vigor of the parent vine. The word “therefore” (^{<620>}ὄστε) here implies that the reason why Paul infers that anyone is a new creature who is in Christ is that which is stated in the previous verse; to wit, the change of views in regard to the Redeemer to which he there refers, and which was so great as to constitute a change like a new creation. The affirmation here is universal, “if any man be in Christ;” that is, all who become true Christians — undergo such a change in their views and feelings as to make it proper to say of them that they are new creatures. No matter what they have been before, whether moral or immoral; whether infidels or speculative believers; whether amiable, or debased, sensual and polluted yet if they become Christians they all experience such a change as to make it proper to say they are a new creation.

A new creature Margin, “Let him be.” This is one of the instances in which the margin has given a less correct translation than is in the text. The idea evidently is, not that he ought to be a new creature, but that he is in fact; not that he ought to live as becomes a new creature — which is true enough — but that he will in fact live in that way, and manifest the characteristics of the new creation. The phrase “a new creature” (^{<2537>}καὶνῆ ^{<2937>}κτίσις) occurs also in ^{<815D>}Galatians 6:15. The word rendered

“creature” (κτίσις ^{<2937>}) means properly in the New Testament, creation. It denotes:

- (1) The act of creating (^{<8021>}Romans 1:20);
- (2) A created thing, a creature (^{<8025>}Romans 1:25); and refers:
 - (a) To the universe, or creation in general; ^{<4106>}Mark 10:6; 13:9-11; ^{<4034>}1 Peter 3:4.
 - (b) To man, mankind; ^{<4165>}Mark 16:15; ^{<5103>}Colossians 1:23.

Here it means a new creation in a moral sense, and the phrase new creature is equivalent to the expression in ^{<4024>}Ephesians 4:24, “The new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” It means, evidently, that there is a change produced in the renewed heart of man that is equivalent to the act of creation, and that bears a strong resemblance to it — a change, so to speak, as if the man was made over again, and had become new. The mode or manner in which it is done is not described, nor should the words be pressed to the quick, as if the process were the same in both cases — for the words are here evidently figurative. But the phrase implies evidently the following things:

- (1) That there is an exertion of divine power in the conversion of the sinner as really as in the act of creating the world out of nothing, and that this is as indispensable in the one case as in the other.
- (2) That a change is produced so great as to make it proper to say that he is a new man. He has new views, new motives, new principles, new objects and plans of life. He seeks new purposes, and he lives for new ends. If a drunkard becomes reformed, there is no impropriety in saying that he is a new man. If a man who was licentious becomes pure, there is no impropriety in saying that he is not the same man that he was before. Such expressions are common in all languages, and they are as proper as they are common. There is such a change as to make the language proper. And so in the conversion of a sinner. There is a change so deep, so clear, so entire, and so abiding, that it is proper to say, here is a new creation of God — a work of the divine power as decided and as glorious as when God created all things out of nothing. There is no other moral change that takes place on earth so deep, and radical, and thorough as the change at conversion. And there is no other where there is so much propriety in ascribing it to the mighty power of God.

Old things are passed away The old views in regard to the Messiah, and in regard to people in general, ⁴⁷⁸¹⁶2 Corinthians 5:16. But Paul also gives this a general form of expression, and says that old things in general have passed away — referring to everything. It was true of all who were converted that old things had passed away. And it may include the following things:

(1) In regard to the Jews — that their former prejudices against Christianity, their natural pride, and spirit of seducing others; their attachment to their rites and ceremonies, and dependence on them for salvation had all passed away. They now renounced that independence, relied on the merits of the Saviour, and embraced all as brethren who were of the family of Christ.

(2) In regard to the Gentiles — their attachment to idols, their love of sin and degradation, their dependence on their own works, had passed away, and they had renounced all these things, and had come to mingle their hopes with those of the converted Jews, and with all who were the friends of the Redeemer.

(3) In regard to all, it is also true that old things pass away. Their former prejudices, opinions, habits, attachments pass away. Their supreme love of self passes away. Their love of sins passes away. Their love of the world passes away. Their supreme attachment to their earthly friends rather than God passes away. Their love of sin, their sensuality, pride, vanity, levity, ambition, passes away. There is a deep and radical change on all these subjects — a change which commences at the new birth; which is carried on by progressive sanctification; and which is consummated at death and in heaven.

Behold, all things are become new That is, all things in view of the mind. The purposes of life, the feelings of the heart, the principles of action, all become new. The understanding is consecrated to new objects, the body is employed in new service, the heart forms new attachments. Nothing can be more strikingly descriptive of the facts in conversion than this; nothing more entirely accords with the feelings of the newborn soul. All is new. There are new views of God, and of Jesus Christ; new views of this world and of the world to come; new views of truth and of duty; and everything is seen in a new aspect and with new feelings. Nothing is more common in young converts than such feelings, and nothing is more common than for them to say that all things are new. The Bible seems to be a new book, and

though they may have often read it before, yet there is a beauty about it which they never saw before, and which they wonder they have not before perceived. The whole face of nature seems to them to be changed, and they seem to be in a new world. The hills, and vales, and streams; the sun, the stars, the groves, the forests, seem to be new. A new beauty is spread over them all; and they now see them to be the work of God, and his glory is spread over them all, and they can now say:

“My Father made them all.”

The heavens and the earth are filled with new wonders, and all things seem now to speak forth the praise of God. Even the very countenances of friends seem to be new; and there are new feelings toward all people; a new kind of love to kindred and friends; and a love before unfelt for enemies; and a new love for all mankind.

2 Corinthians 5:18. *And all things are of God* This refers particularly to the things in question, the renewing of the heart, and the influences by which Paul had been brought to a state of willingness to forsake all, and to devote his life to the self-denying labors involved in the purpose of making the Saviour known. He makes the statement general, however, showing his belief that not only these things were produced by God, but that all things were under his direction, and subject to his control. Nothing that he had done was to be traced to his own agency or power, but God was to be acknowledged everywhere. This great truth Paul never forgot; and he never suffered himself to lose sight of it. It was in his view a cardinal and glorious truth; and he kept its influence always before his mind and his heart. In the important statement which follows, therefore, about the ministry of reconciliation, he deeply feels that the whole plan, and all the success which has attended the plan, was to be traced not to his zeal, or fidelity, or skill, but to the agency of God; see the note on **1 Corinthians 3:6,7.**

Who hath reconciled us to himself The word “us” here includes, doubtless, all who were Christians — whether Jews or Gentiles, or whatever was their rank. They had all been brought into a state of reconciliation, or agreement with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Before they were opposed to God. They had violated His laws. They were his enemies. But by the means of the plan of salvation they had been brought into a state of agreement, or harmony, and were united in feeling and in aim with him. Two people who have been alienated by prejudice, by passion, or by

interest, are reconciled when the cause of the alienation is removed, on whichever side it may have existed, or if on both sides, and when they lay aside their enmity and become friends. Thenceforward they are agreed, and live together without alienation, heart-burnings, jealousies, and strife. So between God and man. There was a variance; there was an alienation. Man was alienated from God. He had no love for Him. He disliked His government and laws. He was unwilling to be restrained. He sought his own pleasure. He was proud, vain, self-confident. He was not pleased with the character of God, or with his claims, or his plans. And in like manner, God was displeased with the pride, the sensuality, the rebellion, the haughtiness of man. He was displeased that His Law had been violated, and that man had cast off his government. Now reconciliation could take place only when these causes of alienation should be laid aside, and when God and man should be brought to harmony; when man should lay aside his love of sin, and should be pardoned, and when, therefore, God could consistently treat him as a friend. The Greek word which is used here (**καταλλάσσω** ^{<2644>}) means properly to change against anything; to exchange for anything, for money, or for any article — Robinson. In the New Testament it means to change one person toward another; that is, to reconcile to anyone; see the note on ^{<4150>}Romans 5:10. It conveys the idea of producing a change so that one who is alienated should be brought to friendship. Of course, all the change which takes place must be on the part of man, for God will not change, and the purpose of the plan of reconciliation is to effect such a change in man as to make him in fact reconciled to God, and at agreement with him. There were indeed obstacles to reconciliation on the part of God, but they did not arise from any unwillingness to be reconciled; from any reluctance to treat his creature as his friend; but they arose from the fact that man had sinned, and that God was just; that such is the perfection of God that He cannot treat the good and evil alike; and that, therefore, if He should treat man as His friend, it was necessary that in some proper way He should maintain the honor of His Law, and show His hatred of sin, and should secure the conversion and future obedience of the offender. All this God proposed to secure by the atonement made by the Redeemer, rendering it consistent for him to exercise the benevolence of his nature, and to pardon the offender. But God is not changed. The plan of reconciliation has made no change in his character. It has not made him a different being from what he was before. There is often a mistake on this subject; and people seem to suppose that God was originally stern, and unmerciful, and inexorable, and

that he has been made mild and forgiving by the atonement. But it is not so. No change has been made in God; none needed to be made; none could be made. He was always mild, and merciful, and good; and the gift of a Saviour and the plan of reconciliation is just an expression of his original willingness to pardon. When a father sees a child struggling in the stream, and in danger of drowning, the peril and the cries of the child make no change in the character of the father, but such was his former love for the child that he would plunge into the stream at the hazard of his own life to save him. So it is with God. Such was his original love for man, and his disposition to show mercy, that he would submit to any sacrifice, except that of truth and justice, in order that he might save him. Hence, he sent his only Son to die — not to change his own character; not to make himself a different being from what he was, but in order to show his love and his readiness to forgive when it could be consistently done. “God so loved the world THAT he sent his only begotten Son,” ^{<B16>}John 3:16.

By Jesus Christ By the agency, or medium of Jesus Christ. He was the mediator to interpose in the work of reconciliation. And he was abundantly qualified for this work, and was the only being that has lived in this world who was qualified for it. Because:

- (1) He was endowed with a divine and human nature — the nature of both the parties at issue — God and man, and thus, in the language of Job, could “lay his hand upon both,” ^{<B33>}Job 9:33.
- (2) He was intimately acquainted with both the parties, and knew what was needful to be done. He knew God the Father so well that he could say, “No man knoweth the Father but the Son,” ^{<B27>}Matthew 11:27. And he knew man so well that it could be said of him, he “needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man,” ^{<B25>}John 2:25. No one can be a mediator who is not acquainted with the feelings, views, desires, claims, or prejudices of both the parties at issue.
- (3) He was the friend of both the parties. He loved God. No man ever doubted this, or had any reason to call it in question, and he was always desirous of securing all that God claimed, and of vindicating him, and he never abandoned anything that God had a right to claim. And he loved man. He showed this in all his life. He sought his welfare in every way possible, and gave himself for him. Yet no one is qualified to act the mediator’s part who is not the common friend of both the parties at issue, and who will not seek the welfare, the right, or the honor of both.

(4) He was willing to suffer anything from either party in order to produce reconciliation. From the hand of God he was willing to endure all that he deemed to be necessary, in order to show his hatred of sin by his vicarious sufferings, and to make an atonement; and from the hand of man he was willing to endure all the reproach, and contumely, and scorn which could be possibly involved in the work of inducing man to be reconciled to God. And,

(5) He has removed all the obstacles which existed to a reconciliation. On the part of God, he has made it consistent for him to pardon. He has made an atonement, so that God can be just while he justifies the sinner. He has maintained His truth, and justice, and secured the stability of His moral government while He admits offenders to His favor. And on the part of man, He, by the agency of His Spirit, overcomes the unwillingness of the sinner to be reconciled, humbles his pride, shows him his sin, changes his heart, subdues his enmity against God, and secures in fact a harmony of feeling and purpose between God and man, so that they shall be reconciled forever.

And hath given to us To us the apostles and our fellow-laborers.

The ministry of reconciliation That is, of announcing to people the nature and the conditions of this plan of being reconciled. We have been appointed to make this known, and to press its acceptance on people; see ~~418~~2 Corinthians 5:20.

~~418~~**2 Corinthians 5:19.** *To wit* (Greek, ὥς ^{<5613>} ὅτι ^{<3754>}), namely This verse is designed further to state the nature of the plan of reconciliation, and of the message with which they were entrusted. It contains an abstract, or an epitome of the whole plan; and is one of those emphatic passages in which Paul compresses into a single sentence the substance of the whole plan of redemption.

That God was in Christ That God was by Christ (εν ^{<1722>} Χριστω ^{<5547>}), by means of Christ; by the agency, or mediatorship of Christ. Or it may mean that God was united to Christ, and manifested himself by him. So Doddridge interprets it. Christ was the mediator by means of whom God designed to accomplish the great work of reconciliation.

Reconciling the world unto himself The world here evidently means the human race generally, without distinction of nation, age, or rank. The

whole world was alienated from him, and he sought to have it reconciled. This is one incidental proof that God designed that the plan of salvation should be adapted to all people; see the note on ~~EB14~~ 2 Corinthians 5:14. It may be observed further, that God sought that the world should be reconciled. Man did not seek it. He had no plan for it, he did not desire it. He had no way to effect it. It was the offended party, not the offending, that sought to be reconciled; and this shows the strength of his love. It was love for enemies and alienated beings, and love evinced to them by a most earnest desire to become their friend, and to be at agreement with them; compare note on ~~EB18~~ Romans 5:8. Tyndale renders this very accurately: “For God was in Christ, and made agreement between the world and himself, and imputed not their sins unto them.”

Not imputing their trespasses Not reckoning their transgressions to them; that is, forgiving them, pardoning them. On the meaning of the word impute, see the note, ~~EB18~~ Romans 4:3. The idea here is, that God did not charge on them with inexorable severity and stern justice their offences, but graciously provided a plan of pardon, and offered to remit their sins on the conditions of the gospel. The plan of reconciliation demonstrated that he was not disposed to impute their sins to them, as he might have done, and to punish them with unmitigated severity for their crimes, but was more disposed to pardon and forgive. And it may be here asked, if God was not disposed to charge with unrelenting severity their own sins to their account, but was rather disposed to pardon them, can we believe that he is disposed to charge on them the sin of another? If he does not charge on them with inexorable and unmitigated severity their own transgressions, will he charge on them with unrelenting severity — or at all — the sin of Adam? see the note on ~~EB19~~ Romans 5:19. The sentiment here is, that God is not disposed or inclined to charge the transgressions of people upon them; he has no pleasure in doing it; and therefore he has provided a plan by which they may be pardoned. At the same time it is true that unless their sins are pardoned, justice will charge or impute their sins to them, and will exact punishment to the uttermost.^{f13}

And hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation Margin,” put in us.” Tyndale renders this: “and hath committed unto us the preaching of the atonement.” The meaning is, that the office of making known the nature of this plan, and the conditions on which God was willing to be reconciled to man, had been committed to the ministers of the gospel.

2 Corinthians 5:20. *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ* We are the ambassadors whom Christ has sent forth to negotiate with people in regard to their reconciliation to God, Tyndale renders this: “Now then are we messengers in the room of Christ.” The word used here (πρεσβευομεν ^{<4243>}), from πρεσβυς, an aged man, an elder, and then an ambassador) means to act as an ambassador, or sometimes merely to deliver a message for another, without being empowered to do any thing more than to explain or enforce it — Bloomfield. See Thucydides 7,9. An ambassador is a minister of the highest rank, employed by one prince or state at the court of another, to manage the concerns of his own prince or state, and representing the dignity and power of his sovereign — Webster. He is sent to do what the sovereign would himself do were he present. They are sent to make known the will of the sovereign, and to negotiate matters of commerce, of war, or of peace, and in general everything affecting the interests of the sovereign among the people to whom they are sent. At all times, and in all countries, an ambassador is a sacred character, and his person is regarded as inviolable. He is bound implicitly to obey the instructions of his sovereign, and as far as possible to do only what the sovereign would do were he himself present. Ministers are ambassadors for Christ, as they are sent to do what he would do were he personally present. They are to make known, and to explain, and enforce the terms on which God is willing to be reconciled to people. They are not to negotiate on any new terms, nor to change those which God has proposed, nor to follow their own plans or devices, but they are simply to urge, explain, state, and enforce the terms on which God is willing to be reconciled. Of course they are to seek the honor of the sovereign who has sent them forth, and to seek to do only his will. They go not to promote their own welfare; not to seek honor, dignity, or emolument; but they go to transact the business which the Son of God would engage in were he again personally on the earth. It follows that their office is one of great dignity, and great responsibility, and that respect should be showed them as the ambassadors of the King of kings.

As though God did beseech you by us Our message is to be regarded as the message of God. It is God who speaks. What we say to you is said in his name and on his authority, and should be received with the respect which is due to a message directly from God. The gospel message is God speaking to people through the ministry, and entreating them to be reconciled. This

invests the message which the ministers of religion bear with infinite dignity and solemnity; and it makes it a fearful and awful thing to reject it.

We pray you in Christ's stead (ὕπερ ^{<528>} Χριστου ^{<547>}). In the place of Christ; or doing what he did when on earth, and what he would do were he where we are.

Be ye reconciled to God This is the sum and burden of the message which the ministers of the gospel bear to their fellow-men; see the note on ^{<459>}2 Corinthians 5:19. It implies that man has something to do in this work. He is to be reconciled to God. He is to give up his opposition. He is to submit to the terms of mercy. All the change in the case is to be in him, for God cannot change. God has removed all the obstacles to reconciliation which existed on his part. He has done all that he will do, all that needed to be done, in order to render reconciliation easy as possible. And now it remains that man should lay aside his hostility, abandon his sins, embrace the terms of mercy, and become in fact reconciled to God. And the great object of the ministers of reconciliation is to urge this duty on their fellow-men. They are to do it in the name of Christ. They are to do it as if Christ were himself present, and were himself urging the message. They are to use the arguments which he would use; evince the zeal which he would show; and present the motives which he would present to induce a dying world to become in fact reconciled to God.

^{<482>}**2 Corinthians 5:21.** *For he hath made him to be sin for us* The Greek here is, 'for him who knew no sin, he hath made sin, or a sin-offering for us.' The design of this very important verse is, to urge the strongest possible reason for being reconciled to God. This is implied in the word (γαρ ^{<1063>}) "for." Paul might have urged other arguments, and presented other strong considerations. But he chooses to present this fact, that Christ has been made sin for us, as embodying and concentrating all. It is the most affecting of all arguments; it is the one that is likely to prove most effectual. It is not indeed improper to urge on people every other consideration to induce them to be reconciled to God. It is not improper to appeal to them by the conviction of duty; to appeal to their reason and conscience; to remind them of the claims, the power, the goodness, and the fear of the Creator; to remind them of the awful consequences of a continued hostility to God; to persuade them by the hope of heaven, and by the fear of hell (^{<408>}2 Corinthians 5:11) to become his friends: but, after all, the strongest argument, and that which is most adapted to melt the soul, is

the fact that the Son of God has become incarnate for our sins, and has suffered and died in our stead. When all other appeals fail this is effectual; and this is in fact the strong argument by which the mass of those who become Christians are induced to abandon their opposition and to become reconciled to God.

To be sin The words ‘to be’ are not in the original. Literally, it is, ‘he has made him sin, or a sin-offering’ (ἁμαρτιαν ^{<266>} εποίησεν ^{<4160>}). But what is meant by this? What is the exact idea which the apostle intended to convey? I answer, it cannot be:

(1) That he was literally sin in the abstract, or sin as such. No one can pretend this. The expression must be, therefore, in some sense, figurative. Nor,

(2) Can it mean that he was a sinner, for it is said in immediate connection that he “knew no sin,” and it is everywhere said that he was holy, harmless, undefiled. Nor,

(3) Can it mean that he was, in any proper sense of the word, guilty, for no one is truly guilty who is not personally a transgressor of the Law; and if he was, in any proper sense, guilty, then he deserved to die, and his death could have no more merit than that of any other guilty being; and if he was properly guilty it would make no difference in this respect whether it was by his own fault or by imputation: a guilty being deserves to be punished; and where there is desert of punishment there can be no merit in sufferings. But all such views as go to make the Holy Redeemer a sinner, or guilty, or deserving of the sufferings which he endured, border on blasphemy, and are abhorrent to the whole strain of the Scriptures. In no form, in no sense possible, is it to be maintained that the Lord Jesus was sinful or guilty. It is a corner stone of the whole system of religion, that in all conceivable senses of the expression he was holy, and pure, and the object of the divine approbation. And every view which fairly leads to the statement that he was in any sense guilty, or which implies that he deserved to die, is “prima facie” a false view, and should be at once abandoned. But,

(4) If the declaration that he was made “sin” (ἁμαρτιαν ^{<266>}) does not mean that he was sin itself, or a sinner, or guilty, then it must mean that he was a sin-offering — an offering or a sacrifice for sin; and this is the interpretation which is now generally adopted by expositors; or it must be taken as an abstract for the concrete, and mean that God treated him as if

he were a sinner. The former interpretation, that it means that God made him a sin-offering, is adopted by Whitby, Doddridge, Macknight, Rosenmuller, and others; the latter, that it means that God treated him as a sinner, is adopted by Vorstius, Schoettgen, Robinson (Lexicon), Dr. Bull, and others. There are many passages in the Old Testament where the word "sin" (ἁμαρτία ^{<266>}) is used in the sense of sin-offering, or a sacrifice for sin. Thus, ^{<3908>}Hosea 4:8, "They eat up the sin of my people;" that is, the sin-offerings; see ^{<3462>}Ezekiel 43:22,25; 44:29; 45:22,23,25. See Whitby's note on this verse. But whichever meaning is adopted, whether it means that he was a sacrifice for sin, or that God treated him as if he were a sinner, that is, subjected him to sufferings which, if he had been personally a sinner, would have been a proper expression of his hatred of transgression, and proper punishment for sin, in either case it means that he made an atonement; that he died for sin; that his death was not merely that of a martyr; but that it was designed by substituted sufferings to make reconciliation between man and God. Locke renders this: probably expressing the true sense, "For God hath made him subject to suffering and death, the punishment and consequence of sin, as if he had been a sinner, though he were guilty of no sin." To me, it seems probable that the sense is, that God treated him as if he had been a sinner; that he subjected him to such pains and woes as would have been a proper punishment if he had been guilty; that while he was, in fact, in all senses perfectly innocent, and while God knew this, yet that in consequence of the voluntary assumption of the place of man which the Lord Jesus took, it pleased the Father to lay on him the deep sorrows which would be the proper expression of his sense of the evil of sin; that he endured so much suffering, as would answer the same great ends in maintaining the truth, and honor, and justice of God, as if the guilty had themselves endured the penalty of the Law. This, I suppose, is what is usually meant when it is said "our sins were imputed to him;" and though this language is not used in the Bible, and though it is liable to great misapprehension and perversion, yet if this is its meaning, there can be no objection to it.^{f14}

Who knew no sin He was not guilty. He was perfectly holy and pure. This idea is thus expressed by Peter (^{<4122>}1 Peter 2:22): "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth;" and in ^{<3026>}Hebrews 7:26, it is said he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." In all respects, and in all conceivable senses, the Lord Jesus was pure and holy. If he had not been, he would not have been qualified to make an atonement. Hence, the sacred

writers are everywhere at great pains to keep this idea prominent, for on this depends the whole superstructure of the plan of salvation. The phrase “knew no sin,” is an expression of great beauty and dignity. It indicates his entire and perfect purity. He was altogether unacquainted with sin; he was a stranger to transgression; he was conscious of no sin; he committed none. He had a mind and heart perfectly free from pollution, and his whole life was perfectly pure and holy in the sight of God.

That we might be made the righteousness of God This is a Hebraism, meaning the same as divinely righteous. It means that we are made righteous in the sight of God; that is, that we are accepted as righteous, and treated as righteous by God on account of what the Lord Jesus has done. There is here an evident and beautiful contrast between what is said of Christ, and what is said of us. He was made sin; we are made righteousness; that is, he was treated as if he were a sinner, though he was perfectly holy and pure; we are treated as if we were righteous, though we are defiled and depraved. The idea is, that on account of what the Lord Jesus has endured in our behalf we are treated as if we had ourselves entirely fulfilled the Law of God, and had never become exposed to its penalty. In the phrase “righteousness of God,” there is a reference to the fact that this is his plan of making people righteous, or of justifying them. They who thus become righteous, or are justified, are justified on his plan, and by a scheme which he has devised. Locke renders this:

“that we, in and by him, might be made righteous, by a righteousness imputed to us by God.”

The idea is, that all our righteousness in the sight of God we receive in and through a Redeemer. All is to be traced to him. This verse contains a beautiful epitome of the whole plan of salvation, and the uniqueness of the Christian scheme. On the one hand, one who was perfectly innocent, by a voluntary substitution, is treated As IF he were guilty; that is, is subjected to pains and sorrows which if he were guilty would be a proper punishment for sin: and on the other, they who are guilty and who deserve to be punished, are treated, through his vicarious sufferings, as if they were perfectly innocent; that is, in a manner which would be a proper expression of God’s approbation if he had not sinned. The whole plan, therefore, is one of substitution; and without substitution, there can be no salvation. Innocence voluntarily suffers for guilt, and the guilty are thus made pure and holy, and are saved. The greatness of the divine compassion and love is

thus shown for the guilty; and on the ground of this it is right and proper for God to call on people to be reconciled to him. It is the strongest argument that can be used. When God has given his only Son to the bitter suffering of death on the cross in order that we may be reconciled, it is the highest possible argument which can be used why we should cease our opposition to him, and become his friends.^{f15}

REMARKS

- 1.** It is possible for Christians to have the assurance that they shall enter into heaven, ~~from~~ 2 Corinthians 5:1. Paul said that he knew this; John knew this (see the note on ~~from~~ 2 Corinthians 5:1), and there is no reason why others should not know it. If a man hates sin he may know that as well as anything else; if he loves God, why should he not know that as well as to know that he loves an earthly friend? If he desires to be holy, to enter heaven, to be eternally pure, why should we have any doubt about that? If he loves to pray, to read the Bible, to converse of heaven — if his heart is truly in these things, he may know it, as well as know anything else about his own character of feelings.
- 2.** If a Christian may know it, he should know it. No other knowledge is so desirable as this. Nothing will produce so much comfort as this. Nothing will contribute so much to make him firm, decided, and consistent in his Christian walk as this. No other knowledge will give him so much support in temptation; so much comfort in trial; so much peace in death. And if a man is a Christian, he should give himself no rest until he obtains assurance on this subject; if he is not a Christian he cannot know that too soon, or take too early measures to flee from the wrath to come.
- 3.** The body will soon be dissolved in death, ~~from~~ 2 Corinthians 5:1. It is a frail crumbling, decaying dwelling, that must soon be taken down. It has none of the properties of a permanent abode. it can be held together but a little time. It is like a hut or cottage, that is shaken by every gust of wind: like a tent when the pins are loose, and the cords unstranded, or rotten, and when the wind will soon sweep it away. And since this is the fact, we may as well know it, and not attempt to conceal it from the mind. All truth may be looked at calmly, and should be, and a man who is residing in a frail and shattered dwelling, should be looking out for one that is more permanent and substantial. Death should be looked at. The fact that this tabernacle shall be taken down should be looked at; and every man should be asking

with deep interest the question whether there is not a more permanent dwelling for him in a better world.

4. This life is burdened, and is full of cares, ~~4000~~2 Corinthians 5:2,4. It is such as is suited to make us desire a better state. We groan here under sin, amidst temptation, encompassed by the cares and toils of life. We are burdened with duties, and we are oppressed by trials; and under all we are sinking to the grave. Soon, under the accumulated burdens, the body will be crushed, and sink back to the dust. Man cannot endure the burden long, and he must soon die. These accumulated trials and cares are such as are adapted to make him desire a better inheritance, and to look forward to a better world. God designs that this shall be a world of care and anxiety, in order that we may be led to seek a better portion beyond the grave.

5. The Christian has a permanent home in heaven, ~~4000~~2 Corinthians 5:1,2,4. There is a house not made with hands; an eternal home; a world where mortality is unknown. There is his home; that is his eternal dwelling. Here he is a stranger, among strangers, in a strange world. In heaven is his home. The body here may be sick, feeble, dying; there it shall be vigorous, strong, immortal. He may have no comfortable dwelling here; he may be poor, and afflicted; there he shall have an undecaying dwelling, an unchanging home. Who in a world like this should not desire to be a Christian? What other condition of life is so desirable as that of the man who is sure that after a few more days he shall be admitted to an eternal home in heaven, where the body never dies, and where sin and sorrow are known no more?

6. The Christian should be willing to bear all the pain and sorrow which God shall appoint, ~~4000~~2 Corinthians 5:1-4. Why should he not? He knows not only that God is good in all this; but he knows that it is but for a moment; that he is advancing toward heaven, and that he will soon be at home. Compared with that eternal rest what trifles are all the sufferings of this mortal life!

7. We should not desire to die merely to get rid of pain, or to be absent from the body, ~~4000~~2 Corinthians 5:4. It is not merely in order that we may be "unclothed," or that we may get away from a suffering body, that we should be willing to die. Many a sinner suffers so much here that he is willing to plunge into an awful eternity, as he supposes, to get rid of pain, when, alas, he plunges only into deeper and eternal woe. We should be willing to bear as much pain, and to bear it as long as God shall be pleased

to appoint. We should submit to all without a complaint. We should be anxious to be relieved only when God shall judge it best for us to be away from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

8. In a mere readiness to die there is no evidence that we are prepared for heaven; compare ~~404~~2 Corinthians 5:4. Many a man supposes that because he is ready to die, that, therefore, he is prepared. Many a one takes comfort because a dying friend was ready and willing to die. But in a mere willingness to die there is no evidence of a preparation for death, because 100 causes may conspire to produce this besides piety. And let us not be deceived by supposing that because we have no alarm about death, and are willing to go to another world, that therefore we are prepared. It may be either stupidity, or insensibility; it may be a mere desire to get rid of suffering; it may be because we are cherishing a hope of heaven which is altogether vain and illusive.

9. The Christian should, and may desire to depart and to be in heaven, ~~405~~2 Corinthians 5:2. Heaven is his home; and it is his privilege to desire to be there. Here he is in a world of trial and of sin. There he shall be in a world of joy and of holiness. Here he dwells in a frail, suffering, decaying body. There he shall be clothed with immortality. It is his privilege, therefore, to desire, as soon as it shall be the will of God, to depart, and to enter on his eternal inheritance in heaven. He should have a strong, fixed, firm desire for that world; and should be ready at the shortest notice to go and to be forever with the Lord.

10. The hopes and joys of Christians, and all their peace and calmness in the prospect of death, are to be traced to God, ~~406~~2 Corinthians 5:5. It is not that they are not naturally as timid and fearful of dying as others; it is not that they have any native courage or strength, but it is to be traced entirely to the mercy of God, and the influence of his Spirit, that they are enabled to look calmly at death, at the grave, at eternity. With the assured prospect of heaven, they have nothing to fear in dying; and if we have the “earnest of the Spirit” — the pledge that heaven is ours — we have nothing to fear in the departure from this world.

11. The Christian should be, and may be, always cheerful, ~~407~~2 Corinthians 5:6. Paul said that he was always confident, or cheerful. Afflictions did not depress him; trials did not cast him down. He was not disheartened by opposition; he did not lose his courage by being reviled and persecuted. In all this he was cheerful and bold. There is nothing in religion to make us

melancholy and sad. The assurance of the favor of God, and the hope of heaven, should have, and will have, just the opposite effect. A sense of the presence of God, a conviction that we are sinners, a deep impression of the truth that we are to die, and of the infinite interest of the soul at stake, will indeed make us serious and solemn, and should do so. But this is not inconsistent with cheerfulness, but is rather suited to produce it. It is favorable to a state of mind where all irritability is suppressed, and where the mind is made calm and settled; and this is favorable to cheerfulness. Besides, there is much, very much in religion to prevent sadness, and to remove gloom from the soul. The hope of heaven, and the prospect of dwelling with God and with holy beings forever, is the best means of expelling the gloom which is caused by the disappointments and cares of the world. And much as many persons suppose that religion creates gloom, it is certain that nothing in this world has done so much to lighten care, to break the force of misfortune and disappointment, to support in times of trial, and to save from despair, as the religion of the Redeemer. And it is moreover certain that there are no persons so habitually calm in their feelings, and cheerful in their tempers, as consistent and devout Christians. If there are some Christians, like David Brainerd, who are melancholy and sad, as there are undoubtedly, it should be said:

- (1) That they are few in number;
- (2) That their gloom is to be traced to constitutional propensity, and not to religion;
- (3) That they have, even with all their gloom, joys which the world never experiences, and which can never be found in sin; and,
- (4) That their gloom is not produced by religion, but by the lack of more of it.

12. It is noble to act with reference to things unseen and eternal, ~~2~~2 Corinthians 5:7. It elevates the soul; lifts it above the earth; purifies the heart; and gives to man a new dignity. It prevents all the grovelling effect of acting from a view of present objects, and with reference to the things which are just around us.

“Whatever withdraws us,” says Dr. Johnson, “from the power of our senses; whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future,

predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings” — *Tour to the Hebrides*, p. 322, ed. Philipps 1810.

Whatever directs the eye and the heart to heaven; whatever may make man feel and believe that there is a God, a Saviour, a heaven, a world of glory, elevates him with the consciousness of his immortality, and raises him above the groveling objects that wither and debase the soul. Man should act with reference to eternity. He should be conscious of immortality. He should be deeply impressed with that high honor that awaits him of standing before God. He should feel that he may partake in the glories of the resurrection; that he may inherit an eternal heaven. Feeling thus, what trifles are the things of the earth! How little should he be moved by its trials! How little should he be influenced by its wealth, its pleasures, and its honors!

13. The Christian, when he leaves the body, is at once with the Lord Jesus, ~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 5:8. He rushes, as it were instinctively, to his presence, and casts himself at his feet. He has no other home than where the Saviour is; he thinks of no future joy or glory but that which is to be enjoyed with him. Why then should we fear death? Lay out of view, as we may, the momentary pang, the chilliness, and the darkness of the grave, and think of that which will be the moment after death — the view of the Redeemer, the sight of the splendors of the heavenly world, the angels, the spirits of the just made perfect, the river of the paradise of God, and the harps of praise, and what has man to fear in the prospect of dying?

*Why should I shrink at pain or woe,
Or feel at death dismay?
I've Canaan's goodly land in view,
And realms of endless day.*

*Apostles, martyrs, prophets there,
Around my Saviour stand;
And soon my friends in Christ below
Will join the glorious band.*

*Jerusalem! my happy home!
My soul still pants for thee;
When shall my labors have an end
in joy, and peace, and thee! — Charles Wesley*

14. We should act feeling that we are in the immediate presence of God and so as to meet his acceptance and approbation, whether we remain on

earth, or whether we are removed to eternity, ~~(150)~~ 2 Corinthians 5:9. The prospect of being with him, and the consciousness that his eye is fixed upon us, should make us diligent, humble, and laborious. It should be the great purpose of our lives to secure his favor, and meet with his acceptance; and it should make no difference with us in this respect, where we are — whether on earth or in heaven; with the prospect of long life, or of an early death; in society or in solitude; at home or abroad; on the land or on the deep; in sickness or in health; in prosperity or in adversity, it should be our great aim so to live as to be “accepted of him.” And the Christian will so act. To act in this manner is the very nature of true piety; and where this desire does not exist, there can be no true religion.

15. We must appear before the judgment-seat, ~~(150)~~ 2 Corinthians 5:10. We must all appear there. This is inevitable. There is not one of the human family that can escape. Old and young; rich and poor; bond and free; all classes, all conditions, all nations must stand there, and give an account for all the deeds done in the body, and receive their eternal doom. How solemn is the thought of being arraigned! How deeply affecting the idea that on the issue of that one trial will depend our eternal weal or woe! How overwhelming the reflection that from that sentence there can be no appeal; no power of reversing, it; no possibility of afterward changing our destiny!

16. We shall soon be there, ~~(150)~~ 2 Corinthians 5:10. No one knows when he is to die; and death when it comes will remove us at once to the judgment-seat. A disease that may carry us off in a few hours may take us there; or death that may come in an instant shall bear us to that awful bar. How many are stricken down in a moment; how many are hurried without any warning to the solemnities of the eternal world! So we may die. No one can insure our lives; no one can guard us from the approach of the invisible king of terrors.

17. We should be ready to depart If we must stand at the awful bar; and if we may be summoned there any moment, assuredly we should lose no time in being ready to go. It is our great business in life; and it should claim our first attention, and all other things should be postponed that we may be ready to die. It should be the first inquiry every morning, and the last subject of thought every evening — for who knows when he rises in the morning but that before night he may stand at the judgment-seat! Who, when he lies down on his bed at night, knows but that in the silence of the

night-watches he may be summoned to go alone — to leave his family and friends, his home and his bed, to answer for all the deeds done in the body?

18. We should endeavor to save others from eternal death, ~~¶¶~~2 Corinthians 5:11. If we have ourselves any just views of the awful terrors of the day of judgment, and if we have any just views of the wrath of God, we should endeavor “to persuade” others to flee from the wrath to come. We should plead with them; we should entreat them; we should weep over them; we should pray for them, that they may be saved from going up to meet the awful wrath of God. If our friends are unprepared to meet God; if they are living in impenitence and sin, and if we have any influence over others in any way, we should exert it all to induce them to come to Christ, and to save themselves from the awful terrors of that day. Paul deemed no self-denial and no sacrifice too great, if he might persuade them to come to God, and to save their souls. And who that has any just views of the awful terrors of the day of judgment; of the woes of an eternal hell, and of the glories of an eternal heaven; can deem that labor too great which shall be the means of saving immortal souls? Not to frighten them should we labor, not to alarm them merely should we plead with them, but we should endeavor by all means to persuade them to come to the Redeemer. We should not use tones of harshness and denunciation; we should not speak of hell as if we would rejoice to execute the sentence, but we should speak with tenderness, earnestness, and with tears (compare ~~¶¶~~Acts 20:31), that we may induce our friends and fellow-sinners to be reconciled to God.

19. We should not deem it strange or remarkable if we are charged with being deranged for being active and zealous in the subject of religion, ~~¶¶~~2 Corinthians 5:13. There will always be enough, both in the church and out of it, to charge us with over-heated zeal; with lack of prudence; or with decided mental alienation. But we are not to forget that Paul was accused of being “mad;” and even the Redeemer was thought to be “beside himself.” “It is sufficient for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord;” and if the Redeemer was charged with derangement on account of his special views and his zeal, we should not suppose that any strange thing had happened to us if we are accused in like manner.

20. The gospel should be offered to all people, ~~¶¶~~2 Corinthians 5:14. If Christ died for all, then salvation is provided for all; and then it should be offered to all freely and fully. It should be done without any mental reservation, for God has no such mental reservation; without any hesitation

or misgiving; without any statements that would break the force, or weaken the power of such an offer on the consciences of people. If they reject it, they should be left to see that they reject that which is in good faith offered to them, and that for this they must give an account to God. Every man who preaches the gospel should feel that he is not only permitted but REQUIRED to preach the gospel “to every creature;” nor should he embrace any opinion whatever which will in form or in fact cramp him or restrain him in thus offering salvation to all mankind. The fact that Christ died for all, and that all may be saved, should be a fixed and standing point in all systems of theology, and should be allowed to shape every other opinion, and to shed its influence over every other view of truth.

21. All people by nature are dead in sins, ~~4754~~ 2 Corinthians 5:14. They are insensible to their own good; to the appeals of God; to the glories of heaven, and to the terrors of hell. They do not act for eternity; they are without concern in regard to their everlasting destiny. They are as insensible to all these things, until aroused by the Spirit of God, as a dead man in his grave is to surrounding objects. And there is nothing that ever did arouse such a man, or ever could, but the same power that made the world, and the same voice that raised Lazarus from his grave. This melancholy fact strikes us everywhere; and we should be deeply humbled that it is our condition by nature, and should mourn that it is the condition of our fellowmen everywhere.

22. We should form our estimate of objects and of their respective value and importance by other considerations than those which are derived from their temporal nature, ~~4756~~ 2 Corinthians 5:16. It should not be simply according to the flesh. It should not be as they estimate them who are living for this world. It should not be by their rank, their splendor, or their fashion. It should be by their reference to eternity, and their bearing on the state of things there.

23. It should be with us a very serious inquiry whether our views of Christ are such as they have who are living after the flesh, or such only as the unrenewed mind takes, ~~4756~~ 2 Corinthians 5:16. The carnal mind has no just views of the Redeemer. To every impenitent sinner he is “a root out of a day ground.” There is no beauty in him. And to every hypocrite, and every deceived professor of religion, there is really no beauty seen in him. There is no spontaneous, elevated, glowing attachment to him. It is all forced and

unnatural. But to the true Christian there is a beauty seen in his character that is not seen in any other; and the whole soul loves him, and embraces him. His character is seen to be most pure and lovely; his benevolence boundless; his ability and willingness to save, infinite. The renewed soul desires no other Saviour; and rejoices that he is just what he is — rejoices in his humiliation as well as his exaltation; in his poverty as well as his glory; rejoices in the privilege of being saved by him who was spit upon, and mocked, and crucified, as well as by him who is at the right hand of God. One thing is certain, unless we have just views of Christ we can never be saved.

24. The new birth is a great and most important change, ^{<A517>}2 Corinthians 5:17. It is not in name or in profession merely, but it is a deep and radical change of the heart. It is so great that it may be said of each one that he is a new creation of God; and in relation to each one, that old things are passed away, and all things are become new. How important it is that we examine our hearts and see whether this change has taken place, or whether we are still living without God and without hope. It is indispensable that we be born again; John 3. If we are not born again, and if we are not new creatures in Christ, we must perish for ever. No matter what our wealth, talent, learning, accomplishment, reputation, or morality; unless we have been so changed that it may be said, and that we can say, “old things are passed away, and all things are become new,” we must perish forever. There is no power in the universe that can save a man who is not born again.

25. The gospel ministry is a most responsible and important work, ^{<A518>}2 Corinthians 5:18,19. There is no other office of the same importance; there is no situation in which man can be placed more solemn than that of making known the terms on which God is willing to bestow favor on apostate man.

26. How amazing is the divine condescension, that God should have ever proposed such a plan of reconciliation, ^{<A519>}2 Corinthians 5:20,21. That he should not only have been willing to be reconciled, but that he should have sought, and have been so anxious for it as to be willing to send his own Son to die to secure it! It was pure, rich, infinite benevolence. God was not to be benefitted by it. He was infinitely blessed and happy even though man should have been lost. He was pure, and just, and holy, and it was not necessary to resort to this in order to vindicate his own character. He had

done man no wrong: and if man had perished in his sins, the throne of God would have been pure and spotless. It was love; mere love. It was pure, holy, disinterested, infinite benevolence. It was worthy of a God; and it has a claim to the deepest gratitude of man.

Let us then, in view of this whole chapter, seek to be reconciled to God. Let us lay aside all our opposition to him. Let us embrace his plans. Let us be willing to submit to him, and to become his ETERNAL FRIENDS. Let us seek to heaven to which he would raise us; and though our earthly house of this tabernacle must be dissolved, let us be prepared, as we may be, for that eternal habitation which he has prepared for all who love him in the heavens.

NOTES ON 2 CORINTHIANS 6

This chapter (2 Corinthians 6), closely connected in sense with the preceding, is designed as an address to the Corinthian Christians, exhorting them to act worthily of their calling, and of their situation under such a ministry as they had enjoyed. In the previous chapters, Paul had discoursed at length of the design and of the labors of the ministry. The main drift of all this was to show them the nature of reconciliation, and the obligation to turn to God, and to live to him. This idea is pursued in this chapter; and in view of the labors and self-denials of the ministry, Paul urges on the Corinthian Christians the duty of coming out from the world, and of separating themselves entirely from all evil. The chapter may be conveniently contemplated in the following parts:

I. Paul states that he and his associates were fellow-laborers with God, and he exhorts the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain. To induce them to make a wise improvement of the privileges which they enjoyed, he quotes a passage from Isaiah, and applies it as meaning that it was then an acceptable time, and that they might avail themselves of mercy, [2 Corinthians 6:1,2](#).

II. He enumerates the labors and self-denials of the ministry. He refers to their sincerity, zeal, and honesty of life. He shows how much they had been willing to endure in order to convey the gospel to others, and how much they had in fact endured, and how much they had benefitted others. He speaks of their afflictions in a most tender and beautiful manner, and of the happy results which had followed from their self-denying labors, [2 Corinthians 6:3-10](#). The design of this is, evidently, to remind them of what their religion had cost, and to appeal to them in view of all this to lead holy and pure lives.

III. Paul expresses his ardent attachment for them, and says that if they were straitened — if they did not live as they should do, it was not because he and his fellow-laborers had not loved them, and sought their welfare, but from a defect in themselves, [2 Corinthians 6:11,12](#).

IV. As a reward for all that he had done and suffered for them, he now asked only that they should live as became Christians, [2 Corinthians 6:13-18](#). He sought not silver, or gold, or apparel. He had not labored as

he had done with any view to a temporal reward. And he now asked simply that they should come out from the world, and be dissociated from everything that was evil. He demanded that they should be separated from all idolatry, and idolatrous practices; assures them that there can be no union between light and darkness; righteousness and unrighteousness; Christ and Belial; that there can be no agreement between the temple of God and idols; reminds them of the fact that they are the temple of God; and encourages them to do this by the assurance that God would be their God, and that they should be his adopted sons and daughters. The chapter is one of great beauty; and the argument for a holy life among Christians is one that is exceedingly forcible and tender.

2 Corinthians 6:1. *We then, as workers together with him* On the meaning of this expression, see the note, ^{<488>}1 Corinthians 3:9. The Greek here is (συνεργουντες ^{<490>}) “working together,” and may mean either that the apostles and ministers to whom Paul refers were joint-laborers in entreating them not to receive the grace of God in vain; or it may mean that they cooperated with God, or were engaged with him in endeavoring to secure the reconciliation of the world to himself. Tyndale renders it: “we as helpers.” Doddridge, “we then as the joint-laborers of God.” Most expositors have concurred in this interpretation. The word properly means, to work together; to cooperate in producing any result. Macknight supposes that the word here is in the vocative, and is an address to the fellow-laborers of Paul, entreating them not to receive the grace of God in vain. In this opinion he is probably alone, and has manifestly departed from the scope and design of the passage. Probably the most obvious meaning is that of our translators, who regard it as teaching that Paul was a joint-worker with God in securing the salvation of people.

That ye receive not the grace of God in vain The “grace of God” here means evidently the gracious offer of reconciliation and pardon. And the sense is, “We entreat you not to neglect or slight this offer of pardon, so as to lose the benefit of it, and be lost. It is offered freely and fully. It may be partaken of by all, and all may be saved. But it may also be slighted, and all the benefits of it will then be lost.” The sense is, that it was possible that this offer might be made to them, they might hear of a Saviour, be told of the plan of reconciliation and have the offers of mercy pressed on their attention and acceptance, and yet all be in vain. They might notwithstanding all this be lost, for simply to hear of the plan of salvation or the offers of mercy, will no more save a sinner than to hear of medicine

will save the sick. It must be embraced and applied, or it will be in vain. It is true that Paul probably addressed this to those who were professors of religion; and the sense is, that they should use all possible care and anxiety lest these offers should have been made in vain. They should examine their own hearts; they should inquire into their own condition; they should guard against self-deception. The same persons (~~408~~ 2 Corinthians 5:20) Paul had exhorted also to be reconciled to God; and the idea is, that he would earnestly entreat even professors of religion to give all diligence to secure an interest in the saving mercy of the gospel, and to guard against the possibility of being self-deceived and ruined.

~~408~~ **2 Corinthians 6:2.** *For he saith* see ~~408~~ Isaiah 49:8. In that passage the declaration refers to the Messiah, and the design is there to show that God would be favorable to him; that he would hear him when he prayed, and would make him the medium of establishing a covenant with his own people, and of spreading the true religion around the earth; see my note on that place. Paul quotes the passage here not as affirming that he used it in exactly the sense, or with reference to the same design for which it was originally spoken, but as expressing the idea which he wished to convey, or in accordance with the general principle implied in its use in Isaiah. The general idea there, or the principle involved, was, that under the Messiah God would be willing to hear; that is, that he would be disposed to show mercy to the Jew and to the Gentile. This is the main idea of the passage as used by Paul. Under the Messiah, it is said by Isaiah, God would be willing to show mercy. That would be an acceptable time. That time says Paul, has arrived. The Messiah has come, and now God is willing to pardon and save. And the doctrine in this verse is, that under the Messiah, or in the time of Christ, God is willing to show mercy to people. In him alone is the throne of grace accessible, and now that he has come, God is willing to pardon, and people should avail themselves of the offers of mercy.

I have heard thee The Messiah. I have listened to thy prayer for the salvation of the pagan world. The promise to the Messiah was, that the pagan world should be given to him; but it was a promise that it should be in answer to his prayers and intercessions.

“Ask of me, and I shall give thee the pagan for thine inheritance,
and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession;”

~~408~~ Psalm 2:8.

The salvation of the pagan world, and of all who are saved, is to be in answer to the prevalent intercession of the Lord Jesus.

In a time accepted In Isaiah, “in an acceptable time.” The idea is, that he had prayed in a time when God was disposed to show mercy; the time when in his wise arrangements he had designed that his salvation should be extended to the world. It is a time which he had fixed as the appropriate period for extending the knowledge of his truth and his salvation; and it proves that there was to be a period which was the favorable period of salvation, that is, which God esteemed to be the proper period for making his salvation known to people. At such a period the Messiah would pray, and the prayer would be answered.

In the day of salvation In the time when I am disposed to show salvation.

Have I succored thee The Messiah. I have sustained thee, that is, in the effort to make salvation known. God here speaks of there being an accepted time, a limited period, in which petitions in favor of the world would be acceptable to him. That time Paul says had come; and the idea which he urges is, that people should avail themselves of that, and embrace now the offers of mercy.

Behold, now is the accepted time ... The meaning of this passage is, the “Messiah is come. The time referred to by Isaiah has arrived. It is now a time when God is ready to show compassion, to hear prayer, and to have mercy on mankind. Only through the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, does he show mercy, and people should therefore now embrace the offers of pardon.” The doctrine taught here, therefore, is, that through the Lord Jesus, and where he is preached, God is willing to pardon and save people; and this is true wherever he is preached, and as long as people live under the sound of the gospel. The world is under a dispensation of mercy, and God is willing to show compassion, and while this exists, that is, while people live, the offers of salvation are to be freely made to them. The time will come when it will not be an acceptable time with God. The day of mercy will be closed; the period of trial will be ended; and people will be removed to a world where no mercy is shown, and where compassion is unknown. This verse, which should be read as a parenthesis, is designed to be connected with the argument which the apostle is urging, and which he presented in the previous chapter. The general doctrine is, that people should seek reconciliation with God. To enforce that, he here says, that it was now the acceptable time, the time when God was willing to be

reconciled to human beings. The general sentiment of this passage may be thus expressed:

- (1)** Under the gospel it is an acceptable time, a day of mercy, a time when God is willing to show mercy to people.
- (2)** There may be special seasons which may be especially called the acceptable, or accepted time:
 - (a)** When the gospel is pressed on the attention by the faithful preaching of his servants, or by the urgent entreaties of friends;
 - (b)** When it is brought to our attention by any striking dispensation of Providence;
 - (c)** When the Spirit of God strives with us, and brings us to deep reflection, or to conviction for sin;
 - (d)** In a revival of religion, when many are pressing into the kingdom — it is at all such seasons an accepted time, a day of salvation. a day which we should improve. It is “NOW” such a season, because:
 - (i)** The time of mercy will pass by, and God will not be willing to pardon the sinner who goes unprepared to eternity.
 - (ii)** Because we cannot calculate on the future. We have no assurance, no evidence that we shall live another day, or hour.
 - (iii)** It is taught here, that the time will come when it will not be an accepted time. Now is the accepted time; at some future period it will NOT be. If people grieve away the Holy Spirit; if they continue to reject the gospel; if they go unprepared to eternity, no mercy can be found. God does not design to pardon beyond the grave. He has made no provision for forgiveness there; and they who are not pardoned in this life, must be unpardoned forever.

2 Corinthians 6:3. *Giving no offence in anything* We the ministers of God, ~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 6:1. The word rendered “offence” means, properly, stumbling; then offence, or cause of offence, a falling into sin. The meaning here is, “giving no occasion for contemning or rejecting the gospel;” and the idea of Paul is, that he and his fellow-apostles so labored as that no one who saw or knew them, should have occasion to reproach the ministry, or the religion which they preached; but so that in their pure

and self-denying lives, the strongest argument should be seen for embracing it; compare ~~4006~~ Matthew 10:16; ~~4183~~ 1 Corinthians 8:13; 10:32,33. See the notes, ~~3445~~ Philippians 2:15; ~~5000~~ 1 Thessalonians 2:10; 5:22. How they conducted so as to give no offence he states in the following verses.

That the ministry be not blamed The phrase, “the ministry,” refers here not merely to the ministry of Paul, that is, it does not mean merely that he would be subject to blame and reproach, but that the ministry itself which the Lord Jesus had established would be blamed, or would be reproached by the improper conduct of anyone who was engaged in that work. The idea is, that the misconduct of one minister of the gospel would bring a reproach upon the profession itself, and would prevent the usefulness and success of others, just as the misconduct of a physician exposes the whole profession to reproach, or the bad conduct of a lawyer reflects itself in some degree on the entire profession. And it is so everywhere. The errors, follies, misconduct, or bad example of one minister of the gospel brings a reproach upon the sacred calling itself, and prevents the usefulness of many others. Ministers do not stand alone. And though no one can be responsible for the errors and failings of others, yet no one can avoid suffering in regard to his usefulness by the sins of others. Not only, therefore, from a regard to his personal usefulness should every minister be circumspect in his walk, but from respect to the usefulness of all others who sustain the office of the ministry, and from respect to the success of religion all over the world. Paul made it one of the principles of his conduct so to act that no man should have cause to speak reproachfully of the ministry on his account. In order to this, he felt; it to be necessary not only to claim and assert honor for the ministry, but to lead such a life as should deserve the respect of people. If a man wishes to secure respect for his calling, it must be by living in the manner which that calling demands, and then respect and honor will follow as a matter of course; see Calvin.

~~4004~~ **2 Corinthians 6:4.** *But in all things* In every respect. In all that we do. In every way, both by words and deeds. How this was done, Paul proceeds to state in the following verses.

Approving ourselves as the ministers of God Margin, “Commending.” Tyndale renders it, “In all things let us behave ourselves as the ministers of God.” The idea is, that Paul and his fellowlaborers endeavored to live as became the ministers of God, and so as to commend the ministry to the

confidence and affection of people. They endeavored to live as was appropriate to those who were the ministers of God, and so that the world would be disposed to do honor to the ministry.

In much patience In the patient endurance of afflictions of all kinds. Some of his trials he proceeds to enumerate. The idea is, that a minister of God, in order to do good and to commend his ministry, should set an example of patience. He preaches this as a duty to others; and if, when he is poor, persecuted, oppressed, calumniated, or imprisoned, he should complain, or be insubmissive, the consequence would be that he would do little good by all his preaching. And no one can doubt, that God often places his ministers in circumstances of special trial, among other reasons, in order that they may illustrate their own precepts by their example, and show to their people with what temper and spirit they may and ought to suffer. Ministers often do a great deal more good by their example in suffering than they do in their preaching. It is easy to preach to others; it is not so easy to manifest just the right spirit in time of persecution and trial. People too can resist preaching, but they cannot resist the effect and power of a good example in times of suffering. In regard to the manner in which Paul says that the ministry may commend itself, it may be observed, that he groups several things together; or mentions several classes of influences or means. In this and the next verse he refers to various kinds of afflictions. In the following verses he groups several things together, pertaining to a holy life, and a pure conversation.

In afflictions In all our afflictions; referring to all the afflictions and trials which they were called to bear. The following words, in the manner of a climax, specify more particularly the kinds of trials which they were called to endure.

In necessities This is a stronger term than afflictions, and denotes the distress which arose from want. He everywhere endured adversity. It denotes unavoidable distress and calamity.

In distresses The word used here (στενοχωρία ^{<4730>}) denotes properly straitness of place, lack of room; then straits, distress, anguish. It is a stronger word than either of those which he had before used. See it explained in the notes on ^{<4730>}Romans 2:9. Paul means that in all these circumstances he had evinced patience, and had endeavored to act as became a minister of God.

2 Corinthians 6:5. *In stripes* In this verse, Paul proceeds to specifications of what he had been called to endure. In the previous verse, he had spoken of his afflictions in general terms. In this expression, he refers to the fact that he and his fellow-laborers were scourged in the synagogues and cities as if they had been the worst of people. In ^{<47123>}2 Corinthians 11:23-25, Paul says that he had been scourged five times by the Jews, and had been thrice beaten with rods. See the notes on that place.

In imprisonments As at Philippi; ^{<4162>}Acts 16:24ff. It was no uncommon thing for the early preachers of Christianity to be imprisoned.

In tumults Margin, "Tossing to and fro." The Greek word (^{<181>}ακαταστασια) denotes properly "instability," thence disorder, tumult, commotion. Here it means that in the various tumults and commotions which were produced by the preaching of the gospel, Paul endeavored to act as became a minister of God. Such tumults were excited at Corinth (^{<4486>}Acts 18:6); at Philippi (^{<4169>}Acts 16:19,20); at Lystra and Derbe (^{<4449>}Acts 14:19); at Ephesus (Acts 19), and in various other places. The idea is, that if the ministers of religion are assailed by a lawless mob, they are to endeavor to show the spirit of Christ there, and to evince all patience, and to do good even in such a scene. Patience and the Christian spirit may often do more good in such scenes than much preaching would do elsewhere.

In labors Referring probably to the labors of the ministry, and its incessant duties, and perhaps also to the labors which they performed for their own support, as it is well known that Paul and probably also the other apostles, labored often to support themselves.

In watchings In wakefulness, or lack of sleep. He probably refers to the fact that in these arduous duties, and in his travels, and in anxious cares for the churches, and for the advancement of religion, he was often deprived of his ordinary rest. He refers to this again in ^{<47127>}2 Corinthians 11:27.

In fastings Referring probably not only to the somewhat frequent fasts to which he voluntarily submitted as acts of devotion, but also to the fact that in his travels, when abroad and among strangers, he was often destitute of food. To such trials, those who traveled as Paul did, among strangers, and without property, would be often compelled to submit; and such trials, almost without number, the religion which we now enjoy has cost. It at first cost the painful life, the toils, the anxieties, and the sufferings of the Redeemer; and it has been propagated and perpetuated amidst the deep

sorrows, the sacrifices, and the tears and blood of those who have contributed to perpetuate it on earth. For such a religion, originated, extended, and preserved in such a manner, we can never express suitable gratitude to God. Such a religion we cannot overestimate in value; and for the extension and perpetuity of such a religion, we also should be willing to practice unwearied self denial.

2 Corinthians 6:6. *By pureness* Paul, having in the previous verses, grouped together some of the sufferings which he endured and by which he had endeavored to commend and extend the true religion, proceeds here to group together certain other influences by which he had sought the same object. The substance of what he here says is, that it had not only been done by sufferings and trials, but by a holy life, and by entire consecration to the great cause to which he had devoted himself. He begins by stating that it was by pureness, that is, by integrity, sanctity, a holy and pure life. All preaching, and all labors would have been in vain without this; and Paul well knew that if he succeeded in the ministry, he must be a good man. The same is true in all other professions. One of the essential requisites of an orator, according to Quintilian, is, that he must be a good man; and no man may expect ultimately to succeed in any calling of life unless he is pure. But however this may be in other callings, no one will doubt it in regard to the ministry of the gospel.

By knowledge Interpreters have differed much in the interpretation of this. Rosenmuller and Schleusner understand by it prudence. Grotius interprets it as meaning a knowledge of the Law. Doddridge supposes that it refers to a solicitude to improve in the knowledge of those truths which they were called to communicate to others. Probably the idea is a very simple one. Paul is showing how he endeavored to commend the gospel to others, **2 Corinthians 6:4**. He says, therefore, that one way was by communicating knowledge, true knowledge. He proclaimed that which was true, and which was real knowledge, in opposition to the false science of the Greeks, and in opposition to those who would substitute declamation for argument, and the mere ornaments of rhetoric for truth. The idea is, that the ministry should not be ignorant, but that if they wished to commend their office, they should be well informed, and should be people of good sense. Paul had no belief that an ignorant ministry was preferable to one that was characterized by true knowledge; and he felt that if he was to be useful it was to be by his imparting to others truth that would be useful. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge;" **Malachi 2:7**.

By long-suffering By patience in our trials, and in the provocations which we meet with. We endeavor to obtain and keep a control over our passions, and to keep them in subjection. See this word explained in the notes on ^{<4630>}1 Corinthians 13:4.

By kindness see the note, ^{<4630>}1 Corinthians 13:4. By gentleness of manner, of temper, and of spirit. By endeavoring to evince this spirit to all, whatever may be their treatment of us, and whatever may be our provocations. Paul felt that if a minister would do good he must be kind, and gentle to all.

By the Holy Ghost By the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. By those graces and virtues which it is his office especially to produce in the heart; compare ^{<4812>}Galatians 5:22,23. Paul here evidently refers not to the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit, but he is referring to the Spirit which he and his fellow-ministers manifested, and means here, doubtless, that they evinced such feelings as the Holy Spirit produced in the hearts of the children of God.

By love unfeigned Sincere, true, ardent love to all. By undissembled, pure, and genuine affection for the souls of people. What good can a minister do if he does not love his people, and the souls of people? The prominent characteristic in the life of the Redeemer was love — love to all. So if we are like him, and if we do any good, we shall have love to people. No man is useful without it; and ministers, in general, are useful just in proportion as they have it. It will prompt to labor, self-denial, and toil; it will make them patient, ardent, kind; it will give them zeal, and will give them access to the heart; it will accomplish what no eloquence, labor, or learning will do without it. He who shows that he loves me has access at once to my heart; he who does not, cannot make a way there by any argument, eloquence, denunciation, or learning. No minister is useful without it; no one with it can be otherwise than useful.

^{<4812>}**2 Corinthians 6:7.** *By the word of truth* That is, by making known the truths of the gospel. It was his object to make known the simple truth. He did not corrupt it by false mixtures of philosophy and human wisdom, but communicated it as it had been revealed to him. The object of the appointment of the Christian ministry is to make known the truth, and when that is done it cannot but be that they will commend their office and work to the favorable regards of people.

By the power of God By the divine power which attended the preaching of the gospel. Most of the ancient commentators explain this of the power of working miracles — Bloomfield. But it probably includes all the displays of divine power which attended the propagation of the gospel, whether in the working of miracles, or in the conversion of people. If it be asked how Paul used this power so as to give no offence in the work of the ministry, it may be replied, that the miraculous endowments bestowed upon the apostles, the power of speaking foreign languages, etc., seem to have been bestowed upon them to be employed in the same way as were their natural faculties; see the notes on [1 Corinthians 14:32](#). The idea here is, that they used the great powers entrusted to them by God, not as impostors would have done, for the purposes of gain and ambition, or for vain display, but solely for the furtherance of the true religion, and the salvation of people. They thus showed that they were sent from God, as well by the nature of the powers with which they were entrusted, as by the manner in which they used them.

By the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left

Interpreters have varied much in the exposition of this passage; and many have run into utter wildness. Grotius says, that it refers to the manner in which the ancient soldiers were armed. They bore a spear in their right hand, and a shield in the left. With the former they attacked their foes, with the latter they made defense. Some have supposed that it refers to the fact that they were taught to use the sword with the left hand as well as with the right. The simple idea is, that they were completely armed. To be armed on the right hand and on the left is to be well armed, or entirely equipped. They went forth to conflict. They met persecution, opposition, and slander. As the soldier went well armed to battle, so did they. But the armor with which they met their foes, and which constituted their entire panoply, was a holy life. With that they met all the assaults of their enemies; with that all slander and persecution. That was their defense, and by that they hoped and expected to achieve their conquests. They had no swords, and spears, and helmets, and shields; no carnal weapons of offence and defense; but they expected to meet all their assaults, and to gain all their victories, by an upright and holy life.

[2 Corinthians 6:8](#). *By honor and dishonor* The apostle is still illustrating the proposition that he and his fellow-laborers endeavored to give no offence ([2 Corinthians 6:3](#)), and to commend themselves as the ministers of God, [2 Corinthians 6:4](#). He here ([2 Corinthians 6:8-10](#))

introduces another group of particulars in which it was done. The main idea is, that they endeavored to act in a manner so as to commend the ministry and the gospel, whether they were in circumstances of honor or dishonor, whether lauded or despised by the world. The word rendered “by” ($\delta\iota\alpha$ ^{<1223>}) does not here denote the means by which they commended the gospel, but the medium. In the midst of honor and dishonor; whatever might be the esteem in which they were held by the world, they gave no offence. The first is, “by honor.” They were not everywhere honored, or treated with respect. Yet they were sometimes honored by people. The churches which they founded would honor them, and as the ministers of religion they would be by them treated with respect. Perhaps occasionally also they might be treated with great attention and regard by the people of the world on account of their miraculous powers; compare ^{<EXT>} Acts 28:7. So now, ministers of the gospel are often treated with great respect and honor. They are beloved and venerated; caressed and flattered, by the people of their charge. As ministers of God, as exercising a holy function, their office is often treated with great respect by the world. If they are eloquent or learned, or if they are eminently successful they are often highly esteemed and loved. It is difficult in such circumstances to “commend themselves as the ministers of God.” Few are the people who are not injured by honor; few who are not corrupted by flattery. Few are the ministers who are proof against this influence, and who in such circumstances can honor the ministry. If done, it is by showing that they regard such things as of little moment; by showing that they are influenced by higher considerations than the love of praise; by not allowing this to interfere with their duties, or to make them less faithful and laborious; but rather by making this the occasion of increased fidelity and increased zeal in their master’s cause. Most ministers do more to “give offence” in times when they are greatly honored by the world than when they are despised. Yet it is possible for a minister who is greatly honored to make it the occasion of commending himself more and more as a minister of God. And he should do it; as Paul said he did. The other situation was “in dishonor.” It is needless to say, that the apostles were often in situations where they had opportunity thus to commend themselves as the ministers of God. If sometimes honored, they were often dishonored. If the world sometimes flattered and caressed them, it often despised them, and cast out their names as evil; see the note, ^{<EXT>} 1 Corinthians 4:13. And perhaps it is so substantially now with those who are faithful. In such circumstances, also, Paul sought to commend himself as a minister of God. It was by receiving

all expressions of contempt with meekness; by not suffering them to interfere with the faithful discharge of his duties; by rising above them, and showing the power of religion to sustain him; and by returning good for evil, prayers for maledictions, blessings for curses, and by seeking to save, not injure and destroy those who thus sought to overwhelm him with disgrace. It may be difficult to do this, but it can be done; and when done, a man always does good.

By evil report The word used here (**δυσφημία** ^{<1426>}), means, properly, ill-omened language, malediction, reproach, contumely. It refers to the fact that they were often slandered and calumniated. Their motives were called in question, and their names aspersed. They were represented as deceivers and impostors, etc. The statement here is, that in such circumstances, and when thus assailed and reproached, they endeavored to commend themselves as the ministers of God. Evidently they endeavored to do this by not slandering or reviling in return; by manifesting a Christian spirit; by living down the slanderous accusation, and by doing good if possible even to their calumniators. It is more difficult, says Chrysostom, to bear such reports than it is pain of body; and it is consequently more difficult to evince a Christian spirit then. To human nature it is trying to have the name slandered and cast out as evil when we are conscious only of a desire to do good. But it is sufficient for the disciple that he be as his master, and if they called the master of the house Beelzebub, we must expect they will also those of his household. It is a fine field for a Christian minister, or any other Christian, to do good when his name is unjustly slandered. It gives him an opportunity of showing the true excellency of the Christian spirit; and it gives him the inexpressible privilege of being like Christ — like him in his suffering and in the moral excellence of character. A man should be willing to be anything if it will make him like the Redeemer — whether it be in suffering or in glory; see ^{<1010>}Philippians 3:10; ^{<1013>}1 Peter 4:13.

And good report When people speak well of us; when we are commended, praised, or honored. To honor the gospel then, and to commend the ministry, is:

- (1) To show that the heart is not set on this, and does not seek it;
- (2) To keep the heart from being puffed up with pride and self-estimation;
- (3) Not to suffer it to interfere with our fidelity to others. and with our faithfully presenting to them the truth.

Satan often attempts to bribe people by praise, and to neutralize the influence of ministers by flattery. It seems hard to go and proclaim to people painful truths who are causing the incense of praise to ascend around us. And it is commonly much easier for a minister of the gospel to commend himself as a minister of God when he is slandered than when he is praised, when his name is cast out as evil than when the breezes of popular favor are wafted upon him. Few people can withstand the influence of flattery, but many people can meet persecution with a proper spirit; few people comparatively can always evince Christian fidelity to others when they live always amidst the influence of “good report,” but there are many who can be faithful when they are poor, and despised, and reviled. Hence, it has happened, that God has so ordered it that his faithful servants have had but little of the “good report” which this world can furnish, but that they have been generally subjected to persecution and slander.

As deceivers That is, we are regarded and treated as if we were deceivers, and as if we were practicing an imposition on mankind, and as if we would advance our cause by any trick or fraud that would be possible. We are regarded and treated as deceivers. Perhaps this refers to some charges which had been brought against them by the opposing faction at Corinth (Locke), or perhaps to the opinion which the Jewish priests and pagan philosophers entertained of them. The idea is, that though they were extensively regarded and treated as impostors, yet they endeavored to live as became the ministers of God. They bore the imputation with patience, and they applied themselves diligently to the work of saving souls. Paul seldom turned aside to vindicate himself from such charges, but pursued his master’s work, and evidently felt that if he had a reputation that was worth anything, or deserved any reputation, God would take care of it; compare ^{EB01}Psalm 37:1-4. A man, especially a minister, who is constantly endeavoring to vindicate his own reputation, usually has a reputation which is not worth vindicating. A man who deserves a reputation will ultimately obtain just as much as is good for him, and as will advance the cause in which he is embarked.

And yet true We are not deceivers and impostors. Though we are regarded as such, yet we show ourselves to be true and faithful ministers of Christ.

^{EB02}**2 Corinthians 6:9.** *As unknown* As those who are deemed to be of an obscure and ignoble rank in life, unknown to the great, unknown to fame. The idea, I think, is, that they went as strangers, as persons

unknown, in preaching the gospel. Yet, though thus unknown they endeavor to commend themselves as the ministers of God. Though among strangers; though having no introduction from the great and the noble, yet they endeavored so to act as to convince the world that they were the ministers of God. This could be done only by a holy life, and by the evidence of the divine approbation which would attend them in their work. And by this, the ministers of religion, if they are faithful, may make themselves known even among those who were strangers, and may live so as to “give no offence.” Every minister and every Christian, even when they are “unknown” and when among strangers, should remember their high character as the servants of God, and should so live as to commend the religion which they profess to love, or which they are called on to preach. And yet how often is it that ministers when among strangers seem to feel themselves at liberty to lay aside their ministerial character, and to engage in conversation, and even partake of amusements which they themselves would regard as wholly improper if it were known that they were the ambassadors of God! And how often is it the case that professing Christians when traveling, when among strangers, when in foreign lands, forget their high calling, and conduct in a manner wholly different from what they did when surrounded by Christians; and when restrained by the sentiments and by the eyes of a Christian community!

And yet well known Our sentiments and our principles are well known. We have no concealments to make. We practice no disguise. We attempt to impose on no one. Though obscure in our origin; though without rank, of wealth, or power, or patronage, to commend ourselves to favor, yet we have succeeded in making ourselves known to the world. Though obscure in our origin, we are not obscure now. Though suspected of dark designs, yet our principles are all well known to the world. No people of the same obscurity of birth ever succeeded in making themselves more extensively known than did the apostles. The world at large became acquainted with them; and by their self-denial, zeal, and success, they extended their reputation around the globe.

As dying That is, regarded by others as dying. As condemned often to death; exposed to death; in the midst of trials that expose us to death, and that are ordinarily followed by death; see the note on ~~4651~~ 1 Corinthians 15:31, on the phrase, “I die daily.” They passed through so many trials that it might be said that they were constantly dying. “And, behold, we live.” Strange as it may seem, we still survive. Through all our trials we are

preserved, and though often exposed to death, yet we still live. The idea here is, that in all these trials, and in these exposures to death, they endeavored to commend themselves as the ministers of God. They bore their trials with patience; submitted to these exposures without a complaint; and ascribed their preservation to the interposition of God.

As chastened The word “chastened” (παιδευομενοι ^{<381>}) means corrected, “chastised.” It is applied to the chastening which God causes by afflictions and calamities; ^{<413>}1 Corinthians 11:32; ^{<489>}Revelation 3:19; ^{<316>}Hebrews 12:6. It refers here, not to the scourgings to which they were subjected in the synagogues and elsewhere, but to the chastisements which God inflicted; the trials to which he subjected them. And the idea is, that in the midst of these trials, they endeavored to act as became the ministers of God. They bore them with patience. They submitted to them as coming from his hand. They felt that they were right; and they submitted without a complaint.

And not killed Though severely chastened, yet we are not put to death. We survive them — preserved by the interposition of God.

^{<410>}**2 Corinthians 6:10.** *As sorrowful* (λυπουμενοι ^{<3076>}). Grieving, afflicted, troubled, sad. Under these sufferings we seem always to be cast down and sad. We endure afflictions that usually lead to the deepest expressions of grief. If the world looks only upon our trials, we must be regarded as always suffering, and always sad. The world will suppose that we have cause for continued lamentation (Doddridge), and they will regard us as among the most unhappy of mortals. Such, perhaps, is the estimate which the world usually affixes to the Christian life. They regard it as a life of sadness and of gloom; of trial and of melancholy. They see little in it that is cheerful, and they suppose that a heavy burden presses constantly on the heart of the Christian. Joy they think pertains to the gaities and pleasures of this life; sadness to religion. And perhaps a more comprehensive statement of the feelings with which the frivolous people of the world regard Christians cannot be found than in this expression, “as sorrowful.” True, they are not free from sorrow. They are tried like others. They have special trials arising from persecution, opposition, contempt, and from the conscious and deep-felt depravity of their hearts. They ARE serious; and their seriousness is often interpreted as gloom. But there is another side to this picture, and there is much in the Christian character and feelings unseen or unappreciated by the world. For they are

Always rejoicing So Paul was, notwithstanding the fact that he always appeared to have occasion for grief. Religion had a power not only to sustain the soul in trial, but to fill it with positive joy. The sources of his joy were doubtless the assurances of the divine favor and the hopes of eternal glory. And the same is true of religion always. There is an internal peace and joy which the world may not see or appreciate, but which is far more than a compensation for all the trials which the Christian endures.

As poor The idea is, we are poor, yet in our poverty we endeavor “to give no offence, and to commend ourselves as the ministers of God.” This would be done by their patience and resignation; by their entire freedom from everything dishonest and dishonorable, and by their readiness, when necessary, to labor for their own support. There is no doubt that the apostles were poor; compare ^{<40B>}Acts 3:6. The little property which some of them had, had all been forsaken in order that they might follow the Saviour, and go and preach his gospel. And there is as little doubt that the mass of ministers are still poor, and that, God designs and desires that they should be. It is in such circumstances that he designs they should illustrate the beauty and the sustaining power of religion, and be examples to the world.

Yet making many rich On the meaning of the word rich see the note, ^{<40B>}Romans 2:4. Here the apostle means that he and his fellow-laborers, though poor themselves, were the instruments of conferring durable and most valuable possessions on many persons. They had bestowed on them the true riches. They had been the means of investing them with treasures infinitely more valuable than any which kings and princes could bestow. They to whom they ministered were made partakers of the treasure where the moth doth not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

As having nothing Being utterly destitute. Having no property. This was true, doubtless, in a literal sense, of most of the apostles. “And yet possessing all things.” That is:

- (1) Possessing a portion of all things that may be necessary for our welfare, as far as our heavenly Father shall deem to be necessary for us.
- (2) Possessing an interest in all things, so that we can enjoy them. We can derive pleasure from the works of God — the heavens, the earth, the hills, the streams, the cattle on the mountains or in the vales, as the works of

God. We have a possession in them so that we can enjoy them as his works, and can say, "Our Father made them all." They are given to man to enjoy. They are a part of the inheritance of man. And though we cannot call them our own in the legal sense, yet we can call them ours in the sense that we can derive pleasure from their contemplation, and see in them the proofs of the wisdom and the goodness of God. The child of God that looks upon the hills and vales; upon an extensive and beautiful farm or landscape, may derive more pleasure from the contemplation of them as the work of God and his gift to people, than the real owner does, if irreligious, from contemplating all this as his own. And so far as mere happiness is concerned, the friend of God who sees in all this the proofs of God's beneficence and wisdom, may have a more valuable possession in those things than he who holds the title-deeds.

(3) Heirs of all things. We have a title to immortal life — a promised part in all that the universe can furnish that can make us happy.

(4) In the possession of pardon and peace; of the friendship of God and the knowledge of the Redeemer, we have the possession of all things. This comprises all. He that has this, what need has he of more? This meets all the desires; satisfies the soul; makes the man happy and blessed. He that has God for his portion, may be said to have all things, for he is "all in all." He that has the Redeemer for his friend has all things that he needs, for

"he that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

✠ Romans 8:32.

✠ **2 Corinthians 6:11.** *O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you*

We speak freely, and fully. This is an affectionate address to them, and has reference to what he had just said. It means that, when the heart was full on the subject, words would flow freely, and that he had given vent to the fervid language which he had just used because his heart was full. He loved them; he felt deeply; and he spoke to them with the utmost freedom of what he had thought, and purposed, and done.

Our heart is enlarged We have deep feelings, which naturally vent themselves in fervent and glowing language. The main idea here is, that he had a strong affection for them; a heart which embraced and loved them all, and which expressed itself in the language of deep emotion. He had loved them so that he was willing to be reproached, and to be persecuted,

and to be poor, and to have his name cast out as evil. “I cannot be silent. I conceal or dissemble nothing. I am full of ardent attachment, and that naturally vents itself in the strong language which I have used.” True attachment will find means of expressing itself. A heart full of love will give vent to its feelings. There will be no dissembling and hypocrisy there. And if a minister loves the souls of his people he will pour out the affections of his heart in strong and glowing language.

2 Corinthians 6:12. *Ye are not straitened in us* That is, you do not possess a narrow or contracted place in our affections. We love you fully, ardently, and are ready to do all that can be done for your welfare. There is no lack of room in our affections toward you. It is not narrow, confined, pent up. It is ample and free.

But ye are straitened in your own bowels That is, in the affections of your hearts. The word used here (**σπλάνγχνα** ^{<4698>}) commonly means in the Bible the tender affections. The Greek word properly denotes the upper viscera; the heart, the lungs, the liver. It is applied by Greek writers to denote those parts of victims which were eaten during or after the sacrifice — Robinson (Lexicon). Hence, it is applied to the heart, as the seat of the emotions and passions; and especially the gentler emotions, the tender affections, compassion, pity, love, etc. Our word “bowels” is applied usually to the lower viscera, and by no means expresses the idea of the word which is used in Greek. The idea here is, that they were straitened, or were confined in their affections for him. It is the language of reproof, meaning that he had not received from them the demonstrations of attachment which he had a right to expect, and which was a fair and proportionate return for the love bestowed on them. Probably he refers to the fact that they had formed parties; had admitted false teachers; and had not received his instructions as implicitly and as kindly as they ought to have done.

2 Corinthians 6:13. *Now for a recompence in the same* “By way of recompence, open your hearts in the same manner toward me as I have done toward you. It is all the reward or compensation which I ask of you; all the return which I desire. I do not ask silver or gold, or any earthly possessions. I ask only a return of love, and a devotedness to the cause which I love, and which I endeavor to promote.”

I speak as unto my children I speak as a parent addressing his children. I sustain toward you the relation of a spiritual father, and I have a right to require and expect a return of affection.

Be ye also enlarged Be not straitened in your affections. Love me as I love you. Give to me the same proofs of attachment which I have given you. The idea in this verse is, that the only compensation or remuneration which he expected for all the love which he had shown them, and for all his toils and self-denials in their behalf (^{<406>}2 Corinthians 6:4,5), was, that they would love him, and yield obedience to the laws of the gospel requiring them to be separate from the world, ^{<406>}2 Corinthians 6:14-18. One ground of the claim which he had to their affection was, that he sustained toward them the relation of a father, and that he had a right to require and to expect such a return of love. The Syriac renders it well: "Enlarge your love toward me." Tyndale renders it: "I speak unto you as unto children, which have like reward with us; stretch yourselves therefore out; bear not the yoke with unbelievers."

^{<404>}**2 Corinthians 6:14.** *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers* This is closely connected in sense with the previous verse. The apostle is there stating the nature of the remuneration or recompense which he asks for all the love which he had shown to them. He here says, that one mode of remuneration would be to yield obedience to his commands, and to separate themselves from all improper alliance with unbelievers. "Make me this return for my love. Love me as a proof of your affection, be not improperly united with unbelievers. Listen to me as a father addressing his children, and secure your own happiness and piety by not being unequally yoked with those who are not Christians." The word which is used here (^{<208>}ἑτεροζυγεω) means properly, to bear a different yoke, to be yoked heterogeneously — Robinson (Lexicon). It is applied to the custom of yoking animals of different kinds together (Passow); and as used here means not to mingle together, or be united with unbelievers. It is implied in the use of the word that there is a dissimilarity between believers and unbelievers so great that it is as improper for them to mingle together as it is to yoke animals of different kinds and species. The ground of the injunction is, that there is a difference between Christians and those who are not, so great as to render such unions improper and injurious. The direction here refers doubtless to all kinds of improper connections with those who were unbelievers. It has been usually supposed by commentators to refer particularly to marriage. But there is no reason for confining it to

marriage. It doubtless includes that, but it may as well refer to any other intimate connection, or to intimate friendships, or to participation in their amusements and employments, as to marriage. The radical idea is, that they were to abstain from all connections with unbelievers — with infidels, and pagans, and those who were not Christians, which would identify them with them; or they were to have no connection with them in anything as unbelievers, pagans, or infidels; they were to partake with them in nothing that was special to them as such. They were to have no part with them in their paganism unbelief, and idolatry, and infidelity; they were not to be united with them in any way or sense where it would necessarily be understood that they were partakers with them in those things. This is evidently the principle here laid down, and this principle is as applicable now as it was then. In the remainder of this verse and the following verses (~~4765~~ 2 Corinthians 6:15,16), he states reasons why they should have no such contact. There is no principle of Christianity that is more important than that which is here stated by the apostle; and none in which Christians are more in danger of erring, or in which they have more difficulty in determining the exact rule which they are to follow. The questions which arise are very important. Are we to have no contact with the people of the world? Are we cut loose from all our friends who are not Christians? Are we to become monks, and live a recluse and unsocial life? Are we never to mingle with the people of the world in business, in innocent recreation, or in the duties of citizens, and as neighbors and friends? It is important, therefore, in the highest degree, to endeavor to ascertain what are the principles on which the New Testament requires us to act in this matter. And in order to a correct understanding of this, the following principles may be suggested:

I. There is a large field of action, pursuit, principle, and thought, over which infidelity, sin, paganism, and the world as such, have the entire control. It is wholly without the range of Christian law, and stands opposed to Christian law. It pertains to a different kingdom; is conducted by different principles, and tends to destroy and annihilate the kingdom of Christ. It cannot be reconciled with Christian principle, and cannot be conformed to but in entire violation of the influence of religion. Here the prohibition of the New Testament is absolute and entire. Christians are not to mingle with the people of the world in these things; and are not to partake of them. This prohibition, it is supposed, extends to the following, among other things:

(1) To idolatry. This was plain. On no account or pretence were the early Christians to partake of that, or to countenance it. In primitive times, during the Roman persecutions, all that was asked was that they should cast a little incense on the altar of a pagan god. They refused to do it, and because they refused to do it, thousands perished as martyrs. They judged rightly; and the world has approved their cause.

(2) Sin, vice, licentiousness. This is also plain. Christians are in no way to patronise them, or to lend their influence to them, or to promote them by their name, their presence, or their property. “Neither be partakers of other people’s sins;” ^{<482>}1 Timothy 5:22; 2 John 11.

(3) Arts and acts of dishonesty, deception, and fraud in traffic and trade. Here the prohibition also must be absolute. No Christian can have a right to enter into partnership with another where the business is to be conducted on dishonest and unchristian principles, or where it shall lead to the violation of any of the laws of God. If it involves deception and fraud in the principles on which it is conducted; if it spreads ruin and poverty — as the distilling and vending of ardent spirits does; if it leads to the necessary violation of the Christian Sabbath, then the case is plain. A Christian is to have no “fellowship with such unfruitful works of darkness, but is rather to reprove them;” ^{<481>}Ephesians 5:11.

(4) The amusements and pleasures that are entirely worldly, and sinful in their nature; that are wholly under worldly influence, and which cannot be brought under Christian principles. Nearly all amusements are of this description. The true principle here seems to be, that if a Christian in such a place is expected to lay aside his Christian principles, and if it would be deemed indecorous and improper for him to introduce the subject of religion, or if religion would be regarded as entirely inconsistent with the nature of the amusement then he is not to be found there. The world reigns there, and if the principles of his Lord and Master would be excluded, he should not be there. This applies of course to the theater, the circus, the ballroom, and to large and splendid parties of pleasure. We are not to associate with idolaters in their idolatry; nor with the licentious in their licentiousness; nor with the infidel in his infidelity; nor with the proud in their pride; nor with the frivolous in their gaiety; nor with the friends of the theater, or the ballroom, or the circus in their attachment to these places and pursuits. And whatever other connection we are to have with them as neighbors, citizens, or members of our families, we are not to participate

with them IN these things. Thus far all seems to be clear; and the rule is a plain one whether it applies to marriage, or to business, or to religion, or to pleasure; compare note, ~~4150~~ 1 Corinthians 5:10.

II. There is a large field of action, thought, and plan which may be said to be common with the Christian and the world; that is, where the Christian is not expected to abandon his own principles, and where there will be, or need be, no compromise of the sternest views of truth, or the most upright, serious, and holy conduct. He may carry his principles with him; may always manifest them if necessary; and may even commend them to others. A few of these may be referred to.

- (1) Commercial transactions and professional engagements that are conducted on honest and upright principles, even when those with whom we act are not Christians.
- (2) Literary and scientific pursuits, which never, when pursued with a right spirit, interfere with the principles of Christianity, and never are contrary to it.
- (3) The love and affection which are due to relatives and friends. Nothing in the Bible assuredly will prohibit a pious son from uniting with one who is not pious in supporting an aged and infirm parent, or a much loved and affectionate sister. The same remark is true also respecting the duty which a wife owes to a husband, a husband to a wife, or a parent to a child, though one of them should not be a Christian. And the same observation is true also of neighbors, who are not to be prohibited from uniting as neighbors in social contact, and in acts of common kindness and charity, though all not Christians.
- (4) As citizens. We owe duties to our country, and a Christian need not refuse to act with others in the elective franchise, or in making or administering the laws. Here, however, it is clear that he is not at liberty to violate the laws and the principles of the Bible. He cannot be at liberty to unite with them in political schemes that are contrary to the Law of God, or in elevating to office people whom he cannot vote for with a good conscience as qualified for the station.
- (5) In plans of public improvement, in schemes that go to the advancement of the public welfare, when the schemes do not violate the laws of God.

But if they involve the necessity of violating the Sabbath, or any of the laws of God, assuredly he cannot consistently participate in them.

(6) In doing good to others. So the Saviour was with sinners; so he ate, and drank, and conversed with them. So we may mingle with them, without partaking of their wicked feelings and plans, so far as we can do them good, and exert over them a holy and saving influence. In all the situations here referred to, and in all the duties growing out of them, the Christian may maintain his principles, and may preserve a good conscience. Indeed the Saviour evidently contemplated that his people would have such contact with the world, and that in it they would do good. But in none of these is there to be any compromise of principle; in none to be any yielding to the opinions and practices that are contrary to the laws of God.

III. There is a large field of action, conduct, and plan, where Christians only will act together. These relate to the special duties of religion — to prayer, Christian fellowship, the ordinances of the gospel, and most of the plans of Christian beneficence. Here the world will not intrude; and here assuredly there will be no necessity of any compromise of Christian principle.

For what fellowship Paul proceeds here to state reasons why there should be no such improper connection with the world. The main reason, though under various forms, is that there can be no fellowship, no communion, nothing in common between them; and that therefore they should be separate. The word “fellowship” (μετοχη³³⁵³) means partnership, participation. What is there in common; or how can the one partake with the other? The interrogative form here is designed to be emphatic, and to declare in the strongest terms that there can be no such partnership.

Righteousness Such as you Christians are required to practice; implying that all were to be governed by the stern and uncompromising principles of honesty and justice.

With unrighteousness Dishonesty, injustice, sin; implying that the world is governed by such principles.

And what communion (κοινωνια²⁸⁴²). Participation; communion; that which is in common. What is there in common between light and darkness? What common principle is there of which they both partake? There is none. There is a total and eternal separation.

Light The emblem of truth, virtue, holiness; see the note, ^{<4016>}Matthew 4:16; 5:16; ^{<4004>}John 1:4; ^{<4129>}Romans 2:19; ^{<4041>}2 Corinthians 4:4,6. It is implied here that Christians are enlightened, and walk in the light. Their principles are pure and holy — principles of which light is the proper emblem.

Darkness The emblem of sin, corruption, ignorance; implying that the world to which Paul refers was governed and influenced by these. The idea is, that as there is an entire separation between light and darkness in their nature; as they have nothing in common, so it is and should be, between Christians and sinners. There should be a separation. There can be nothing in common between holiness and sin; and Christians should have nothing to do “with the unfruitful works of darkness:” ^{<4151>}Ephesians 5:11.

^{<4015>}**2 Corinthians 6:15.** *And what concord* (συμφωνησις ^{<4857>}).

Sympathy, unison. This word refers properly to the unison or harmony produced by musical instruments, where there is a chord. What accordance, what unison is there; what strings are there which being struck will produce a chord or harmony? The idea is, then, there is as much that is discordant between Christ and Belial as there is between instruments of music that produce only discordant and jarring sounds.

Hath Christ What is there in common between Christ and Belial, implying that Christians are governed by the principles, and that they follow the example of Christ.

Belial (Βελιαλ ^{<955>}) or (Βελιαρ ^{<955>}), as as it is found in some of the late editions. The form Beliar is Syriac. The Hebrew word ל [yl b ^{<41100>} means literally without profit; worthlessness; wickedness. It is here evidently applied to Satan. The Syriac translates it “Satan.” The idea is, that the persons to whom Paul referred, the pagan, wicked, unbelieving world, were governed by the principles of Satan, and were “taken captive by him at his will” (^{<4126>}2 Timothy 2:26 compare ^{<4184>}John 8:44), and that Christians should be separate from the wicked world, as Christ was separate from all the feelings, purposes, and plans of Satan. He had no participation in them; he formed no union with them; and so it should be with the followers of the one in relation to the followers of the other.

Or what part (μερις ^{<3310>}). Portion, share, participation, fellowship. This word refers usually to a division of an estate; ^{<4102>}Luke 10:42; note, ^{<4121>}Acts 8:21; ^{<4012>}Colossians 1:12. There is no participation; nothing in common.

He that believeth A Christian; a man the characteristic of whom it is that he believes on the Lord Jesus.

With an infidel A man who does not believe — whether a pagan idolater, a profane man, a scoffer, a philosopher, a man of science, a moral man, or a son or daughter of gaiety. The idea is, that on the subject of religion there is no union; nothing in common; no participation. They are governed by different principles; have different feelings; are looking to different rewards; and are tending to a different destiny. The believer, therefore, should not select his partner in life and his chosen companions and friends from this class, but from those with whom he has sympathy, and with whom he has common feelings and hopes.

2 Corinthians 6:16. *And what agreement* (συνγκαταθεσις ^{<4783>}). Assent, accord, agreement. what putting or laying down together is there? What is there in one that resembles the other?

The temple of God What has a temple of God to do with idol worship? It is erected for a different purpose, and the worship of idols in it would not be tolerated. It is implied here that Christians are themselves the temple of God, a fact which Paul proceeds immediately to illustrate; and that it is as absurd for them to mingle with the infidel world as it would be to erect the image of a pagan god in the temple of YAHWEH. This is strong language, and we cannot but admire the energy and copiousness of the expressions used by Paul, “which cannot,” says Bloomfield, “be easily paralleled in the best Classical writers.”

With idols Those objects which God hates, and on which he cannot look but with abhorrence. The sense is, that for Christians to mingle with the sinful world; to partake of their pleasures, pursuits, and follies, is as detestable and hateful in the sight of God as if his temple were profaned by erecting a deformed, and shapeless, and senseless block in it as an object of worship. And, assuredly, if Christians had such a sense of the abomination of mingling with the world, they would feel the obligation to be separate and pure.

For ye are the temple of the living God see this explained in the notes on ^{<4816>}1 Corinthians 3:16,17. The idea is, that as God dwells with his people, they ought to be separated from a sinful and polluted world.

As God hath said The words here quoted are taken substantially from ^{<1234>}Exodus 39:45; ^{<1312>}Leviticus 26:12; ^{<1372>}Ezekiel 37:27. They are not literally quoted, but Paul has thrown together the substance of what occurs in several places. The sense, however, is the same as occurs in the places referred to.

I will dwell in them (ἐνοικητω ^{<1774>}). I will take up my indwelling in them. There is an allusion doubtless to the fact that he would be present among his people by the Sechinah, or the visible symbol of his presence; see the note on ^{<1316>}1 Corinthians 3:16,17. It implies, when used with reference to Christians, that the Holy Spirit would abide with them, and that the blessing of God would attend them; see Romans 8; ^{<1316>}Colossians 3:16; ^{<1314>}2 Timothy 1:14.

And walk in them That is, I will walk among them. I will be one of their number. He was present among the Jews by the public manifestation of his presence by a symbol; he is present with Christians by the presence and guidance of his Holy Spirit.

And I will be their God Not only the God whom they worship, but the God who will protect and bless them. I will take them under my special protection, and they shall enjoy my favor. This is certainly as true of Christians as it was of the Jews, and Paul has not departed from the spirit of the promise in applying it to the Christian character. His object in quoting these passages is, to impress on Christians the solemnity and importance of the truth that God dwelt among them and with them; that they were under his care and protection; that they belonged to him, and that they therefore should be separate from the world.

^{<1317>}**2 Corinthians 6:17.** *Wherefore* Since you are a special people. Since God, the holy and blessed God, dwells with you and among you.

Come out from among them That is, from among idolaters and unbelievers; from a frivolous and vicious world. These words are taken, by a slight change, from ^{<1311>}Isaiah 3:11. They are there applied to the Jews in Babylon, and are a solemn call which God makes on them to leave the place of their exile, to come out from among the idolaters of that city and return to their own land; see my note on that place. Babylon, in the Scriptures, is the emblem of whatever is proud, arrogant, wicked, and opposed to God; and Paul, therefore, applies the words here with great

beauty and force to illustrate the duty of Christians in separating themselves from a vain, idolatrous, and wicked world.

And be ye separate Separate from the world, and all its corrupting influences.

Saith the Lord see ^{<281>}Isaiah 3:11. Paul does not use this language as if it had original reference to Christians, but he applies it as containing an important principle that was applicable to the case which he was considering, or as language that would appropriately express the idea which he wished to convey. The language of the Old Testament is often used in this manner by the writers of the New.

And touch not the unclean thing In Isaiah, “touch no unclean thing;” that is, they were to be pure, and to have no connection with idolatry in any of its forms. So Christians were to avoid all unholy contact with a vain and polluted world. The sense is, “Have no close connection with an idolater, or an unholy person. Be pure; and feel that you belong to a community that is under its own laws, and that is to be distinguished in moral purity from all the rest of the world.”

And I will receive you That is, I will receive and recognize you as my friends and my adopted children. This could not be done until they were separated from an idolatrous and wicked world. The fact of their being received by God, and recognized as his children, depended on their coming out from the world. These words with the verses following, though used evidently somewhat in the form of a quotation, yet are not to be found in any single place in the Old Testament In ^{<1074>}2 Samuel 7:14, God says of Solomon, “I will be his Father, and he shall be my son.” In ^{<2810>}Jeremiah 31:9, God says, “For I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born.” It is probable that Paul had such passages in his eye, yet he doubtless designed rather to express the general sense of the promises of the Old Testament than to quote any single passage. Or why may it not be that we should regard Paul here himself as speaking as an inspired man directly, and making a promise then first communicated immediately from the Lord? Paul was inspired as well as the prophets; and it may be that he meant to communicate a promise directly from God. Grotius supposes that it was not taken from any particular place in the Old Testament, but was a part of a hymn that was in use among the Hebrews.

<406> 2 Corinthians 6:18. *And will be a Father unto you* A father is the protector, counselor, and guide of his children. He instructs them, provides for them, and counsels them in time of perplexity. No relation is more tender than this. In accordance with this, God says, that he will be to his people their protector, counsellor, guide, and friend. He will cherish toward them the feeling of a father; he will provide for them, he will acknowledge them as his children. No higher honor can be conferred on mortals than to be adopted into the family of God, and to be permitted to call the Most High our Father. No rank is so elevated as that of being the sons and the daughters of the Lord Almighty. Yet this is the common appellation by which God addresses his people; and the most humble in rank, the most poor and ignorant of his friends on earth, the most despised among people, may reflect that they are the children of the ever-living God, and have the Maker of the heavens and the earth as their Father and their eternal Friend. How poor are all the honors of the world compared with this!

The Lord Almighty The word used here (**παντοκρατωρ** ^{<3841>}) occurs nowhere except in this place and in the book of Revelation; ^{<4068>}Revelation 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7,14; 19:6,16; 21:22. It means one who has all power; and is applied to God in contradistinction from idols that are weak and powerless. God is able to protect his people, and they who put their trust in him shall never be confounded. What has he to fear who has a friend of almighty power?

REMARKS

- 1.** It is right and proper to exhort Christians not to receive the grace of God in vain, ^{<4062>}2 Corinthians 6:1. Even they sometimes abuse their privileges; become neglectful of the mercy of God; undervalue the truths of religion, and do not make as much as they should do of the glorious truths that are suited to sanctify and to save. Every Christian should endeavor to make just as much as possible of his privileges, and to become just as eminent as he can possibly be in his Christian profession.
- 2.** The benefits of salvation to this world come through the intercession of Jesus Christ, ^{<4062>}2 Corinthians 6:2. It is because God is pleased to hear him; because he calls on God in an accepted time that we have any hope of pardon. The sinner enjoys no offer of mercy, and no possibility of pardon except what he owes to Jesus Christ. Should he cease to plead for people,

the offers of salvation would be withdrawn, and the race would perish forever.

3. The world is under a dispensation of mercy, ~~2~~2 Corinthians 6:2.

People may be saved: God is willing to show compassion, and to rescue them from ruin.

4. How important is the present moment! ~~2~~2 Corinthians 6:2. How important is each moment! It may be the last period of mercy. No sinner can calculate with any certainty on another instant of time. God holds his breath, and with infinite ease he can remove him to eternity. Eternal results hang on the present — the fleeting moment, and yet how unconcerned are the mass of people about their present condition; how unanxious about what may possibly or probably occur the next moment! Now, the sinner may be pardoned. The next moment he may be beyond the reach of forgiveness. This instant, the bliss of heaven is offered him; the next, he may be solemnly excluded from hope and heaven!

5. The ministers of the gospel should give no occasion of offence to any one, ~~2~~2 Corinthians 6:3. On each one of them depends a portion of the honor of the ministry in this world, and of the honor of Jesus Christ among people. How solemn is this responsibility! How pure, and holy, and unblameable should they be!

6. Ministers and all Christians should be willing to suffer in the cause of the Redeemer, ~~2~~2 Corinthians 6:4,5. If the early ministers and other Christians were called to endure the pains of imprisonment and persecution for the honor of the gospel, assuredly we should be willing also to suffer. Why should there be anymore reason for their suffering than for ours?

7. We see what our religion has cost, ~~2~~2 Corinthians 6:4,5. It has come down to us through suffering. All the privileges that we enjoy have been the fruit of toil, and blood, and tears, and sighs. The best blood in human veins has flowed to procure these blessings; the holiest people on earth have wept, and been scourged, and tortured, that we might possess these privileges. What thanks should we give to God for all this! How highly should we prize the religion that has cost so much!

8. In trial we should evince such a spirit as not to dishonor, but to honor our religion, ~~2~~2 Corinthians 6:3-5. This is as incumbent on all Christians as it is on ministers of the gospel. It is in such scenes that the reality of

religion is tested. It is then that its power is seen. It is then that its value may be known. Christians and Christian ministers often do good in circumstances of poverty, persecution, and sickness, which they never do in health, and in popular favor, and in prosperity. And God often places his people in trial that they may do good then, expecting that they will accomplish more than they could in prosperous circumstances. They whose aim it is to do good have often occasion to bless God that they were subjected to trial. Bunyan wrote the “Pilgrim’s Progress” in a dungeon; and almost all the works of Baxter were written when he was suffering under persecution, and forbidden to preach the gospel. The devil is often foiled in this way. He persecutes and opposes Christians; and on the rack and at the stake they do most to destroy his kingdom; he throws them into dungeons, and they make books which go down even to the millennium, making successful war on the empire of darkness. Christians, therefore, should esteem it a privilege to be permitted to suffer on account of Christ; ^{<1029>}Philippians 1:29.

9. If ministers and other Christians do any good they must be pure, ^{<1016>}2 Corinthians 6:6,7. The gospel is to be commended by pureness, and knowledge, and the word of truth, and the armor of righteousness. It is in this way that they are to meet opposition; in this way that they are to propagate their sentiments. No man need expect to do good in the ministry or as a private Christian, who is not a holy man. No man who is a holy man can help doing good. It will be a matter of course that he will shed a healthful moral influence around him. And he will no more live without effect than the sun sheds its steady beams on the earth without effect. His influence may be very noiseless and still, like the sunbeams or the dew, but it will be felt in the world. Wicked people can resist anything else better than they can a holy example. They can make a mock of preaching; they can deride exhortation; they can throw away a tract; they can burn the Bible; but what can they do against a holy example? No more than they can against the vivifying and enlightening beams of the sun; and a man who leads a holy life cannot help doing good, and cannot be prevented from doing good.

10. They who are Christians must expect to meet with much dishonor, and to be subjected often to the influence of evil report, ^{<1018>}2 Corinthians 6:8. The world is unfriendly to religion, and its friends must never be surprised if their motives are impeached, and their names calumniated.

- 11.** Especially is this the case with ministers, [2 Corinthians 6:8](#). They should make up their minds to it, and they should not suppose that any strange thing had happened to them if they are called thus to suffer.
- 12.** They who are about to make a profession of religion, and they who are about entering on the work of the ministry, or who are agitating the question whether they should be ministers, should ask themselves whether they are prepared for this. They should count the cost; nor should they either make a profession of religion or think of the ministry as a profession, unless they are willing to meet with dishonor, and to go through evil report; to be poor ([2 Corinthians 6:10](#)), and to be despised and persecuted, or to die in the cause which they embrace.
- 13.** Religion has power to sustain the soul in trials, [2 Corinthians 6:10](#). Why should he be sad who has occasion to rejoice always? Why should he deem himself poor, though he has slender earthly possessions, who is able to make many rich? Why should he be melancholy as if he had nothing, who has Christ as his portion, and who is an heir of all things? Let not the poor, who are rich in faith, despond as though they had nothing. They have a treasure which gold cannot purchase, and which will be of infinite value when all other treasure fails. He that has an everlasting inheritance in heaven cannot be called a poor man. And he that can look to such an inheritance should not be unwilling to part with his earthly possessions. Those who seem to be most wealthy are often the poorest of mortals; and those who seem to be poor, or who are in humble circumstances, often have an enjoyment of even this world which is unknown in the palaces and at the tables of the great. They look on all things as the work of their Father; and in their humble dwellings, and with their humble fare, they have an enjoyment of the bounties of their heavenly Benefactor, which is not experienced often in the dwellings of the great and the rich.
- 14.** A people should render to a minister and a pastor a return of love and confidence that shall be proportionate to the love which is shown to them, [2 Corinthians 6:12](#). This is but a reasonable and fair requital, and this is necessary not only to the comfort, but to the success of a minister. What good can he do unless he has the affections and confidence of his people?
- 15.** The compensation or recompence which a minister has a right to expect and require for arduous toil is, that his people should be “enlarged” in love toward him, and that they should yield themselves to the laws of the Redeemer, and be separate from the world, [2 Corinthians 6:13](#). And this

is an ample reward. It is what he seeks, what he prays for, what he most ardently desires. If he is worthy of his office, he will seek not theirs but them (~~47214~~2 Corinthians 12:14), and he will be satisfied for all his toils if he sees them walking in the truth (3 John 4), and showing in their lives the pure and elevated principles of the gospel which they profess to love.

16. The welfare of religion depends on the fact that Christians should be separate from a vain, and frivolous, and wicked world, ~~47064~~2 Corinthians 6:14-16. Why should they partake of those things in which they can, if Christians, have nothing in common? Why attempt to mingle light with darkness? to form a compact between Christ and Belial? or to set up a polluted idol in the temple of the living God? The truth is, there are great and eternal principles in the gospel which should not be surrendered, and which cannot be broken down. Christ intended to set up a kingdom that should be unlike the kingdoms of this world. And he designed that his people should be governed by different principles from the people of this world.

17. They who are about to make a profession of religion should resolve to separate themselves from the world, ~~47064~~2 Corinthians 6:14,15. Religion cannot exist where there is no such separation, and they who are unwilling to forsake infidel companions and the frivolous amusements and vanities of life, and to find their chosen friends and pleasures among the people of God, can have no evidence that they are Christians. The world with all its wickedness and its frivolous pleasures must be forsaken, and there must be an effectual line drawn between the friends of God and the friends of sin.

Let us, then, who profess to be the friends of the Redeemer remember how pure and holy we should be. It should not be indeed with the spirit of the Pharisee; it should not be with a spirit that will lead us to say, "stand by, for I am holier than thou;" but it should be, while we discharge all our duties to our impenitent friends, and while in all our contacts with the world we should be honest and true, and while we do not refuse to mingle with them as neighbors and citizens as far as we can without compromising Christian principles, still our chosen friends and our dearest friendships should be with the people of God. For, his friends should be our friends; our happiness should be with them, and the world should see that we prefer the friends of the Redeemer to the friends of gaiety, ambition, and sin.

18. Christians are the holy temple of God, ~~4766~~2 Corinthians 6:16. How pure should they be! How free should they be from sin! How careful to maintain consciences void of offence!

19. What an inestimable privilege it is to be a Christian! (~~4768~~2 Corinthians 6:18); to be a child of God! to feel that he is a Father and a Friend! to feel that though we may be forsaken by all others; though poor and despised, yet there is one who never forsakes; one who never forgets that he has sons and daughters dependent on him, and who need his constant care. Compared with this, how small the honor of being permitted to call the rich our friends, or to be regarded as the sons or daughters of nobles and of princes! Let the Christian then most highly prize his privileges, and feel that he is raised above all the elevations of rank and honor which this world can bestow. All these shall fade away, and the highest and the lowest shall meet on the same level in the grave, and alike return to dust. But the elevation of the child of God shall only begin to be visible and appreciated when all other honors fade away.

20. Let all seek to become the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Let us aspire to this rather than to earthly honors; let us seek this rather than to be numbered with the rich and the great. All cannot be honored in this world, and few are they who can be regarded as belonging to elevated ranks here. But all may be the children of the living God, and be permitted to call the Lord Almighty their Father and their Friend. O! if people could as easily be permitted to call themselves the sons of monarchs and princes; if they could as easily be admitted to the palaces of the great and sit down at their tables as they can enter heaven, how greedily would they embrace it! And yet how poor and paltry would be such honor and pleasure compared with that of feeling that we are the adopted children of the great and the eternal God!

NOTES ON 2 CORINTHIANS 7

The first verse of this chapter (2 Corinthians 7) properly belongs to the previous chapter, and should have been attached to that. It is an exhortation made in view of the promises there referred to, to make every effort to obtain perfect purity, and to become entirely holy.

In ~~4002~~2 Corinthians 7:2,3, he entreats the Corinthians, in accordance with the wish which he had expressed in ~~4003~~2 Corinthians 6:13, to receive him as a teacher and a spiritual father; as a faithful apostle of the Lord Jesus. To induce them to do this, he assures them that he had given them, at no time, any occasion of offence. He had injured no man; he had wronged no man. Possibly some might suppose that he had injured them by the sternness of his requirements in forbidding them to contract friendships and alliances with infidels; or in the case of discipline in regard to the incestuous person. But he assures them that all his commands had been the fruit of most tender love for them, and that he was ready to live and die with them.

The remainder of the chapter (~~4004~~2 Corinthians 7:4-15) is occupied mainly in stating the joy which he had at the evidence which they had given that they were ready to obey his commands. He says, therefore (~~4005~~2 Corinthians 7:4), that he was full of comfort and joy; and that in all his tribulation, the evidence of their obedience had given him great and unfeigned satisfaction. In order to show them the extent of his joy, he gives a pathetic description of the anxiety of mind which he had on the subject; his troubles in Macedonia, and particularly his distress on not meeting with Titus as he had expected, ~~4006~~2 Corinthians 7:5. But this distress had been relieved by his coming, and by the evidence which was furnished through him that they were ready to yield obedience to his commands, ~~4007~~2 Corinthians 7:6,7. This joy was greatly increased by his hearing from Titus the effect which his former Epistle to them had produced, ~~4008~~2 Corinthians 7:8-13. He had felt deep anxiety in regard to that. He had even regretted, it would seem (~~4009~~2 Corinthians 7:8), that he had sent it. He had been deeply pained at the necessity of giving them pain, ~~4010~~2 Corinthians 7:8. But the effect had been all that he had desired; and when he learned from Titus the effect which it had produced — the deep repentance which they had evinced, and the thorough reformation which had occurred (~~4011~~2

Corinthians 7:9-11), he had great occasion to rejoice that he had sent the Epistle to them. This new and distinguished instance of their obedience had given him great joy, and confirmed him in the proof that they were truly attached to him. The apostle adds, in the conclusion of the chapter, that his joy was greatly increased by the joy which Titus manifested. and his entire satisfaction in the conduct of the Corinthians and the treatment which he had received from them (^{<4073>}2 Corinthians 7:13), so that though he, Paul, had often had occasion to speak in the kindest terms of the Corinthians, all that he had ever said in their favor Titus had realized in his own case (^{<4074>}2 Corinthians 7:14), and the affection of Titus for them had been greatly increased by his visit to them, ^{<4075>}2 Corinthians 7:15. The whole chapter, therefore, is eminently adapted to produce good feeling in the minds of the Corinthians toward the apostle, and to strengthen the bonds of their mutual attachment.

^{<4076>}**2 Corinthians 7:1.** *Having therefore these promises* The promises referred to in ^{<4077>}2 Corinthians 6:17,18; the promise that God would be a Father, a protector, and a friend The idea is, that as we have a promise that God would dwell in us, that he would be our God, that he would be to us a Father, we should remove from us whatever is offensive in his sight, and become perfectly holy.

Let us cleanse ourselves Let us purify ourselves. Paul was not afraid to bring into view the agency of Christians themselves in the work of salvation. He, therefore, says, 'let us purify ourselves,' as if Christians had much to do; as if their own agency was to be employed; and as if their purifying was dependent on their own efforts. While it is true that all purifying influence and all holiness proceeds from God, it is also true that the effect of all the influences of the Holy Spirit is to excite us to diligence to purify our own hearts, and to urge us to make strenuous efforts to overcome our own sins. He who expects to be made pure without any effort of his own, will never become pure; and he who ever becomes holy will become so in consequence of strenuous efforts to resist the evil of his own heart, and to become like God. The argument here is, that we have the promises of God to aid us. We do not go about the work in our own strength. It is not a work in which we are to have no aid. But it is a work which God desires, and where he will give us all the aid which we need.

From all filthiness of the flesh The noun used here (^{<3436>}μολυσμος) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The verb occurs in ^{<4407>}1

Corinthians 8:7; ^{<4104>}Revelation 3:4; 14:4, and means to stain, defile, pollute, as a garment; and the word used here means a soiling, hence, defilement, pollution, and refers to the defiling and corrupting influence of fleshly desires and carnal appetites. The filthiness of the flesh here denotes evidently the gross and corrupt appetites and passions of the body, including all such actions of all kinds as are inconsistent with the virtue and purity with which the body, regarded as the temple of the Holy Spirit, should be kept holy — all such passions and appetites as the Holy Spirit of God would not produce.

And spirit By “filthiness of the spirit,” the apostle means, probably, all the thoughts or mental associations that defile the man. Thus, the Saviour (^{<4159>}Matthew 15:19) speaks of evil thoughts, etc. that proceed out of the heart, and that pollute the man. And probably Paul here includes all the sins and passions which pertain particularly to mind or to the soul rather than to carnal appetites, such as the desire of revenge, pride, avarice, ambition, etc. These are in themselves as polluting and defiling as the gross sensual pleasures. They stand as much in the way of sanctification, they are as offensive to God, and they prove as certainly that the heart is depraved as the grossest sensual passions. The main difference is, that they are more decent in the external appearance; they can be better concealed; they are usually indulged by a more elevated class in society; but they are not the less offensive to God. It may be added, also, that they are often conjoined in the same person; and that the man who is defiled in his “spirit” is often a man most corrupt and sensual in his” flesh.” Sin sweeps with a desolating influence through the whole frame, and it usually leaves no part unaffected, though some part may be more deeply corrupted than others.

Perfecting This word (^{<2005>}επιτελουντες) means properly to bring to an end, to finish, complete. The idea here is, that of carrying it out to the completion. Holiness had been commenced in the heart, and the exhortation of the apostle is, that they should make every effort that it might be complete in all its parts. He does not say that this work of perfection had ever been accomplished — nor does he say that it had not been. He only urges the obligation to make an effort to be entirely holy; and this obligation is not affected by the inquiry whether anyone has been or has not been perfect. It is an obligation which results from the nature of the Law of God and his unchangeable claims on the soul. The fact that no one has been perfect does not relax the claim; the fact that no one will be in this life does not weaken the obligation. It proves only the deep and

dreadful depravity of the human heart, and should humble us under the stubbornness of guilt. The obligation to be perfect is one that is unchangeable and eternal; see ^{<4158>}Matthew 5:48; ^{<4015>}1 Peter 1:15. Tyndale renders this: “and grow up to full holiness in the fear, of God.” The unceasing and steady aim of every Christian should be perfection — perfection in all things — in the love of God, of Christ, of man; perfection of heart, and feeling, and emotion; perfection in his words, and plans, and dealings with people; perfection in his prayers, and in his submission to the will of God. No man can be a Christian who does not sincerely desire it. and who does not constantly aim at it. No man is a friend of God who can acquiesce in a state of sin, and who is satisfied and contented that he is not as holy as God is holy. And any man who has no desire to be perfect as God is, and who does not make it his daily and constant aim to be as perfect as God, may set it down as demonstrably certain that he has no true religion, How can a man be a Christian who is willing to acquiesce in a state of sin, and who does not desire to be just like his Master and Lord?

In the fear of God Out of fear and reverence of God. From a regard to his commands, and a reverence for his name. The idea seems to be, that we are always in the presence of God; we are professedly under His Law; and we should be awed and restrained by a sense of his presence from the commission of sin, and from indulgence in the pollutions of the flesh and spirit. There are many sins that the presence of a child will restrain a man from committing; and how should the conscious presence of a holy God keep us from sin! If the fear of man or of a child will restrain us, and make us attempt to be holy and pure, how should the fear of the all-present and the all-seeing God keep us not only from outward sins, but from polluted thoughts and unholy desires!

^{<4015>}**2 Corinthians 7:2.** *Receive us* Tyndale renders this: “understand us.” The word used here ($\chi\omega\rho\eta\sigma\alpha\tau\epsilon$ ^{<5562>}) means properly, give space, place, or room; and it means here evidently, make place or room for us in your affections; that is, admit or receive us as your friends. It is an earnest entreaty that they would do what he had exhorted them to do in ^{<4013>}2 Corinthians 6:13; see the note on that verse. From that he had digressed in the close of the last chapter. He here returns to the subject and asks an interest in their affections and their love.

We have wronged no man We have done injustice to no man. This is given as a reason why they should admit him to their full confidence and

affection. It is not improbable that he had been charged with injuring the incestuous person by the severe discipline which he had found it necessary to inflict on him note ^{<418>}1 Corinthians 5:5. This charge would not improbably be brought against him by the false teachers in Corinth. But Paul here says, that whatever was the severity of the discipline, he was conscious of having done injury to no member of that church. It is possible, however, that he does not here refer to any such charge, but that he says in general that he had done no injury, and that there was no reason why they should not receive him to their entire confidence. It argues great consciousness of integrity when a man who has spent a considerable time, as Paul had, with others, is able to say that he had wronged no man in any way. Paul could not have made this solemn declaration unless he was certain he had lived a very blameless life; compare ^{<419>}Acts 20:33.

We have corrupted no man This means that he had corrupted no man in his morals, either by his precept or his example. The word (φθειρω ^{<5351>}) means in general to bring into a worse state or condition, and is very often applied to morals. The idea is, here, that Paul had not by his precept or example made any man the worse. He had not corrupted his principles or his habits, or led him into sin.

We have defrauded no man We have taken no man's property by cunning, by trick, or by deception. The word ^{<4122>}πλεονεκτεω means literally to have more than another, and then to take advantage, to seek unlawful gain, to circumvent, defraud, deceive. The idea is, that Paul had taken advantage of no circumstances to extort money from them, to overreach them, or to cheat them. It is the conviction of a man who was conscious that he had lived honestly, and who could appeal to them all as full proof that his life among them had been blameless.

^{<4118>}**2 Corinthians 7:3.** *I speak not this to condemn you* I do not speak this with any desire to reproach you. I do not complain of you for the purpose of condemning, or because I have a desire to find fault, though I am compelled to speak in some respect of your lack of affection and liberality toward me. It is not because I have no love for you, and wish to have occasion to use words implying complaint and condemnation.

For I have said before ^{<4111>}2 Corinthians 7:11,12.

That ye are in our hearts That is, we are so much attached to you; or you have such a place in our affections.

To die and live with you If it were the will of God, we would be glad to spend our lives among you, and to die with you; an expression denoting most tender attachment. A similar well-known expression occurs in Horace:

Tecum vivere amem. tecum obeam libens.
Odes, B. III. IX. 24.

With the world I live, with the world I die.

This was an expression of the tenderest attachment. It was true that the Corinthians had not shown themselves remarkably worthy of the affections of Paul, but from the beginning he had felt toward them the tenderest attachment. And if it had been the will of God that he should cease to travel, and to expose himself to perils by sea and land to spread the knowledge of the Saviour, he would gladly have confined his labors to them, and there have ended his days.

2 Corinthians 7:4. *Great is my boldness of speech toward you* This verse seems designed to soften the apparent harshness of what he had said (2 Corinthians 6:12), when he intimated that there was a lack of love in them toward him (Bloomfield), as well as to refer to the plainness which he had used all along in his letters to them. He says, therefore, that he speaks freely; he speaks as a friend; he speaks with the utmost openness and frankness; he conceals nothing from them. He speaks freely of their faults, and he speaks freely of his love to them; and he as frankly commends them and praises them. It is the open, undisguised language of a friend, when he throws open his whole soul and conceals nothing.

Great is my glorying of you I have great occasion to commend and praise you, and I do it freely. He refers here to the fact that he had boasted of their liberality in regard to the proposed collection for the poor saints of Judea (2 Corinthians 9:4); that he had formerly boasted much of them to Titus, and of their readiness to obey his commands (2 Corinthians 7:14); and that now he had had abundant evidence, by what he had heard from Titus (verses 5ff), that they were disposed to yield to his commands, and obey his injunctions. He had probably often had occasion to boast of their favorable regard for him.

I am filled with comfort That is, by the evidence which I have received of your readiness to obey me.

I am exceeding joyful I am overjoyed. The word used here occurs nowhere else in the New Testament except in ^{<481>}Romans 5:20. It is not found in the classic writers; and is a word which Paul evidently compounded (from ὑπερ ^{<528>} and περισσευω ^{<405>}), and means to superabound over, to superabound greatly, or exceedingly. It is a word which would be used only when the heart was full, and when it would be difficult to find words to express its conceptions. Paul's heart was full of joy; and he pours forth his feelings in the most fervid and glowing language. I have joy which cannot be expressed.

In all our tribulation see the note, ^{<400>}2 Corinthians 1:4.

^{<405>}**2 Corinthians 7:5.** *For when we were come into Macedonia* For the reasons which induced Paul to go into Macedonia; see the notes on ^{<4016>}2 Corinthians 1:16; compare the notes, ^{<402>}2 Corinthians 2:12,13.

Our flesh had no rest We were exceedingly distressed and agitated. We had no rest. The causes of his distress he immediately states.

But we were troubled on every side In every way. We had no rest in any quarter. We were obliged to enter into harassing labors and strifes there, and we were full of anxiety in regard to you.

Without were fightings Probably he here refers to fierce opposition, which he met with in prosecuting his work of preaching the gospel. He met there, as he did everywhere, with opposition from Pagans, Jews, and false brethren. Tumults were usually excited wherever he went; and he preached the gospel commonly amidst violent opposition.

Within were fears Referring probably to the anxiety which he had in regard to the success of the Epistle which he had sent to the church at Corinth. He felt great solicitude on the subject. He had sent Titus there to see what was the state of the church and to witness the effect of his instructions. Titus had not come to him as he had expected, at Troas (^{<4023>}2 Corinthians 2:13), and he felt the deepest anxiety in regard to him and to the success of his Epistle. His fears were probably that they would be indisposed to exercise the discipline on the offender; or lest the severity of the discipline required should alienate them from him; or lest the party under the influence of the false teachers should prevail. All was uncertainty, and his mind was filled with the deepest apprehension.

2 Corinthians 7:6. *God that comforteth those that are cast down*

Whose characteristic is, that he gives consolation to those who are anxious and depressed. All his consolation was in God; and by whatever instrumentality comfort was administered, he regarded and acknowledged God as the author; see the note, **2 Corinthians 1:4.**

By the coming of Titus To Macedonia. He rejoiced not only in again seeing him, but especially in the intelligence which he brought respecting the success of his Epistle, and the conduct of the church at Corinth.

2 Corinthians 7:7. *And not by his coming only* Not merely by the fact that he was restored to me, and that my anxieties in regard to him were now dissipated. It is evident that Paul, not having met with Titus as he had expected, at Troas, had felt much anxiety on his account, perhaps apprehending that he was sick, or that he had died.

But by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you Titus was satisfied and delighted with his interview with you. He had been kindly treated, and he had seen all the effect produced by the letter which he had desired. He had, therefore, been much comforted by his visit to Corinth, and this was a source of additional joy to Paul. He rejoiced at what he had witnessed among you, and he imparted the same joy to me also. The joy of one friend will diffuse itself through the heart of another. Joy is diffusive, and one Christian cannot well be happy without making others happy also.

When he told us of your earnest desire Either to rectify what was amiss (Doddrige, Clarke); or to see me — Macknight, Rosenmuller, Bloomfield. It seems to me that the connection requires us to understand it of their desire, their anxiety to comply with his commands. and to reform the abuses which existed in the church, and which had given him so much pain.

Your mourning Produced by the Epistle. Your deep repentance over the sins which had prevailed in the church.

Your fervent mind toward me Greek, ‘Your zeal for me.’ It denotes that they evinced great ardor of attachment to him, and an earnest desire to comply with his wishes.

So that I rejoiced the more I not only rejoiced at his coming, but I rejoiced the more at what he told me of you. Under any circumstances the coming of Titus would have been an occasion of joy; but it was especially so from the account which he gave me of you.

2 Corinthians 7:8. *For though I made you sorry ...* That is, in the First Epistle which he had sent to them. In that Epistle he had felt it necessary to reprove them for their dissensions and other disorders which had occurred and which were tolerated in the church. That Epistle was suited to produce pain in them — as severe and just reproof always does; and Paul felt very anxious about its effect on them. It was painful to him to write it, and he was well aware that it must cause deep distress among them to be thus reproved.

I do not repent I have seen such happy effects produced by it; it has so completely answered the end which I had in view; it was so kindly received, that I do not regret now that I wrote it. It gives me no pain in the recollection, but I have occasion to rejoice that it was done.

Though I did repent Doddridge renders this: “however anxious I may have been.” The word used here does not denote repentance in the sense in which that word is commonly understood, as if any wrong had been done. It is not the language of remorse. It can denote here nothing more than “that uneasiness which a good man feels, not from the consciousness of having done wrong, but from a tenderness for others, and a fear lest that which, prompted by duty, he had said, should have too strong an effect upon them.” — Campbell, diss. vi. part iii. section 9. See the meaning of the word further illustrated in the same dissertation. The word (μεταμελομαι ^{<338>}) denotes properly to change one’s purpose or mind after having done anything (Robinson); or an uneasy feeling of regret for what has been done without regard either to duration or effects — Campbell. Here it is not to be understood that Paul meant to say he had done anything wrong. He was an inspired man, and what he had said was proper and right. But he was a man of deep feeling, and of tender affections. He was pained at the necessity of giving reproof. And there is no improbability in supposing that after the letter had been sent off, and he reflected on its nature and on the pain which it would cause to those whom he tenderly loved, there might be some misgiving of heart about it, and the deepest anxiety, and regret at the necessity of doing it. What parent is there who has not had the same feeling as this? He has felt it necessary to correct a beloved child, and has formed the purpose, and has executed it. But is there no misgiving of heart? No question asked whether it might not have been dispensed with? No internal struggle; no sorrow; no emotion which may be called regret at the resolution which has been taken? Yet there is no repentance as if the parent had done wrong. He feels that he has done what

was right and necessary. He approves his own course, and has occasion of rejoicing at the good effects which follow. Such appears to have been the situation of the apostle Paul in this case; and it shows that he, had a tender heart, that he did not delight in giving pain, and that he had no desire to overwhelm them with grief. When the effect was seen, he was not unwilling that they should be apprized of the pain which it had cost him. When a parent has corrected a child, no injury is done if the child becomes acquainted with the strugglings which it has cost him, and the deep pain and anxiety caused by the necessity of resorting to chastisement.

For I perceive ... I perceive the good effect of the Epistle. I perceive that it produced the kind of sorrow in you which I desired. I see that it has produced permanent good results. The sorrow which it caused in you is only for a season; the good effects will be abiding. I have, therefore, great occasion to rejoice that I sent the Epistle. It produced permanent repentance and reformation (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 7:9), and thus accomplished all that I wished or desired.

^{<400>}**2 Corinthians 7:9.** *Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry ...* I have no pleasure in giving pain to anyone, or in witnessing the distress of any. When people are brought to repentance under the preaching of the gospel, the ministers of the gospel do not find pleasure in their grief as such. They are not desirous of making people unhappy by calling them to repentance, and they have no pleasure in the deep distress of mind which is often produced by their preaching, in itself considered. It is only because such sorrow is an indication of their return to God, and will be followed by happiness and by the fruits of good living, that they find any pleasure in it, or that they seek to produce it.

But that ye sorrowed to repentance It was not mere grief; it was not sorrow producing melancholy, gloom, or despair; it was not sorrow which led you to be angry at him who had reproved you for your errors — as is sometimes the case with the sorrow that is produced by reproof; but it was sorrow that led to a change and reformation. It was sorrow that was followed by a putting away of the evil for the existence of which there had been occasion to reprove you. The word rendered here as “repentance” (μετανοια ^{<3341>}) is a different word from that which, in ^{<400>}2 Corinthians 7:8, is rendered “I did repent,” and indicates a different state of mind. It properly means a change of mind or purpose; compare ^{<3827>}Hebrews 12:7. It denotes a change for the better; a change of mind that is durable and

productive in its consequences; a change which amounts to a permanent reformation; see Campbell's Diss. ut supra. The sense here is, that it produced a change, a reformation. It was such sorrow for their sin as to lead them to reform and to put away the evils which had existed among them. It was this fact, and not that they had been made sorry, that led Paul to rejoice.

After a godly manner Margin, "according to God;" see the note on the next verse.

That ye might receive damage by us in nothing The Greek word rendered "receive damage" (ζημιωθητε ^{<2210>}) means properly to bring loss upon anyone; to receive loss or detriment; see the note on ^{<4085>}1 Corinthians 3:15; compare ^{<3088>}Philippians 3:8. The sense here seems to be, "So that on the whole no real injury was done you in any respect by me. You were indeed put to pain and grief by my reproof. You sorrowed. But it has done you no injury on the whole. It has been a benefit to you. If you had not reformed, if you had been pained without putting away the sins for which the reproof was administered, if it had been mere grief without any proper fruit, you might have said that you would have suffered a loss of happiness, or you might have given me occasion to inflict severer discipline. But now you are gainers in happiness by all the sorrow which I have caused." Sinners are gainers in happiness in the end by all the pain of repentance produced by the preaching of the gospel. No man suffers loss by being told of his faults if he repents; and people are under the highest obligations to those faithful ministers and other friends who tell them of their errors, and who are the means of bringing them to true repentance.

^{<4070>}**2 Corinthians 7:10.** *For godly sorrow* "Sorrow according to God" (ἡ ^{<3588>} γὰρ ^{<1063>} κατὰ ^{<2596>} Θεοῦ ^{<2316>} λυπη ^{<3077>}). That is, such sorrow as has respect to God, or is according to his will, or as leads the soul to him. This is a very important expression in regard to true repentance, and shows the exact nature of that sorrow which is connected with a return to God. The phrase may be regarded as implying the following things:

(1) Such sorrow as God approves, or such as is suitable to. or conformable to his will and desires. It cannot mean that it is such sorrow or grief as God has, for he has none; but such as shall be in accordance with what God demands in a return to him. It is a sorrow which his truth is suited to produce on the heart; such a sorrow as shall appropriately arise from

viewing sin as God views it; such sorrow as exists in the mind when our views accord with his in regard to the existence, the extent, the nature, and the ill-desert of sin. Such views will lead to sorrow that it has ever been committed; and such views will be “according to God.”

(2) Such sorrow as shall be exercised toward God in view of sin; which shall arise from a view of the evil of sin as committed against a holy God. It is not mainly that it will lead to pain; that it will overwhelm the soul in disgrace; that it will forfeit the favor or lead to the contempt of man; or that it will lead to an eternal hell; but it is such as arises from a view of the evil of sin as committed against a holy and just God, deriving its main evil from the fact that it is an offence against his infinite Majesty. Such sorrow David had (~~ROM~~ Psalm 2:4), when he said, “against thee, thee only have I sinned;” when the offence regarded as committed against, man, enormous as it was, was lost and absorbed in its greater evil when regarded as committed against God. So all true and genuine repentance is that which regards sin as deriving its main evil from the fact that it is committed against God.

(3) That which leads to God. It leads to God to obtain forgiveness; to seek for consolation. A heart truly contrite and penitent seeks God, and implores pardon from him. Other sorrow in view of sin than that which is genuine repentance, leads the person away from God. He seeks consolation in the world; he endeavors to drive away his serious impressions or to drown them in the pleasures and the cares of life. But genuine sorrow for sin leads the soul to God, and conducts the sinner, through the Redeemer, to him to obtain the pardon and peace which he only can give to a wounded spirit. In God alone can pardon and true peace be found; and godly sorrow for sin will seek them there.

Worketh repentance Produces a change that shall be permanent; a reformation. It is not mere regret; it does not soon pass away in its effects, but it produces permanent and abiding changes. A man who mourns over sin as committed against God, and who seek to God for pardon, will reform his life and truly repent. He who has grief for sin only because it will lead to disgrace or shame, or because it will lead to poverty or pain, will not necessarily break off from it and reform. It is only when it is seen that sin is committed against God and is evil in his sight, that it leads to a change of life.

Not to be repented of (αμεταμελητον ^{<278>}); see the note on ^{<408>}2

Corinthians 7:8. Not to be regretted. It is permanent and abiding. There is no occasion to mourn over such repentance and change of life. It is that which the mind approves, and which it will always approve. There will be no reason for regretting it, and it will never be regretted. And it is so. Who ever yet repented of having truly repented of sin? Who is there, who has there ever been, who became a true penitent, and a true Christian, who ever regretted it? Not an individual has ever been known who regretted his having become a Christian. Not one who regretted that he had become one too soon in life, or that he had served the Lord Jesus too faithfully or too long.

But the sorrow of the world All sorrow which is not toward God, and which does not arise from just views of sin as committed against God, or lead to God. Probably Paul refers here to the sorrow which arises from worldly causes and which does not lead to God for consolation. Such may be the sorrow which arises from the loss of friends or property; from disappointment, or from shame and disgrace, Perhaps it may include the following things:

- (1) Sorrow arising from losses of property and friends, and from disappointment.
- (2) Sorrow for sin or vice when it overwhelms the mind with the consciousness of guilt, and when it does not lead to God, and when there is no contrition of soul from viewing it as an offence against God. Thus, a female who has wandered from the paths of virtue, and involved her family and herself in disgrace; or a man who has been guilty of forgery, or perjury, or any other disgraceful crime, and who is detected; a man who has violated the laws of the land, and who has involved himself and family in disgrace, will often feel regret, and sorrow, and also remorse, but it arises wholly from worldly considerations, and does not lead to God.
- (3) When the sorrow arises from a view of worldly consequences merely, and when there is no looking to God for pardon and consolation. Thus, people, when they lose their property or friends, often pine in grief without looking to God. Thus, when they have wandered from the path of virtue and have fallen into sin, they often look merely to the disgrace among people, and see their names blasted, and their comforts gone, and pine away in grief. There is no looking to God for pardon or for consolation. The sorrow arises from this world, and it terminates there. It is the loss of

what they valued pertaining to this world, and it is all which they had, and it produces death. It is sorrow such as the people of this world have, begins with this world, and terminates with this world.

Worketh death Tends to death, spiritual, temporal, and eternal. It does not tend to life.

(1) It produces distress only. It is attended with no consolation.

(2) It tends to break the spirit, to destroy the peace, and to mar the happiness.

(3) It often leads to death itself. The spirit is broken, and the heart pines away under the influence of the unalleviated sorrow; or under its influence people often lay violent hands on themselves and take their lives. Life is often closed under the influence of such sorrow.

(4) It tends to eternal death. There is no looking to God; no looking for pardon. It produces murmuring, repining, complaining, fretfulness against God, and thus leads to his displeasure and to the condemnation and ruin of the soul.

<4711> 2 Corinthians 7:11. *For behold this self-same thing* For see in your own case the happy effects of godly sorrow. See the effects which it produced; see an illustration of what it is suited to produce. The construction is, “For lo! this very thing, to wit, your sorrowing after a godly manner, wrought carefulness, clearing of yourselves,” etc. The object of Paul is to illustrate the effects of godly sorrow, to which he had referred in **<4710> 2 Corinthians 7:10**. He appeals, therefore, to their own case, and says that it was beautifully illustrated among themselves.

What carefulness (**σπουδην** **<4710>**). This word properly denotes “speed, haste;” then diligence, earnest effort, forwardness. Here it is evidently used to denote the diligence and the great anxiety which they manifested to remove the evils which existed among them. They went to work to remove them. They did not sit down to mourn over them merely, nor did they wait for God to remove them, nor did they plead that they could do nothing, but they set about the work as though they believed it might be done. When people are thoroughly convinced of sin, they will set about removing it with the utmost diligence. They will feel that this can be done, and must be done, or that the soul will be lost.

What clearing of yourselves (απολογιαν ^{<627>}). Apology. This word properly means a plea or defense before a tribunal or elsewhere; ^{<421>} Acts 22:1; ^{<5046>} 2 Timothy 4:16. Tyndale renders it, “Yea, it caused you to clear yourselves.” The word here properly means “apology” for what had been done; and it probably refers here to the effort which would be made by the sounder part of the church to clear themselves from blame in what had occurred. It does not mean that the guilty, when convicted of sin, will attempt to vindicate themselves and to apologize to God for what they had done; but it means that the church at Corinth were anxious to state to Titus all the mitigating circumstances of the case: they showed great solicitude to free themselves, as far as could be done, from blame; they were anxious, as far as could be, to show that they had not approved of what had occurred, and perhaps that it had occurred only because it could not have been prevented. We are not to suppose that all the things here referred to occurred in the same individuals, and that the same persons precisely evinced diligence, and made the apology, etc. It was done by the church; all evinced deep feeling; but some manifested it in one way, and some in another. The whole church was roused, and all felt, and all endeavored in the proper way to free themselves from the blame, and to remove the evil from among them.

Yea, what indignation Indignation against the sin, and perhaps against the persons who had drawn down the censure of the apostle. One effect of true repentance is to produce decided hatred of sin. It is not mere regret, or sorrow, it is positive hatred. There is a deep indignation against it as an evil and a bitter thing.

Yea, what fear Fear lest the thing should be repeated. Fear lest it should not be entirely removed. Or it may possibly mean fear of the displeasure of Paul, and of the punishment which would be inflicted if the evil were not removed. But it more probably refers to the anxious state of mind that the whole evil might be corrected, and to the dread of having any vestige of the evil remaining among them.

Yea, what vehement desire This may either mean their fervent wish to remove the cause of complaint, or their anxious desire to see the apostle. It is used in the latter sense in ^{<4002>} 2 Corinthians 7:7, and according to Doddridge and Bloomfield this is the meaning here. Locke renders it, “desire of satisfying me.” It seems to me more probable that Paul refers to their anxious wish to remove the sin, since this is the topic under

consideration. The point of his remarks in this verse is not so much their affection for him as their indignation against their sin, and their deep grief that sin had existed and had been tolerated among them.

Yea, what zeal Zeal to remove the sin, and to show your attachment to me. They set about the work of reformation in great earnest.

Yea, what revenge! Tyndale renders this: “it caused punishment.” The idea is, that they immediately set about the work of inflicting punishment on the offender. The word used here (εκδικησις ^{<1557>}) probably denotes “maintenance of right, protection;” then it is used in the sense of avengement, or vengeance; and then of penal retribution or punishment; see ^{<2122>}Luke 21:22; ^{<5108>}2 Thessalonians 1:8; ^{<1014>}1 Peter 2:14.

In all things ... The sense of this is, “You have entirely acquitted yourselves of blame in this business.” The apostle does not mean that none of them had been to blame, or that the church had been free from fault, for a large part of his former Epistle is occupied in reproving them for their faults in this business, but he means that by their zeal and their readiness to take away the cause of complaint, they had removed all necessity of further blame, and had pursued such a course as entirely to meet his approbation. They had cleared themselves of any further blame in this business, and had become, so far as this was concerned, “clear” (ἀγνου ^{<3>}) or pure.

^{<4172>}**2 Corinthians 7:12.** *Wherefore, though I wrote unto you ...* In this verse Paul states the main reason why he had written to them on the subject. It was not principally on account of the man who had done the wrong, or of him who had been injured; but it was from tender anxiety for the whole church, and in order to show the deep interest which he had in their welfare.

Not for his cause that had done the wrong Not mainly, or principally on account of the incestuous person; ^{<4181>}1 Corinthians 5:1. It was not primarily with reference to him as an individual that I wrote, but from a regard to the whole church.

Nor for his cause that suffered wrong Not merely that the wrong which he had suffered might be rectified, and that his rights might be restored, valuable and desirable as was that object. The offence was that a man had taken his father’s wife as his own (^{<4181>}1 Corinthians 5:1), and the person

injured, therefore, was his father. It is evident from this passage, I think, that the father was living at the time when Paul wrote this Epistle.

But that our care ... I wrote mainly that I might show the deep interest which I had in the church at large, and my anxiety that it might not suffer by the misconduct of any of its members. It is from a regard to the welfare of the whole earth that discipline should be administered, and not simply with reference to an individual who has done wrong, or an individual who is injured. In church discipline such private interests are absorbed in the general interest of the church at large.

~~¶~~ **2 Corinthians 7:13.** *Therefore we were comforted in your comfort*

The phrase “your comfort,” here seems to mean the happiness which they had, or might reasonably be expected to have in obeying the directions of Paul, and in the repentance which they had manifested. Paul had spoken of no other consolation or comfort than this; and the idea seems to be that they were a happy people, and would be happy by obeying the commands of God. This fact gave Paul additional joy, and he could not but rejoice that they had removed the cause of the offence, and that they would not thus be exposed to the displeasure of God. Had they not repented and put away the evil, the consequences to them must have been deep distress. As it was, they would be blessed and happy.

And exceedingly the more ... Titus had been kindly received, and hospitably entertained, and had become much attached to them. This was to Paul an additional occasion of joy; see ~~¶~~ 2 Corinthians 7:7.

~~¶~~ **2 Corinthians 7:14.** *For if I have boasted anything to him ...* This seems to imply that Paul had spoken most favorably to Titus of the Corinthians before he went among them. He had probably expressed his belief that he would be kindly received; that they would be disposed to listen to him, and to comply with the directions of the apostle; perhaps he had spoken to him of what he anticipated would be their liberality in regard to the collection which he was about to make for the poor saints at Jerusalem.

I am not ashamed It has all turned out to be true. He has found it as I said it would be. All my expectations are realized; and you have been as kind, and hospitable, and benevolent as I assured him you would be.

As we spake all things to you in truth Everything which I said to you was said in truth. All my promises to you, and all my commands, and all my reasonable expectations expressed to you, were sincere. I practiced no disguise, and all that I have said thus far turned out to be true.

Even so our boasting ... My boasting of your character, and of your disposition to do right, which I made before Titus has turned out to be true. It was as I said it would be. I did not commend you too highly to him, as I did not overstate the matter to you in my Epistle.

2 Corinthians 7:15. *And his inward affection ...* He has become deeply and tenderly attached to you. His affectionate regard for you has been greatly increased by his visit. On the meaning of the word here rendered “inward affection” (*σπλαγγχια* ^{<4698>}, Margin, bowels) see the note on ^{<4612>}2 Corinthians 6:12. It denotes here: deep, tender attachment, or love.

How with fear and trembling ye received him With fear of offending, and with deep apprehension of the consequences of remaining in sin. He saw what a fear there was of doing wrong, and what evidence there was, therefore, that you were solicitous to do right.

2 Corinthians 7:16. *I rejoice, therefore, that I have confidence ...* I have had the most ample proof that you are disposed to obey God, and to put away everything that is offensive to him. The address of this part of the Epistle, says Doddridge, is wonderful. It is designed, evidently, not merely to commend them for what they had done, and to show them the deep attachment which he had for them, but in a special manner to prepare them for what he was about to say in the following chapter, respecting the collection which he had so much at heart for the poor saints at Jerusalem. What he here says was admirably adapted to introduce that subject. They had thus far showed the deepest regard for him. They had complied with all his directions. All that he had said of them had proved to be true. And as he had boasted of them to Titus (^{<4614>}2 Corinthians 7:14), and expressed his entire confidence that they would comply with his requisitions, so he had also boasted of them to the churches of Macedonia and expressed the utmost confidence that they would be liberal in their benefactions, ^{<4612>}2 Corinthians 9:2. All that Paul here says in their favor, therefore, was eminently adapted to excite them to liberality, and prepare them to comply with his wishes in regard to that contribution.

REMARKS

1. Christians are bound by every solemn and sacred consideration to endeavor to purify themselves, ~~4000~~2 Corinthians 7:1. They who have the promises of eternal life, and the assurance that God will be to them a father, and evidence that they are his sons and daughters, should not indulge in the filthiness of the flesh and spirit.
2. Every true Christian will aim at perfection, ~~4000~~2 Corinthians 7:1. He will desire to be perfect; he will strive for it; he will make it a subject of unceasing and constant prayer. No man can be a Christian to whom it would not be a pleasure to be at once as perfect as God. And if any man is conscious that the idea of being made at once perfectly holy would be unpleasant or painful, he may set it down as certain evidence that he is a stranger to religion.
3. No man can be a Christian who voluntarily indulges in sin, or in what he knows to be wrong, ~~4000~~2 Corinthians 7:1. A man who does that cannot be aiming at perfection. A man who does that shows that he has no real desire to be perfect.
4. How blessed will be heaven, ~~4000~~2 Corinthians 7:1. There we shall be perfect. And the crowning glory of heaven is not that we shall be happy, but that we shall be holy. Whatever there is in the heart that is good shall there be perfectly developed; whatever there is that is evil shall be removed, and the whole soul will be like God. The Christian desires heaven because he will be there perfect. He desires no other heaven. He could be induced to accept no other if it were offered to him. He blesses God day by day that there is such a heaven, and that there is no other: that there is one world which sin does not enter, and where evil shall be unknown.
5. What a change will take place at death, ~~4000~~2 Corinthians 7:1. The Christian will be there made perfect. How this change will be there produced we do not know. Whether it will be by some extraordinary influence of the Spirit of God on the heart, or by the mere removal from the body, and from a sinful world to a world of glory, we know not. The fact seems to be clear, that at death the Christian will be made at once as holy as God is holy, and that he will ever continue to be in the future world.

6. What a desirable thing it is to die, ~~4008~~2 Corinthians 7:1. Here, should we attain to the age of the patriarchs, like them we should continue to be imperfect. Death only will secure our perfection; and death, therefore, is a desirable event. The perfection of our being could not be attained but for death; and every Christian should rejoice that he is to die. It is better to be in heaven than on earth; better to be with God than to be away from him; better to be made perfect than to be contending here with internal corruption, and to struggle with our sins. "I would not live always," was the language of holy Job; "I desire to depart and to be with Christ," was the language of holy Paul.

7. It is often painful to be compelled to use the language of reproof, ~~4008~~2 Corinthians 7:8. Paul deeply regretted the necessity of doing it in the case of the Corinthians, and expressed the deepest anxiety in regard to it. No man, no minister, parent, or friend can use it but with deep regret that it is necessary. But the painfulness of it should not prevent our doing it. It should be done tenderly but faithfully. If done with the deep feeling, with the tender affection of Paul, it will be done right; and when so done, it will produce the desired effect, and do good. No man should use the language of reproof with a hard heart, or with severity of feeling. If he is, like Paul, ready to weep when he does it, it will do good. If he does it because he delights in it, it will do evil.

8. It is a subject of rejoicing where a people exercise repentance, ~~4008~~2 Corinthians 7:8. A minister has pleasure not in the pain which his reproofs cause; not in the deep anxiety and distress of the sinner, and not in the pain which Christians feel under his reproofs, but he has joy in the happy results or the fruits which follow from it. It is only from the belief that those tears will produce abundant joy that he has pleasure in causing them, or in witnessing them.

9. The way to bring people to repentance is to present to them the simple and unvarnished truth, ~~4008~~2 Corinthians 7:8,9. Paul stated simple and plain truths to the Corinthians. He did not abuse them; he did not censure them in general terms; he stated things just as they were, and specified the things on account of which there was occasion for repentance. So if ministers wish to excite repentance in others, they must specify the sins over which others should weep; if we wish, as individuals, to feel regret for our sins, and to have true repentance toward God, we must dwell on those particular sins which we have committed, and should endeavor so to reflect

on them that they may make an appropriate impression on the heart. No man will truly repent by general reflections on his sin; no one who does not endeavor so to dwell on his sins as that they shall make the proper impression which each one is suited to produce on the soul. Repentance is that state of mind which a view of the truth in regard to our own depravity is suited to produce.

10. There is a great difference between godly sorrow and the sorrow of the world, ~~4070~~ 2 Corinthians 7:10. All people feel sorrow. All people, at some period of their lives, grieve over their past conduct. Some in their sorrow are pained because they have offended God, and go to God, and find pardon and peace in him. That sorrow is unto salvation. But the mass do not look to God. They turn away from him even in their disappointments, and in their sorrows, and in the bitter consciousness of sin. They seek to alleviate their sorrows in worldly company, in pleasure, in the intoxicating bowl; and such sorrow works death. It produces additional distress, and deeper gloom here, and eternal woe hereafter.

11. We may learn what constitutes true repentance, ~~4071~~ 2 Corinthians 7:11. There should be, and there will be, deep feeling. There will be “carefulness,” deep anxiety to be freed from the sin; there will be a desire to remove it; “indignation” against it; “fear” of offending God; “earnest desire” that all that has been wrong should be corrected; “zeal” that the reformation should be entire; and a wish that the appropriate “revenge,” or expression of displeasure, should be excited against it. The true penitent hates nothing so cordially as he does his sin. He hates nothing but sin. And his warfare with that is decided, uncompromising, inexorable, and eternal.

12. It is an evidence of mercy and goodness in God that the sorrow which is felt about sin may be made to terminate in our good, and to promote our salvation, ~~4070~~ 2 Corinthians 7:10,11. If sorrow for sin had been suffered to take its own course, and had proceeded unchecked, it would in all cases have produced death. If it had not been for the merciful interposition of Christianity, by which even sorrow might be turned to joy, this world would have been everywhere a world of sadness and of death. Man would have suffered. Sin always produces, sooner or later, woe. Christianity has done nothing to make people wretched, but it has done everything to bind up broken hearts. It has revealed a way by which sorrow may be turned into joy, and the bitterness of grief may be followed by the sweet calm and sunshine of peace.

13. The great purpose of Christian discipline is to benefit the whole church, ~~40712~~ 2 Corinthians 7:12. It is not merely on account of the offender, nor is it merely that the injured may receive a just recompense. It is primarily that the church may be pure, and that the cause of religion may not be dishonored. When the work of discipline is entered on from any private and personal motives, it is usually attended with bad feeling, and usually results in evil. When it is entered on with a desire to honor God, and to promote the purity of the church, when the whole aim is to deliver the church from opprobrium and scandal, and to have just such a church as Jesus Christ desires, then it will be prosecuted with good temper, and with right feeling, and then it will lead to happy results. Let no man institute a process of discipline on an offending brother from private, personal, and revengeful feelings. Let him first examine his own heart, and let him be sure that his aim is solely the glory of Christ, before he attempts to draw down the censure of the church on an offending brother. How many cases of church discipline would be arrested if this simple rule were observed! And while the case before us shows that it is important in the highest degree that discipline should be exercised on an offending member of the church; while no consideration should prevent us from exercising that discipline; and while every man should feel desirous that the offending brother should be reproved or punished, yet this case also shows that it should be done with the utmost tenderness, the most strict regard to justice, and the deepest anxiety that the general interests of religion should not suffer by the manifestation of an improper spirit, or by improper motives in inflicting punishment on an offending brother.

NOTES ON 2 CORINTHIANS 8

In the previous chapter (2 Corinthians 7) the apostle had expressed his entire confidence in the ready obedience of the Corinthians in all things. To this confidence he had been led by the promptitude with which they had complied with his commands in regard to the case of discipline there, and by the respect which they had shown to Titus, whom he had sent to them. All that he had ever said in their favor had been realized; all that had ever been asked of them had been accomplished. The object of his statement in the close of 2 Corinthians 7 seems to have been to excite them to diligence in completing the collection which they had begun for the poor and afflicted saints of Judea. On the consideration of that subject, which lay so near his heart, he now enters; and this chapter and the following are occupied with suggesting arguments, and giving directions for a liberal contribution.

Paul had given directions for taking up this collection in the first Epistle; see [1 Corinthians 16:1ff](#); compare [Romans 15:26](#). This collection he had given Titus direction to take up when he went to Corinth; see [2 Corinthians 7:6-17](#) of this chapter. But from some cause it had not been completed, [2 Corinthians 7:10,11](#). What that cause was, is not stated, but it may have been possibly the disturbances which had existed there, or the opposition of the enemies of Paul, or the attention which was necessarily bestowed in regulating the affairs of the church. But in order that the contribution might be made, and might be a liberal one, Paul presses on their attention several considerations designed to excite them to give freely. The chapter is, therefore, of importance to us, as it is a statement of the duty of giving liberally to the cause of benevolence, and of the motives by which it should be done. In the presentation of this subject, Paul urges upon them the following considerations.

He appeals to the very liberal example of the churches of Macedonia, where, though they were exceedingly poor, they had contributed with great cheerfulness and liberality to the object, [2 Corinthians 8:1-5](#).

From their example he had been induced to desire Titus to lay the subject before the church at Corinth, and to finish the collection which he had begun, [2 Corinthians 8:6](#).

He directs them to abound in this, not as a matter of commandment, but excited by the example of others, <4087>2 Corinthians 8:7,8.

He appeals to them by the love of the Saviour; reminds them that though he was rich yet he became poor, and that they were bound to imitate his example, <4089>2 Corinthians 8:9.

He reminds them of their intention to make such a contribution, and of the effort which they had made a year before; and though they had been embarrassed in it, and might find it difficult still to give as much as they had intended, or as much as they would wish, still it would be acceptable to God. For if there was a willing mind, God accepted the offering, <4080>2 Corinthians 8:10-12.

He assures them that it was not his wish to burden or oppress them. All that he desired was that there should be an equality in all the churches, <4083>2 Corinthians 8:13-15.

To show them how much he was interested in this, he thanks God that he had put it into the heart of Titus to engage in it. And in order more effectually to secure it, he says that he had sent with Titus a brother who was well known, and whose praise was in all the churches. He had done this in order that the churches might have entire confidence that the contribution would be properly distributed. Paul did not wish it to be entrusted to himself. He would leave no room for suspicion in regard to his own character; he would furnish the utmost security to the churches that their wishes were complied with. He desired to act honestly not only in the sight of the Lord, but to furnish evidence of his entire honesty to people, <4086>2 Corinthians 8:16-21.

To secure the same object he had also sent another brother, and these three brethren he felt willing to recommend as faithful and tried; as people in whom the church at Corinth might repose the utmost confidence, <4082>2 Corinthians 8:22-24.

<4081>**2 Corinthians 8:1.** *Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit* We make known to you; we inform you. The phrase “we do you to wit,” is used in Tyndale’s translation, and means “we cause you to know.” The purpose for which Paul informed them of the liberality of the churches of Macedonia was to excite them to similar liberality.

Of the grace of God ... The favor which God had shown them in exciting a spirit of liberality, and in enabling them to contribute to the fund for supplying the needs of the poor saints at Jerusalem. The word “grace” (χαρις ⁵⁴⁸⁵) is sometimes used in the sense of gift, and the phrase “gift of God” some have supposed may mean very great gift, where the words “of God” may be designed to mark anything very eminent or excellent, as in the phrase “cedars of God,” “mountains of God,” denoting very great cedars, very great mountains. Some critics (as Macknight, Bloomfield, Locke, and others) have supposed that this means that the churches of Macedonia had been able to contribute largely to the aid of the saints of Judea. But the more obvious and correct interpretation, as I apprehend, is that which is implied in the common version, that the phrase “grace of God,” means that God had bestowed on them grace to give according to their ability in this cause. According to this it is implied:

(1) That a disposition to contribute to the cause of benevolence is to be traced to God. He is its author. He excites it. It is not a plant of native growth in the human heart, but a large and liberal spirit of benevolence is one of the effects of his grace, and is to be traced to him.

(2) It is a favor bestowed on a church when God excites in it a spirit of benevolence. It is one of the evidences of his love. And indeed there cannot be a higher proof of the favor of God than when by his grace he inclines and enables us to contribute largely to meliorate the condition, and to alleviate the needs of our fellowmen. Perhaps the apostle here meant delicately to hint this. He did not therefore say coldly that the churches of Macedonia had contributed to this object, but he speaks of it as a favor shown to them by God that they were able to do it. And he meant, probably, gently to intimate to the Corinthians that it would be an evidence that they were enjoying the favor of God if they should contribute in like manner.

The churches of Macedonia Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea. For an account of Macedonia, see the notes, ⁴¹⁴⁰Acts 16:9; ⁵¹⁵³Romans 15:26. Of these churches, that at Philippi seems to have been most distinguished for liberality (⁵¹⁰⁰Philippians 4:10,15,16,18), though it is probable that other churches contributed according to their ability, as they are commended (compare ⁴¹⁰²2 Corinthians 9:2) without distinction.

<418> 2 Corinthians 8:2. *How that, in a great trial of affliction* When it might be supposed they were unable to give; when many would suppose they needed the aid of others; or when it might be supposed their minds would be wholly engrossed with their own concerns. The trial to which the apostle here refers was doubtless some persecution which was excited against them, probably by the Jews; see **<416> Acts 16:20; 17:5.**

The abundance of their joy Their joy arising from the hopes and promises of the gospel. Notwithstanding their persecutions, their joy has abounded, and the effect of their joy has been seen in the liberal contribution which they have made. Their joy could not be repressed by their persecution, and they cheerfully contributed largely to the aid of others.

And their deep poverty Their very low estate of poverty was made to contribute liberally to the needs of others. It is implied here:

- (1) That they were very poor — a fact arising probably from the consideration that the poor generally embraced the gospel first, and also because it is probable that they were molested and stripped of their property in persecutions (compare **<508> Hebrews 10:34**);
- (2) That notwithstanding this they were enabled to make a liberal contribution — a fact demonstrating that a people can do much even when poor if all feel disposed to do it, and that afflictions are favorable to the effort; and,
- (3) That one cause of this was the joy which they had even in their trials. If a people have the joys of the gospel; if they have the consolations of religion themselves, they will somehow or other find means to contribute to the welfare of others. They will be willing to labor with reference to it, or they will find something which they can sacrifice or spare. Even their deep poverty will abound in the fruits of benevolence.

Abounded They contributed liberally. Their joy was manifested in a large donation, notwithstanding their poverty.

Unto the riches of their liberality Margin, “Simplicity.” The word (**<572> ἀπλοτης**) used here means properly sincerity, candor, probity; then Christian simplicity, integrity; then liberality; see **<518> Romans 12:8** (Margin.); **<491> 2 Corinthians 9:11,13.** The phrase “riches of liberality,” is a Hebraism, meaning rich, or abundant liberality. The sense is, their liberality was much greater than could be expected from persons so poor; and the

object of the apostle is, to excite the Corinthians to give liberally by their example.

2 Corinthians 8:3. *For to their power* To the utmost of their ability

I bear record Paul had founded those churches and had spent much time with them. He was therefore well qualified to bear testimony in regard to their condition.

Yea, and beyond their power Beyond what could have been expected; or beyond what it would have been thought possible in their condition. Doddridge remarks that this is a noble hyperbole, similar to that used by Demosthenes when he says, "I have performed all, even with an industry beyond my power." The sense is, they were willing to give more than they were well able. It shows the strong interest which they had in the subject, and the anxious desire which they had to relieve the needs of others.

Of themselves (αυθαιρεται ^{<330>}). Acting from choice, self-moved, voluntarily, of their own accord. They did not wait to be urged and pressed to do it. They rejoiced in the opportunity of doing it. They came forward of their own accord and made the contribution. "God loveth a cheerful giver" (^{<407>}2 Corinthians 9:7); and from all the accounts which we have of these churches in Macedonia it is evident that they were greatly distinguished for their cheerful liberality.

2 Corinthians 8:4. *Praying us with much entreaty* Earnestly entreating me to receive the contribution and convey it to the poor and afflicted saints in Judea.

And take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints Greek, "that we would take the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints." They asked of us to take part in the labor of conveying it to Jerusalem. The occasion of this distress which made the collection for the saints of Judea necessary, was probably the famine which was predicted by Agabus, and which occurred in the time of Claudius Caesar; see note on ^{<412>}Acts 11:28. Barnabas was associated with Paul in conveying the contribution to Jerusalem; ^{<418>}Acts 6:30. Paul was unwilling to do it unless they particularly desired it, and he seems to have insisted that some person should be associated with him; ^{<420>}2 Corinthians 8:20; ^{<518>}1 Corinthians 16:3,4.

◀2 Corinthians 8:5. *And this they did ...* They did not give what we expected only. We knew their poverty, and we expected only a small sum from them.

Not as we hoped Not according to the utmost of our hopes. We were greatly disappointed in the amount which they gave, and in the manner in which it was done.

But first gave their ownelves to the Lord They first made an entire consecration of themselves and all that they had to the Lord. They kept nothing back. They felt that all they had was his. And where a people honestly and truly devote themselves to God, they will find no difficulty in having the means to contribute to the cause of charity.

And unto us by the will of God That is, they gave themselves to us to be directed in regard to the contribution to be made. They complied with our wishes and followed our directions. The phrase “by the will of God,” means evidently that God moved them to this, or that it was to be traced to his direction and providence. It is one of the instances in which Paul traces everything that is right and good to the agency and direction of God.

◀2 Corinthians 8:6. *Insomuch* The sense of this passage seems to be this, “We were encouraged by this unexpected success among the Macedonians. We were surprised at the extent of their liberality. And encouraged by this, we requested Titus to go among you and finish the collection which you had proposed and which you had begun. Lest you should be outstripped in liberality by the comparatively poor Macedonian Christians, we were anxious that you should perform what you had promised and contemplated, and we employed Titus, therefore, that he might go at once and finish the collection among you.”

The same grace also Margin, “Gift;” see the note on **◀2 Corinthians 8:1**. The word refers to the contribution which he wished to be made.

◀2 Corinthians 8:7. *Therefore as ye abound in everything* see the note, **◀1 Corinthians 1:5**. Paul never hesitated to commend Christians where it could be done with truth; and the fact that they were eminent in some of the Christian duties and graces, he makes the ground of the exhortation that they would abound in all. From those who had so many eminent characteristics of true religion he had a right to expect much; and he therefore exhorts them to manifest a symmetry of Christian character.

In faith In the full belief of the truth and obligation of the gospel.

And utterance In the ability to instruct others; perhaps referring to their power of speaking foreign languages; 1 Corinthians 14.

And knowledge The knowledge of God, and of his truth.

And in all diligence Diligence or readiness in the discharge of every duty. Of this, Paul had full evidence in their readiness to comply with his commands in the case of discipline to which so frequent reference is made in this Epistle.

And in your love to us Manifested by the readiness with which you received our commands; see ~~4006~~ 2 Corinthians 7:4,6,7,11,16.

See that ye abound in this grace also The idea here is, that eminence in spiritual endowments of any kind, or in any of the traits of the Christian character should lead to great benevolence, and that the character is not complete unless benevolence be manifested toward every good object that may be presented.

~~4008~~ **2 Corinthians 8:8.** *I speak not by commandment* This does not mean that he had no express command of God in the case, but that he did not mean to command them; he did not speak authoritatively; he did not intend to prescribe what they should give. He used only moral motives, and urged the considerations which he had done to persuade rather than to command them to give; see ~~4009~~ 2 Corinthians 8:10. He was endeavoring to induce them to give liberally, not by abstract command and law, but by showing them what others had given who had much less ability and much fewer advantages than they had. People cannot be induced to give to objects of charity by command, or by a spirit of dictation and authority. The only successful, as well as the only lawful appeal, is to their hearts and consciences, and sober judgments. And if an apostle did not take upon himself the language of authority and command in matters of Christian benevolence, assuredly ministers and ecclesiastical bodies now have no right to use any such language.

But by occasion of the forwardness of others I make use of the example of the churches of Macedonia as an argument to induce you to give liberally to the cause.

And to prove the sincerity of your love The apostle does not specify here what “love” he refers to, whether love to God, to Christ, to himself, or to the church at large. It may be that he designedly used the word in a general sense, to denote love to any good object; and that he meant to say that liberality in assisting the poor and afflicted people of God would be the best evidence of the sincerity of their love to God, to the Redeemer, to him, and to the church. Religion is love; and that love is to be manifested by doing good to all people as we have opportunity. The most substantial evidence of that love is when we are willing to part with our property, or with whatever is valuable to us, to confer happiness and salvation on others.

2 Corinthians 8:9. *For ye know ...* The apostle Paul was accustomed to illustrate every subject, and to enforce every duty where it could be done, by a reference to the life and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. The design of this verse is apparent. It is, to show the duty of giving liberally to the objects of benevolence, from the fact that the Lord Jesus was willing to become poor in order that he might benefit others. The idea is, that he who was Lord and proprietor of the universe, and who possessed all things, was willing to leave his exalted station in the bosom of the Father and to become poor, in order that we might become rich in the blessings of the gospel, in the means of grace, and as heirs of all things; and that we who are thus benefitted, and who have such an example, should be willing to part with our earthly possessions in order that we may benefit others.

The grace The benignity, kindness, mercy, goodness. His coming in this manner was a proof of the highest benevolence.

Though he was rich The riches of the Redeemer here referred to, stand opposed to that poverty which he assumed and manifested when he dwelt among people. It implies:

(1) His pre-existence, because he became poor. He had been rich. Yet not in this world. He did not lay aside wealth here on earth after he had possessed it, for he had none. He was not first rich and then poor on earth, for he had no earthly wealth. The Socinian interpretation is, that he was “rich in power and in the Holy Spirit;” but it was not true that he laid these aside, and that he became poor in either of them. He had power, even in his poverty, to still the waves, and to raise the dead, and he was always full of the Holy Spirit. His family was poor; and his parents were poor; and he

was himself poor all his life. This then must refer to a state of antecedent riches before his assumption of human nature; and the expression is strikingly parallel to that in ^{<4003>}Philippians 2:6ff.

“Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation,” etc.

(2) He was rich as the Lord and proprietor of all things. He was the Creator of all (^{<4003>}John 1:3; ^{<50016>}Colossians 1:16), and as Creator he had a right to all things, and the disposal of all things. The most absolute right which can exist is that acquired by the act of creation; and this right the Son of God possessed over all gold, and silver, and diamonds, and pearls; over all earth and lands; over all the treasures of the ocean, and over all worlds. The extent and amount of his riches, therefore, is to be measured by the extent of his dominion over the universe; and to estimate his riches, therefore, we are to conceive of the scepter which he sways over the distant worlds. What wealth has man that can compare with the riches of the Creator and Proprietor of all? How poor and worthless appears all the gold that man can accumulate compared with the wealth of him whose are the silver, and the gold, and the cattle upon a thousand hills?

Yet for your sakes That is, for your sakes as a part of the great family that was to be redeemed. In what respect it was for their sake, the apostle immediately adds when he says, it was that they might be made rich. It was not for his own sake, but it was for ours.

He became poor In the following respects:

- (1) He chose a condition of poverty, a rank of life that was usually that of poverty. He “took upon himself the form of a servant;” ^{<1007>}Philippians 2:7.
- (2) He was connected with a poor family. Though of the family and lineage of David (^{<4004>}Luke 2:4), yet the family had fallen into decay, and was poor. In the Old Testament he is beautifully represented as a shoot or sucker that starts up from the root of a decayed tree; see my note on ^{<23100>}Isaiah 11:1.
- (3) His whole life was a life of poverty. He had no home; ^{<4058>}Luke 9:58. He chose to be dependent on the charity of the few friends that he drew around him, rather than to create food for the abundant supply of his own needs. He had no farms or plantations; he had no splendid palaces; he had no money hoarded in useless coffers or in banks; he had no property to distribute to his friends. His mother he commended when he died to the

charitable attention of one of his disciples (~~John~~ John 19:27), and all his personal property seems to have been the raiment which he wore, and which was divided among the soldiers that crucified him. Nothing is more remarkable than the difference between the plans of the Lord Jesus and those of many of his followers and professed friends. He formed no plan for becoming rich, and he always spoke with the deepest earnestness of the dangers which attend an effort to accumulate property. He was among the most poor of the sons of people in his life; and few have been the people on earth who have not had as much as he had to leave to surviving friends, or to excite the cupidity of those who should fall heirs to their property when dead.

(4) He died poor. He made no will in regard to his property, for he had none to dispose of. He knew well enough the effect which would follow if he had amassed wealth, and had left it to be divided among his followers. They were very imperfect; and even around the cross there might have been anxious discussion, and perhaps strife about it, as there is often now over the coffin and the unclosed grave of a rich and foolish father who has died. Jesus intended that his disciples should never be turned away from the great work to which he called them by any wealth which he would leave them; and he left them not even a keepsake as a memorial of his name. All this is the more remarkable from two considerations:

(a) That he had it in his power to choose the manner in which he would come. He might have come in the condition of a splendid prince. He might have rode in a chariot of ease, or have dwelt in a magnificent palace. He might have lived with more than the magnificence of an oriental prince, and might have bequeathed treasures greater than those of Croesus or Solomon to his followers. But he chose not to do it.

(b) It would have been as right and proper for him to have amassed wealth, and to have sought princely possessions, as for any of his followers. What is right for them would have been right for him. People often mistake on this subject; and though it cannot be demonstrated that all his followers should aim to be as poor as he was, yet it is undoubtedly true that he meant that his example should operate constantly to check their desire of amassing wealth. In him it was voluntary; in us there should be always a readiness to be poor if such be the will of God; nay, there should be rather a preference to be in moderate circumstances that we may thus be like the Redeemer.

That ye through his poverty might be rich That is, might have durable and eternal riches, the riches of God's everlasting favor. This includes:

(1) The present possession of an interest in the Redeemer himself. "Do you see these extended fields?" said the owner of a vast plantation to a friend. "They are mine. All this is mine." "Do you see yonder poor cottage?" was the reply of the friend as he directed his attention to the abode of a poor widow. "She has more than all this. She has CHRIST as her portion; and that is more than all." He who has an interest in the Redeemer has a possession that is of more value than all that princes can bestow.

(2) The heirship of an eternal inheritance, the prospect of immortal glory; ~~<BNT>~~ Romans 8:17.

(3) Everlasting treasures in heaven. Thus, the Saviour compares the heavenly blessings to treasures; ~~<10M>~~ Matthew 6:20. Eternal and illimitable wealth is theirs in heaven; and to raise us to that blessed inheritance was the design of the Redeemer in consenting to become poor. This, the apostle says, was to be secured by his poverty. This includes probably the two following things, namely,

(a) That it was to be by the moral influence of the fact that he was poor that people were to be blessed he designed by his example to counteract the effect of wealth; to teach people that this was not the thing to be aimed at; that there were more important purposes of life than to obtain money; and to furnish a perpetual reproof of those who are aiming to amass riches. The example of the Redeemer thus stands before the whole church and the world as a living and constant memorial of the truth that people need other things than wealth; and that there are objects that demand their time and influence other than the accumulation of property. It is well to have such an example; well to have before us the example of one who never formed any plan for gain, and who constantly lived above the world. In a world where gain is the great object, where all people are forming plans for it, it is well to have one great model that shall continually demonstrate the folly of it, and that shall point to better things.

(b) The word "poverty" here may include more than a mere lack of property. It may mean all the circumstances of his low estate and humble condition; his sufferings and his woes. The whole train of his privations was included in this; and the idea is, that he gave himself to this lowly condition in order that by his sufferings he might procure for us a part in

the kingdom of heaven. His poverty was a part of the sufferings included in the work of the atonement. For it was not the sufferings of the garden merely, or the pangs of the cross, that constituted the atonement; it was the series of sorrows and painful acts of humiliation which so thickly crowded his life. By all these he designed that we should be made rich; and in view of all these the argument of the apostle is, we should be willing to deny ourselves to do good to others.

2 Corinthians 8:10. *And herein I give my advice* Not undertaking to command them, or to prescribe how much they should give. Advice will go much further than commands on the subject of charities.

For this is expedient for you (συμφερει ^{<4851>}). That is, this will be of advantage to you; it will be profitable; it will be becoming. The idea is, that they were bound by a regard to consistency and to their own welfare, to perform what they had purposed. It became them; it was proper, and was demanded; and there would have been manifest disadvantages if it had not been done.

Who have begun before Who commenced the collection a year before; see **2 Corinthians 8:6**. It had been commenced with fair prospects of success, but had been interrupted probably by the dissensions which arose in the church there.

Not only to do Not merely to accomplish it as if by constraint, or as a matter of compulsion and drudgery.

But also to be forward Margin, "Willing." So the Greek (το ^{<3588>} θελειν ^{<2309>}). They were voluntary in this, and they set about it with vigorous and determined zeal and courage. There was a resolute determination in the thing, and a willingness and heartiness in it which showed that they were actuated by Christian principle. Consistency, and their own reputation and advantage, now demanded that they should complete what they had begun.

2 Corinthians 8:11. *As there was a readiness to will* Now accomplish the thing, and be not satisfied with having begun it. Do not suppose that the intention was sufficient, or that you are now released from the obligation. A year indeed has elapsed; but the necessity of the aid for the poor has not ceased. The sentiment here is, that if we have felt it our duty to aid in a cause of benevolence, and have commenced it, and have then been interrupted in executing our purpose, we should seize the first

favorable opportunity to accomplish what we had designed. We should not regard ourselves as released from our obligation, but should, from a regard to consistency and our obligation to God, accomplish what we had intended.

Out of that which ye have According to your ability; see ^{<4082>}2 Corinthians 8:12. It should be in proportion to your means.

^{<4182>}**2 Corinthians 8:12.** *For if there be first a willing mind* If there is a “readiness” (προθυμία ^{<4288>}), a disposition to give; if the heart is in it, then the offering will be acceptable to God, whether you be able to give much or little. A willing mind is the first consideration. No donation, however large, can be acceptable where that does not exist; none, however small, can be otherwise than acceptable where that is found. This had relation as used by Paul to the duty of almsgiving; but the principle is as applicable to everything in the way of duty. A willing mind is the first and main thing. it is that which God chiefly desires, and that without which everything else will be offensive, hypocritical, and vain; see the note, ^{<4007>}2 Corinthians 9:7.

It is accepted Doddridge, Rosenmuller, Macknight, and some others apply this to the person, and render it, “he is accepted;” but the more usual, and the more natural interpretation is to apply it to the gift — it is accepted. God will approve of it, and will receive it favorably.

According to that a man hath ... He is not required to give what he has not. His obligation is proportioned to his ability. His offering is acceptable to God according to the largeness and willingness of his heart, and not according to the narrowness of his fortune — Locke. If the means are small, if the individual is poor, and if the gift shall be, therefore, small in amount, yet it may be proof of a larger heart and of more true love to God and his cause than when a much more ample benefaction is made by one in better circumstances. This sentiment the Saviour expressly stated and defended in the case of the poor widow; ^{<4122>}Mark 12:42-44; ^{<4201>}Luke 21:1-4. She who had cast in her two mites into the treasury had put in more than all which the rich people had contributed, for they had given of their abundance, but she had cast in all that she had, even all her living. The great and obviously just and equal principle here stated, was originally applied by Paul to the duty of giving alms. But it is equally true and just as applied to all the duties which we owe to God. He demands:

(1) A willing mind, a heart disposed to yield obedience. He claims that our service should be voluntary and sincere, and that we should make an unreserved consecration of what we have.

(2) Secondly, he demands only what we have power to render. He requires a service strictly according to our ability, and to be measured by that. He demands no more than our powers are suited to produce; no more than we are able to render. Our obligations in all cases are limited by our ability. This is obviously the rule of equity, and this is all that is anywhere demanded in the Bible, and this is everywhere demanded. Thus, our love to him is to be in proportion to our ability, and not to be graduated by the ability of angels or other beings.

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL THY heart, and with all THY soul, and with all THY mind, and with all THY strength;” ^{<4123>}Mark 12:30.

Here the obligation is limited by the ability, and the love is to be commensurate with the ability. So of repentance, faith, and of obedience in any form. None but a tyrant ever demands more than can be rendered; and to demand more is the appropriate description of a tyrant, and cannot pertain to the ever-blessed God.

(3) Thirdly, if there is any service rendered to God, according to the ability, it is accepted of him. It may not be as much or as valuable as may be rendered by beings of higher powers; it may not be as much as we would desire to render, but it is all that God demands, and is acceptable to him. The poor widow was not able to give as much as the rich man; but her offering was equally acceptable, and might be more valuable, for it would be accompanied with her prayers. The service which we can render to God may not be equal to that which the angels render; but it may be equally appropriate to our condition and our powers, and may be equally acceptable to God. God may be as well pleased with the sighings of penitence as the praises of angels; with the offerings of a broken and a contrite heart as with the loud hallelujahs of unfallen beings in heaven.

^{<4183>}**2 Corinthians 8:13.** *For I mean not that other men be eased ...* I do not intend that others should be eased in order to relieve you. Literally, “Not that there should be rest ($\alpha\nu\epsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ ^{<425>}, a letting loose; remission, relaxation) to others, but affliction ($\theta\lambda\iota\psi\iota\varsigma$ ^{<2347>}) to you.” Probably the Corinthians were able to contribute more than many other churches,

certainly more than the churches of Macedonia (~~2~~2 Corinthians 8:2), and Paul therefore presses upon them the duty of giving according to their means, yet he by no means intended that the entire burden should come on them.

~~2~~**2 Corinthians 8:14.** *But by an equality* On just and equal principles. “That now at this time,” etc. That at the present time your abundance may be a supply for their needs, so that at some future time, if there should be occasion for it, their abundance may be a supply for your needs. The idea is this. Corinth was then able to give liberally, but many of the other churches were not. They were poor, and perhaps persecuted and in affliction. But there might be great reverses in their condition. Corinth might be reduced from its affluence, and might itself from its affluence, and might itself become dependent on the aid of others, or might be unable to contribute any considerable amount for the purposes of charity. The members of the church in Corinth, therefore, should so act in their circumstances of prosperity, that others would be disposed to aid them should their condition ever be such as to demand it. And the doctrine here taught is:

(1) That the support of the objects of benevolence should be on equal principles. The rich should bear an equal and fair proportion, and if more frequent demands are made on their benefaction than on others they should not complain.

(2) Christians should contribute liberally while they have the means. In the vicissitudes of life no one can tell how soon he may be unable to contribute, or may even be dependent on the charity of others himself. A change in the commercial world; losses by fire or at sea; lack of success in business; loss of health, and the failure of his plans, may soon render him unable to aid the cause of benevolence. While he is prospered he should embrace every opportunity to do good to all. Some of the most painful regrets which people ever have, arise from the reflection that when prospered they were indisposed to give to benefit others, and when their property is swept away they become unable. God often sweeps away the property which they were indisposed to contribute to aid others, and leaves them to penury and want. Too late they regret that they were not the liberal patrons of the objects of benevolence when they were able to be.

That there may be equality That all may be just and equal. That no unjust burden should be borne by anyone portion of the great family of the redeemed. Every Christian brother should bear his due proportion.

~~CHRS~~ **2 Corinthians 8:15.** *As it is written* see ~~CHRS~~ Exodus 16:18.

He that had gathered much ... This passage was originally applied to the gathering of manna by the children of Israel. The manna which fell around the camp of Israel was gathered every morning. All that were able were employed in gathering it; and when it was collected it was distributed in the proportion of an omer, or about five pints to each man. Some would be more active and more successful than others. Some by age or infirmity would collect little; probably many by being confined to the camp would collect none. They who had gathered more than an omer, therefore, would in this way contribute to the needs of others, and would be constantly manifesting a spirit of benevolence. And such was their willingness to do good in this way, such their readiness to collect more than they knew would be demanded for their own use, and such the arrangement of Providence in furnishing it, that there was no want; and there was no more gathered than was needful to supply the demands of the whole. Paul applies this passage, therefore, in the very spirit in which it was originally penned. He means to say that the rich Christians at Corinth should impart freely to their poorer brethren. They had gathered more wealth than was immediately necessary for their families or themselves. They should, therefore, impart freely to those who had been less successful. Wealth, like manna, is the gift of God. It is like that spread by his hand around us every day. Some are able to gather much more than others. By their skill, their health, their diligence, or by providential arrangements, they are eminently successful. Others are feeble, or sick, or aged, or destitute of skill, and are less successful. All that is obtained is by the arrangement of God. The health, the strength, the skill, the wisdom by which we are enabled to obtain it, are all his gift. That which is thus honestly obtained, therefore, should be regarded as his bounty, and we should esteem it a privilege daily to impart to others less favored and less successful. Thus, society will be bound more closely together. There will be, as there was among the Israelites, the feelings of universal brotherhood. There will be on the one hand the happiness flowing from the constant exercise of the benevolent feelings; on the other the strong ties of gratitude. On the one hand the evils of poverty will be prevented, and on the other the not less, though different evils resulting from superabundant wealth. Is it a forced and unnatural

analogy also to observe, that wealth, like manna, corrupts by being kept in store? manna if kept more than a single day became foul and loathsome. Does not wealth hoarded up when it might be properly employed; wealth that should have been distributed to relieve the needs of others, become corrupting in its nature, and offensive in the sight of holy and benevolent minds? Compare ^{<MFB>}James 5:2-4. Wealth, like manna, should be employed in the service which God designs — employed to diffuse everywhere the blessings of religion, comfort, and peace.

^{<MFB>}**2 Corinthians 8:16.** *But thanks be to God* Paul regarded every right feeling, and every pure desire; every inclination to serve God or to benefit a fellow mortal, as the gift of God. He, therefore, ascribes the praise to him that Titus was disposed to show an interest in the welfare of the Corinthians.

The same earnest care The earnest care here referred to was that the Corinthians might complete the collection, and finish what they had proposed. Titus was willing to undertake this, and see that it was done.

For you For your completing the collection. Paul represents it as being done for them, or for their welfare. The poor saints in Judea indeed were to have the immediate benefit of the contribution, but it was a privilege for them to give, and Paul rejoiced that they had that privilege. A man who presents to Christians a feasible object of benevolence, and who furnishes them an opportunity of doing good to others, is doing good to them, and they should esteem it an act of kindness done to them.

^{<MFB>}**2 Corinthians 8:17.** *For indeed he accepted the exhortation* He cheerfully complied with the exhortation which I gave him, to wit, to visit you, and excite you to this good work.

But being more forward More disposed to do this than I had supposed. The idea here is, that he was very ready to engage in this; he was more ready to engage in it than Paul was to exhort him to it; he anticipated his request; he had already resolved to engage in it.

Of his own accord he went ... He went voluntarily and without urging. The ground of Paul's thankfulness here seems to have been this, He apprehended probably some difficulty in obtaining the collection there, He was acquainted with the distracted state of the church, and feared that Titus might have some reluctance to engage in the service. He was

therefore very agreeably surprised when he learned that Titus was willing to make another journey to Corinth and to endeavor to complete the collection.

~~<418>~~ **2 Corinthians 8:18.** *And we have sent with him the brother* It has been generally supposed that this anonymous brother was Luke. Some have supposed however that it was Mark, others that it was Silas or Barnabas. It is impossible to determine with certainty who it was; nor is it material to know. Whoever it was, it was some one well known, in whom the church at Corinth could have entire confidence. It is remarkable that though Paul mentions him again (~~<41218>~~ 2 Corinthians 12:18), he does it also in the same manner, without specifying his name. The only circumstances that can throw any light on this are:

(1) That Luke was the companion and intimate friend of Paul, and attended him in his travels. From ~~<41610>~~ Acts 16:10,11, where Luke uses the term “we,” it appears that he was with Paul when he first went into Macedonia, and from ~~<41615>~~ Acts 16:15 it is clear that he went with Paul to Philippi. From ~~<4171>~~ Acts 17:1, where Luke alters his style and uses the term “they,” it is evident that he did not accompany Paul and Silas when they went to Thessalonica, but either remained at Philippi or departed to some other place. He did not join them again until they went to Troas on the way to Jerusalem; ~~<4185>~~ Acts 20:5. In what manner Luke spent the interval is not known. Macknight supposes that it might have been in multiplying copies of his gospel for the use of the churches. Perhaps also he might have been engaged in preaching, and in services like that in the case before us.

(2) It seems probable that Luke is the person referred to by the phrase “whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches.” This would be more likely to be applied to one who had written a gospel, or a life of the Redeemer that had been extensively circulated, than to any other person. Still it is by no means certain that he is the person here referred to, nor is it of material consequence.

Whose praise Who is well known and highly esteemed.

Is in the gospel Either for writing the gospel, or for preaching the gospel. The Greek will bear either construction. In some way he was celebrated for making known the truths of the gospel.

2 Corinthians 8:19. *And not that only* Not only is he esteemed on account of other services which he has rendered by his preaching and writings; but he has had a new mark of the confidence of the churches in being appointed to convey the collection to Jerusalem.

Chosen of the churches Chosen by the churches. Many concurred in the choice, showing that they had entire confidence in him. Paul had been unwilling to have charge of this contribution alone (~~410B~~1 Corinthians 16:3,4; compare ~~410B~~2 Corinthians 8:20), and he had procured the appointment of some one to undertake it. Probably he expected that the church at Corinth would concur in this appointment.

With this grace Margin, "Gift;" see ~~410B~~2 Corinthians 8:1. The word here refers to the alms, or the collection which had been made.

Which is administered by us That is, which is undertaken by us. Paul had been the instrument of procuring it.

To the glory of the same Lord The Lord of us all. The design was to promote the glory of the Lord by showing the influence of religion in producing true benevolence.

And declaration of your ready mind That is, to afford you an opportunity of evincing your readiness to do good to others, and to promote their welfare.

2 Corinthians 8:20. *Avoiding this* That is, I intend to prevent any blame from being cast upon me in regard to the management of these funds. For this purpose Paul had refused to have the entire management of the funds (see ~~412B~~1 Corinthians 12:3,4), and had secured the appointment of one who had the entire confidence of all the churches.

That no man should blame us That no one should have any occasion to say that I had appropriated it to my own use or contrary to the will of the donors. Paul felt how dangerous it was for ministers to have much to do with money matters. He had a very deep impression of the necessity of keeping his own character free from suspicion on this subject. He knew how easy it might be for his enemies to raise the charge that he had embezzled the funds and appropriated them to his own use. He therefore insisted on having associated with him some one who had the entire confidence of the churches, and who should be appointed by them, and thus he was certain of being forever free from blame on the subject. A most

important example for all ministers in regard to the pecuniary benefactions of the churches.

In this abundance ... In this large amount which is contributed by the churches and committed to our disposal. Large sums of money are in our time committed to the ministers of the gospel in the execution of the objects of Christian benevolence. Nothing can be more wise than the example of Paul here, that they should have associated with them others who have the entire confidence of the churches, that there may not be occasion for slander to move her poisonous tongue against the ministers of religion.

2 Corinthians 8:21. *Providing for honest things* The expression used here occurs in ^{<517>}Romans 12:17; see the note on that place. In that place, however, it refers to the manner in which we are to treat those who injure us; here it refers to the right way of using property; and it seems to have been a kind of maxim by which Paul regulated his life, a “vade mecum” that was applicable to everything. The sentiment is, that we are to see to it beforehand that all our conduct shall be comely or honest. The word rendered “providing for” (προνοουμενοι ^{<4306>}) means foreseeing, or perceiving beforehand; and the idea is, that we are to make it a matter of previous calculation, a settled plan, a thing that is to be attended to of set design. In the middle voice, the form in which it occurs here, it means to provide for in one’s own behalf; to apply oneself to anything; to practice diligently — Robinson. The word rendered “things honest” (καλα ^{<2570>}) means properly beautiful, or comely. The idea which is presented here is, that we are to see beforehand, or we are to make it a matter of set purpose that what we do shall be comely, that is, just, honorable, correct, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of mankind. Paul applies this in his own case to the alms which were to be entrusted to him. His idea is, that he meant so to conduct in the whole transaction as that his conduct should be approved by God, but that it should also be regarded as beautiful or correct in the sight of people. He knew how much his own usefulness depended on an irreproachable character. He, therefore, procured the appointment of one who had the entire confidence of the churches to travel with him. But there is no reason for confining this to the particular case under consideration. It seems to have been the leading maxim of the life of Paul, and it should be of ours. The maxim may be applied to everything which we have to do; and should constantly regulate us. It may be applied to the acquisition and use of property; to the discharge of our professional

duties; to our contact with others; to our treatment of inferiors and dependents; to our charities, etc. — in all of which we should make it a matter of previous thought, of earnest diligence, that our conduct should be perfectly honest and comely before God and man. Let us learn from this verse also, that ministers of the gospel should be especially careful that their conduct in money matters, and especially in the appropriation of the charities of the church, should be above suspicion. Much is often entrusted to their care, and the churches and individual Christians often commit much to their discretion. Their conduct in this should be without reproach; and in order to this, it is well to follow the example of Paul, and to insist that others who have the entire confidence of the churches should be associated with them. Nothing is easier than to raise a slanderous report against a minister of the gospel; and nothing gratifies a wicked world more than to be able to do it — and perhaps especially if it pertains to some improper use of money. It is not easy to meet such reports when they are started; and a minister, therefore, should be guarded, as Paul was, at every possible point, that he may be freed from that “whose breath outvenoms all the worms of Nile” — Slander.

2 Corinthians 8:22. *And we have sent with them our brother* Who this was is wholly unknown; and conjecture is useless. Some have supposed that it was Apollos, others Silas, others Timothy. But there are no means of ascertaining who it was; nor is it material. It was some one in whom Paul had entire confidence.

Whom we have oftentimes proved diligent Of whom we have evidence that he has been faithful. It is evident, therefore, that he had been the companion and fellow-laborer of Paul.

But now much more diligent ... Who will now prove himself much more diligent than ever before.

Upon the confidence ... Margin, “he hath.” The margin is doubtless the more correct reading here. The idea is, that this brother had great confidence in the Corinthians that they would give liberally, and that he would, therefore, evince special diligence in the business.

2 Corinthians 8:23. *Whether any do inquire of Titus* It is to be observed that the words “any do inquire” are not in the original; nor is it clear that these are the most proper words to be introduced here. The Greek may mean either, “if any do inquire about Titus,” or it may mean “if

anything is to be said about Titus.” The sense of the passage may either be, that some of the faction at Corinth might be disposed to inquire about the authority of Titus to engage in this work, or that Paul having said so much in commendation of the persons who went with Titus, it seemed proper also to say something in his favor also. The idea is, “If any inquiry is made from any quarter about him, or if it is necessary from any cause to say any thing about him, I would say he is my partner,” etc.

He is my partner ... He partakes with me in preaching the gospel, and in establishing and organizing churches; compare ^{<3005>}Titus 1:5. To the Corinthians this fact would be a sufficient commendation of Titus.

Or our brethren be inquired of That is, the brethren who accompanied Titus. If any inquiry was made about their character, or if it was necessary to say anything in regard to them.

They are the messengers of the churches They have the entire confidence of the churches, having been selected and appointed by them to a work of labor and responsibility; compare ^{<1745>}Philippians 2:25. The words here rendered “messengers of the churches,” are in the original “apostles of the churches,” (^{<652>}αποστολοι ^{<1577>}εκκλησιων). The word “apostles” here is used evidently in its proper sense, to denote one who is sent out to transact any business for others, or as an agent or legate. These persons were not apostles in the technical sense, and this is an instance where the word is applied in the New Testament to those who had no claim to the apostolic office. It is also applied in a similar way to Apollos and Barnabas, though neither, strictly speaking, were apostles.

And the glory of Christ That is, they have a character so well known and established for piety; they are so eminent Christians and do such honor to the Christian name and calling, that they may be called the glory of Christ. It is an honor to Christ that he has called such persons into his church, and that he has so richly endowed them. Every Christian should so live as that it would appear to all the world that it was an honor and glory to the Redeemer that he had such followers; an honor to his gospel that it had converted such and brought them into his kingdom. It is sufficient honor, moreover, to any man to say that he is “the glory of Christ.” Such a character should be, and will be, as it was here, a recommendation sufficient for any to secure them the confidence of others.

2 Corinthians 8:24. *Wherefore show ye to them ...* By a liberal contribution in the cause in which they are engaged and for which they have come among you now, furnish the evidence that you love me and the Christian cause, and show that I have not boasted of you in vain.

The proof of your love Your love to me, to God, to the cause of religion; see the note on **2 Corinthians 8:8**.

And of our boasting ... My boasting that you would give liberally to the object; see the note, **2 Corinthians 7:14**. Let it now be seen that my boasting was well founded, and that I properly understood your character, and your readiness to contribute to the objects of Christian benevolence.

REMARKS

- 1.** Let us bear in mind that a disposition to be liberal proceeds only from God, **2 Corinthians 8:1**. The human heart is by nature selfish, and indisposed to benevolence. It is only by the grace of God that people are excited to liberality; and we should therefore pray for this as well as for all other graces. We should beseech God to remove selfishness from our minds; to dispose us to feel as we should feel for the needs of others, and to incline us to give just what we ought to give to relieve them in trouble, and to promote their temporal and eternal welfare.
- 2.** It is an inestimable blessing when God gives a spirit of liberality to the church, **2 Corinthians 8:1**. It should be regarded as a proof of his special favor; and as an evidence of the prevalence of the principles of true religion.
- 3.** People are often most liberal when in circumstances of distress, perplexity, and affliction, **2 Corinthians 8:2**. Prosperity often freezes the heart, but adversity opens it. Success in life often closes the hand of benevolence, but adversity opens it. We are taught to feel for the sufferings of others by suffering ourselves; and in the school of adversity we learn invaluable lessons of benevolence which we should never acquire in prosperity. If you lack the tear of sympathy: if you want aid in a good cause, go to a man in affliction, and his heart is open. And hence, it is that God often suffers his people to pass through trials in order that they may possess the spirit of large and active benevolence.

4. If Christians desire to be generous, they must first devote themselves to God, ~~4COR~~2 Corinthians 8:5. If this is not done they will have no heart to give, and they will not give. They will have a thousand excuses ready, and there will be no ground of appeal which we can make to them. True liberality is always based on the fact that we have given ourselves wholly to God.

5. When Christians have honestly devoted themselves to God, it will be easy to contribute liberally to the cause of benevolence, ~~4COR~~2 Corinthians 8:5. They will find something to give; or if they have nothing now they will labor and deny themselves in order that they may have something to give. If every professed Christian on earth had honestly given himself to God, and should act in accordance with this, the channels of benevolence Would never be dry.

6. We should compare ourselves in the matter of benevolence with the churches here referred to, ~~4COR~~2 Corinthians 8:3. They were poor; they were in deep affliction, and yet they contributed all in their power, and beyond their power. Do we do this? Do we give according to our ability? Do we deny ourselves of one comfort? withhold one gratification? curtail one expense which fashion demands, in order that we may have the means of doing good? O! if every Christian would give according to his ability to the sacred cause of charity, how soon would the means be ample to place the Bible in every family on the globe, to preach the gospel in every country, and to maintain all the institutions which the cause of humanity needs in this and in other lands.

7. The Christian character is incomplete unless there is a spirit of large and liberal beneficence, ~~4COR~~2 Corinthians 8:7. This is indispensable to the proper symmetry of the Christian graces, and this should be cultivated in order to give beauty and completeness to the whole. Yet it cannot be denied that there are true Christians where this is lacking. There are those who give every other evidence of piety; who are people of prayer, and who evince humility, and who are submissive in trials, and whose conversation is that of Christians, who are yet sadly deficient in this virtue. Either by an original closeness of disposition, or by a defect of education, or by lack of information in regard to the objects of Christian benevolence, they are most stinted in their benefactions, and often excite the amazement of others that they give so little to the cause of benevolence. Such persons should be entreated to carry out their Christian character to completion. As they

abound in other things, they should abound in this grace also. They are depriving themselves of much comfort, and are bringing much injury on the cause of the Redeemer while they refuse to sustain the great objects of Christian charity. No Christian character is symmetrical or complete unless it is crowned with the spirit of large and comprehensive benevolence toward every object that tends to promote the temporal and eternal welfare of man.

8. The sincerity of our love should be tested, and will be, by our readiness to deny ourselves to do good to others, ^{<ARB>}2 Corinthians 8:8. The love of the Lord Jesus was tested in that way; and there can be no true love to God or man where there is not a readiness to contribute of our means for the welfare of others. If we love the Redeemer, we shall devote all to his service; if we love our fellow-men we shall evince our “sincerity” by being willing to part with our earthly substance to alleviate their woes, enlighten their ignorance, and save their souls.

9. Let us imitate the example of the Lord Jesus, ^{<ARB>}2 Corinthians 8:9. He was rich, yet he became poor; and, O HOW POOR! Let the rich learn to copy his example, and be willing to part with their abundant and superfluous wealth in order that they may relieve and benefit others. That man is most happy as well as most useful, who most resembles the Redeemer; that man will be most happy who stoops from the highest earthly elevation to the lowest condition that he may minister to the welfare of others.

10. Charity should be voluntary, ^{<ARB>}2 Corinthians 8:12. It should be the free and spontaneous offering of the heart; and the first promptings of the heart, before the pleadings of avarice come in, and the heart grows cold by the influence of returning covetousness, are likely to be the most correct.

11. Charity should be in an honest proportion to our means, ^{<ARB>}2 Corinthians 8:12. It should be according to what a man hath. God hath left the determination of this proportion to every individual, responsible to him alone. He has not told us how much we shall give, or in what proportion we shall give; but he has left it for every individual to decide what he may give, and what he ought to give.

12. If people do not give according to their means they must answer for it to God. Every man may have opportunity to contribute to relieve others if he will open his heart and ears to the cries of a suffering and a dying world.

No man can complain that he has no opportunity to give; or that he may not procure for his own soul all the blessings which can be produced by the most large and liberal benevolence.

13. People have no excuse for being lost, ^{<4082>}2 Corinthians 8:12. If God required more of them than they could render they would have excuse. They would not be to blame. They might be sufferers and martyrs in hell, but no one would blame them. But the sinner can never have any such excuse. God never required anymore of him than he had power to render; and if he dies it will be his own fault, and the throne of God will still be spotless and pure.

14. God's government is an equal, and just, and good government, ^{<4082>}2 Corinthians 8:12. What can be more equitable than the principle that a man is accepted according to what he has? What ground of complaint can the sinner have in regard to this administration?

15. The churches should bear their just proportion in the cause of Christian beneficence, ^{<4083>}2 Corinthians 8:13-15. There are great interests of charity which **MUST** be sustained. The world cannot do without them. Not only must the poor be provided for, but the cause of temperance, and of Sunday schools, and of missions must be sustained. Bibles must be distributed, and people must be educated for the ministry, and the widow and the fatherless must be the objects of Christian benevolence. These burdens, if they are burdens, should be equally distributed. The rich should furnish their fair proportion in sustaining them; and those in more moderate circumstances must do their fair proportion also in sustaining them. If this were done, all the objects of Christian benevolence could be sustained, and they would in fact not be burdensome to the churches. With infinite ease all might be contributed that is necessary to send the gospel around the world.

16. Ministers of the gospel should have as little as possible to do with money matters, ^{<4089>}2 Corinthians 8:19-21. While they should be willing, if it is necessary, to be the almoners of the churches, and should esteem it a privilege to be the means of conveying to the poor and needy, and to the great cause of benevolence, what the churches may choose to commit to them, yet they should not covet this office; they should not show any particular desire for it; nor should they do it unless, like Paul, they have the most ample security that the voice of slander can never be raised in regard to their management. Let them see to it that they have persons associated with them who have the entire confidence of the churches; people who will

be responsible also, and who will be competent witnesses of the manner in which they discharge their duty. In all things ministers should be pure. On few points is there more danger that the enemy will endeavor to take advantage, and to injure their character, than in regard to their abuse of

17. Let all Christians so live that it may be honestly said of them they are “the glory of Christ,” ^{<4082>}2 Corinthians 8:23. Let them aim so to live that it will be esteemed to be an honor to the Redeemer that he called them into his kingdom, and that he so richly endowed them by his grace. This would be a commendation to all people where they might go; to say this is enough to say of any man. None can have a higher character than to have it said with truth of him “he is the glory of Christ; he is an honor to his Redeemer and to his cause.”

NOTES ON 2 CORINTHIANS 9

In this chapter (2 Corinthians 9) the apostle continues the subject which he had discussed in 2 Corinthians 8 — the collection which he had purposed to make for the poor saints in Judea. The deep anxiety which he had that the collection should be liberal; that it should not only be such as to be really an aid to those who were suffering, but be such as would be an expression of tender attachment to them on the part of the Gentile converts, was the reason, doubtless, why Paul urged this so much on their attention. His primary wish undoubtedly was, to furnish aid to those who were suffering. But in connection with that, he also wished to excite a deep interest among the Gentile converts in behalf of those who had been converted to Christianity among the Jews. He wished that the collection should be so liberal as to show that they felt that they were united as brethren, and that they were grateful that they had received the true religion from the Jews. And he doubtless wished to cement as much as possible the great body of the Christian brotherhood, and to impress on their minds the great truths that whatever was their national origin, and whatever were their national distinctions, yet in Christ they were one. For this purpose he presses on their attention a great variety of considerations why they should give liberally, and this chapter is chiefly occupied in stating reasons for that in addition to those which had been urged in the previous chapter. The following view will present the main points in the chapter.

(1) He was aware of their readiness to give, and knowing this, he had boasted of it to others, and others had been excited to give liberally from what the apostle had said of them, ~~400B~~ 2 Corinthians 9:1,2. The argument here is, that Paul's veracity and their own character were at stake and depended on their now giving liberally.

(2) He had sent the brethren to them in order that there might by no possibility be a failure, ~~400B~~ 2 Corinthians 9:3-5. Though he had the utmost confidence in them, and fully believed that they were disposed to give liberally, yet he knew also that something might prevent it unless messengers went to secure the contributions, and that the consequence might be, that he and they would be "ashamed" that he had boasted so much of their readiness to give.

(3) To excite them to give liberally, Paul advances the great principles that the reward in heaven will be in proportion to the liberality evinced on earth, and that God loves one who gives cheerfully, ^{<406>}2 Corinthians 9:6,7. By the prospect, therefore, of an ample reward, and by the desire to meet with the approbation of God, he calls upon them to contribute freely to aid their afflicted Christian brethren.

(4) He further excites them to liberal giving by the consideration that if they contributed liberally, God was able to furnish them abundantly with the means of doing good on a large scale in time to come, ^{<408>}2 Corinthians 9:8-11. In this way he would enable them to do good hereafter in proportion as they were disposed to do good now, and the result of all would be, that abundant thanks would be rendered to God — thanks from those who were aided, and thanks from those who had aided them that they had been enabled to contribute to supply their needs.

(5) As a final consideration inducing them to give, the apostle states that not only would they thus do good, but would show the power of the gospel, and the affection which they had for the Jewish converts, and would thus contribute much in promoting the glory of God. The Jewish converts would see the power of the gospel on their Gentile brethren; they would feel that they now pertained to one great family; they would praise God for imparting his grace in this manner; and they would be led to pray much for those who had thus contributed to alleviate their needs, ^{<402>}2 Corinthians 9:12-14.

(6) Paul closes the whole chapter, and the whole discussion respecting the contribution about which he had felt so deep an interest, by rendering thanks to God for his “unspeakable gift,” JESUS CHRIST, ^{<405>}2 Corinthians 9:15. Paul was ever ready, whatever was the topic before him, to turn the attention to him. He here evidently regards him as the author of all liberal feeling, and of all true charity; and seems to imply that all that they could give would be small compared with the “unspeakable gift” of God, and that the fact that God had imparted such a gift. to the world was a reason why they should be willing to devote all they had to his service.

^{<401>}**2 Corinthians 9:1.** *For as touching the ministering to the saints* In regard to the collection that was to be taken up for the aid of the poor Christians in Judea; see the notes on ^{<615>}Romans 15:26; ^{<610>}1 Corinthians 16:1; 2 Corinthians 8.

It is superfluous ... It is needless to urge that matter on you, because I know that you acknowledge the obligation to do it, and have already purposed it.

For me to write to you That is, to write more, or to write largely on the subject. It is unnecessary for me to urge arguments why it should be done; and all that is proper is to offer some suggestions in regard to the manner in which it shall be accomplished.

~~400~~ **2 Corinthians 9:2.** *For I know the forwardness of your mind* I know your promptitude, or your readiness to do it; see ~~400~~ 2 Corinthians 8:10. Probably Paul here means that he had had opportunity before of witnessing their readiness to do good, and that he had learned in particular of Titus that they had formed the plan to aid in this contribution.

For which I boast of you to them of Macedonia To the church in Macedonia; see ~~400~~ 2 Corinthians 8:1. So well assured was he that the church at Corinth would make the collection as it had proposed, that he boasted of it to the churches of Macedonia as if it were already done, and made use of this as an argument to stimulate them to make an effort.

That Achaia was ready a year ago Achaia was that part of Greece of which Corinth was the capital; see the note, ~~400~~ Acts 18:12. It is probable that there were Christians in other parts of Achaia besides Corinth, and indeed it is known that there was a church in Cenchrea (see ~~400~~ Romans 16:1). which was one of the ports of Corinth. Though the contribution would be chiefly derived from Corinth, yet it is probable that the others also would participate in it. The phrase “was ready” means that they had been preparing themselves for this collection, and doubtless Paul had stated that the collection was already made and was waiting. He had directed them (~~400~~ 1 Corinthians 16:1) to make it on the first day of the week, and to lay it by in store, and he did not doubt that they had complied with his request.

And your zeal Your ardor and promptitude. The readiness with which you entered into this subject, and your desire to relieve the needs of others.

Hath provoked Has roused, excited, impelled to give. We use the word “provoke” commonly now in the sense of to irritate, but in the Scriptures it is confined to the signification of exciting, or rousing. The ardor of the Corinthians would excite others not only by their promptitude, but because

Corinth was a splendid city, and their example would be looked up to by Christians at a distance. This is one instance of the effect which will be produced by the example of a church in a city.

2 Corinthians 9:3. *Yet have I sent the brethren* The brethren referred to in **2 Corinthians 8:18,22,23.**

Lest our boasting of you That you were disposed to contribute, and that you were already prepared, and that the contribution was ready.

Should be in vain Lest anything should have occurred to prevent the collection. I have sent them that they may facilitate it, and that it may be secure and certain.

In this behalf In this respect. That is, lest our boasting of you, in regard to your readiness to contribute to relieve the needs of others, should be found to have been ill-grounded.

2 Corinthians 9:4. *Lest haply if they of Macedonia* If any of the Macedonians should happen to come with me, and should find that you had done nothing. He does not say that they would come with him, but it was by no means improbable that they would. It was customary for some of the members of the churches to travel with Paul from place to place, and the conversation was constant between Macedonia and Achaia. Paul had, therefore, every reason to suppose that some of the Macedonians would accompany him when he should go to Corinth. At all events it was probable that the Macedonians would learn from some quarter whether the Corinthians were or were not ready when Paul should go to them.

We (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed ... “In this,” says Bloomfield, “one cannot but recognize a most refined and delicate turn, inferior to none of the best Classical writers.” Paul had boasted confidently that the Corinthians would be ready with their collection. He had excited and stimulated the Macedonians by this consideration. He had induced them in this way to give liberally, **2 Corinthians 8:1-4.** If now it should turn out after all that the Corinthians had given nothing, or had given stintedly, the character of Paul would suffer. His veracity and his judgment would be called in question, and he would be accused of trick, and artifice, and fraud in inducing them to give. Or if he should not be charged with dishonesty, yet he would be humbled and mortified himself that he had made representations which had proved to be so unfounded. But this was not all.

The character of the Corinthians was also at stake. They had purposed to make the collection. They had left the impression in the mind of Paul that it would be done. They had hitherto evinced such a character as to make Paul confident that the collection would be made. If now by any means this should fail, their character would suffer, and they would have occasion to be ashamed that they had excited so confident expectations of what they would do.

2 Corinthians 9:5. *Therefore I thought it necessary ...* In order to secure the collection, and to avoid all unpleasant feeling on all hands.

That they would go before unto you Before I should come.

And make up beforehand your bounty Prepare it before I come. The word “bounty” is in the margin, rendered “blessing.” The Greek (εὐλογία ^{<129>}) means properly commendation, eulogy. Then it means blessing, praise applied to God. Then that which blesses — a gift, donation, favor, bounty — whether of God to human beings, or of one man to another. Here it refers to their contribution as that which would be adapted to confer a blessing on others, or suited to produce happiness.

That the same might be ready as a matter of bounty That it may truly appear as a liberal and voluntary offering; as an act of generosity and not as wrung or extorted from you. That it may be truly a blessing — a thank-offering to God and adapted to do good to people.

And not as of covetousness “And not like a sort of extortion, wrung from you by mere dint of importunity” — Doddridge. The word used here (πλεονεξία ^{<124>}) means usually covetousness, greediness of gain, which leads a person to defraud others. The idea here is, that Paul would have them give this as an act of bounty, or liberality on their part, and not as an act of covetousness on his part, not as extorted by him from them.

2 Corinthians 9:6. *But this I say* This I say in order to induce you to give liberally. This I say to prevent your supposing that because it is to be a voluntary offering you may give only from your superfluity, and may give sparingly.

He which soweth sparingly This expression has all the appearance of a proverb, and doubtless is such. It does not occur indeed elsewhere in the Scriptures, though substantially the same sentiment exciting to liberality often occurs; see ^{<121>}Psalm 12:1-3; ^{<124>}Proverbs 11:24,25; 19:17; 22:9.

Paul here says that it is in giving as it is in agriculture. A man that sows little must expect to reap little. If he sows a small piece of land he will reap a small harvest; or if he is niggardly in sowing and wishes to save his seed and will not commit it to the earth, he must expect to reap little. So it is in giving. Money given in alms, money bestowed to aid the poor and needy, or to extend the influence of virtue and pure religion, is money bestowed in a way similar to the act of committing seed to the earth. It will be returned again in some way with an abundant increase. It shall not be lost. The seed may be buried long. It may lie in the ground with no indication of a return or of increase. One who knew not the arrangements of Providence might suppose it was lost and dead. But in due time it shall spring up and produce an ample increase. So with money given to objects of benevolence. To many it may seem to be a waste, or may appear to be thrown away. But in due time it will be repaid in some way with abundant increase. And the man who wishes to make the most out of his money for future use and personal comfort will give liberally to deserving objects of charity — just as the man who wishes to make the most out of his grain will not suffer it to lie in his granary, but will commit the seed to the fertile earth. “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it again after many days” (Ecclesiastes 11:1); that is, when the waters as of the Nile have overflowed the banks and flooded the whole adjacent country, then is the time to cast abroad thy seed. The waters will retire, and the seed will sink into the accumulated fertile mud that is deposited, and will spring up in an abundant harvest. So it is with that which is given for objects of benevolence.

Shall reap also sparingly Shall reap in proportion to what he sowed. This everyone knows is true in regard to grain that is sowed. It is also no less true in regard to deeds of charity. The idea is, that God will bestow rewards in proportion to what is given. These rewards may refer to results in this life, or to the rewards in heaven, or both. All who have ever been in the habit of giving liberally to the objects of benevolence can testify that they have lost nothing, but have reaped in proportion to their liberality. This follows in various ways.

(1) In the comfort and peace which results from giving. If a man wishes to purchase happiness with his gold, he can secure the most by bestowing it liberally on objects of charity. It will produce him more immediate peace than it would to spend it in sensual gratifications, and far more than to hoard it up useless in his coffers.

(2) In reflection on it hereafter. It will produce more happiness in remembering that he has done good with it, and promoted the happiness of others, than it will to reflect that he has hoarded up useless wealth, or that he has squandered it in sensual gratification. The one will be unmingled pleasure when he comes to die; the other will be unmingled self-reproach and pain.

(3) In subsequent life, God will in some way repay to him far more than he has bestowed in deeds of charity. By augmented prosperity, by health and future comfort, and by raising up for us and our families, when in distress and want, friends to aid us, God can and often does abundantly repay the liberal for all their acts of kindness and deeds of beneficence.

(4) God can and will reward his people in heaven abundantly for all their kindness to the poor, and all their self-denials in endeavoring to diffuse the influence of truth and the knowledge of salvation. Indeed the rewards of heaven will be in no small degree apportioned in this manner, and determined by the amount of benevolence which we have shown on earth; see ~~41234~~ Matthew 25:34-40. On all accounts, therefore, we have every inducement to give liberally. As a farmer who desires an ample harvest scatters his seed with a liberal hand; as he does not grudge it though it falls into the earth; as he scatters it with the expectation that in due time it will spring up and reward his labors, so should we give with a liberal hand to aid the cause of benevolence, nor should we deem what we give to be lost or wasted though we wait long before we are recompensed, or though we should be in no other way rewarded than by the comfort which arises from the act of doing good.

~~4006~~ **2 Corinthians 9:7.** *Every man according as he purposeth in his heart ...* The main idea in this verse is, that the act of giving should be voluntary and cheerful. It should not seem to be extorted by the importunity of others (~~4006~~ 2 Corinthians 9:6); nor should it be given from urgent necessity, but it should be given as an offering of the heart. On this part of the verse we may remark:

(1) That the heart is usually more concerned in the business of giving than the head. If liberality is evinced, it will be the heart which prompts to it; if it is not evinced, it will be because the heart has some bad passions to gratify, and is under the influence of avarice, or selfishness, or some other

improper attachment. Very often a man is convinced he ought to give liberally, but a narrow heart and a parsimonious spirit prevents it.

(2) We should follow the dictates of the heart in giving. I mean that a man will usually give more correctly who follows the first promptings of his heart when an object of charity is presented, than he will if he takes much time to deliberate. The instinctive prompting of a benevolent heart is to give liberally. And the amount which should be given will usually be suggested to a man by the better feelings of his heart. But if he resolves to deliberate much, and if he suffers the heart to grow cold, and if he defers it, the pleadings of avarice will come in, or some object of attachment or plan of life will rise to view, or he will begin to compare himself with others. and he will give much less than he would have done if he had followed the first impulse of feeling. God implanted the benevolent feelings in the bosom that they should prompt us to do good; and he who acts most in accordance with them is most likely to do what he ought to do; and in general it is the safest and best rule for a man to give just what his heart prompts him to give when an object of charity is presented. Man at best is too selfish to be likely to give too much or to go beyond his means; and if in a few instances it should be done, more would be gained in value in the cultivation of benevolent feeling than would be lost in money. I know of no better rule on the subject, than to cultivate as much as possible the benevolent feelings, and then to throw open the soul to every proper appeal to our charity, and to give just according to the instinctive prompting of the heart.

(3) Giving should be voluntary and cheerful. It should be from the heart. Yet there is much, very much that is not so, and there is, therefore, much benevolence that is spasmodic and spurious; that cannot be depended on, and that will not endure. No dependence can be placed on a man in regard to giving who does not do it from the steady influences of a benevolent heart. But there is much obtained in the cause of benevolence that is produced by a kind of extortion. It is given because others give, and the man would be ashamed to give less than they do. Or, it is given because he thinks his rank in life demands it, and he is prompted to do it by pride and vanity. Or, he gives from respect to a pastor or a friend, or because he is warmly importuned to give; or because he is shut up to a kind of necessity to give, and must give or he would lose his character and become an object of scorn and detestation. In all this there is nothing cheerful and voluntary; and there can be nothing in it acceptable to God. Nor can it be depended

on permanently. The heart is not in it, and the man will evade the duty as soon as he can, and will soon find excuses for not giving at all.

Not grudgingly Greek, “Not of grief” (μη ^{<3361>} εκ ^{<1537>} λυπης ^{<3077>}). Not as if he were sorry to part with his money. Not as if he were constrained to do a thing that was extremely painful to him. “Or of necessity.” As if he were compelled to do it. Let him do it cheerfully.

For God loveth a cheerful giver And who does not? Valuable as any gift may be in itself, yet if it is forced and constrained; if it can be procured only after great importunity and persevering effort, who can esteem it as desirable? God desires the heart in every service. No service that is not cheerful and voluntary; none that does not arise from true love to him can be acceptable in his sight. God loves it because it shows a heart like his own — a heart disposed to give cheerfully and do good on the largest scale possible; and because it shows a heart attached from principle to his service and cause. The expression here has all the appearance of a proverb, and expressions similar to this occur often in the Scriptures. In an uninspired writer, also, this idea has been beautifully expanded. “In all thy gifts show a cheerful countenance, and dedicate thy tithes with gladness. Give unto the Most High according as he hath enriched thee: and as thou hast gotten give with a cheerful eye. For the Lord recompenseth, and will give thee seven times as much” — Wisdom of the Son of Sirach 35:9-11. In nothing, therefore, is it more important than to examine the motives by which we give to the objects of benevolence. However liberal may be our benefactions, yet God may see that there is no sincerity, and may hate the spirit with which it is done.

2 Corinthians 9:8. *And God is able ...* Do not suppose that by giving liberally you will be impoverished and reduced to want. You should rather confide in God, who is able to furnish you abundantly with what is needful for the supply of your necessities. Few persons are ever reduced to poverty by liberality. Perhaps in the whole circle of his acquaintance it would be difficult for an individual to point out one who has been impoverished or made the poorer in this way. Our selfishness is generally a sufficient guard against this; but it is also to be added, that the divine blessing rests upon the liberal man, and that God keeps him from want. But in the meantime there are multitudes who are made poor by the lack of liberality. They are parsimonious in giving but they are extravagant in dress, and luxury, and in expenses for amusement or vice, and the

consequence is poverty and want. “There is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty;” Proverbs 11:24. The divine blessing rests upon the liberal: and while every person should make a proper provision for his family, every one should give liberally, confiding in God that he will furnish the supplies for our future needs. Let this maxim be borne in mind, that no one is usually made the poorer by being liberal.

All grace All kinds of favor. He is able to impart to you those things which are needful for your welfare.

That ye always ... The sense is, “If you give liberally you are to expect that God will furnish you with the means, so that you will be able to abound more and more in it.” You are to expect that he will abundantly qualify you for doing good in every way, and that he will furnish you with all that is needful for this. The man who gives, therefore, should have faith in God. He should expect that God will bless him in it; and the experience of the Christian world may be appealed to in proof that people are not made poor by liberality.

2 Corinthians 9:9. *As it is written* ^{<4650>} Psalm 112:9. The idea is, “in this way will the saying in the Scriptures be verified, or the promise confirmed.” The psalmist is describing the character of the righteous man. One of his characteristics, he says, is, that he has scattered abroad, he has given liberally to the poor. On such a man a blessing is pronounced (^{<4650>} Psalm 112:1); and one of the blessings will be that he shall be prospered. Some difficulty has been felt by commentators to see how the quotation here made sustains the position of Paul that the liberal man would be blessed of God, and would receive an increase according to his liberality. In order to this, they have supposed (see Doddridge, Bloomfield, and Clarke) that the word “righteousness” means the same as almsgiving, or that “he would always have something to bestow.” But I would suggest that perhaps Paul quoted this, as quotations are frequently made in the Scriptures, where a passage was familiar. He quotes only a part of the passage, meaning that the whole passage confirms the point under consideration. Thus, the whole passage in the psalm is, “He hath dispersed; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth forever; his horn shall be exalted with honor;” that is, he shall be abundantly blessed with prosperity and with the favor of God. Thus, the entire promise sustains the position of Paul, that the liberal man would be abundantly blessed. The phrase “he hath dispersed” (Εσκορπισεν ^{<4650>}), may refer either to the act

of sowing, as a man scatters seed on the earth; or there may be an allusion to the oriental custom of scattering money among an assembled company of paupers; compare ^{<112>}Proverbs 11:24.

His righteousness His deeds of beneficence.

Remaineth In its fruits and consequences; that is, either in its effects on others, or on himself. It may mean that the sums so distributed will remain with him forever inasmuch as he will be supplied with all that is needful to enable him to do good to others. This interpretation accords with the connection.

^{<100>}**2 Corinthians 9:10.** *Now he that ministereth seed to the sower* This is an expression of an earnest wish. In the previous verses he had stated the promises, or had shown what we had a right to expect as a consequence of liberality. He here unites the expression of an earnest desire that they might experience this themselves. The allusion is to the act of sowing seed. The idea is, that when a man scatters seed in his field God provides him with the means of sowing again. He not only gives him a harvest to supply his needs, but he blesses him also in giving him the ability to sow again. Such was the benevolent wish of Paul. He desired not only that God would supply their returning needs, but he desired also that he would give them the ability to do good again; that he would furnish them the means of future benevolence. He acknowledges God as the source of all increase, and wishes that they may experience the results of such increase. Perhaps in this language there is an allusion to ^{<200>}Isaiah 4:10; and the idea is, that it is God who furnishes by his providence the seed to the sower. In like manner he will furnish you the means of doing good.

Minister bread for your food Furnish you with an ample supply for your needs.

Multiply your seed sown Greatly increase your means of doing good; make the result of all your benefactions so to abound that you may have the means of doing good again, and on a larger scale, as the seed sown in the earth is so increased that the farmer may have the means of sowing more abundantly again.

And increase the fruits of your righteousness This evidently means, the results and effects of their benevolence. The word "righteousness" here refers to their liberality; and the wish of the apostle is, that the results of

their beneficence might greatly abound, that they might have the means of doing extensive good, and that they might be the means of diffusing happiness from afar.

2 Corinthians 9:11. *Being enriched in everything ...* In all respects your riches are conferred on you for this purpose. The design of the apostle is to state to them the true reason why wealth was bestowed. It was not for the purposes of luxury and self-gratification; not to be spent in sensual enjoyment, not for parade and display; it was that it might be distributed to others in such a way as to cause thanksgiving to God. At the same time, this implies the expression of an earnest wish on the part of Paul. He did not desire that they should be rich for their own gratification or pleasure; he desired it only as the means of their doing good to others. Right feeling will desire property only as the means of promoting happiness and producing thanksgiving to God. They who truly love their children and friends will wish them to be successful in acquiring wealth only that they may have the means and the disposition to alleviate misery, and promote the happiness of all around them. No one who has true benevolence will desire that anyone in whom he feels an interest should be enriched for the purpose of living amidst luxury, and encompassing himself with the indulgences which wealth can furnish. If a man has not a disposition to do good with money, it is not true benevolence to desire that he may not possess it.

To all bountifulness Margin, Simplicity, or liberality. The word (*ἀπλοτης* ⁵⁷²) means properly sincerity, candor, probity; then also simplicity, frankness, fidelity, and especially as manifesting itself in liberality; see ⁵¹²Romans 12:8; ⁴⁰²2 Corinthians 8:2. Here it evidently means “liberality,” and the idea is, that property is given for this purpose, in order that there may be liberality evinced in doing good to others.

Which causeth through us ... That is, we shall so distribute your alms as to cause thanksgiving to God. The result will be that by our instrumentality, thanks will be given to the great Source and Giver of all wealth. Property should always be so employed as to produce thanksgiving. If it is made to contribute to our own support and the support of our families, it should excite thanksgiving. If it is given to others, it should be so given, if it is possible, that the recipient should be more grateful to God than to us; should feel that though we may be the honored instrument in distributing it, yet the true benefactor is God.

2 Corinthians 9:12. *For the administration of this service* The distribution of this proof of your liberality. The word “service” here, says Doddridge, intimates that this was to be regarded not merely as an act of humanity, but religion.

The want of the saints Of the poor Christians in Judea on whose behalf it was contributed.

But is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God Will abound unto God in producing thanksgivings. The result will be that it will produce abundant thanksgiving in their hearts to God.

2 Corinthians 9:13. *Whiles by the experiment ...* Or rather, by the experience of this ministration; the proof (*δοκιμης* ^{<1382>}), the evidence here furnished of your liberality. They shall in this ministration have experience or proof of your Christian principle.

They glorify God They will praise God as the source of your liberality, as having given you the means of being liberal, and having inclined your hearts to it.

For your professed subjection ... Literally, “For the obedience of your profession of the gospel.” It does not imply merely that there was a profession of religion, but that there was a real subjection to the gospel which they professed. This is not clearly expressed in our translation. Tyndale has expressed it better, “Which praise God for your obedience in acknowledging the gospel of Christ.” There was a real and sincere submission to the gospel of Christ, and that was manifested by their giving liberally to supply the needs of others. The doctrine is, that one evidence of true subjection to the gospel; one proof that our profession is sincere and genuine, is a willingness to contribute to relieve the needs of the poor and afflicted friends of the Redeemer. And unto all people. That is, all others whom you may have the opportunity of relieving.

2 Corinthians 9:14. *And by their prayer for you* On the grammatical construction of this difficult verse, Doddridge and Bloomfield may be consulted. It is probably to be taken in connection with **2 Corinthians 9:12**, and **2 Corinthians 9:13** is a parenthesis. Thus interpreted, the sense will be, “The administration of this service (**2 Corinthians 9:12**) will produce abundant thanks to God. It will also (**2 Corinthians 9:14**) produce another effect. It will tend to excite the prayers

of the saints for you, and thus produce important benefits to yourselves. They will earnestly desire your welfare, they will anxiously pray to be united in Christian friendship with those who have been so signally endowed with the grace of God.” The sentiment is, that charity should be shown to poor and afflicted Christians because it will lead them to pray for us and to desire our welfare. The prayers of the poorest Christian for us are worth more than all we usually bestow on them in charity; and he who has secured the pleadings of a child of God, however humble, in his behalf, has made a good use of his money.

Which long after you Who earnestly desire to see and know you. Who will sincerely desire your welfare, and who will thus be led to pray for you.

For the exceeding grace of God in you On account of the favor which God has shown to you: the strength and power of the Christian principle, manifesting itself in doing good to those whom you have never seen. The apostle supposes that the exercise of a charitable disposition is to be traced entirely to God. God is the author of all grace; he alone excites in us a disposition to do good to others.

2 Corinthians 9:15. *Thanks be unto God* Whitby supposes that this refers to the charitable disposition which they had manifested, and that the sense is, that God was to be adored for the liberal spirit which they were disposed to manifest, and the aid which they were disposed to render to others. But this, it is believed, falls far below the design of the apostle. The reference is rather to the inexpressible gift which God had granted to them in bestowing his Son to die for them; and this is one of the most striking instances which occur in the New Testament, showing that the mind of Paul was full of this subject; and that wherever he began, he was sure to end with a reference to the Redeemer. The invaluable gift of a Saviour was so familiar to his mind, and he was so accustomed to dwell on that in his private thoughts, that the mind naturally and easily glanced on that whenever anything occurred that by the remotest allusion would suggest it. The idea is, “Your benefactions are indeed valuable; and for them, for the disposition which you have manifested, and for all the good which you will be enabled thus to accomplish, we are bound to give thanks to God. All this will excite the gratitude of those who shall be benefitted. But how small is all this compared with the great gift which God has imparted in bestowing a Saviour! That is unspeakable. No words can express it, no

language convey an adequate description of the value of the gift, and of the mercies which result from it.”

His unspeakable gift The word used here (ανεκδιηγητω ^{<411>}) means, what cannot be related, unutterable. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The idea is, that no words can properly express the greatness of the gift thus bestowed on man. It is higher than the mind can conceive; higher than language can express. On this verse we may observe:

(1) That the Saviour is a gift to mankind. So he is uniformly represented; see ^{<416>}John 3:16; ^{<400>}Galatians 1:4; 2:20; ^{<402>}Ephesians 1:22; ^{<416>}1 Timothy 2:6; ^{<424>}Titus 2:14. Man had no claim on God. He could not compel him to provide a plan of salvation; and the whole arrangement — the selection of the Saviour, the sending him into the world, and all the benefits resulting from his work, are all an undeserved gift to man.

(2) This is a gift unspeakably great, whose value no language can express, no heart fully conceive. It is so because:

(a) Of his own greatness and glory;

(b) Because of the inexpressible love which he evinced;

(c) Because of the unutterable sufferings which he endured;

(d) Because of the inexpressibly great benefits which result from his work. No language can do justice to this work in either of these respects; no heart in this world fully conceives the obligation which rests upon man in virtue of his work.

(3) Thanks should be rendered to God for this. We owe him our highest praises for this. This appears:

(a) Because it was mere benevolence in God. We had no claim; we could not compel him to grant us a Saviour. The gift might have been withheld, and his throne would have been spotless, We owe no thanks where we have a claim; where we deserve nothing, then he who benefits us has a claim on our thanks.

(b) Because of the benefits which we have received from him. Who can express this? All our peace and hope; all our comfort and joy in this life; all our prospect of pardon and salvation; all the offers of eternal glory are to be traced to him. Man has no prospect of being happy when he dies but in

virtue of the “unspeakable gift” of God. And when he thinks of his sins, which may now be freely pardoned; when he thinks of an agitated and troubled conscience, which may now be at peace; when he thinks of his soul, which may now be unspeakably and eternally happy; when he thinks of the hell from which he is delivered, and of the heaven to whose eternal glories he may now be raised up by the gift of a Saviour, his heart should overflow with gratitude, and the language should be continually on his lips and in his heart, “THANKS BE UNTO GOD FOR HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT.” Every other mercy should seem small compared with this; and every manifestation of right feeling in the heart should lead us to contemplate the source of it, and to feel, as Paul did, that all is to be traced to the unspeakable gift of God.

REMARKS

- 1.** This chapter, with the preceding, derives special importance from the fact that it contains the most extended discussion of the principles of Christian charity which occurs in the Bible. No one can doubt that it was intended by the Redeemer that his people should be distinguished for benevolence. It was important, therefore, that there should be some portion of the New Testament where the principles on which charity should be exercised, and the motives by which Christians should be induced to give, should be fully stated. Such a discussion we have in these chapters; and they therefore demand the profound and prayerful attention of all who love the Lord Jesus.
- 2.** We have here a striking specimen of the manner in which the Bible is written. Instead of abstract statements and systematic arrangement, the principles of religion are brought out in connection with a case that actually occurred. But it follows that it is important to study the Bible attentively, and to be familiar with every part of it. In some part of the Scriptures, statements of the principles which should guide us in given circumstances will be found; and Christians should, therefore, be familiar with every part of the Bible.
- 3.** These chapters are of special importance to the ministers of religion, and to all whose duty it is to press upon their fellow Christians the duty of giving liberally to the objects of benevolence. The principles on which it should be done are fully developed here. The motives which it is lawful to urge are urged here by Paul. It may be added, also, that the chapters are

worthy of our profound study on account of the admirable tact and address which Paul evinces in inducing others to give. Well he knew human nature. Well he knew the motives which would influence others to give. And well he knew exactly how to shape his arguments and adapt his reasoning to the circumstances of those whom he addressed.

4. The summary of the motives presented in this chapter contains still the most important argument which can be urged to produce liberality. We cannot but admire the felicity of Paul in this address — a felicity not the result of craft and cunning, but resulting from his amiable feelings, and the love which he bore to the Corinthians and to the cause of benevolence. He reminds them of the high opinion which he had of them, and of the honorable mention which he had been induced to make of them ([2 Corinthians 9:1,2](#)); he reminds them of the painful result to his own feelings and theirs if the collection should in any way fail, and it should appear that his confidence in them had been misplaced ([2 Corinthians 9:3-5](#)); he refers them to the abundant reward which they might anticipate as the result of liberal benefactions, and of the fact that God loved those who gave cheerfully ([2 Corinthians 9:6,7](#)); he reminds them of the abundant grace of God, who was able to supply all their needs and to give them the means to contribute liberally to meet the needs of the poor ([2 Corinthians 9:8](#)); he reminds them of the joy which their liberality would occasion, and of the abundant thanksgiving to God which would result from it ([2 Corinthians 9:12,13](#)); and he refers them to the unspeakable gift of God, Jesus Christ, as an example, and an argument, and us urging the highest claims in them, [2 Corinthians 9:15](#). “Who,” says Doddridge, “could withstand the force of such oratory?” No doubt it was effectual in that case, and it should be in all others.

5. May the motives here urged by the apostle be effectual to persuade us all to liberal efforts to do good! Assuredly there is no less occasion for Christian liberality now than there was in the time of Paul. There are still multitudes of the poor who need the kind and efficient aid of Christians. And the whole world now is a field in which Christian beneficence may be abundantly displayed, and every land may, and should experience the benefits of the charity to which the gospel prompts, and which it enjoins. Happy are they who are influenced by the principles of the gospel to do good to all people! Happy they who have any opportunity to illustrate the power of Christian principle in this; any ability to alleviate the needs of one

sufferer, or to do anything in sending that gospel to benighted nations which alone can save the soul from eternal death!

6. Let us especially thank God for his unspeakable gift, Jesus Christ. Let us remember that to him we owe every opportunity to do good: that it was because he came that there is any possibility of benefiting a dying world; and that all who profess to love him are bound to imitate his example and to show their sense of their obligation to God for giving a Saviour. How poor and worthless are all our gifts compared with the great gift of God; how slight our expressions of compassion, even at the best, for our fellow-men, compared with the compassion which he has shown for us! When God has given his Son to die for us, what should we not be willing to give that we may show our gratitude, and that we may benefit a dying world

NOTES ON 2 CORINTHIANS 10

Paul, having finished the subject of the duty of alms-giving in the previous chapter, enters into this on a vindication of himself from the charges of his enemies. His general design is to vindicate his apostolic authority, and to show that he had a right, as well as others, to regard himself as sent from God. This vindication is continued through 2 Corinthians 11—12. In this chapter the stress of the argument is, that he did not depend on anything external to recommend him — on any “carnal weapons;” on anything which commended itself by the outward appearance; or on anything that was so much valued by the admirers of human eloquence and learning. He seems willing to admit all that his enemies could say of him on that head, and to rely on other proofs that he was sent from God. In 2 Corinthians 11 he pursues the subject, and shows by a comparison of himself with others, that he had as good a right certainly as they to regard himself as sent by God. In 2 Corinthians 12 he appeals to another argument, to which none of his accusers were able to appeal, that he had been permitted to see the glories of the heavenly world, and had been favored in a manner unknown to other people.

It is evident that there was one or more false teachers among the Corinthians who called in question the divine authority of Paul. These teachers were native Jews (~~4711B~~ 2 Corinthians 11:13,22), and they boasted much of their own endowments. It is impossible, except from the Epistle itself, to ascertain the nature of their charges and objections against him. From the chapter before us it would seem that one principal ground of their objection was, that though he was bold enough in his letters and had threatened to exercise discipline, yet that he would not dare to do it. They accused him of being, when present with them, timid, weak, mild, pusillanimous, of lacking moral courage to inflict the punishment which he had threatened in his letters. To this he replies in this chapter:

(1) He appeals to the meekness and gentleness of Christ; thus indirectly and delicately vindicating his own mildness from their objections, and entreats them not to give him occasion to show the boldness and severity which he had purposed to do. He had no wish to be bold and severe in the exercise of discipline, ~~4710E~~ 2 Corinthians 10:1,2.

(2) He assures them that the weapons of his warfare were not carnal, but spiritual. He relied on the truth of the gospel and on the power of motives; and these weapons were mighty by the aid of God to cast down all that offend him. Yet he was ready to revenge and punish all disobedience by severe measures if it were necessary, ^{<4707>}2 Corinthians 10:3-6.

(3) They looked on the outward appearance. He cautioned them to remember that he had as good claims to be regarded as belonging to Christ at they had, ^{<4707>}2 Corinthians 10:7. He had given proofs that he was an apostle, and the false teachers should look at those proofs lest they should be found to be opposing God. He assured them that if he had occasion to exercise his power he would have no reason to be ashamed of it, ^{<4708>}2 Corinthians 10:8. It would be found to be ample to execute punishment on his foes.

(4) The false teachers had said that Paul was terrible only in his letters. He boasted of his power, but it was, they supposed, only epistolary bravery. He would not dare to execute his threatening. in reply to this, Paul, in a strain of severe irony, says that he would not seem to terrify them by mere letters. It would be by something far more severe. He advised such objectors, therefore, to believe that he would prove himself to be such as he had shown himself to be in his letters; to look at the evidence, since they boasted of their talent for reasoning, that he would show himself in fact to be what he had threatened to be, ^{<4709>}2 Corinthians 10:9-12.

(5) He pursues the strain of severe irony by secretly comparing himself with them, ^{<4702>}2 Corinthians 10:12-16. They boasted much, but it was only by comparing themselves with one another, and not with any elevated standard of excellence. Paul admitted that he had not the courage to do that, ^{<4702>}2 Corinthians 10:12. Nor did he dare to boast of things wholly beyond his ability as they had done. He was contented to act only within the proper limits prescribed to him by his talents and by the appointment of God. Not so they. They had boldness and courage to go far beyond that, and to boast of things wholly beyond their ability, and beyond the proper measure, ^{<4703>}2 Corinthians 10:13,14. Nor had he courage to boast of entering into other people's labors. It required more courage than he had, to make a boast of what he had done if he had availed himself of things made ready to his hand as if they were the fruit of his own labors, implying that they had done this; that they had come to Corinth, a church founded by his labors, and had quietly set themselves down there, and then, instead

of going into other fields of labor, had called in question the authority of him who had founded the church, and who was laboring indefatigably elsewhere, <4705>2 Corinthians 10:15,16. Paul adds, that such was not his intention. He aimed to preach the gospel beyond, to carry it to regions where it had not been spread. Such was the nature of his courage; such the kind of boldness which he had, and he was not ambitious to join them in their boasting.

(6) He concludes this chapter with a very serious admonition. Leaving the strain of irony, he seriously says that if any man were disposed to boast, it should be only in the Lord. He should glory not in self-commendation, but in the fact that he had evidence that the Lord approved him; not in his own talents or powers, but in the excellence and glory of the Lord, <4707>2 Corinthians 10:17,18.

<4708>**2 Corinthians 10:1.** *Now I Paul myself beseech you* I entreat you who are members of the church not to give me occasion for the exercise of severity in discipline. I have just expressed my confidence in the church in general, and my belief that you will act in accordance with the rules of the gospel. But I cannot thus speak of all. There are some among you who have spoken with contempt of my authority and my claims as an apostle. Of them I cannot speak in this manner; but instead of commanding them I entreat them not to give me occasion for the exercise of discipline.

By the meekness and gentleness of Christ In view of the meekness and mildness of the Redeemer; or desiring to imitate his gentleness and kindness. Paul wished to imitate that. He did not wish to have occasion for severity. He desired at all times to imitate, and to exhibit the gentle feelings of the Saviour. He had no pleasure in severity; and he did not desire to exhibit it.

Who in presence Margin, In outward appearance. It may either mean that when present among them he appeared, according to their representation, to be humble, mild, gentle (<4709>2 Corinthians 10:10); or that in his external appearance he had this aspect; see on <4709>2 Corinthians 10:10. Most probably it means that they had represented him, as timid when among them, and afraid to exercise discipline, however much he had threatened it.

Am base among you The word used here (*ταπεινος* <5011>) usually means low, humble, poor. Here it means timid, modest, the opposite of boldness. Such was formerly the meaning of the English word base. It was applied to

those of low degree or rank; of humble birth; and stood opposed to those of elevated rank or dignity. Now it is commonly used to denote that which is degraded or worthless; of mean spirit; vile; and stands opposed to that which is manly and noble. But Paul did not mean to use it here in that sense. He meant to say that they regarded him as timid and afraid to execute the punishment which he had threatened, and as manifesting a spirit which was the opposite of boldness. This was doubtless a charge which they brought against him; but we are not necessarily to infer that it was true. All that it proves is, that he was modest and unobtrusive, and that they interpreted this as timidity and lack of spirit.

But being absent am bold toward you That is, in my letters; see on ~~4700~~2 Corinthians 10:10. This they charged him with, that he was bold enough when away from them, but that he would be tame enough when he should meet them face to face, and that they had nothing to fear from him.

~~4701~~**2 Corinthians 10:2.** *That I may not be bold* I entreat you so to act that I may not have occasion to exercise the severity which I fear I shall be compelled to use against those who accuse me of being governed wholly by worldly motives and policy. In other words, that I may not be compelled to be bold and decisive in my measures by your improper conduct.

Which think of us Margin, “reckon.” They suppose this; or, they accuse me of it. By the word “us” here Paul means himself, though it is possible also that he speaks in the name of his fellow apostles and laborers who were associated with him, and the objections may have referred to all who acted with him.

As if we walked As if we lived or acted. The word “walk” in the Scriptures is often used to denote the course or manner of life; see the notes, ~~4702~~Romans 4:12; ~~4703~~2 Corinthians 5:7.

According to the flesh see the note on ~~47017~~2 Corinthians 1:17. As if we were governed by the weak and corrupt principles of human nature. As if we had no higher motive than carnal and worldly policy. As if we were seeking our own advantage and not the welfare of the world. The charge was, probably, that he was not governed by high and holy principles, but by the principles of mere worldly policy; that he was guided by personal interests, and by worldly views — by ambition, or the love of dominion, wealth, or popularity, and that he was destitute of every supernatural endowment and every evidence of a divine commission.

2 Corinthians 10:3. *For though we walk in the flesh* Though we are mortal like other people; though we dwell like them in mortal bodies, and necessarily must devote some care to our temporal needs; and though, being in the flesh, we are conscious of imperfections and frailties like others. The sense is, that he did not claim exemption from the common needs and frailties of nature. The best of people are subject to these needs and frailties; the best of people are liable to err.

We do not war after the flesh The warfare in which he was engaged was with sin, idolatry, and all forms of evil. He means that in conducting this he was not actuated by worldly views or policy, or by such ambitious and interested aims as controlled the people of this world. This refers primarily to the warfare in which Paul was himself engaged as an apostle; and the idea is, that he went forth as a soldier under the great Captain of his salvation to fight his battles and to make conquests for him. A similar allusion occurs in **2 Timothy 2:3,4**. It is true, however, that not only all ministers, but all Christians are engaged in a warfare; and it is equally true that they do not maintain their conflict “after the flesh,” or on the principles which govern the people of this world. The warfare of Christians relates to the following points:

- (1) It is a warfare with the corrupt desires and sensual propensities of the heart; with eternal corruption and depravity, with the remaining unsubdued propensities of a fallen nature.
- (2) With the powers of darkness; the mighty spirits of evil that seek to destroy us; see **Ephesians 6:11-17**.
- (3) With sin in all forms; with idolatry, sensuality, corruption, intemperance, profaneness, wherever they may exist. The Christian is opposed to all these, and it is the aim and purpose of his life as far as he may be able to resist and subdue them. He is a soldier enlisted under the banner of the Redeemer to oppose and resist all forms of evil. But his warfare is not conducted on worldly principles. Muhammed propagated his religion with the sword; and the people of this world seek for victory by arms and violence; The Christian looks for his conquests only by the force and the power of truth, and by the agency of the Spirit of God.

2 Corinthians 10:4. *For the weapons of our warfare* The means by which we hope to achieve our victory.

Are not carnal Not those of the flesh. Not such as the people of the world use. They are not such as are employed by conquerors; nor are they such as people in general rely on to advance their cause. We do not depend on eloquence, or talent, or learning, or wealth, or beauty, or any of the external aids on which the people of this world rely. They are not such as derive advantage from any power inherent in themselves. Their strength is derived from God alone.

But mighty through God Margin, “to.” They are rendered mighty or powerful by the agency of God. They depend on him for their efficacy. Paul has not here specified the weapons on which he relied; but he had before specified them (^{<406>}2 Corinthians 6:6,7), so that there was no danger of mistake. The weapons were such as were furnished by truth and righteousness, and these were rendered mighty by the attending agency of God. The sense is, that God is the author of the doctrines which we preach, and that he attends them with the agency of his Spirit, and accompanies them to the hearts of people. It is important for all ministers to feel that their weapons are mighty ONLY through God. Conquerors and earthly warriors go into battle depending on the might of their own arm, and on the wisdom and skill which plans the battle. The Christian goes on his warfare, feeling that however well adapted the truths which he holds are to accomplish great purposes, and however wisely his plans are formed, yet that the efficacy of all depends on the agency of God. He has no hope of victory but in God. And if God does not attend him, he is sure of inevitable defeat.

To the pulling down of strongholds The word rendered here as “strongholds” (οχυρωμα ^{<3794>}) means properly a fastness, fortress, or strong fortification. It is here beautifully used to denote the various obstacles resembling a fortress which exist, and which are designed and adapted to oppose the truth and the triumph of the Christian’s cause. All those obstacles are strongly fortified. The sins of his heart are fortified by long indulgence and by the hold which they have on his soul. The wickedness of the world which he opposes is strongly fortified by the fact that it has seized on strong human passions; that one point strengthens another; that great numbers are united. The idolatry of the world was strongly fortified by prejudice, and long establishment, and the protection of laws, and the power of the priesthood; and the opinions of the world are entrenched behind false philosophy and the power of subtle argumentation. The whole world is fortified against Christianity; and the nations of the

earth have been engaged in little else than in raising and strengthening such strongholds for the space of 6,000 years. The Christian religion goes forth against all the combined and concentrated powers of resistance of the whole world; and the warfare is to be waged against every strongly fortified place of error and of sin. These strong fortifications of error and of sin are to be battered down and laid in ruins by our spiritual weapons.

2 Corinthians 10:5. *Casting down imaginations* Margin, reasonings. The word is probably used here in the sense of device, and refers to all the plans of a wicked world; the various systems of false philosophy; and the reasonings of the enemies of the gospel. The various systems of false philosophy were so entrenched that they might be called the stronghold of the enemies of God. The foes of Christianity pretend to a great deal of reason, and rely on that in resisting the gospel.

And every high thing ... Every exalted opinion respecting the dignity and purity of human nature; all the pride of the human heart and of the understanding. All this is opposed to the knowledge of God, and all exalts itself into a vain self-confidence. People entertain vain and unfounded opinions respecting their own excellency, and they feel that they do not need the provisions of the gospel and are unwilling to submit to God.

And bringing into captivity ... The figure here is evidently taken from military conquests. The idea is, that all the strongholds of paganism, and pride, and sin would be demolished; and that when this was done, like throwing down the walls of a city or making a breach, all the plans and purposes of the soul, the reason, the imagination, and all the powers of the mind would be subdued or led in triumph by the gospel, like the inhabitants of a captured city. Christ was the great Captain in this warfare. In his name the battle was waged, and by his power the victory was won. The captives were made for him and under his authority; and all were to be subject to his control. Every power of thought in the pagan world; all the systems of philosophy and all forms of opinion among people; all the purposes of the soul; all the powers of reason, memory, judgment, fancy in an individual, were all to come under the laws of Christ. All doctrines were to be in accordance with his will; philosophy should no longer control them, but they should be subject to the will of Christ. All the plans of life should be controlled by the will of Christ, and formed and executed under his control — as captives are led by a conqueror. All the emotions and feelings of the heart should be controlled by him, and led by him as a captive is led by a

victor. The sense is, that it was the aim and purpose of Paul to accomplish this, and that it would certainly be done. The strongholds of philosophy, paganism, and sin should be demolished, and all the opinions, plans, and purposes of the world should become subject to the all-conquering Redeemer.

2 Corinthians 10:6. *And having in a readiness ...* I am ready to punish all disobedience, notwithstanding all that is said to the contrary; see the notes on **2 Corinthians 10:1,2**. Clothed as I am with this power; aiming to subdue all things to Christ, though the weapons of my warfare are not carnal, and though I am modest or timid (**2 Corinthians 10:1**) when I am with you, I am prepared to take any measures of severity required by my apostolic office, in order that I may inflict deserved punishment on those who have violated the laws of Christ. The design of this is, to meet the objection of his enemies, that he would not dare to execute his threatenings.

When your obedience is fulfilled Doddridge renders this: “now your obedience is fulfilled, and the sounder part of your church restored to due order and submission.” The idea seems to be, that Paul was ready to inflict discipline when the church had showed a readiness to obey his laws, and to do its own duty — delicately intimating that the reason why it was not done was the lack of entire promptness in the church itself, and that it could not be done on any offender as long as the church itself was not prepared to sustain him. The church was to discountenance the enemies of the Redeemer; to show an entire readiness to sustain the apostle, and to unite with him in the effort to maintain the discipline of Christ’s house.

2 Corinthians 10:7. *Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?* This is addressed evidently to the members of the church, and with reference to the claims which had been set up by the false teachers. There can be no doubt that they valued themselves on their external advantages, and laid claim to special honor in the work of the ministry, because they were superior in personal appearance, in rank, manners, or eloquence to Paul. Paul reproves them for thus judging, and assures them that this was not a proper criterion by which to determine on qualifications for the apostolic office. Such things were highly valued among the Greeks, and a considerable part of the effort of Paul in these letters is to show that these things constitute no evidence that those who possessed them were sent from God.

If any man trust to himself ... This refers to the false teachers who laid claims to be the followers of Christ by way of eminence. Whoever these teachers were, it is evident that they claimed to be on the side of Christ, and to be appointed by him. They were probably Jews, and they boasted of their talents and eloquence, and possibly that they had seen the Saviour. The phrase “trust to himself,” seems to imply that they relied on some special merit of their own, or some special advantage which they had — Bloomfield. It may have been that they were of the same tribe that he was, or that they had seen him, or that they confided in their own talents or endowments as a proof that they had been sent by him. It is not an uncommon thing for people to have such confidence in their own gifts, and particularly in a power of fluent speaking, as to suppose that this is a sufficient evidence that they are sent to preach the gospel.

Let him of himself think this again Since he relies so much on himself; since he has such confidence in his own powers, let him look at the evidence that I also am of Christ.

That as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's That I have given as much evidence that I am commissioned by Christ as they can produce. It may be of a different kind. It is not in eloquence, and rank, and the gift of a rapid and ready elocution, but it may be superior to what they are able to produce. Probably Paul refers here to the fact that he had seen the Lord Jesus, and that he had been directly commissioned by him. The sense is, that no one could produce more proofs of being called to the ministry than he could.

~~4018~~ **2 Corinthians 10:8.** *For though I should boast ...* If I should make even higher claims than I have done to a divine commission. I could urge higher evidence than I have done that I am sent by the Lord Jesus.

Of our authority Of my authority as an apostle, my power to administer discipline, and to direct the affairs of the church.

Which the Lord hath given us for edification A power primarily conferred to build up his people and save them and not to destroy.

I should not be ashamed It would be founded on good evidence and sustained by the nature of my commission. I should also have no occasion to be ashamed of the manner in which it has been exercised — a power that has in fact been employed in extending religion and edifying the

church, and not in originating and sustaining measures suited to destroy the soul.

<711>2 Corinthians 10:9. *That I may not seem ...* The meaning of this verse seems to be this. “I say that I might boast more of my power in order that I may not appear disposed to terrify you with my letters merely. I do not threaten more than I can perform. I have it in my power to execute all that I have threatened, and to strike an awe not only by my letters, but by the infliction of extraordinary miraculous punishments. And if I should boast that I had done this, and could do it again, I should have no reason to be ashamed. It would not be vain and empty boasting; not boasting which is not well-founded.”

<711>2 Corinthians 10:10. *For his letters* The letters which he has sent to the church when absent. Reference is had here probably to the First Epistle to the Corinthians. They might also have seen some of Paul’s other epistles, and been so well acquainted with them as to be able to make the general remark that he had the power of writing in an authoritative and impressive manner.

Say they Margin, “Said he.” Greek (φησιν ^{<5346>}) in the singular. This seems to have referred to some one person who had uttered the words — perhaps some one who was the principal leader of the faction opposed to Paul.

Are weighty and powerful Tyndale renders this: “Sore and strong.” The Greek is, “heavy and strong” (βαρεια ^{<926>} και ^{<2532>} ισχυρα ^{<2478>}). The sense is, that his letters were energetic and powerful. They abounded with strong argument, manly appeals, and impressive reproof. This even his enemies were compelled to admit, and this no one can deny who ever read them. Paul’s letters comprise a considerable portion of the New Testament; and some of the most important doctrines of the New Testament are those which are advocated and enforced by him; and his letters have done more to give shape to the theological doctrines of the Christian world than any other cause whatever. He wrote 14 epistles to churches and individuals on various occasions and on a great variety of topics; and his letters soon rose into very high repute among even the inspired ministers of the New Testament (see ^{<6185>}2 Peter 3:15,16), and were regarded as inculcating the most important doctrines of religion. The general characteristics of Paul’s letters are:

- (1) They are strongly argumentative. See especially the Epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews.
- (2) They are distinguished for boldness and vigor of style.
- (3) They are written under great energy of feeling and of thought — a rapid and impetuous torrent that bears him forcibly along.
- (4) They abound more than most other writings in parentheses, and the sentences are often involved and obscure.
- (5) They often evince rapid transitions and departures from the regular current of thought. A thought strikes him suddenly, and he pauses to illustrate it, and dwells upon it long, before he returns to the main subject. The consequence is, that it is often difficult to follow him.
- (6) They are powerful in reproof — abounding with strokes of great boldness of denunciation, and also with specimens of most withering sarcasm and most delicate irony.
- (7) They abound in expressions of great tenderness and pathos. Nowhere can be found expressions of a heart more tender and affectionate than in the writings of Paul.
- (8) They dwell much on great and profound doctrines, and on the application of the principles of Christianity to the various duties of life.
- (9) They abound with references to the Saviour. He illustrates everything by his life, his example, his death, his resurrection. It is not wonderful that letters composed on such subjects and in such a manner by an inspired man produced a deep impression on the Christian world; nor that they should be regarded now as among the most important and valuable portions of the Bible. Take away Paul's letters, and what a chasm would be made in the New Testament! What a chasm in the religious opinions and in the consolations of the Christian world!

But his bodily presence His personal appearance.

Is weak Imbecile, feeble (ασθενής ^{<772>}) — a word often used to denote infirmity of body, sickness, disease; ^{<4259>}Matthew 25:39,43,44; ^{<210>}Luke 10:9; ^{<400>}Acts 4:9; 5:15,16; ^{<6113>}1 Corinthians 11:30. Here it is to be observed that this is a mere charge which was brought against him, and it is not of necessity to be supposed that it was true, though the presumption is,

that there was some foundation for it. It is supposed to refer to some bodily imperfections, and possibly to his diminutive stature. Chrysostom says that his stature was low, his body crooked, and his head bald. Lucian, in his *Philopatris*, says of him, “Corpore erat parvo, contracto, incurvo, tricubitali” — probably an exaggerated description, perhaps a caricature — to denote one very diminutive and having no advantages of personal appearance. According to Nicephorus, Paul “was a little man, crooked, and almost bent like a bow; with a pale countenance, long and wrinkled; a bald head; his eyes full of fire and benevolence; his beard long, thick, and interspersed with gray hairs, as was his head,” etc. But there is no certain evidence of the truth of these representations. Nothing in the Bible would lead us to suppose that Paul was remarkably diminutive or deformed; and though there may be some foundation for the charge here alleged that his bodily presence was weak, yet we are to remember that this was the accusation of his enemies, and that it was doubtless greatly exaggerated. Nicephorus was a writer of the sixteenth century, and his statements are worthy of no regard. That Paul was eminently an eloquent man may be inferred from a great many considerations; some of which are:

(1) His recorded discourses in the Acts of the Apostles, and the effect produced by them. No one can read his defense before Agrippa or Felix and not be convinced that as an orator he deserves to be ranked among the most distinguished of ancient times. No one who reads the account in the Acts can believe that he had any remarkable impediment in his speech or that he was remarkably deformed.

(2) Such was somehow his grace and power as an orator that he was taken by the inhabitants of Lycaonia as Mercury, the god of eloquence; ~~Acts~~ Acts 16:12. Assuredly the evidence here is, that Paul was not deformed.

(3) It may be added, that Paul is mentioned by Longinus among the principal orators of antiquity. From these circumstances, there is no reason to believe that Paul was remarkably deficient in the qualifications requisite for an orator, or that he was in any way remarkably deformed.

And his speech contemptible To be despised. Some suppose that he had an impediment in his speech. But conjecture here is vain and useless. We are to remember that this is a charge made by his adversaries, and that it was made by the fastidious Greeks, who professed to be great admirers of eloquence, but who in his time confided much more in the mere art of the rhetorician than in the power of thought, and in energetic appeals to the

reason and conscience of people. Judged by their standard it may be that Paul had not the graces in voice or manner, or in the knowledge of the Greek language which they esteemed necessary in a finished orator; but judged by his power of thought, and his bold and manly defense of truth, and his energy of character and manner, and his power of impressing truth on mankind, he deserves, doubtless, to be ranked among the first orators of antiquity. No man has left the impress of his own mind on more other minds than Paul.

2 Corinthians 10:11. *Let such an one think this ...* Let them not flatter themselves that there will be any discrepancy between my words and my deeds. Let them feel that all which has been threatened will be certainly executed unless there is repentance. Paul here designedly contradicts the charge which was made against him; and means to say that all that he had threatened in his letters would he certainly executed unless there was a reform. I think that the evidence here is clear that Paul does not intend to admit what they said about his bodily presence to be true; and most probably all that has been recorded about his deformity is mere fable.

2 Corinthians 10:12. *For we dare not make ourselves of the number* We admit that we are not bold enough for that. They had accused him of a lack of boldness and energy when present with them, **2 Corinthians 10:1,10.** Here in a strain of severe but delicate irony, he says he was not bold enough to do things which they had done. He did not dare to do the things which had been done among them. To such boldness of character, present or absent, he could lay no claim.

Or compare ourselves ... I am not bold enough for that. That requires a stretch of boldness and energy to which I can lay no claim.

That commend themselves That put themselves forward, and that boast of their endowments and attainments. It is probable that this was commonly done by those to whom the apostle here refers; and it is certain that it is everywhere the characteristic of pride. To do this, Paul says, required greater boldness than he possessed, and on this point he yielded to them the palm. The satire here is very delicate, and yet very severe, and was such as would doubtless be felt by them.

But they measuring themselves by themselves Whitby and Clarke suppose that this means that they compare themselves with each other; and that they made the false apostles particularly their standard. Doddridge,

Grotius, Bloomfield, and some others suppose the sense to be, that they made themselves the standard of excellence. They looked continually on their own accomplishments, and did not look at the excellences of others. They thus formed a disproportionate opinion of themselves, and undervalued all others. Paul says that he had not boldness enough for that. It required a moral courage to which he could lay no claim. Horace (Epis. 1:7. 98) has an expression similar to this:

“Metirise quemque sue modulo ac pede verum est.”

The sense of Paul is, that they made themselves the standard of excellence; that they were satisfied with their own attainments; and that they overlooked the superior excellence and attainments of others. This is a graphic description of pride and self-complacency; and, alas! it is what is often exhibited. How many there are, and it is to be feared even among professing Christians, who have no other standard of excellence than themselves. Their views are the standard of orthodoxy; their modes of worship are the standard of the proper manner of devotion; their habits and customs are in their own estimation perfect; and their own characters are the models of excellence, and they see little or no excellence in those who differ from them. They look on themselves as the true measure of orthodoxy, humility, zeal, and piety; and they condemn all others, however excellent they may be, who differ from them.

And comparing themselves ... Or rather comparing themselves with themselves. Themselves they make to be the standard, and they judge of everything by that.

Are not wise Are stupid and foolish. Because:

- (1) They had no such excellence as to make themselves the standard.
- (2) Because this was an indication of pride.
- (3) Because it made them blind to the excellences of others. It was to be presumed that others had endowments not inferior to theirs.
- (4) Because the requirements of God, and the character of the Redeemer, were the proper standard of conduct. Nothing is a more certain indication of folly than for a man to make himself the standard of excellence. Such an individual must be blind to his own real character; and the only thing certain about his attainments is, that he is inflated with pride. And yet how

common! How self-satisfied are most persons! How pleased with their own character and attainments! How grieved at any comparison which is made with others implying their inferiority! How prone to undervalue all others simply because they differ from them! — The margin renders this: “understand it not,” that is, they do not understand their own character or their inferiority.

2 Corinthians 10:13. *But we will not boast of things without our measure* Tyndale renders this:” But we will not rejoice above measure.” There is great obscurity in the language here, arising from its brevity. But the general idea seems to be plain. Paul says that he had not boldness as they had to boast of things wholly beyond his proper rule and his actual attainments and influence: and, especially, that he was not disposed to enter into other people’s labors; or to boast of things that had been done by the mere influence of his name, and beyond the proper limits of his personal exertions. He made no boast of having done anything where he had not been himself on the ground and labored assiduously to secure the object. They, it is not improbable, had boasted of what had been done in Corinth as though it were really their work though it had been done by the apostle himself. Nay more, it is probable that they boasted of what had been done by the mere influence of their name. Occupying a central position, they supposed that their reputation had gone abroad, and that the mere influence of their reputation had had an important effect. Not, so with Paul. He made no boast of anything but what God had enabled him to do by his evangelical labors, and by personal exertions. He entered into no one else’s labors and claimed nothing that others had done as his own. He was not bold enough for that.

But according to the measure of the rule ... Margin, Or, “line.” The word rendered “rule” (Greek, **κᾰνὼν** ^{<2583>}, whence our English word canon) means properly a reed, rod, or staff employed to keep anything stiff, erect, asunder (Hom. ii. 8. 103): then a measuring rod or line; then any standard or rule — its usual meaning in the New Testament, as, for example, of life and doctrine, ^{<816>}Galatians 6:16; ^{<116>}Philippians 3:16 — Robinson’s Lexicon. Here it means the limit, boundary line, or sphere of action assigned to anyone. Paul means to say that God had appropriated a certain line or boundary as the proper limit of his sphere of action; that his appropriate sphere extended to them; that in going to them, though they were far distant from the field of his early labors, he had confined himself within the proper limits assigned him by God; and that in boasting of his

labors among them he was not boasting of anything which did not properly fall within the sphere of labor assigned to him. The meaning is, that Paul was especially careful not to boast of anything beyond his proper bounds.

Which God hath distributed to us Which in assigning our respective fields of labor God has assigned unto me and my fellow-laborers. The Greek word rendered here as “distributed” (ἐμερίσεν ^{<3307>}) means properly to measure; and the sense is, that God had measured out or apportioned their respective fields of labor; that by his providence he had assigned to each one his proper sphere, and that in the distribution Corinth had fallen to the lot of Paul. In going there he had kept within the proper limits; in boasting of his labors and success there he did not boast of what did not belong to him.

A measure to reach even unto you The sense is, “the limits assigned me include you, and I may therefore justly boast of what I have done among you as within my proper field of labor.” Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles (^{<4257>}Acts 26:17,18); and the whole country of Greece therefore he regarded as falling within the limits assigned to him. No one therefore could blame him for going there as if he was an intruder; no one assert that he had gone beyond the proper bounds.

^{<7014>}**2 Corinthians 10:14.** *For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure* In coming to preach to you we have not gone beyond the proper limits assigned us. We have not endeavored to enlarge the proper boundaries, to stretch the line which limited us, but have kept honestly within the proper limits.

As though we reached not unto you That is, as if our boundaries did not extend so far as to comprehend you. We have not overstepped the proper limits, as if Greece was not within the proper sphere of action.

For we are come as far as to you ... In the regular work of preaching the gospel we have come to you. We have gone from place to place preaching the gospel where we had opportunity; we have omitted no important places, until in the regular discharge of our duties in preaching we have reached you and have preached the gospel to you. We have not omitted other places in order to come to you and enter into the proper field of labor of others, but in the regular work of making the gospel known as far as possible to all people we have come to Corinth. Far as it is, therefore, from

the place where we started, we have approached it in a regular manner, and have not gone out of our proper province in doing it.

<4015>2 Corinthians 10:15. *Not boasting of things without our measure*

There is here probably an allusion to the false teachers at Corinth. They had come after Paul had been there, and had entered into his labors. When he had founded the church; when he had endured trials and persecutions in order to reach Corinth; when he had labored there for a year and a half (<4015>Acts 18:11), they came and entered the quiet and easy field, formed parties. and claimed the field as their own. Paul says that he had not courage to do that; see note, <47012>2 Corinthians 10:12. That required a species of boldness to which he could lay no claim; and he did not assume honor to himself like that.

That is, of other men's labors Not intruding into churches which we did not establish, and claiming the right to direct their affairs, and to exclude the founders from all proper honors and all influence, and endeavoring to alienate the affections of Christians from their spiritual father and guide.

But having hope ... So far from this; so far from a desire to enter into the labors of others and quietly enjoying the avails of their industry; and so far even from a desire to sit down ourselves and enjoy the fruit of our own labors, I desire to penetrate other untrodden regions; to encounter new dangers; to go where the gospel has not been planted, and to rear other churches there. I do not, therefore, make these remarks as if I wished even to dispossess the teachers that have entered into my labors. I make them because I wish to be aided by you in extending the gospel further; and I look to your assistance in order that I may have the means of going into the regions where I have not made known the name of the Redeemer.

When your faith is increased When you become so strong as not to need my presence and my constant care; and when you shall be able to speed me on my way and to aid me on my journey. He expected to be assisted by them in his efforts to carry the gospel to other countries.

That we shall be enlarged Margin, "Magnified by you." Bloomfield supposes that this means. "to gain fame and glory by you;" that is, as the teacher may justly by his pupils. So Robinson renders it. "to make great, to praise." But to me the idea seems to be that he wished them to enlarge or magnify him by introducing him to larger fields of action; by giving him a wider sphere of labor. It was not that he wished to be magnified by

obtaining a wider reputation, not as a matter of praise or ambition, but he wished to have his work and success greatly enlarged. This he hoped to be enabled to do partly by the aid of the church at Corinth. When they became able to manage their own affairs; when his time was not demanded to superintend them; when their faith became so strong that his presence was not needed; and when they should assist him in his preparations for travel, then he would enter on his wider field of labor. He had no intention of sitting down in ease as the false teachers in Corinth seem disposed to have done.

According to our rule Greek, “According our canon;” see on ^{<47013>}2 Corinthians 10:13. The sense is, according to the rule by which the sphere of his labors had been marked out. His rule was to carry the gospel as far as possible to the pagan world. He regarded the regions lying far beyond Corinth as coming properly within his limits; and he desired to occupy that field.

Abundantly Greek, Unto abundance. So as to abound; that is, to occupy the field assigned as far as possible.

^{<47016>}**2 Corinthians 10:16.** *To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you* What regions are referred to here can be only a matter of conjecture. It may be that he wished to preach in other parts of Greece, and that he designed to go to Arcadia or Lacedaemon. Rosenmuller supposes that as the Corinthians were engaged in commerce, the apostle hoped that by them some tidings of the gospel would reach the countries with which they were engaged in traffic. But I think it most probable that he alludes to Italy and Spain. It is certain that he had formed the design of visiting Spain (^{<45124>}Romans 15:24,28); and he doubtless wished the Corinthians to aid him in that purpose, and was anxious to do this as soon as the condition of the eastern churches would allow it.

And not to boast in another man’s line of things ... Margin, “Rule,” the same word (κᾶνον ^{<2583>}) which occurs in ^{<47013>}2 Corinthians 10:13. The meaning is, that Paul did not mean to boast of what properly belonged to others. He did not claim what they had done as his own. He did not intend to labor within what was properly their bounds, and then to claim the field and the result of the labor as his. He probably means here to intimate that this had been done by the false teachers of Corinth; but so far was he from designing to do this, that he meant soon to leave Corinth, which was properly within his limits, and the church which he had founded there, to

go and preach the gospel to other regions. Whether Paul ever went to Spain has been a question (see the note on ^{<615>}Romans 15:24); but it is certain that he went to Rome, and that he preached the gospel in many other places after this besides Corinth.

^{<471>}**2 Corinthians 10:17.** *But he that glorieth* He that boasts. Whatever may be the occasion of his boasting, whether in planting churches or in watering them; whether in his purposes, plans, toils, or success. Paul himself did not deem it improper on some occasions to boast (^{<47116>}2 Corinthians 11:16; 12:5), but it was not of his own power, attainments, or righteousness. He was disposed to trace all to the Lord, and to regard him as the source of all blessing and all success.

Let him glory in the Lord In this serious and weighty admonition, Paul designs, doubtless, to express the manner in which he was accustomed to glory, and to furnish an admonition to the Corinthians. In the previous part of the chapter there had been some severe irony. He closes the chapter with the utmost seriousness and solemnity of manner, in order to show on his part that he was not disposed to glory in his own attainments and to admonish them not to boast of theirs. If they had anything valuable they should regard the Lord as the author of it. In this admonition it is probable that Paul had in his eye the passage in ^{<242>}Jeremiah 9:23,24; though he has not expressly quoted it. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth." The sentiment is a favorite one with Paul, as it should be with all Christians; see the note on ^{<401>}1 Corinthians 1:31. On this verse we may here remark:

I. That nothing is more common than for people to boast or glory. Little as they really have in which to glory, yet there is no one probably who has not something of which he is proud, and of which he is disposed to boast. It would be difficult or impossible to find a person who had not something on which he prided himself; something in which he esteemed himself superior to others.

II. The things of which they boast are very various:

(1) Many are proud of their personal beauty; many, too, who would be unwilling to be thought proud of it.

(2) Many glory in their accomplishments; or, what is more likely, in the accomplishments of their children.

(3) Many glory in their talents; talents for anything, valuable or not, in which they suppose they surpass others. They glory in their talent for eloquence, or science, or gaining knowledge; or in their talent for gaining property or keeping it: for their skill in their professions or callings; for their ability to run, to leap, or to practice even any trick or sleight of hand. There is nothing so worthless that it does not constitute a subject of glorying, provided it be ours. If it belong to others it may be valueless.

(4) Many glory in their property; in fine houses, extended plantations, or in the reputation of being rich; or in gorgeous dress, equipage, and furniture. In short, there is nothing which people possess in which they are not prone to glory. Forgetful of God the giver; forgetful that all may be soon taken from them. or that they soon must leave all; forgetful that none of these things can constitute a distinction in the grave or beyond, they boast as if these things were to remain forever, and as if they had been acquired independently of God. How prone is the man of talents to forget that God has given him his intellect, and that for its proper use he must give account! How prone is the rich man to forget that he must die! How prone the frivolous and the beautiful to forget that they will lie undistinguished in the grave; and that death will consume them as soon as the most vile and worthless of the species!

III. If we glory it should be in the Lord. We should ascribe our talents, wealth, health, strength, and salvation to him. We should rejoice:

(1) That we have such a Lord, so glorious so full of mercy so powerful, so worthy of confidence and love.

(2) We should rejoice in our endowments and possessions as his gift. We should rejoice that we may come and lay everything at his feet, and whatever may be our rank, or talents, or learning, we should rejoice that we may come with the humblest child of poverty, and sorrow, and want, and say,

“Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth’s sake;” ^{<403>}Psalm 115:1;

see the note on ^{<403>}1 Corinthians 1:31.

2 Corinthians 10:18. *For not he that commendeth himself ...* Not he who boasts of his talents and endowments. He is not to be judged by the estimate which he shall place on himself, but by the estimate which God shall form and express.

Is approved By God. It is no evidence that we shall be saved that we are prone to commend ourselves; see ~~610~~Romans 16:10.

But whom the Lord commendeth see the note on ~~612~~Romans 2:29. The idea here is, that people are to be approved or rejected by God. He is to pass judgment on them, and that judgment is to be in accordance with his estimate of their character, and not according to their own. If he approves them they will be saved; if he does not, vain will be all their empty boasting; vain all their reliance on their wealth, eloquence, learning, or earthly honors. None will save them from condemnation; not all these things can purchase for them eternal life. Paul thus seriously shows that we should be mainly anxious to obtain the divine favor. It should be the grand aim and purpose of our life; and we should repress all disposition for vain — glory or self-confidence; all reliance on our talents, attainments, or accomplishments for salvation. OUR BOAST IS THAT WE HAVE SUCH A REDEEMER: AND IN THAT WE ALL MAY GLORY!

REMARKS

1. We should have no desire to show off any special boldness or energy of character which we may have; ~~700~~2 Corinthians 10:1,2. We should greatly prefer to evince the gentleness and meekness of Christ. Such a character is in itself of far more value than one that is merely energetic and bold; that is rash, authoritative, and fond of display.
2. They who are officers in the church should have no desire to administer discipline; ~~702~~2 Corinthians 10:2. Some people are so fond of power that they always love to exercise it. They are willing to show it even by inflicting punishment on others; and “dressed in a little brief authority” they are constantly seeking occasion to show their consequence; they magnify trifles; they are unwilling to pass by the slightest offences. The reason is not that they love the truth, but that they love their own consequence, and they seek every opportunity to show it.
3. All Christians and all Christian ministers are engaged in a warfare; ~~703~~2 Corinthians 10:3. They are at war with sin in their own hearts, and with sin

wherever it exists on earth, and with the powers of darkness. With foes so numerous and so vigilant, they should not expect to live a life of ease or quietness. Peace, perfect peace, they may expect in heaven, not on earth. Here they are to fight the good fight of faith and thus to lay held on eternal life. It has been the common lot of all the children of God to maintain such a war, and shall we expect to be exempt?

*“Shall I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?”*

*“Are there no foes for me to face,
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?”*

4. The weapons of the Christian are not to be carnal, but are to be spiritual; ~~47004~~ 2 Corinthians 10:4. He is not to make his way by the exhibition of human passion; in bloody strife; and by acting under the influence of ambitious feelings. Truth is his weapon; and armed with truth, and aided by the Spirit of God, he is to expect the victory. How different is the Christian warfare from others! How different is Christianity from other systems! Muhammed made his way by arms, and propagated his religion amidst the din of battle. But not so with Christianity. That is to make its way by the silent, but mighty operation of truth; and there is not a rampart of idolatry and sin that is not yet to fall before it.

5. The Christian should be a man of a pure spirit; ~~47004~~ 2 Corinthians 10:4. He is to make his way by the truth. He should therefore love the truth, and he should seek to diffuse it as far as possible. In propagating or defending it, he should be always mild, gentle, and kind. Truth is never advanced, and an adversary is never convinced, where passion is evinced; where there is a haughty manner or a belligerent spirit. The apostolic precepts are full of “wisdom,” “speaking the truth in love” Ephesians 4:15), “in MEEKNESS INSTRUCTING those that oppose themselves: if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;” ~~47025~~ 2 Timothy 2:25.

6. In his warfare the Christian shall conquer; ~~47004~~ 2 Corinthians 10:4,5. Against the truth of Christianity nothing has been able to stand. It made its way against the arrayed opposition of priests and emperors; against customs and laws; against inveterate habits and opinions; against all forms

of sin, until it triumphed, and “the banners of the faith floated from the palaces of the Cesars.” So it will be in all the conflicts with evil. Nothing is more certain than that the powers of darkness in this world are destined to fall before the power of Christian truth, and that every stronghold of sin shall yet be demolished. So it is in the conflicts of the individual Christian. He may struggle long and hard. He may have many foes to contend with. But he shall gain the victory. His triumph shall be secure; and he shall yet be enabled to say, “I have fought a good fight — henceforth there is laid up for me A CROWN.”

*“The saints in all this glorious war
Shall conquer though they die;
They see the triumph from afar,
And seize it with their eye.”*

7. Yet all should feel their dependence on God; ^{<47004>}2 Corinthians 10:4. It is only through him and by his aid that we have any power. Truth itself has no power except as it is attended and directed by God; and we should engage in our conflict feeling that none but God can give us the victory. If forsaken by him, we shall fall; if supported by him, we may face without fear a “frowning world,” and all the powers of the “dark world of hell.”

8. We should not judge by the outward appearance; ^{<47007>}2 Corinthians 10:7. It is the heart that determines the character; and by that God shall judge us, and by that we should judge ourselves.

9. We should aim to extend the gospel as far as possible; ^{<47014>}2 Corinthians 10:14-16. Paul aimed to go beyond the regions where the gospel had been preached, and to extend it to far distant lands. So the “field” still “is the world.” A large portion of the earth is yet unevangelized. Instead, therefore, of sitting down quietly in enjoyment and ease, let us, like him, earnestly desire to extend the influence of pure religion, and to bring distant nations to the saving knowledge of the truth.

10. Let us not boast in ourselves; ^{<47017>}2 Corinthians 10:17. Not of our talents, wealth, learning, or accomplishments let us glory. But let us glory that we have such a God as YAHWEH. Let us glory that we have such a Redeemer as Jesus Christ. Let us glory that we have such a sanctifier as the Holy Spirit. Let us acknowledge God as the source of all our blessings, and to him let us honestly consecrate our hearts and our lives.

11. What a reverse of judgment there will yet be on human character! ~~2~~2
Corinthians 10:17,18. How many now commend themselves who will be
condemned in the last day. How many people boast of their talents and
morals, and even their religion, who will then be involved in indiscriminate
condemnation with the most vile and worthless of the race. How anxious
should we be, therefore, to secure the approbation of God; and whatever
our fellow-men may say of us, how infinitely desirable is it to be
commended then by our heavenly Father.

NOTES ON 2 CORINTHIANS 11

This chapter (2 Corinthians 11) is connected in its general design with the preceding. The object of Paul is to vindicate himself from the charges which had been brought against him, and especially to vindicate his claims to the apostolic office. It is ironical in its character, and is of course severe upon the false teachers who had accused him in Corinth. The main purpose is to state his claims to the office of an apostle, and especially to show that when he mentioned those claims, or even boasted of his labors, he had ground for doing so. It would seem that they had charged him with “folly” in boasting as he had done. Probably the false teachers were loud in proclaiming their own praise, but represented Paul as guilty of folly in praising himself. He therefore (~~47100~~2 Corinthians 11:1) asks them if they could bear with him a little further in his folly, and entreats them to do it. This verse contains the scope of the chapter; and the remainder of the chapter is an enumeration of the causes which he had for his boasting, though probably each reason is adapted to some form of accusation brought against him.

Having entreated them to bear with him a little further, he states the reasons why he was disposed to go into this subject at all; ~~47102~~2 Corinthians 11:2-4. It was not because he was disposed to sound his own praise, but it was from love to them. He had espoused them as a chaste virgin to Christ. He was afraid that their affections would be alienated from the Redeemer. He reminded them of the manner in which Eve was tempted; and he reminded them that by the same smooth and plausible arts their affections might also be stolen away, and that they might be led into sin. He reminds them that there was danger of their receiving another gospel, and expresses the apprehension that they had done it, and that they had embraced a deceiver; ~~47104~~2 Corinthians 11:4.

Having made this general statement of his design, Paul now goes more into detail in answering the objections against him, and in showing the reasons which he had for boasting as he had done. The statement in answer to their objections relates to the following points:

(1) He had supposed that he was not behind the chiefest of the apostles. He had supposed that he had claims to the apostolic office of as high an order as any of them. Called to the work as he had been, and laboring as he had

done, he had regarded himself as having an indisputable claim to the office of an apostle. True, they had charged him with being rude in speech, a charge which he was not disposed to deny, but in a far more important point than that he had showed that he was not disqualified for the apostolic office. In knowledge, the main qualification, he had not been deficient, as probably even his opponents were disposed to admit ^{<47116>}2 Corinthians 11:5,6.

(2) He had not deprived himself of the claims to the office and honors of an apostle by declining to receive from them a compensation, and by preaching the gospel without charge; ^{<47117>}2 Corinthians 11:7-9. Probably they had alleged that this was a proof that he knew that he had no claim to the honors of an apostle. He, therefore, states exactly how this was. He had "received" a support, but he had robbed other churches to do it. And even when he was with them, he had received supplies from a distant church in order that he might not be burdensome to them. The charge was therefore groundless, that he knew that he had no right to the support due to an apostle.

(3) He declares it to be his fixed purpose that no one should prevent his boasting in that manner. And this he did because he loved them, and because he would save them from the snares of those who would destroy them. He therefore stated the true character of those who attempted to deceive them. They were the ministers of Satan, appearing as the ministers of righteousness, as Satan himself was transformed into an angel of light; ver 10-15.

(4) Paul claims the privilege of boasting as a fool a little further; ^{<47116>}2 Corinthians 11:16. And he claims that as others boasted, and as they were allowed to do so by the Corinthians, he had also a right to do the same thing. They suffered them to boast; they allowed them to do it even if they devoured them, and smote them, and took their property. It was but fair, therefore, that he should be allowed to boast a little of what he was and of what he had done; ^{<47117>}2 Corinthians 11:17-20.

(5) He goes, therefore, into an extended and most tender description of what he had suffered, and of his claims to their favorable regard. He had all the personal advantages arising from birth which they could pretend to. He was a Hebrew, of the seed of Abraham, and a minister of Christ; ^{<47121>}2 Corinthians 11:21-23. He had endured far more labors and dangers than they had done; and in order to set this before them he enumerates the trials

through which he had passed, and states the labors which constantly came upon him; ~~<7112>~~ 2 Corinthians 11:23-30. Of these things, of his sufferings, and trials, and infirmities, he felt that he had a right to speak, and these constituted a far higher claim to the confidence of the Christian church than the endowments of which his adversaries boasted.

(6) As another instance of peril and suffering, he refers to the fact that his life was endangered when he was in Damascus, and that he barely escaped by being lowered down from the wall of the city, ~~<7113>~~ 2 Corinthians 11:31-33. The conclusion which Paul doubtless intends should be derived from all this is, that he had far higher grounds of claim to the office of an apostle than his adversaries would admit, or than they could furnish themselves. He admitted that he was weak and subject to infirmities; he did not lay claim to the graces of a polished elocution, as they did; but if a life of self-denial and toil, of an honest devotion to the cause of truth at imminent and frequent hazard of life, constituted an evidence that he was an apostle, he had that evidence. They appealed to their birth, their rank, their endowments as public speakers. In the quiet and comfort of a congregation and church established to their hands; in reaping the avails of the labors of others; and in the midst of enjoyments, they coolly laid claims to the honors of the ministerial office, and denied his claims. In trial, and peril, and labor, and poverty; in scourges, and imprisonments, and shipwrecks; in hunger and thirst; in unwearied traveling from place to place: and in the care of all the congregations, were his claims to their respect and confidence, and he was willing that anyone that chose should make the comparison between them. Such was his “foolish” boasting; such his claims to their confidence and regard.

~~<7114>~~ **2 Corinthians 11:1.** *Would to God* Greek, “I would” (Ὁφελον ~~<3785>~~). This expresses earnest desire, but in the Greek there is no appeal to God. The sense would be well expressed by “O that,” or “I earnestly wish.”

Ye could bear with me That you would bear patiently with me; that you would hear me patiently, and suffer me to speak of myself.

In my folly Folly in boasting. The idea seems to be, “I know that boasting is generally foolish, and that it is not to be indulged in. But though it is to be generally regarded as folly, yet circumstances compel me to it, and I ask your indulgence in it.” It is possible also that his opponents accused him of folly in boasting so much of himself.

And indeed bear with me Margin, “Ye do bear.” But the text has probably the correct rendering. It is the expression of an earnest wish that they would tolerate him a little in this. He entreats them to bear with him because he was constrained to it.

2 Corinthians 11:2. *For I am jealous over you* This verse expresses the reason why he was disposed to speak of his attainments, and of what he had done. It was because he loved them, and because he feared that they were in danger of being seduced from the simplicity of the gospel. The phrase “I am jealous” (**Ζηλω** ^{<2205>}) means properly, I ardently love you; I am full of tender attachment to you. The word was usual among the Greeks to denote an ardent affection of any kind (from **ζεω** ^{<2204>}, to boil, to be fervid or fervent). The precise meaning is to be determined by the connection; see the note on ^{<4123>}1 Corinthians 12:31. The word may denote the jealousy which is felt by an apprehension of departure from fidelity on the part of those whom we love; or it may denote a fervid and glowing attachment. The meaning here probably is, that Paul had a strong attachment to them.

With godly jealousy Greek, “with the zeal of God” (**Θεου** ^{<2316>} **ζηλω** ^{<2205>}). That is, with very great or vehement zeal — in accordance with the Hebrew custom when the name God is used to denote any thing signally great, as the phrase “mountains of God,” meaning very elevated or lofty mountains. The mention of this ardent attachment suggested what follows. His mind reverted to the tenderness of the marriage relation, and to the possibility that in that relation the affections might be estranged. He makes use of this figure, therefore, to apprise them of the change which he apprehended.

For I have espoused you ... The word used here (**ἀρμοζω** ^{<718>}) means properly “to adapt, to fit, to join together.” Hence, “to join in wedlock, to marry.” Here it means to marry to another; and the idea is, that Paul had been the agent employed in forming a connection, similar to the marriage connection. between them and the Saviour. The allusion here is not certain. It may refer to the custom which prevailed when friends made and procured the marriage for the bridegroom; or it may refer to some custom like that which prevailed among the Lacedemonians where persons were employed to form the lives and manners of virgins and prepare them for the duties of the married life. The sense is clear. Paul claims that it was by his instrumentality that they had been united to the Redeemer. Under him they

had been brought into a relation to the Saviour similar to that sustained by the bride to her husband; and he felt all the interest in them which naturally grew out of that fact and from a desire to present them blameless to the pure Redeemer. The relation of the Church to Christ is often represented by marriage; see ^{<4052>}Ephesians 5:23-33; ^{<6907>}Revelation 19:7; 21:9.

To one husband To the Redeemer.

That I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ The allusion here, according to Doddridge, is, to the custom among the Greeks “of having an officer whose business it was to educate and form young women, especially those of rank and figure, designed for marriage, and then to present them to those who were to be their husbands, and if this officer through negligence permitted them to be corrupted between the espousals and the consummation of the marriage, great blame would fall upon him.” Such a responsibility Paul felt. So anxious was he for the entire purity of that church which was to constitute “the bride, the Lamb’s wife;” so anxious that all who were connected with that church should be presented pure in heaven.

^{<4718>}**2 Corinthians 11:3.** *But I fear* Paul had just compared the church to a virgin, soon to be presented as a bride to the Redeemer. The mention of this seems to have suggested to him the fact that the first woman was deceived and led astray by the tempter, and that the same thing might occur in regard to the church which he was so desirous should be preserved pure. The grounds of his fear were:

- (1) That Satan had seduced the first woman, thus demonstrating that the most holy ones were in danger of being led astray by temptation; and,
- (2) That special efforts were made to seduce them from the faith. The persuasive arts of the false teachers; the power of philosophy; and the attractive and corrupting influences of the world, he had reason to suppose might be employed to seduce them from simple attachment to Christ.

Lest by any means Lest somehow (*μηπως* ^{<3381>}). It is implied that many means would be used; that all arts would be tried; and that in some way, which perhaps they little suspected, these arts would be successful, unless they were constantly put upon their guard.

As the serpent beguiled Eve see ^{<0001>}Genesis 3:1-11. The word “serpent” here refers doubtless to Satan, who was the agent by whom Eve was

beguiled see <884> John 8:44; <688> 1 John 3:8; <679> Revelation 12:9; 20:2. Paul did not mean that they were in danger of being corrupted in the same way, but that similar efforts would be made to seduce them. Satan adapts his temptations to the character and circumstances of the tempted. He varies them from age to age, and applies them in such a way as best to secure his object. Hence, all should be on their guard. No one knows the mode in which he will approach him, but all may know that he will approach them in some way.

Through his subtilty see <000> Genesis 3:1. By his craft, art, wiles (εἰς <172> τῆ <588> πανουργία <3834>). The word implies that shrewdness, cunning, craft was employed. A tempter always employs cunning and art to accomplish his object. The precise mode in which Satan accomplished his object is not certainly known. Perhaps the cunning consisted in assuming an attractive form — a fascinating manner — a manner suited to charm; perhaps in the idea that the eating of the forbidden fruit had endowed a serpent with the power of reason and speech above all other animals, and that it might be expected to produce a similar transformation in Eve. At all events there were false pretences and appearances, and such Paul apprehended would be employed by the false teachers to seduce and allure them; see on <4113> 2 Corinthians 11:13,14.

So your minds should be corrupted So your thoughts should be perverted. So your hearts should be alienated. The mind is corrupted when the affections are alienated from the proper object, and when the soul is filled with unholy plans, and purposes, and desires.

From the simplicity that is in Christ

(1) From simple and single-hearted devotedness to him — from pure and unmixed attachment to him. The fear was that their affections would be fixed on other objects, and that the singleness and unity of their devotedness to him would be destroyed.

(2) From his pure doctrines. By the admixture of philosophy; by the opinions of the world there was danger that their minds should be turned away from their hold on the simple truths which Christ had taught.

(3) From that simplicity of mind and heart; that childlike candor and docility; that freedom from all guile, dishonesty, and deception which so eminently characterized the Redeemer. Christ had a single aim; was free

from all guile; was purely honest; never made use of any improper arts; never resorted to false appearances; and never deceived. His followers should in like manner be artless and guileless. There should be no mere cunning, no trick, no craft in advancing their purposes. There should be nothing but honesty and truth in all that they say. Paul was afraid that they would lose this beautiful simplicity and artlessness of character and manner; and that they would insensibly be led to adopt the maxims of mere cunning, of policy, of expediency, of seductive arts which prevailed so much in the world — a danger which was imminent among the shrewd and cunning people of Greece; but which is confined to no time and no place. Christians should be more guileless than even children are; as pure and free from trick, and from art and cunning as was the Redeemer himself.

(4) From the simplicity in worship which the Lord Jesus commended and required. The worship which the Redeemer designed to establish was simple, unostentatious, and pure — strongly in contrast with the gorgeousness and corruption of the pagan worship, and even with the imposing splendor of the Jewish temple service. He intended that it should be adapted to all lands, and such as could be offered by all classes of people — a pure worship, claiming first the homage of the heart, and then such simple external expressions as should best exhibit the homage of the heart. How easily might this be corrupted! What temptations were there to attempt to corrupt it by those who had been accustomed to the magnificence of the temple service, and who would suppose that the religion of the Messiah could not be less gorgeous than that which was designed to shadow forth his coming; and by those who had been accustomed to the splendid rites of the pagan worship, and who would suppose that the true religion ought not to be less costly and splendid than the false religion had been. If so much expense had been lavished on false religions, how natural to suppose that equal costliness at least should be bestowed on the true religion. Accordingly the history of the church for a considerable part of its existence has been little more than a record of the various forms in which the simple worship instituted by the Redeemer has been corrupted, until all that was gorgeous in pagan ceremonies and splendid in the Jewish ritual has been introduced as a part of Christian worship.

(5) From simplicity in dress and manner of living. The Redeemer's dress was simple. His manner of living was simple. His requirements demand great simplicity and plainness of apparel and manner of life; ^{<ARB>}1 Peter 3:3-

6; ~~519~~ 1 Timothy 2:9,10. Yet how much proneness is there at all times to depart from this! What a besetting sin has it been in all ages to the church of Christ! And how much pains should there be that the very simplicity that is in Christ should be observed by all who bear the Christian name!

~~519~~ **2 Corinthians 11:4.** *For if he that cometh ...* There is much difficulty in this verse in ascertaining the true sense, and expositors have been greatly perplexed and divided in opinion, especially with regard to the true sense of the last clause, “ye might well bear with him.” It is difficult to ascertain whether Paul meant to speak ironically or seriously; and different views will prevail as different views are taken of the design. If it be supposed that he meant to speak seriously, the sense will be, “If the false teacher could recommend a better Saviour than I have done, or a Spirit better able to sanctify and save, then there would be a propriety in your receiving him and tolerating his doctrines.” If the former, then the sense will be, “You cannot well bear with me; but if a man comes among you preaching a false Saviour, and a false Spirit, and a false doctrine. then you bear with him without any difficulty.” Another interpretation still has been proposed, by supposing that the word “me” is to be supplied at the close of the verse instead of “him,” and then the sense would be, “If you receive so readily one who preaches another gospel, one who comes with far less evidence that he is sent from God than I have, and if you show yourselves thus ready to fall in with any kind of teaching that may be brought to you, you might at least bear with me also.” Amidst this variety it is not easy to ascertain the true sense. To me it seems probable, however, that Paul spoke seriously, and that our translation has expressed the true sense. The main idea doubtless is, that Paul felt that there was danger that they would be corrupted. If they could bring a better gospel, a more perfect system, and proclaim a more perfect Saviour, there would be no such change. But that could not be expected. It could not be done. If therefore they preached any other Saviour or any other gospel; if they departed from the truths which he had taught them, it would be for the worse. It could not be otherwise. The Saviour whom he preached was perfect, and was able to save. The Spirit which he preached was perfect, and able to sanctify. The gospel which he preached was perfect, and there was no hope that it could be improved. Any change must be for the worse; and as the false teachers varied from his instructions, there was every reason to apprehend that their minds would be corrupted from the simplicity that was in Christ. The principal idea, therefore, is, that the gospel which he preached was as

perfect as it could be, and that any change would be for the worse. No doctrine which others brought could be recommended because it was better. By the phrase “he that cometh” is meant doubtless the false teacher in Corinth.

Preacheth another Jesus Proclaims one who is more worthy of your love and more able to save. If he that comes among you and claims your affections can point out another Christ who is more worthy of your confidence, then I admit that you do well to receive him. It is implied here that this could not be done. The Lord Jesus in his character and work is perfect. No Saviour superior to him has been provided; none but he is necessary.

Whom we have not preached Let them show, if they can, that they have any Saviour to tell of whom we have not preached. We have given all the evidence that we are sent by God, and have laid all the claim to your confidence, which they can do for having made known the Saviour. They with all their pretensions have no Saviour to tell you of with whom we have not already made you acquainted. They have no claims, therefore, from this quarter which we have not also.

Or if ye receive another spirit ... If they can preach to you another Sanctifier and Comforter; or if under their ministry you have received higher proofs of the power of the Spirit in performing miracles; in the gift of tongues; in renewing sinners and in comforting your hearts. The idea is, that Paul had proclaimed the existence and agency of the same Holy Spirit which they did; that his preaching had been attended with as striking proofs of the presence and power of that Spirit; that he had all the evidence of a divine commission from such an influence attending his labors which they could possibly have. They could reveal no spirit better able to sanctify and save; none who had more power than the Holy Spirit which they had received under the preaching of Paul, and there was therefore no reason why they should be “corrupted” or seduced from the simple doctrines which they had received and follow others.

Or another gospel ... A gospel more worthy of your acceptance — one more free, more full, more rich in promises; one that revealed a better plan of salvation, or that was more full of comfort and peace.

Ye might well bear with him Margin, “with me.” The word “him” is not in the Greek; but is probably to be supplied. The sense is, there would then be

some excuse for your conduct. There would be some reason why you should welcome such teachers. But if this cannot be done; if they can preach no other and no better gospel and Saviour than I have done, then there is no excuse. There is no reason why you should follow such teachers and forsake those who were your earliest guides in religion. — Let us never forsake the gospel which we have until we are sure we can get a better. Let us adhere to the simple doctrines of the New Testament until some one can furnish better and clearer doctrines. Let us follow the rules of Christ in our opinions and our conduct; our plans, our mode of worship, our dress, and our amusements, engagements, and company, until we can certainly ascertain that there are better rules. A man is foolish for making any change until he has evidence that he is likely to better himself; and it remains yet to be proved that anyone has ever bettered himself or his family by forsaking the simple doctrines of the Bible, and embracing a philosophical speculation; by forsaking the scriptural views of the Saviour as the incarnate God, and embracing the views which represent him as a mere man; by forsaking the simple and plain rules of Christ about our manner of life, our dress, and our words and actions, and embracing those which are recommended by mere fashion and by the customs of a frivolous world.

2 Corinthians 11:5. *For I suppose ...* I think that I gave as good evidence that I was commissioned by God as the most eminent of the apostles. In the miracles which I performed; in the abundance of my labors, and in my success, I suppose that I did not fall behind any of them. If so, I ought to be regarded and treated as an apostle; and if so, then the false teachers should not be allowed to supplant me in your affections, or to seduce you from the doctrines which I have taught. On the evidence that Paul was equal to others in the proper proof of a commission from God; see notes on **2 Corinthians 11:21-30**.

2 Corinthians 11:6. *But though I be rude in speech* see the note, **2 Corinthians 10:10**. The word rendered “rude” here (**ιδιωτης** ^{<2399>}) means properly a private citizen, in opposition to one in a public station; then a plebeian, or one unlettered or unlearned, in opposition to one of more elevated rank, or one who is learned; see the notes on **Acts 4:13**; **1 Corinthians 14:16**. The idea is, my language is that of a plain unlettered person. This was doubtless charged upon him by his enemies, and it may be that he designed in part to admit the truth of the charge.

Yet not in knowledge I do not admit that I am ignorant of the religion which I profess to teach. I claim to be acquainted with the doctrines of Christianity. It does not appear that they charged him with ignorance. If it be asked how the admission that he was rude in speech consists with the fact that he was endowed by the Holy Spirit. with the power of speaking languages, we may observe that Paul had undoubtedly learned to speak Greek in his native place (Tarsus in Cilicia). and that the Greek which he had learned there was probably a corrupt kind, such as was spoken in that place. It was this Greek which he probably continued to speak; for there is no more reason to suppose that the Holy Spirit would aid him in speaking language which he had thus early learned than he would in speaking Hebrew. The endowments of the Holy Spirit were conferred to enable the apostles to speak languages which they had never learned, not in perfecting them in languages with which they were before acquainted. It may have been true, therefore, that Paul may have spoken some languages which he never learned with more fluency and perfection than he did those which he had learned to speak when he was young. See the remarks of the Archbishop of Cambrai, as quoted by Doddridge in loc. It may be remarked. also, that some estimate of the manner of Paul on this point may be formed from his writings. Critics profoundly acquainted with the Greek language remark, that while there is great energy of thought and of diction in the writings of Paul; while he chooses or coins most expressive words, yet that there is everywhere a lack of Attic elegance of manner, and of the smoothness and beauty which were so grateful to a Grecian ear.

But we have been thoroughly made manifest ... You have known all about me. I have concealed nothing from you, and you have had ample opportunity to become thoroughly acquainted with me. The meaning is, "I need not dwell on this. I need speak no more of my manner of speech or knowledge. With all that you are well acquainted."

2 Corinthians 11:7. *Have I committed an offence* Have I done wrong. Greek, "Have I committed a sin." There is here a somewhat abrupt transition from the previous verse; and the connection is not very apparent. Perhaps the connection is this. "I admit my inferiority in regard to my manner of speaking. But this does not interfere with my full understanding of the doctrines which I preach, nor does it interfere with the numerous evidences which I have furnished that I am called to the office of an apostle. What then is the ground of offence? In what have I erred? Wherein have I shown that I was not qualified to be an apostle? Is it in the fact that

I have not chosen to press my claim to a support, but have preached the gospel without charge?" There can be no doubt that they urged this as an objection to him, and as a proof that he was conscious that he had no claim to the office of an apostle; see the notes on <400B>1 Corinthians 9:3-18. Paul here answers this charge; and the sum of his reply is, that he had received a support, but that it had come from others, a support which they had furnished because the Corinthians had neglected to do it.

In abasing myself By laboring with my own hands; by submitting to voluntary poverty, and by neglecting to urge my reasonable claims for a support.

That ye might be exalted In spiritual blessings and comforts. I did it because I could thus better promote religion among you. I could thus avoid the charge of aiming at the acquisition of wealth; could shut the mouths of gainsayers, and could more easily secure access to you. Is it now to be seriously urged as a fault that I have sought your welfare, and that in doing it I have submitted to great self-denial and to many hardships? See notes on <400B>1 Corinthians 9:18ff.

<471B>**2 Corinthians 11:8.** *I robbed other churches* The churches of Macedonia and elsewhere, which had ministered to his needs. Probably he refers especially to the church at Philippi (see <400B>Philippians 4:15,16), which seems to have done more than almost any other church for his support. By the use of the word "robbed" here Paul does not mean that he had obtained anything from them in a violent or unlawful manner, or anything which they did not give voluntarily. The word (εσπλησα <4813>) means properly, "I spoiled, plundered, robbed," but the idea of Paul here is, that he, as it were, robbed them, because he did not render an equivalent for what they gave him. They supported him when he was laboring for another people. A conqueror who plunders a country gives no equivalent for what he takes. In this sense only could Paul say that he had plundered the church at Philippi. His general principle was, that "the laborer was worthy of his hire," and that a man was to receive his support from the people for whom he labored (see <400B>1 Corinthians 9:7-14), but this rule he had not observed in this case.

Taking wages of them Receiving a support from them. They bore my expenses.

To do you service That I might labor among you without being supposed to be striving to obtain your property, and that I might not be compelled to labor with my own hands, and thus to prevent my preaching the gospel as I could otherwise do. The supply from other churches rendered it unnecessary in a great measure that his time should be taken off from the ministry in order to obtain a support.

2 Corinthians 11:9. *And when I was present with you* When I was laboring in order to build up the church in Corinth.

I was chargeable to no man I was burdensome to no one; or more literally, “I did not lie as a dead weight upon you.” The word used here, which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament (**κατεναρκησα** ^{<2655>}), means, literally, to become torpid against, that is, to the detriment of anyone; and hence, to be burdensome. According to Jerome, its use here is a Cilicism of Paul. The idea is that he did not lead a torpid, inactive life at the expense of others. He did not expect a support from them when he was doing nothing; nor did he demand support which would in any sense be a burden to them. By his own hands (^{<4183>}Acts 18:3), and by the aid which he received from abroad, he was supported without deriving aid from the people of Corinth.

And in all things ... In all respects I have carefully kept myself from being a burden on the church. Paul had no idea of living at other people’s expense when he was doing nothing. He did not, as a general thing, mean to receive anything for which he had not rendered a fair equivalent; a just principle for ministers and for all other people; see ^{<7123>}2 Corinthians 12:13.

2 Corinthians 11:10. *As the truth of Christ is in me* That is, I solemnly declare this as in the presence of Christ. As I am a Christian man; as I feel bound to declare the truth, and as I must answer to Christ. It is a solemn form of asseveration, equal to an oath; see the note on Romans 9:1; compare ^{<5417>}1 Timothy 2:7.

No man shall stop me ... Margin, “This boasting shall not be stopped in me;” see the note on ^{<4095>}1 Corinthians 9:15. The idea here is, that Paul was solemnly determined that the same thing should continue. He had not been burdensome to any, and he was resolved that he would not be. Rather than be burdensome he had labored with his own hands, and he meant to do it still. No man in all Achaia should ever have reason to say that he had been an idler, and had been supported by the churches when he was doing nothing. It was the fixed and settled purpose of his life never to be

burdensome to any man. What a noble resolution! How fixed were the principles of his life! And what an instance of magnanimous self-denial and of elevated purpose! Every man, minister or otherwise, should adopt a similar resolution. He should resolve to receive nothing for which he has not rendered a fair equivalent, and resolve if he has health never to be a burden to his friends or to the church of God. And even if sick he may yet feel that he is not burdensome to others. If he is gentle and grateful; if he makes no unnecessary care; and especially if he furnishes an example of patience and piety, and seeks the blessing of God on his benefactors, he furnishes them what they will usually esteem an ample equivalent. No man need be burdensome to his friends; and all should resolve that by the grace of God they never will be. There is considerable variety in the MSS. here (see Mill on the place), but in regard to the general sense there can be no doubt. Nothing should ever hinder this boasting; nothing should deprive him of the privilege of saying that he had not been a burden.

In the regions of Achaia Achaia was that part of Greece of which Corinth was the capital; see the note on ~~41812~~ Acts 18:12.

~~41112~~ **2 Corinthians 11:11.** *Wherefore ...* It is not because I do not love you. It is not from pride, or because I would not as willingly receive aid from you as from any other. It is not because I am more unwilling to be under obligation to you than to others. I have a deep and tender attachment to you; but it is because I can thus best promote the gospel and advance the kingdom of the Redeemer. Possibly it might have been thought that his unwillingness to receive aid from them was some proof of reserve toward them or lack of affection, and this may have been urged against him. This he solemnly denies.

~~41112~~ **2 Corinthians 11:12.** *But what I do* The course of life which I have been pursuing I will continue to pursue. That is, I will continue to preach as I have done without demanding a support. I will labor with my own hands if necessary; I will preach without demanding rigidly what I might be entitled to.

That I may cut off occasion That I might give them no opportunity of accusing me of desiring to grow rich, and of calumniating me. Paul meant that they should have no plausible pretext even for accusing him; that no man should be able to say that he was preaching merely for the hire.

Which desire occasion No doubt his enemies eagerly sought opportunities of accusing him, and greatly wished for some plausible reason for charging him with that which would be disgraceful and ruinous to his character. Or it may mean that they desired opportunity from the example of Paul to justify themselves in their course; that they took wages from the church at Corinth largely, and desired to be able to say that they had his example.

That wherein they glory Probably meaning that they boasted that they preached the gospel for free (gratis); that they received nothing for their labors. Yet while they did this, it is not improbable that they received presents of the Corinthians, and under various pretences contrived to get from them an ample support, perhaps much more than would have been a reasonable compensation. People who profess to preach the gospel gratis, usually contrive in various ways to get more from the people than those who receive a regular and stipulated compensation. By taxing pretty liberally their hospitality; by accepting liberal presents; by frequent proclamation of their self-denial and their poverty, they usually filch large amounts from the people. No people were ever louder in praise of poverty, or in proclamation of their own self-denials than some orders of monks, and that when it might be said almost that the richest possessions of Europe were passing into their hands. At all events, Paul meant that these people should have no opportunity from his course to take any such advantage. He knew what he had a right to (1 Corinthians 9), but he had not urged the right. He had received nothing from the church at Corinth, and he meant to receive nothing. He had honestly preached the gospel to them without charge, and he meant still to do it, ~~41918~~ 1 Corinthians 9:18. They should, therefore, have no opportunity from his conduct either to accuse him of preaching for money, or of sheltering themselves under his example in pretending to preach for nothing when they were in fact obtaining large sums from the people.

They may be found even as we That they may be compelled honestly to pursue such a course as I do, and be found to be in fact what they pretend to be. The sense is, "I mean so to act that if they follow my example, or plead my authority, they may be found to lead an honest life; and that if they boast on this subject, they shall boast strictly according to truth. There shall be no trick; nothing underhanded or deceptive in what they do so far as my example can prevent it."

2 Corinthians 11:13. *For such are false apostles* They have no claim to the apostolic office. They are deceivers. They pretend to be apostles; but they have no divine commission from the Redeemer. Paul had thus far argued the case without giving them an explicit designation as deceivers. But here he says that people who had conducted thus; who attempted to impose on the people; who had brought another gospel, whatever pretences they might have — and he was not disposed to deny that there was much that was plausible — were really impostors and the enemies of Christ. It is morally certain, from **2 Corinthians 11:22**, that these people were Jews; but why they had engaged in the work of preaching, or why they had gone to Corinth, cannot with certainty be determined.

Deceitful workers Impostors. People who practice various arts to impose on others. They were crafty, and fraudulent, and hypocritical. It is probable that they were people who saw that great advantage might be taken of the new religion; people who saw the power which it had over the people, and who saw the confidence which the new converts were inclined to repose in their teachers; perhaps people who had seen the disciples to the Christian faith commit all their property to the hands of the apostles, or who had heard of their doing it (compare **Acts 4:34,35**), and who supposed that by pretending to be apostles also they might come in for a share of this confidence, and avail themselves of this disposition to commit their property to their spiritual guides. To succeed, it was needful as far as possible to undermine the influence of the true apostles, and take their place in the confidence of the people. Thence they were “deceitful (**δολῶν**) workers,” full of trick, and cunning, and of plausible arts to impose on others.

Transforming themselves ... Pretending to be apostles. Hypocritical and deceitful, they yet pretended to have been sent by Christ. This is a direct charge of hypocrisy. They knew they were deceivers; and yet they assumed the high claims of apostles of the Son of God.

2 Corinthians 11:14. *And no marvel* And it is not wonderful, **2 Corinthians 11:15**. Since Satan himself is capable of appearing to be an angel of light, it is not to be deemed strange that those who are in his service also should resemble him.

For Satan himself is transformed ... That is, he who is an apostate angel; who is malignant and wicked; who is the prince of evil, assumes the appearance of a holy angel. Paul assumes this as an indisputable and admitted truth, without attempting to prove it, and without referring to any particular instances. Probably he had in his eye cases where Satan put on false and delusive appearances for the purpose of deceiving, or where he assumed the appearance of great sanctity and reverence for the authority of God. Such instances occurred in the temptation of our first parents (~~ORR~~ Genesis 3:1-6), and in the temptation of the Saviour, Matthew 4. The phrase “an angel of light,” means a pure and holy angel, light being the emblem of purity and holiness. Such are all the angels that dwell in heaven; and the idea is, that Satan assumes such a form as to appear to be such an angel. Learn here:

(1) His power. He can assume such an aspect as he pleases. He can dissemble and appear to be eminently pious. He is the prince of duplicity as well as of wickedness; and it is the consummation of bad power for an individual to be able to assume any character which he pleases.

(2) His art, he is long practiced in deceitful arts. For six thousand years he has been practicing the art of delusion. And with him it is perfect.

(3) We are not to suppose that all that appears to be piety is piety. Some of the most plausible appearances of piety are assumed by Satan and his ministers. None ever professed a profounder regard for the authority of God than Satan did when he tempted the Saviour. And if the prince of wickedness can appear to be an angel of light, we are not to be surprised if those who have the blackest hearts appear to be people of most eminent piety.

(4) We should be on our guard. We should not listen to suggestions merely because they appear to come from a pious man, nor because they seem to be prompted by a regard to the will of God. We may be always sure that, if we are to be tempted, it will be by some one having a great appearance of virtue and religion.

(5) We are not to expect that Satan will appear to man to be as bad as he is. He never shows himself openly to be a spirit of pure wickedness; or black and abominable in his character; or full of evil and hateful. He would thus defeat himself. It is for this reason that wicked people do not believe that there is such a being as Satan. Though continually under his influence

and “led captive by him at his will,” yet they neither see him nor the chains which lead them, nor are they willing to believe in the existence of the one or the other.

2 Corinthians 11:15. *Therefore it is no great thing ...* It is not to be deemed surprising. You are not to wonder if people of the basest, blackest character put on the appearance of the greatest sanctity, and even become eminent as professed preachers of righteousness.

Whose end shall be ... Whose final destiny. Their doom in eternity shall not be according to their fair professions and plausible pretences, for they cannot deceive God; but shall be according to their real character, and their works. Their work is a work of deception, and they shall be judged according to that. What revelations there will be in the day of judgment, when all impostors shall be unmasked, and when all hypocrites and deceivers shall be seen in their true colors! And how desirable is it that there should be such a day to disclose all beings in their true character, and FOREVER to remove imposture and delusion from the universe!

2 Corinthians 11:16. *I say again* I repeat it. He refers to what he had said in 2 Corinthians 11:1. The sense is, “I have said much respecting myself which may seem to be foolish. I admit that to boast in this manner of one’s own self in general is folly. But circumstances compel me to it. And I entreat you to look at those circumstances and not regard me as a fool for doing it.”

If otherwise If you think otherwise. If I cannot obtain this of you that you will not regard me as acting prudently and wisely. If you will think me foolish, still I am constrained to make these remarks in vindication of myself.

Yet as a fool receive me Margin, “Suffer;” see 2 Corinthians 11:1. Bear with me as you do with others. Consider how much I have been provoked to this; how necessary it is to my character; and do not reject and despise me because I am constrained to say that of myself which is usually regarded as foolish boasting.

That I may boast myself a little Since others do it and are not rebuked, may I be permitted to do it also; see 2 Corinthians 11:18,19. There is something sarcastic in the words “a little.” The sense is, “Others are

allowed to boast a great deal. Assuredly I may be allowed to boast a little of what I have done.”

2 Corinthians 11:17. *That which I speak* In praise of myself.

I speak it not after the Lord see the note on **1 Corinthians 7:12**. The phrase here may mean either, I do not speak this by inspiration or claiming to be inspired by the Lord; or more probably it may mean, I do not speak this imitating the example of the Lord Jesus or strictly as becomes his follower. He was eminently modest, and never vaunted or boasted. And Paul probably means to say, “I do not in this profess to follow him entirely. I admit that it is a departure from his pure example in this respect. But circumstances have compelled me and much as I would prefer another strain at remark, and sensible as I am in general of the folly of boasting, yet a regard to my apostolic office and authority urges me to this course.” Bloomfield supposes that the apostle is not speaking seriously, but that he has an allusion to their view of what he was saying. “Be it so, if you think that what I speak, I speak not as I profess to do according to the Lord, or with a view to subserve the purposes of his religion, but as it were in folly, in the confidence of boasting, yet permit me to do it notwithstanding, since you allow others to do it.” It is not easy to settle which is the true sense of the passage. I see no conclusive evidence against either. But the former seems to me to be most in accordance with the scope of the whole. Paul admitted that what he said was not in exact accordance with the spirit of the Lord Jesus; and in admitting this he designed probably to administer a delicate hint that all their boasting was a wide departure from that spirit.

As it were foolishly As in folly. It is to be admitted that to boast is in general foolish; and I admit that my language is open to this general charge.

In this confidence of boasting In confident boasting. I speak confidently and I admit in the spirit of boasting.

2 Corinthians 11:18. *Seeing that many glory ...* The false teachers in Corinth. They boasted of their birth, rank, natural endowments, eloquence, etc.; see **2 Corinthians 11:22**. Compare **Philippians 3:3,4**.

I will glory also I also will boast of my endowments, which though somewhat different yet pertain in the main to the “flesh” also; see **2 Corinthians 11:23ff**. His endowments “in the flesh,” or what he had to

boast of pertaining to the flesh, related not so much to birth and rank, though not inferior to them in these, but to what the flesh had endured — to stripes and imprisonments, and hunger and peril. This is an exceedingly delicate and happy turn given to the whole subject.

2 Corinthians 11:19. *For ye suffer fools gladly* You tolerate or endure those who are really fools. This is perhaps, says Dr. Bloomfield, the most sarcastic sentence ever penned by the apostle Paul. Its sense is, “You profess to be wondrous wise. And yet you who are so wise a people, freely tolerate those who are foolish in their boasting; who proclaim their own merits and attainments. You may allow me, therefore, to come in for my share, and boast also, and thus obtain your favor.” Or it may mean, “You are so profoundly wise as easily to see who are fools. You have great power of discernment in this, and have found out that I am a fool, and also that other boasters are fools. Yet knowing this, you bear patiently with such fools; have admitted them to your favor and friendship, and I may come in among the rest of the fools, and partake also of your favors.” They had borne with the false apostles who had boasted of their endowments, and yet they claimed to be eminent for wisdom and discernment.

2 Corinthians 11:20. *For ye suffer ...* You bear patiently with people who impose on you in every way, and who are constantly defrauding you, though you profess to be so wise, and you may bear with me a little, though I have no such intention. Seriously, if you bear with boasters who intend to delude and deceive you in various ways, you may bear with one who comes to you with no such intention, but with an honest purpose to do good.

If a man bring you into bondage (καταδουλοι ^{<2615>}). If a man, or if anyone (ει ^{<1487>} τις ^{<5100>}) “make a slave of you,” or reduce you to servitude. The idea is, doubtless, that the false teachers set up a lordship over their consciences; destroyed their freedom of opinion; and made them subservient to their will. They really took away their Christian freedom as much as if they had been slaves. In what way this was done is unknown. It may be that they imposed on them rites and forms, commanded expensive and inconvenient ceremonies, and required arduous services merely at their own will. A false religion always makes slaves. It is only true Christianity that leaves perfect freedom. All pagans are slaves to their priests; all fanatics are slaves to some fanatical leader; all those who embrace error are slaves to those who claim to be their guides. The papist everywhere is the

slave of the priest, and the despotism there is as great as in any region of servitude whatever.

If a man devour you This is exceedingly sarcastic. The idea is, “Though you are so wise, yet you in fact tolerate people who impose on you — no matter though they eat you up, or consume all that you have. By their exorbitant demands they would consume all you have — or, as we would say, eat you out of house and home.” All this they took patiently; and freely gave all that they demanded. False teachers are always rapacious. They seek the property, not the souls of those to whom they minister. Not satisfied with a maintenance, they aim to obtain all, and their plans are formed to secure as much as possible of those to whom they minister.

If a man take of you If he take and seize upon your possessions. If he comes and takes what he pleases and bears it away as his own.

If a man exalt himself If he set himself up as a ruler and claim submission. No matter how arrogant his claims, yet you are ready to bear with him. You might then bear with me in the very moderate demands which I make on your obedience and confidence.

If a man smite you on the face The word rendered here as “smite” (δερῶ ^{<1194>}) means properly “to skin, to flay”; but in the New Testament it means “to beat, to scourge” — especially so as “to take off the skin”; ^{<1215>}Matthew 21:35; ^{<1128>}Mark 12:3,5. The idea here is, if anyone treats you with contumely and scorn — since there can be no higher expression of it than to strike a man on the face; ^{<1167>}Matthew 26:67. It is not to be supposed that this occurred literally among the Corinthians; but the idea is, that the false teachers really treated them with as little respect as if they smote them on the face. In what way this was done is unknown; but probably it was by their domineering manners, and the little respect which they showed for the opinions and feelings of the Corinthian Christians. Paul says that as they bore this very patiently, they might allow him to make some remarks about himself in self-commendation.

^{<1122>}**2 Corinthians 11:21.** *I speak as concerning reproach* I speak of disgrace. That is, says Rosenmuller, “I speak of your disgrace, or, as others prefer it, of the disgrace of the false apostles.” Doddridge regards it as a question. “Do I speak this by way of dishonor, from an envious desire to derogate from my superiors so as to bring them down to my own level?” But to me it seems that Paul refers to what he had been admitting

respecting himself — to what he had evinced in rudeness of speech (^{<47106>}2 Corinthians 11:6), and to his not having urged his claims to the support which an apostle had a right to receive — to things, in short, which they esteemed to be disgraceful or reproachful. And his idea, it seems to me, is this: “I have been speaking of reproach or disgrace as if I was weak, that is, as if I was disposed to admit as true all that has been said of me as reproachful or disgraceful; all that has been said of my lack of qualifications for the office, of my lack of talent, or elevated rank, or honorable birth, etc. I have not pressed my claims, but have been reasoning as if all this were true — as if all that was honorable in birth and elevated in rank belonged to them — all that is mean and unworthy pertained to me. But it is not so. Whatever they have I have. Whatever they can boast of, I can boast of in a more eminent degree. Whatever advantage there is in birth is mine; and I can tell of toils, and trials, and sufferings in the apostolic office which far surpass theirs.” Paul proceeds, therefore, to a full statement of his advantages of birth and of his labors in the cause of the Redeemer.

As though we had been weak As if I had no claims to urge; as if I had no just cause of boldness, but must submit to this reproach.

Howbeit (^{<1161>}δε). But. The sense is, if anyone is disposed to boast, I am ready for him. I can tell also of things that have as high claims to confidence as they can. If they are disposed to go into a comparison on the points which qualify a man for the office of an apostle, I am ready to compare myself with them.

Whereinsoever (^{<1722>}εν ^{<3739>}ὅ). In what. Whatever they have to boast of I am prepared also to show that I am equal to them. Be it pertaining to birth, rank, education, labors, they will find that I do not shrink from the comparison.

Any is bold (^{<5100>}τις ^{<5111>}τολμα). Anyone who dares to boast; anyone who is bold.

I speak foolishly Remember now that I speak as a fool. I have been charged with this folly. Just now keep that in mind; and do not forget that it is only a fool who is speaking. Just recollect that I have no claims to public confidence; that I am destitute of all pretensions to the apostolic office; that I am given to a vain parade and ostentation, and to boasting of what does not belong to me, and when you recollect this let me tell my

story. The whole passage is ironical in the highest degree. The sense is, “It is doubtless all nonsense and folly for a man to boast who has only the qualifications which I have. But there is a great deal of wisdom in their boasting who have so much more elevated endowments for the apostolic office.”

I am bold also I can meet them on their own ground, and speak of qualifications not inferior to theirs.

2 Corinthians 11:22. *Are they Hebrews?* This proves that the persons who had made the difficulty in Corinth were those who were of Hebrew extraction though it may be that they had been born in Greece and had been educated in the Grecian philosophy and art of rhetoric. It is also clear that they prided themselves on being Jews — on having a connection with the people and land from whence the religion which the Corinthian church now professed had emanated. Indications are apparent everywhere in the New Testament of the superiority which the Jewish converts to Christianity claimed over those converted from among the pagan. Their boast would probably be that they were the descendants of the patriarchs; that the land of the prophets was theirs; that they spake the language in which the oracles of God were given; that the true religion had proceeded from them, etc.

So am I I have as high claims as any of them to distinction on this head. Paul had all their advantages of birth. He was an Israelite; of rite honored tribe of Benjamin; a Pharisee, circumcised at the usual time (^{518B}Philippians 3:5), and educated in the best manner at the feet of one of their most eminent teachers; ^{422B}Acts 22:3.

Are they Israelites? Another name, signifying substantially the same thing. The only difference is, that the word “Hebrew” signified properly one who was from beyond (yrb[^{4568D} from rb[^{4567D} , to pass, to pass over — hence, applied to Abraham, because he had come from a foreign land; and the word denoted properly a foreigner — a man from the land or country beyond, rb[) the Euphrates. The name Israelite denoted properly one descended from Israel or Jacob, and the difference between them was, that the name Israelite, being a patronymic derived from one of the founders of their nation, was in use among themselves; the name Hebrew was applied by the Canaanite to them as having come from beyond the river, and was the current name among foreign tribes and nations. See Gesenius’ Lexicon

on the word *yrb* [^{<h5680>} Hebrew. Paul in the passage before us means to say that he had as good a claim to the honor of being a native born descendant of Israel as could be urged by any of them.

Are they the seed of Abraham? Do they boast that they are descended from Abraham? This with all the Jews was regarded as a distinguished honor (see ^{<h189>}Matthew 3:9; ^{<h189>}John 8:39), and no doubt the false teachers in Corinth boasted of it as eminently qualifying them to engage in the work of the ministry.

So am I Paul had the same qualification. He was a Jew also by birth. He was of the tribe of Benjamin; ^{<h189>}Philippians 3:5.

^{<h123>}**2 Corinthians 11:23.** *Are they ministers of Christ?* Though Jews by birth yet they claimed to be the ministers of the Messiah.

I speak as a fool As if he had said, “Bear in mind, in what I am now about to say, that he who speaks is accused of being a fool in boasting. Let it not be deemed improper that I should act in this character, and since you regard me as such, let me speak like a fool.” His frequent reminding them of this charge was eminently suited to humble them that they had ever made it, especially when they were reminded by an enumeration of his trials, of the character of the man against whom the charge was brought.

I am more Paul was not disposed to deny that they were true ministers of Christ. But he had higher claims to the office than they had. He had been called to it in a more remarkable manner, and he had shown by his labors and trials that he had more of the true spirit of a minister of the Lord Jesus than they had. He therefore goes into detail to show what he had endured in endeavoring to diffuse the knowledge of the Saviour; trials which he had borne probably while they had been dwelling in comparative ease, and in a comfortable manner, free from suffering and persecution.

In labors more abundant In the kind of labor necessary in propagating the gospel. Probably he had now been engaged in the work a much longer time than they had, and had been far more indefatigable in it.

In stripes In receiving stripes; that is, I have been more frequently scourged; ^{<h123>}2 Corinthians 11:24. This was a proof of his being a minister of Christ, because eminent devotedness to him at that time, of necessity subjected a man to frequent scourging. The ministry is one of the very few places, perhaps it stands alone in this, where it is proof of special

qualification for office that a man has been treated with all manner of contumely, and has even been often publicly whipped. What other office admits such a qualification as this?

Above measure Exceedingly; far exceeding them. He had received far more than they had, and he judged, therefore, that this was one evidence that he had been called to the ministry.

In prisons more frequent In the Book of Acts, Luke mentions only one imprisonment of Paul before the time when this Epistle was written. That was at Philippi with Silas, ~~Acts~~ Acts 16:23ff. But we are to remember that many things were omitted by Luke. He does not profess to give an account of all that happened to Paul; and an omission is not a contradiction. For anything that Luke says, Paul may have been imprisoned often. He mentions his having been in prison once; he does not deny that he had been in prison many times besides; see on ~~Acts~~ Acts 16:24.

In deaths oft This is, exposed to death; or suffering pain equal to death; see on ~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 1:9. No one familiar with the history of Paul can doubt that he was often in danger of death.

~~2~~ **2 Corinthians 11:24.** *Of the Jews ...* On this verse and the following verse it is of importance to make a few remarks preliminary to the explanation of the phrases:

(1) It is admitted that the particulars here referred to cannot be extracted out of the Acts of the Apostles. A few can be identified, but there are many more trials referred to here than are specified there.

(2) This proves that this Epistle was not framed from the history, but that they are written independently of one another — Paley.

(3) Yet they are not inconsistent one with the other. For there is no article in the enumeration here which is contradicted by the history, and the history, though silent with respect to many of these transactions, has left space enough to suppose that they may have occurred.

(a) There is no contradiction between the accounts. Where it is said by Paul that he was thrice beaten with rods, though in the Acts but one beating is mentioned, yet there is no contradiction. It is only the omission to record all that occurred to Paul. But had the history, says Paley, contained an account of four beatings with rods, while Paul mentions here

but three, there would have been a contradiction. And so of the other particulars.

(b) Though the Acts of the Apostles be silent concerning many of the instances referred to, yet that silence may be accounted for on the plan and design of the history. The date of the Epistle synchronizes with the beginning of Acts 20. The part, therefore, which precedes the twentieth chapter is the only place in which can be found any notice of the transactions to which Paul here refers. And it is evident from the Acts that the author of that history was not with Paul until his departure from Troas, as related in 2 Corinthians 16:10; see the note on that place. From that time Luke attended Paul in his travels. From that period to the time when this Epistle was written occupies but four chapters of the history, and it is here if anywhere that we are to look for the minute account of the life of Paul. But here much may have occurred to Paul before Luke joined him. And as it was the design of Luke to give an account of Paul mainly after he had joined him, it is not to be wondered at that many things may have been omitted of his previous life.

(c) The period of time after the conversion of Paul to the time when Luke joined him at Troas is very succinctly given. That period embraced 16 years, and is comprised in a few chapters. Yet in that time Paul was constantly traveling. He went to Arabia, returned to Damascus, went to Jerusalem, and then to Tarsus, and from Tarsus to Antioch, and thence to Cyprus, and then through Asia Minor, etc. In this time he must have made many voyages, and been exposed to many perils. Yet all this is comprised in a few chapters, and a considerable portion of them is occupied with an account of public discourses. In that period of sixteen years, therefore, there was ample opportunity for all the occurrences which are here referred to by Paul; see Paley's *Horse Paulinae* on 2 Corinthians, No. 9:

(d) I may add, that from the account which follows the time when Luke joined him at Troas (from ~~16:10~~ Acts 16:10), it is altogether probable that he had endured much before. After that time there is mention of just such transactions of scourging, stoning, etc., as are here specified, and it is altogether probable that he had been called to suffer them before. When Paul says "of the Jews," etc., he refers to this because this was a Jewish mode of punishment. It was usual with them to inflict but 39 blows. The Gentiles were not limited by law in the number which they inflicted.

Five times This was doubtless in their synagogues and before their courts of justice. They had not the power of capital punishment, but they had the power of inflicting minor punishments. And though the instances are not specified by Luke in the Acts, yet the statement here by Paul has every degree of probability. We know that he often preached in their synagogues (^{<4131>}Acts 9:20; 13:5, 14,15; 14:1; 17:17; 18:4); and nothing is more probable than that they would be enraged against him, and would vent their malice in every way possible. They regarded him as an apostate, and a ringleader of the Nazarenes, and they would not fail to inflict on him the severest punishment which they were permitted to inflict.

Forty stripes save one The word “stripes” does not occur in the original, but is necessarily understood. The Law of Moses (^{<437B>}Deuteronomy 25:3) expressly limited the number of stripes that might be inflicted to 40. In no case might this number be exceeded. This was a humane provision, and one that was not found among the pagan, who inflicted any number of blows at discretion. Unhappily it is not observed among professedly Christian nations where the practice of whipping prevails, and particularly in slave countries, where the master inflicts any number of blows at his pleasure. In practice among the Hebrews, the number of blows inflicted was in fact limited to 39, lest by any accident in counting, the criminal should receive more than the number prescribed in the Law. There was another reason still for limiting it to 39. They usually made use of a scourge with three thongs, and this was struck 13 times. That it was usual to inflict but 39 lashes is apparent from Josephus, Ant. 4. viii, section 21.

^{<4125>}**2 Corinthians 11:25.** *Thrice was I beaten with rods* In the Acts of the Apostles there is mention made of his being beaten in this manner but once before the time when this Epistle was written. That occurred at Philippi; ^{<4162>}Acts 16:22,23. But there is no reason to doubt that it was more frequently done. This was a frequent mode of punishment among the ancient nations, and as Paul was often persecuted, he would be naturally subjected to this shameful punishment.

Once I was stoned This was the usual mode of punishment among the Jews for blasphemy. The instance referred to here occurred at Lystra; ^{<4149>}Acts 14:19. Paley (Horae Paulinae) has remarked that this, when confronted with the history, furnished the nearest approach to a contradiction without a contradiction being actually incurred, that he ever had met with. The history (^{<4149>}Acts 14:19) contains but one account of his being actually

stoned. But prior to this (^{<444b>}Acts 14:5), it mentions that “an assault was made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully and to stone them, but they were aware of it, and fled to Lystra and Derbe.” “Now,” Paley remarks, “had the assault been completed; had the history related that a stone was thrown, as it relates that preparations were made both by Jews and Gentiles to stone Paul and his companions; or even had the account of this transaction stopped without going on to inform us that Paul and his companions were aware of their danger and fled, a contradiction between the history and the Epistle would have ensued. Truth is necessarily consistent; but it is scarcely possible that independent accounts, not having truth to guide them, should thus advance to the very brink of contradiction without falling into it.”

Thrice I suffered shipwreck On what occasions, or where, is now unknown, as these instances are not referred to in the Acts of the Apostles. The instance of shipwreck recorded there (Acts 27), which occurred when on his way to Rome, happened after this Epistle was written, and should not be supposed to be one of the instances referred to here. Paul made many voyages in going from Jerusalem to Tarsus, and to Antioch, and to various parts of Asia Minor, and to Cyprus; and shipwrecks in those seas were by no means such unusual occurrences as to render this account improbable.

A night and a day ... The word used here (^{<3574>}νυκθημερον) denotes a complete natural day, or 24 hours.

In the deep To what this refers we do not now certainly know. It is probable, however, that Paul refers to some period when, having been shipwrecked, he was saved by supporting himself on a plank or fragment of the vessel until he obtained relief. Such a situation is one of great peril, and he mentions it, therefore, among the trials which he had endured. The supposition of some commentators that he spent his time on some rock in the deep; or of others that this means some deep dungeon; or of others that he was swallowed by a whale (that is, a big fish), like Jonah, shows the extent to which the fancy is often indulged in interpreting the Bible.

^{<4112>}**2 Corinthians 11:26.** *In journeyings often* Of course subject to the fatigue, toil, and danger which such a mode of life involves.

In perils of waters In danger of losing my life at sea, or by floods, or by crossing streams.

Of robbers Many of the countries, especially Arabia, through which he traveled, were then infested, as they are now, with robbers. It is not impossible or improbable that he was often attacked and his life endangered. It is still unsafe to travel in many of the places through which he traveled.

By mine own countrymen The Jews. They often scourged him; laid wait for him and were ready to put him to death. They had deep enmity against him as an apostate, and he was in constant danger of being put to death by them.

By the pagan By those who had not the true religion. Several instances of his danger from this quarter are mentioned in the Acts.

In the city In cities, as in Derbe. Lystra, Philippi, Jerusalem, Ephesus, etc.

In the wilderness In the desert, where he would be exposed to ambushes, or to wild beasts, or to hunger and want. Instances of this are not recorded in the Acts, but no one can doubt that they occurred. The idea here is, that he had met with constant danger wherever he was, whether in the busy haunts of people or in the solitude and loneliness of the desert.

In the sea see ^{<4112>}2 Corinthians 11:25.

Among false brethren This was the crowning danger and trial to Paul, as it is to all others. A man can better bear danger by land and water, among robbers and in deserts, than he can bear to have his confidence abused, and to be subjected to the action and the arts of spies upon his conduct. Who these were he has not informed us. He mentions it as the chief trial to which he had been exposed, that he had met those who pretended to be his friends, and who yet had sought every possible opportunity to expose and destroy him. Perhaps he has here a delicate reference to the danger which he apprehended from the false brethren in the church at Corinth.

^{<4112>}**2 Corinthians 11:27.** *In weariness* Resulting from traveling, exposure, labor, and want. The word **κοπος** ^{<287>} (from **κοπτω** ^{<287>}, “to beat, to cut”) means, properly, “wailing and grief,” accompanied with beating the breast. Hence, the word means “toil, labor, wearisome effort.”

And painfulness This word (**μολθος** ^{<3449>}) is a stronger term than the former. It implies painful effort; labor producing sorrow, and in the New Testament is uniformly connected with the word rendered “weariness”

(^{<509>}1 Thessalonians 2:9; ^{<508>}2 Thessalonians 3:8), rendered in both those places “travail.”

In watchings often In loss of sleep, arising from abundant toils and from danger; see the note on ^{<405>}2 Corinthians 6:5.

In hunger and thirst From traveling among strangers, and being dependent on them and on his own personal labors; see the note, ^{<401>}1 Corinthians 4:11.

In fastings often Either voluntary or involuntary; see the note on ^{<405>}2 Corinthians 6:5.

In cold and nakedness see the note, ^{<401>}1 Corinthians 4:11.

^{<402>}**2 Corinthians 11:28.** *Besides those things that are without* In addition to these external trials, these trials pertaining to the body, I have mental trials and anxieties resulting from the necessary care of all the churches, But on the meaning of these words commentators are not agreed. Rosenmuller supposes that the phrase means “besides those things that come from other sources,” “that I may omit other things.” Beza, Erasmus, Bloomfield, and some others suppose that the passage means those things out of the regular routine of his office. Doddridge, “besides foreign affairs.” Probably the sense is, “Apart from the things beside” (^{<566>}Χωρίς ^{<588>}των ^{<3924>}παρεκτος); “not to mention other matters; or if other matters should be laid aside, there is this continually rushing anxiety arising from the care of all the churches.” That is, this would be enough in itself. Laying aside all that arises from hunger, thirst, cold, etc., this continual care occupies my mind and weighs upon my heart.

That which cometh upon me daily There is great force in the original here. The phrase rendered “that which cometh upon me” means properly, “that which rushes upon me.” The word (^{<1999>}επισυστασις) means properly a concourse, a crowd, hence, a tumult; and the idea here is, that these cares rushed upon him, or pressed upon him like a crowd of people or a mob that bore all before it. This is one of Paul’s most energetic expressions, and denotes the incessant anxiety of mind to which he was subject.

The care of all the churches The care of the numerous churches which he had established, and which needed his constant supervision. They were young; many of them were feeble; many were made up of heterogeneous materials; many composed of Jews and Gentiles mingled together, with

conflicting prejudices, habits, preferences; many of them were composed of those who had been gathered from the lowest ranks of life; and questions would be constantly occurring relating to their order and discipline in which Paul would feel a deep interest, and which would naturally be referred to him for decision. Besides this, they had many trials. They were persecuted, and would suffer much. In their sufferings Paul would feel deep sympathy, and would desire, as far as possible, to afford them relief. In addition to the churches which he had planted, he would feel an interest in all others, and doubtless many cases would be referred to him as an eminent apostle for counsel and advice. No wonder that all this came rushing on him like a tumultuous assembly ready to overpower him.

<4712> 2 Corinthians 11:29. *Who is weak ...* I sympathize with all. I feel where others feel, and their sorrows excite deep sympathetic emotions in my bosom. Like a tender and compassionate friend I am affected when I see others in circumstances of distress. The word “weak” here may refer to any lack of strength, any infirmity or feebleness arising either from body or mind. It may include all who were feeble by persecution or by disease; or it may refer to the weak in faith and doubtful about their duty (see **<4102> 1 Corinthians 9:22**), and to those who were burdened with mental sorrows. The idea is, that Paul had a deep sympathy in all who needed such sympathy from any cause. And the statement here shows the depth of feeling of this great apostle; and shows what should be the feeling of every pastor; see the note on **<5215> Romans 12:15**.

And I am not weak? I share his feelings and sympathize with him. If he suffers, I suffer. Bloomfield supposes that Paul means that in the case of those who were weak in the faith he accommodated himself to their weakness and thus became all things to all people; see my note on **<4102> 1 Corinthians 9:22**. But it seems to me probable that he uses the phrase here in a more general sense, as denoting that he sympathized with those who were weak and feeble in all their circumstances.

Who is offended (**σκανδαλιζεται** **<4624>**). Who is “scandalized.” The word means properly to cause to stumble and fall; hence, to be a stumbling-block to any one; to give or cause offence to anyone. The idea here seems to be, “who is liable to be led astray; who has temptations and trials that are likely to lead him to sin or to cause him to fall, and I do not burn with impatience to restore him, or with indignation against the tempter?” In all such cases Paul deeply sympathized with them, and was prompt to aid them.

And I burn not? That is, with anger or with great agitation of mind at learning that anyone had fallen into sin. This may either mean that he would burn with indignation against those who had led them into sin, or be deeply excited in view of the disgrace which would be thus brought on the Christian cause. In either case it means that his mind would be in a glow of emotion; he would feel deeply; he could not look upon such things with indifference or without being deeply agitated. With all he sympathized; and the condition of all, whether in a state of feeble faith, or feeble body, or falling into sin, excited the deepest emotions in his mind. The truth here taught is, that Paul felt a deep sympathy for all others who bore the Christian name, and this sympathy for others greatly increased the cares and toils of the apostolic office which he sustained. But having given this exposition, candor compels me to acknowledge that the whole verse may mean, “Who is feeble in the faith in regard to certain observances and rites and customs (~~4112~~ 1 Corinthians 9:22), and I do not also evince the same? I do not rouse their prejudices, or wound their feelings, or alarm them. On the other hand, who is scandalized, or led into sin by the example of others in regard to such custom; who is led by the example of others into transgression, and I do not burn with indignation?” In either case, however, the general sense is, that he sympathized with all others.

~~4113~~ **2 Corinthians 11:30.** *If I must needs glory* It is unpleasant for me to boast, but circumstances have compelled me. But since I am compelled, I will not boast of my rank, or talents, but of that which is regarded by some as an infirmity.

Mine infirmities Greek, “The things of my weakness.” The word here used is derived from the same word which is rendered weak,” in ~~4112~~ 2 Corinthians 11:29. He intends doubtless to refer here to what had preceded in his enumeration of the trials which he had endured. He had spoken of sufferings. He had endured much. He had also spoken of that tenderness of feeling which prompted him to sympathize so deeply when others suffered. He admitted that he often wept, and trembled, and glowed with strong feelings on occasions which perhaps to many would not seem to call for such strong emotions, and which they might be disposed to set down as a weakness or infirmity. This might especially be the case among the Greeks, where many philosophers, as the Stoics, were disposed to regard all sympathetic feeling, and all sensitiveness to suffering as an infirmity. But Paul admitted that he was disposed to glory in this alone. He gloried that he had sneered so much; that he had endured so many trials on account of

Christianity, and that he had a mind that was capable of feeling for others and of entering into their, sorrows and trials. Well might he do this, for there is no more lovely feature in the mind of a virtuous man, and there is no more lovely influence of Christianity than this, that it teaches us to “bear a brother’s woes,” and to sympathize in all the sorrows and joys of others. Philosophy and infidelity may be dissocial, cheerless, cold; but it is not so with Christianity. Philosophy may snap asunder all the cords which bind us to the living world, but Christianity strengthens these cords; cold and cheerless atheism and scepticism may teach us to look with unconcern on a suffering world, but it is the glory of Christianity that it teaches us to feel an interest in the weal or woe of the obscurest man that lives, to rejoice in his joy, and to weep in his sorrows.

2 Corinthians 11:31. *The God and Father ...* Paul was accustomed to make solemn appeals to God for the truth of what he said, especially when it was likely to be called in question; see **2 Corinthians 11:10**; compare **Romans 9:1**. The solemn appeal which he here makes to God is made in view of what he had just said of his sufferings, not of what follows — for there was nothing in the occurrence at Damascus that demanded so solemn an appeal to God. The reason of this asseveration is probably that the transactions to which he had referred were known to but few, and perhaps not all of them to even his best friends; that his trials and calamities had been so numerous and extraordinary that his enemies would say that they were improbable, and that all this had been the mere fruit of exaggeration; and as he had no witnesses to appeal to for the truth of what he said, he makes a solemn appeal to the ever-blessed God. This appeal is made with great reverence. It is not rash, or bold, and is by no means irreverent or profane. He appeals to God as the Father of the Redeemer whom he so much venerated and loved, and as himself blessed for evermore. If all appeals to God were made on as important occasions as this, and with the same profound veneration and reverence, such appeals would never be improper, and we should never be shocked as we are often now when people appeal to God. This passage proves that an appeal to God on great occasions is not improper; it proves also that it should be done with profound veneration.

2 Corinthians 11:32. *In Damascus* This circumstance is mentioned as an additional trial. It is evidently mentioned as an instance of peril which had escaped his recollection in the rapid account of his dangers enumerated

in the previous verses. It is designed to show what imminent danger he was in, and how narrowly he escaped with his life. On the situation of Damascus, see the note, ^{<400E>}Acts 9:2. The transaction here referred to is also related by Luke (^{<402E>}Acts 9:24,25), though without mentioning the name of the king, or referring to the fact that the governor kept the city with a garrison.

The governor Greek, ὁ ^{<3588>} εθναρχης ^{<1481>}, “The ethnarch;” properly a ruler of the people, a prefect, a ruler, a chief. Who he was is unknown, though he was evidently some officer under the king. It is not improbable that he was a Jew, or at any rate he was one who could be influenced by the Jews, and he was doubtless excited by the Jews to guard the city, and if possible to take Paul as a malefactor. Luke informs us (^{<402E>}Acts 9:23,24) that the Jews took counsel against Paul to kill him, and that they watched the gates night and day to effect their object. They doubtless represented Paul as an apostate, and as aiming to overthrow their religion. He had come with an important commission to Damascus and had failed to execute it; he had become the open friend of those whom he came to destroy; and they doubtless claimed of the civil authorities of Damascus that he should be given up and taken to Jerusalem for trial. It was not difficult, therefore, to secure the cooperation of the governor of the city in the case, and there is no improbability in the statement.

Under Aretas the king There were three kings of this name who are particularly mentioned by ancient writers. The first is mentioned in 2 Macc. 5:8, as the “king of the Arabians.” He lived about 170 years before Christ, and of course could not be the one referred to here. The second is mentioned in Josephus, Antiquities 13, xv, section 2. He is first mentioned as having reigned in Coele-Syria, but as being called to the government of Damascus by those who dwelt there, on account of the hatred which they bore to Ptolemy Meneus. Whiston remarks in a note on Josephus, that this was the first king of the Arabians who took Damascus and reigned there, and that this name afterward became common to such Arabian kings as reigned at Damascus and at Petra; see Josephus, Antiquities 16, ix, section 4. Of course this king reigned some time before the transaction here referred to by Paul. A third king of this name, says Rosenmuller, is the one mentioned here. He was the father-in-law of Herod Antipas. He made war with his son-in-law Herod because he had repudiated his daughter, the wife of Herod. This he had done in order to marry his brother Philip’s wife; see the note, ^{<404E>}Matthew 14:3. On this account Aretas made war with Herod,

and in order to resist him, Herod applied to Tiberius the Roman emperor for aid. Vitellius was sent by Tiberius to subdue Aretas, and to bring him dead or alive to Rome. But before Vitellius had embarked in the enterprise, Tiberius died, and thus Aretas was saved from ruin. It is supposed that in this state of things, when thus waging war with Herod, he made an incursion to Syria and seized upon Damascus, where he was reigning when Paul went there; or if not reigning there personally, he had appointed an ethnarch or governor who administered the affairs of the city in his place.

Kept the city ... Luke (~~4024~~ Acts 9:24) says that they watched the gates day and night to kill him. This was probably the Jews. Meantime the ethnarch guarded the city, to prevent his escape. The Jews would have killed him at once; the ethnarch wished to apprehend him and bring him to trial. In either case Paul had much to fear, and he, therefore, embraced the only way of escape.

With a garrison The word which is used here in the original (φρουρεω ~~5432~~) means simply to watch; to guard; to keep. Our translation would seem to imply that there was a body of people stationed in order to guard the city. The true idea is, that there were men who were appointed to guard the gates of the city and to keep watch lest he should escape them. Damascus was surrounded, as all ancient cities were, with high walls, and it did not occur to them that he could escape in any other way than by the gates.

~~4113~~ **2 Corinthians 11:33.** *And through a window* That is, through a little door or aperture in the wall; perhaps something like an embrasure, that might have been large enough to allow a man to pass through it. Luke says (~~4025~~ Acts 9:25) that they let him down “by the wall.” But there is no inconsistency. They doubtless first passed him through the embrasure or loop-hole in the wall, and then let him down gently by the side of it. Luke does not say it was over the top of the wall, but merely that he descended by the wall. It is not probable that an embrasure or opening would be near the bottom, and consequently there would be a considerable distance for him to descend by the side of the wall after he had passed through the window. Bloomfield, however, supposes that the phrase employed by Luke and rendered “by the wall,” means properly “through the wall.” But I prefer the former interpretation.

In a basket The word used here (σάγγαυη ^{<4553>}) means anything braided or twisted; hence, a rope-basket, a net-work of cords, or a wicker hamper. It might have been such an one as was used for catching fish, or it might have been made for the occasion. The word used by Luke (^{<4102>}Acts 9:25) is σπυρίς ^{<4711>} — a word usually meaning a basket for storing grain, provisions, etc. Where Paul went immediately after he had escaped them, he does not here say. From ^{<8017>}Galatians 1:17, it appears that he went into Arabia, where he spent some time, and then returned to Damascus, and after three years he went up to Jerusalem. It would not have been safe to have gone to Jerusalem at once, and he therefore waited for the passions of the Jews to have time to cool, before he ventured himself again in their hands.

REMARKS

1. There may be circumstances, but they are rare, in which it may be proper to speak of our own attainments, and of our own doings; ^{<4710>}2 Corinthians 11:1. Boasting is in general nothing but folly — the fruit of pride — but there may be situations when to state what we have done may be necessary to the vindication of our own character, and may tend to honor God. Then we should do it; not to trumpet forth our own fame, but to glorify God and to advance his cause. Occasions occur however but rarely in which it is proper to speak in this manner of ourselves.

2. The church should be pure. It is the bride of the Redeemer; the “Lamb’s wife;” ^{<4710>}2 Corinthians 11:2. It is soon to be presented to Christ, soon to be admitted to his presence. How holy should be that church which sustains such a relation! How anxious to be worthy to appear before the Son of God!

3. All the individual members of that church should be holy; ^{<4710>}2 Corinthians 11:2. They as individuals are soon to be presented in heaven as the fruit of the labors of the Son of God, and as entitled to his eternal love. How pure should be the lips that are soon to speak his praise in heaven; how pure the eyes that are soon to behold his glory; how holy the feet that are soon to tread his courts in the heavenly world!

4. There is great danger of being corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ; ^{<4710>}2 Corinthians 11:3. Satan desires to destroy us; and his great object is readily accomplished if he can seduce Christians from simple devotedness to the Redeemer; if he can secure corruption in doctrine or in

the manner of worship, and can produce conformity in dress and in the style of living to this world. Formerly, he excited persecution. But in that he was foiled. The more the church was persecuted the more it grew. Then he changed his ground. What he could not do by persecution he sought to do by corrupting the church; and in this he has been by far more successful. This can be done slowly but certainly; effectually but without exciting suspicion. And it matters not to Satan whether the church is crippled by persecution or its zeal destroyed by false doctrine and by conformity to the world. His aim is secured; and the power of the church destroyed. The form in which he now assails the church is by attempting to seduce it from simple and hearty attachment to the Saviour. And, O! in how many instances is he successful.

5. Our religion has cost much suffering. We have in this chapter a detail of extraordinary trials and sorrows in establishing it; and we have reason to be thankful, in some degree, that the enemies of Paul made it necessary for him to boast in this manner. We have thus some most interesting details of facts of which otherwise we should have been ignorant; and we see that the life of Paul was a life of continual self-denial and toil. By sea and land; at home and abroad; among his own countrymen and strangers, he was subjected to continued privations and persecution. So it has been always in regard to the establishment of the gospel. It began its career in the sufferings of its great Author, and the foundation of the church was laid in his blood. It progressed amidst sufferings, for all the apostles, except John, it is supposed were martyrs. It continued to advance amidst sufferings — for 10 fiery persecutions raged throughout the Roman Empire, and thousands died in consequence of their professed attachment to the Saviour. It has been always propagated in pagan lands by self-denials and sacrifices, for the life of a missionary is that of sacrifice and toil. How many such people as David Brainerd and Henry Martyn have sacrificed their lives in order to extend the true religion around the world!

6. All that we enjoy is the fruit of the sufferings, toils, and sacrifices of others. We have not one Christian privilege or hope which has not cost the life of many a martyr. How thankful should we be to God that he was pleased to raise up people who would be willing thus to suffer, and that he sustained and kept them until their work was accomplished!

7. We may infer the sincerity of the people engaged in propagating the Christian religion. What had Paul to gain in the sorrows which he endured?

Why did he not remain in his own land and reap the honors which were then fully within his grasp? The answer is an easy one. It was because he believed that Christianity was true; and believing that, he believed that it was of importance to make it known to the world. Paul did not endure these sorrows, and encounter these perils for the sake of pleasure, honor, or gain. No man who reads this chapter can doubt that he was sincere, and that he was an honest man.

8. The Christian religion is, therefore, true. Not because the first preachers were sincere for the advocates of error are often sincere, and are willing to suffer much or even to die as martyrs; but because this was a case when their sincerity proved the facts in regard to the truth of Christianity. It was not sincerity in regard to opinions merely, it was in regard to facts. They not only believed that the Messiah had come and died and risen again, but they saw him — saw him when he lived; saw him die; saw him after he was risen; and it was in relation to these facts that they were sincere. But how could they be deceived here? People may be deceived in their opinions; but how could John, e. g., be deceived in affirming that he was intimately acquainted — the bosom friend — with Jesus of Nazareth; that he saw him die; and that he conversed with him after he had died? In this he could not be mistaken; and sooner than deny this, John would have spent his whole life in a cave in Patmos, or have died on the cross or at the stake. But if John saw all this, then the Christian religion is true.

9. We should be willing to suffer now. If Paul and the other apostles were willing to endure so much, why should not we be? If they were willing to deny themselves so much in order that the gospel should be spread among the nations, why should not we be? It is now just as important that it should be spread as it was then; and the church should be just as willing to sacrifice its comforts to make the gospel known as it was in the days of Paul. We may add, also, that if there was the same devotedness to Christ evinced by all Christians now which is described in this chapter; if there was the same zeal and self-denial, the time would not be far distant when the gospel would be spread all around the world. May the time soon come when all Christians shall have the same self-denial as Paul; and especially when all who enter the ministry shall be WILLING to forsake country and home, and to encounter peril in the city and the wilderness; on the sea and the land; to meet cold, and nakedness, hunger, thirst, persecution, and death in any way in order that they may make known the name of the Saviour to a lost world.

NOTES ON 2 CORINTHIANS 12

This chapter (2 Corinthians 12) is a continuation of the same general subject which was discussed in the two previous chapters. The general design of the apostle is, to defend himself from the charges brought against him in Corinth, and especially, as it would appear, from the charge that he had no claims to the character of an apostle. In the previous chapters he had met these charges, and had shown that he had just cause to be bold toward them; that he had in his life given evidence that he was called to this work, and especially that by his successes and by his sufferings he had showed that he had evidence that he had been truly engaged in the work of the Lord Jesus.

This chapter contains the following subjects.

1. Paul appeals to another evidence that he was engaged in the apostolic office — an evidence to which none of his accusers could appeal — that he had been permitted to behold the glories of the heavenly world; ^{<4710>}2 Corinthians 11:1-10. In the previous chapter he had mentioned his trials. Here he says (^{<4712>}2 Corinthians 12:1), that as they had compelled him to boast, he would mention the revelation which he had had of the Lord. He details, therefore, the remarkable vision which he had had several years before (^{<4713>}2 Corinthians 12:2-4), when he was caught up to heaven, and permitted to behold the wonders there, Yet he says, that lest such an extraordinary manifestation should exalt him above measure, he was visited with a sore and special trial — a trial from which he prayed earnestly to be delivered, but that he received answer that the grace of God would be sufficient to support him; ^{<4715>}2 Corinthians 12:5-9. It was in view of this, he says (^{<4710>}2 Corinthians 12:10) that he had pleasure in infirmities and sufferings in the cause of the Redeemer.

2. He then (^{<4721>}2 Corinthians 12:11,12) sums up what he had said; draws the conclusion that he had given every sign or evidence that he was an apostle; that in all that pertained to toil, and patience, and miracles, he had shown that he was commissioned by the Saviour; though with characteristic modesty he said he was nothing.

3. He then expresses his purpose to come again and see them, and his intention then not to be burdensome to them; ^{<4723>}2 Corinthians 12:13-15. He was willing to labor for them, and to exhaust his strength in

endeavoring to promote their welfare without receiving support from them, for he regarded himself in the light of a father to them, and it was not usual for children to support their parents.

4. In connection with this, he answers another charge against himself. Some accused him of being crafty; that though he did not burden them, yet he knew well how to manage so as to secure what he wanted without burdening them, or seeming to receive anything from them; ^{<47216>}2 Corinthians 12:16. To this he answers by an appeal to fact. Particularly he appeals to the conduct of Titus when with them, in full proof that he had no such design; ^{<47217>}2 Corinthians 12:17-19.

5. In the conclusion of the chapter, he expresses his fear that when he should come among them he would find much that would humble them and give him occasion for severity of discipline; ^{<47220>}2 Corinthians 12:20,21. This apprehension is evidently expressed in order that they might be led to examine themselves, and to put away whatever was wrong.

^{<47218>}**2 Corinthians 12:1.** *It is not expedient* It is not well; it does not become me. This may either mean that he felt and admitted that it did not become him to boast in this manner; that there was an impropriety in his doing it though circumstances had compelled him, and in this sense it is understood by nearly, or quite, all expositors; or it may be taken ironically. "Such a man as I am ought not to boast. So you say, and so it would seem. A man who has done no more than I have; who has suffered nothing; who has been idle and at ease as I have been, ought surely not to boast. And since there is such an evident impropriety in my boasting and speaking about myself, I will turn to another matter, and inquire whether the same thing may not be said about visions and revelations. I will speak, therefore, of a man who had some remarkable revelations, and inquire whether he has any right to boast of the favors imparted to him." This seems to me to be the probable interpretation of this passage.

To glory To boast; 2 Corinthians 10 8,13; 11:10. One of the charges which they alleged against him was, that he was given to boasting without any good reason. After the enumeration in the previous chapter of what he had done and suffered, he says that this was doubtless very true. Such a man has nothing to boast of.

I will come Margin, "For I will." Our translators have omitted the word ($\gamma\alpha\rho$ ^{<1063>}) for in the text, evidently supposing that it is a mere expletive.

Doddridge renders it, “nevertheless.” But it seems to me that it contains an important sense, and that it should be rendered by then. “Since it is not fit that I should glory, then I will refer to visions, etc. I will turn away then from that subject, and come to another.” Thus, the word (γάρ ^{<1063>}) is used in ^{<879>}John 7:41. “Shall then (μή ^{<3361>} γάρ ^{<1063>}) Christ come out of Galilee?” ^{<4881>}Acts 8:31. “How can I then (τῷ ^{<3588>} γάρ ^{<1063>}) except some man should guide me?” see also ^{<4895>}Acts 19:35; ^{<8188>}Romans 3:3; ^{<5018>}Philippians 1:18.

To visions The word “vision” is used in the Scriptures often to denote the mode in which divine communications were usually made to people. This was done by causing some scene to appear to pass before the mind as in a landscape, so that the individual seemed to see a representation of what was to occur in some future period. It was usually applied to prophecy, and is often used in the Old Testament; see my note on ^{<2100>}Isaiah 1:1, and also on ^{<4910>}Acts 9:10. The vision which Paul here refers to was that which he was permitted to have of the heavenly world; ^{<4724>}2 Corinthians 12:4. He was permitted to see what perhaps no other mortal had seen, the glory of heaven.

And revelations of the Lord Which the Lord had made. Or it may mean manifestations which the Lord had made of himself to him. The word rendered “revelations” means properly an “uncovering” (ἀποκαλύψις ^{<602>}, from ἀποκαλύπτω ^{<601>}, to uncover), and denotes a removal of the veil of ignorance and darkness, so that an object may be clearly seen; and is thus applied to truth revealed, because the obscurity is removed and the truth becomes manifest.

^{<4712>}**2 Corinthians 12:2.** *I knew a man in Christ* I was acquainted with a Christian; the phrase “in Christ” meaning nothing more than that he was united to Christ or was a Christian; see ^{<5107>}Romans 16:7. The reason why Paul did not speak of this directly as a vision which he had himself seen was probably that he was accused of boasting, and he had admitted that it did not become him to glory. But though it did not become him to boast directly, yet he could tell them of a man concerning whom there would be no impropriety evidently in boasting. It is not uncommon, moreover, for a man to speak of himself in the third person. Thus, Caesar in his Commentaries uniformly speaks of himself. And so John in his Gospel speaks of himself, ^{<8123>}John 13:23,24; 19:26; 21:20. John did it on account of his modesty, because he would not appear to put himself forward, and

because the mention of his own name as connected with the friendship of the Saviour in the remarkable manner in which he enjoyed it, might have savored of pride. For a similar reason Paul may have been unwilling to mention his own name here; and he may have abstained from referring to this occurrence elsewhere, because it might savor of pride, and might also excite the envy or ill-will of others. Those who have been most favored with spiritual enjoyments will not be the most ready to proclaim it. They will cherish the remembrance in order to excite gratitude in their own hearts and support them in trial; they will not emblazon it abroad as if they were more the favorites of heaven than others are. That this refers to Paul himself is evident for the following reasons:

- (1) His argument required that he should mention something that had occurred to himself. Anything that had occurred to another would not have been pertinent.
- (2) He applies it directly to himself (^{<4711>}2 Corinthians 12:7), when he says that God took effectual measures that he should not be unduly exalted in view of the abundant revelations bestowed on him.

About fourteen years ago On what occasion or where this occurred, or why he concealed the remarkable fact so long, and why there is no other allusion to it, is unknown; and conjecture is useless. If this Epistle was written, as is commonly supposed, about the year 58 A.D., then this occurrence must have happened about the year 44 A.D.. This was several years after his conversion, and of course this does not refer to the trance mentioned in ^{<410>}Acts 9:9, at the time when he was converted. Dr. Benson supposes that this vision was made to him when he was praying in the temple after his return to Jerusalem, when he was directed to go from Jerusalem to the Gentiles (^{<4217>}Acts 22:17), and that it was intended to support him in the trials which he was about to endure. There can be little danger of error in supposing that its object was to support him in those remarkable trials, and that God designed to impart to him such views of heaven and its glory, and of the certainty that he would soon be admitted there, as to support him in his sufferings, and make him willing to bear all that should be laid upon him. God often gives to his people some clear and elevated spiritual comforts before they enter into trials as well as while in them; he prepares them for them before they come. This vision Paul had kept secret for fourteen years. He had doubtless often thought of it; and the remembrance of that glorious hour was doubtless one of the reasons

why he bore trials so patiently and was willing to endure so much. But before this he had had no occasion to mention it. He had other proofs in abundance that he was called to the work of an apostle; and to mention this would savor of pride and ostentation. It was only when he was compelled to refer to the evidences of his apostolic mission that he refers to it here.

Whether in the body, I cannot tell That is, I do not pretend to explain it. I do not know how it occurred. With the fact he was acquainted; but how it was brought about he did not know. Whether the body was caught up to heaven; whether the soul was for a time separated from the body; or whether the scene passed before the mind in a vision, so that he seemed to have been caught up to heaven, he does not pretend to know. The evident idea is, that at the time he was in a state of insensibility in regard to surrounding objects, and was unconscious of what was occurring, as if he had been dead. Where Paul confesses his own ignorance of what occurred to himself it would be vain for us to inquire; and the question how this was done is immaterial. No one can doubt that God had power if he chose to transport the body to heaven; or that he had power for a time to separate the soul from the body; or that he had power to represent to the mind so clearly the view of the heavenly world that he would appear to see it; see ^{<4076>}Acts 7:56. It is clear only that he lost all consciousness of anything about him at that time, and that he saw only the things in heaven. It may be added here, however, that Paul evidently supposed that his soul might be taken to heaven without the body, and that it might have separate consciousness and a separate existence. He was not, therefore, a materialist, and he did not believe that the existence and consciousness of the soul was dependent on the body.

God knoweth With the mode in which it was done God only could be acquainted. Paul did not attempt to explain that. That was to him of comparatively little consequence, and he did not lose his time in a vain attempt to explain it. How happy would it be if all theologians were as ready to be satisfied with the knowledge of a fact, and to leave the mode of explaining it with God, as this prince of theologians was. Many a man would have busied himself with a vain speculation about the way in which it was done; Paul was contented with the fact that it had occurred.

Such an one caught up The word which is used here ($\acute{\alpha}\rho\pi\alpha\zeta\omega$ ^{<726>}) means, to seize upon, to snatch away, as wolves do their prey (^{<820>}John 12:10); or to seize with avidity or eagerness (^{<4012>}Matthew 11:12); or to carry away, to

hurry off by force or involuntarily; see ^{<4065>}John 6:15; ^{<4073>}Acts 7:39; 23:10. In the case before us there is implied the idea that Paul was conveyed by a foreign force; or that he was suddenly seized and snatched up to heaven. The word expresses the suddenness and the rapidity with which it was done. Probably it was instantaneous, so that he appeared at once to be in heaven. Of the mode in which it was done Paul has given no explanations; and conjecture would be useless.

To the third heaven The Jews sometimes speak of seven heavens, and Muhammed has borrowed this idea from the Jews. But the Bible speaks of but three heavens, and among the Jews in the apostolic ages also the heavens were divided into three:

- (1) The aerial, including the clouds and the atmosphere, the heavens above us, until we come to the stars.
- (2) The starry heavens, the heavens in which the sun, moon, and stars appear to be situated.
- (3) The heavens beyond the stars. That heaven was supposed to be the residence of God, of angels, and of holy spirits. It was this upper heaven, the dwelling-place of God, to which Paul was taken, and whose wonders he was permitted to behold — this region where God dwelt; where Christ was seated at the right hand of the Father, and where the spirits of the just were assembled. The fanciful opinions of the Jews about seven heavens may be seen detailed in Schoettgen or in Wetstein, by whom the principal passages from the Jewish writings relating to the subject have been collected. As their opinions throw no light on this passage, it is unnecessary to detail them here.

^{<4128>}**2 Corinthians 12:3.** *And I knew such a man* It is not uncommon to repeat a solemn affirmation in order that it may be made more emphatic. This is done here. Paul repeats the idea, that he was intimately acquainted with such a man, and that he did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body. All that was known to God.

^{<4124>}**2 Corinthians 12:4.** *Into paradise* The word “paradise” (^{<3857>}παράδεισος) occurs but three times in the New Testament; ^{<4234>}Luke 23:43; ^{<4124>}2 Corinthians 12:4; ^{<4107>}Revelation 2:7. It occurs often in the Septuagint, as the translation of the word garden; ^{<4008>}Genesis 2:8-10,15,16; 3:1-3,8,16,23,24; 13:10; ^{<4246>}Numbers 24:6; ^{<2513>}Isaiah 51:3; ^{<4583>}Ezekiel

28:13; 31:8,9; ^{<2118>} Joel 2:3. And also ^{<2031>} Isaiah 1:30; ^{<2215>} Jeremiah 29:5; and of the word **sdrp** ^{<6508>} in ^{<4618>} Nehemiah 2:8; ^{<2115>} Ecclesiastes 2:5; ^{<2113>} Song of Solomon 2:13. It is a word which had its origin in the language of eastern Asia, and which has been adopted in the Greek, the Roman, and other western languages. In Sanskrit the word “paradesha” means a land elevated and cultivated; in Armenian, “pardes” denotes a garden around the house planted with trees, shrubs, grass for use and ornament. In Persia, the word denotes the pleasure gardens and parks with wild animals around the country residences of the monarchs and princes. Hence, it denotes in general a garden of pleasure; and in the New Testament is applied to the abodes of the blessed after death, the dwelling-place of God and of happy spirits; or to heaven as a place of blessedness. Some have supposed that Paul here by the word “paradise” means to describe a different place from that denoted by the phrase “the third heaven;” but there is no good reason for this supposition. The only difference is that this word implies the idea of a place of blessedness; but the same place is undoubtedly referred to.

And heard unspeakable words The word which is rendered here as “unspeakable” (**αρηρητα** ^{<731>}) may either mean what cannot be spoken, or what ought not to be spoken. The word means unutterable, ineffable; and whichever idea we attach to it, Paul meant to say that he could not attempt by words to do justice to what he saw and heard. The use of the word “words” here would seem to imply that he heard the language of exalted praise; or that there were truths imparted to his mind which he could not hope to convey in any language spoken by people.

Which it is not lawful for a man to utter Margin, “Possible.” Witsius supposes that the word **εξον** ^{<1832>} may include both, and Doddridge accords with the interpretation. See also Robinson’s Lexicon. The word is most commonly used in the signification of lawful. Thus, ^{<404>} Matthew 14:4, “It is not lawful for thee to have her.” ^{<4462>} Acts 16:21, “Which it is not lawful for us to observe;” ^{<4025>} 22:25, “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman,” etc. In the same sense of lawful it is used in ^{<4012>} Matthew 12:2,10,12; 20:15; ^{<4026>} Mark 2:26; 10:2. When it refers to possibility it probably means moral possibility; that is, propriety, or it means that it is right. It seems to me, therefore, that the word here rather means that it was not proper to give utterance to those things; it would not be right to attempt it. It might be also true that it would not have been possible for language to convey clearly the ideas connected with the things which Paul was then permitted to see; but the main thought is, that there was some

reason why it would not be proper for him to have attempted to communicate those ideas to people at large. The Jews held that it was unlawful to pronounce the Tetragrammaton, that is, the name of four letters **hwhy**, JEHOVAH; and whenever that name occurred in their scriptures, they substituted the name *Adonai* in its place. They maintain indeed that the true pronunciation is utterly lost, and none of them to this day attempt to pronounce it. But this was mere superstition; and it is impossible that Paul should have been influenced by any such reason as this.

The transaction here referred to is very remarkable. It is the only instance in the Scriptures of anyone who was taken to heaven, either in reality or in vision, and who returned again to the earth and was then qualified to communicate important truths about the heavenly world from personal observation. Enoch and Elijah were taken to heaven; but they returned not to converse with people. Elijah appeared with Moses in conversation with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration; but they conversed with him only about his decease, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem; ^{<BIB>}Luke 9:31. There would have been no propriety for them to have spoken to Jesus of heaven, for he came down from heaven and was in heaven (^{<BIB>}John 3:13), and they were not permitted to speak to the disciples of heaven. Lazarus was raised from the dead (John 11), and many of the saints which had slept in their graves arose at the death of Jesus (^{<BIB>}Matthew 27:52), but there is no intimation that they communicated any thing to the living about the heavenly world. Of all the million who have been taken to heaven, not one has been permitted to return to bear his testimony to its glories; to witness for God that he is faithful to his promises; to encourage his pious friends to persevere; or to invite his impenitent friends to follow him to that glorious world. And so fixed is the Law; so settled is the principle, that even Lazarus was not permitted to go, though at the earnest request of the rich man in hell, and warn his friends not to follow him to that world of woe; ^{<BIB>}Luke 16:27-31. Muhammed indeed feigned that he had made a journey to heaven, and he attempts to describe what he saw; and the difference between true inspiration and false or pretended inspiration is strikingly evinced by the difference between Paul's dignified silence — *verba sacro digna silentio* (Horace) and the puerilities of the prophet of Mecca. See the Koran, chap. 17. As the difference between the true religion and imposture is strikingly illustrated by this, we may recur to the principal events which happened to the

impostor on his celebrated journey. The whole account may be seen in Prideaux's *Life of Muhammed*, pp. 43ff. He solemnly affirmed that he had been translated to the heaven of heavens; that on a white beast, less than a mule, but larger than an ass, he had been conveyed from the temple of Mecca to that of Jerusalem; had successively ascended the seven heavens with his companion Gabriel, receiving and returning the salutations of its blessed inhabitants; had then proceeded alone within two bow-shots of the throne of the Almighty, when he felt a cold which pierced him to the heart, and was touched on the shoulder by the hand of God, who commanded him to pray 50 times a day, but with the advice of Moses he was prevailed on to have the number reduced to five; and that he thru returned to Jerusalem and to Mecca, having performed a journey of thousands of years in the tenth part of a night.

The fact that Paul was not permitted to communicate what he had seen is very remarkable. It is natural to ask why it is so? Why has not God sent down departed saints to tell people of the glories of heaven? Why does he not permit them to come and bear testimony to what they have seen and enjoyed? Why not come and clear up the doubts of the pious; why not come and convince a thoughtless world; why not come and bear honorable testimony for God that he is faithful to reward his people? And especially why did he not suffer Paul, whom he had permitted to behold the glories of paradise, to testify simply to what he had seen, and tell us what was there?

To these questions, so obvious, it is impossible to give an answer that we can demonstrate to be the true one. But we may suggest some reasons which may furnish a plausible answer, and which may serve to remove some of the perplexity in the case. I would, therefore, suggest that the following may have been some of the reasons why Paul was not permitted to communicate what he saw to human beings:

(1) It was designed for the support of Paul himself in view of the very remarkable trials which he was about to endure. God had called him to great toils and self-denials. He was to labor much alone; to go to foreign lands; to be persecuted, and ultimately put to death; and it was his purpose to qualify him for this work by some special manifestation of his favor. He accordingly gave him such views of heaven that he would be supported in his trials by a conviction of the undoubted truth of what he taught, and by the prospect of certain glory when his labors should end. It was one instance when God gave special views to prepare for trials, as he often

does to his people now, preparing them in a unique manner for special trials. Christians, from some cause, often have more elevated views and deeper feeling before they are called to endure trials than they have at other times — special grace to prepare them for suffering. But as this was designed in a special manner for Paul alone, it was not proper for him to communicate what he saw to others.

(2) It is probable that if there were a full revelation of the glories of heaven we should not be able to comprehend it; or even if we did, we should be incredulous in regard to it. So unlike what we see; so elevated above our highest comprehension; probably so unlike what we now anticipate is heaven, that we should be slow to receive the revelation. It is always difficult to describe what we have not seen, even on earth, so that we shall have any very clear idea of it: how much more difficult must it be to describe heaven. We are often incredulous about what is reported to exist in foreign lands on earth which we have not seen, and a long time is often necessary before we will believe it. The king of Siam, when told by the Dutch ambassador that water became so hard in his country that people might walk on it, said, “I have often suspected you of falsehood, but now I know that you lie.” So incredulous might we be, with our weak faith, if we were told what actually exists in heaven. We should not improbably turn away from it as wholly incredible.

(3) There are great truths which it is not the design of God to reveal to human beings. The object is to communicate enough to win us, to comfort us, to support our faith, not to reveal all. In eternity there must be boundless truths and glories which are not needful for us to know now, and which, on many accounts, it would not be proper to be revealed to man. The question is not, do we know all, but have we enough safely to guide us to heaven, and to comfort us in the trials of life.

(4) There is enough revealed of heaven for our guidance and comfort in this world. God has told us what it will be in general. It will be a world without sin; without tears; without wrong, injustice, fraud, or wars; without disease, pestilence, plague, death; and it is easy to fill up the picture sufficiently for all our purposes. Let us think of a world where all shall be pure and holy; of a world free from all that we now behold that is evil; free from pain, disease, death; a world where “friends never depart, foes never come;” a world where all shall be harmony and love — and where all this shall be ETERNAL, and we shall see that God has revealed

enough for our welfare here. The highest hopes of man are met when we anticipate AN ETERNAL HEAVEN; the heaviest trials may be cheerfully borne when we have the prospect of EVERLASTING REST.

(5) One other reason may be assigned why it was not proper for Paul to disclose what he saw, and why God has withheld more full revelations from mankind about heaven. It is, that his purpose is that we shall here walk by faith and not by sight. We are not to see the reward, nor to be told fully what it is. We are to have such confidence in God that we shall assuredly believe that, he will fully reward and bless us, and under this confidence we are to live and act here below. God designs, therefore, to try our faith, and to furnish an abundant evidence that his people are disposed to obey his commands and to put their trust in his faithfulness. Besides, if all the glories of heaven were revealed; if all were told that might be; and if heaven were made as attractive to mortal view as possible, then it might appear that his professed people were influenced solely by the hope of the reward. As it is, there is enough to support and comfort; not enough to make it the main and only reason why we serve God. It may be added:

(a) That we have all the truth which we shall ever have about heaven here below. No other messenger will come; none of the pious dead will return. If people, therefore, are not willing to be saved in view of the truth which they have, they must be lost. God will communicate no more.

(b) The Christian will soon know all about heaven. He will soon be there. He begins no day with any certainty that he may not close it in heaven; he lies down to rest at no time with any assurance that he will not wake in heaven amidst its full and eternal splendors.

(c) The sinner will soon know fully what it is to lose heaven. A moment may make him fully sensible of his loss — for he may die; and a moment may put him forever beyond the possibility of reaching a world of glory.

2 Corinthians 12:5. *Of such an one will I glory* Of such a man it would be right to boast. It would be admitted that it is right to exult in such a man, and to esteem him to be uniquely favored by God. I will boast of him as having received special honor from the Lord. Bloomfield, however, supposes that the words rendered “of such an one should be translated “of such a thing,” or of such a transaction; meaning” I can indeed justly boast of my being caught up to heaven as of a thing the whole glory of which pertains to him who has thus exalted me; but of myself, or

of anything in me, I will not boast.” So Rosenmuller explains it. But it seems to me that the connection requires that we should understand it of a person, and that the passage is partly ironical. Paul speaks in the third person. He chooses to keep himself directly out of view. And though he refers really to himself, yet he would not say this directly, but says that of such a man they would admit it would be proper to boast.

Yet of myself Directly. It is not expedient for me to boast of myself. “You would allow me to boast of such a man as I have referred to; I admit that it is not proper for me to boast directly of myself.”

But in mine infirmities My weaknesses, trials, pains, sufferings; such as many regard as infirmities; see the note on ^{471B}2 Corinthians 11:30.

^{471B}**2 Corinthians 12:6.** *For though I would desire to glory* I take this to be a solemn and serious declaration of the irony which precedes; and that Paul means to say seriously, that if he had a wish to boast as other people boasted, if he chose to make much of his attainments and privileges, he would have enough of which to make mention. It would not be mere empty boasting without any foundation or any just cause, for he had as much of which to speak in a confident manner pertaining to his labors as an apostle, and his evidence of the divine favor, as could be urged by any one. “I might go on to speak much more than I have done, and to urge claims which all would admit to be well-founded.”

I shall not be a fool “It would not be foolish boasting; for it would be according to truth. I could urge much more than I have done; I could speak of things which no one would be disposed to call in question as laying the foundation of just claims to my being regarded as eminently favored of God; I could seriously state what all would admit to be such.”

For I will say the truth That is, “Whatever I should say on this subject would be the simple truth. I should mention nothing which has not actually occurred. But I forbear, lest some one should form an improper estimate of me.” The apostle seems to have intended to have added something more, but he was checked by the apprehension to which he here refers. Or perhaps he means to say that if he should boast of the vision to which he had just referred; if he should go on to say how highly he had been honored and exalted by it, there would be no impropriety in it. It was so remarkable that if he confined himself strictly to the truth, as he would do, still it would

he regarded by all as a very extraordinary honor, and one to which no one of the false teachers could refer as laying a foundation for their boasting.

Lest any man should think of me ... The idea in this part of the verse I take to be this. "I desire and expect to be estimated by my public life. I expect to be judged of men by my deeds, by what they see in me, and by my general reputation in respect to what I have done in establishing the Christian religion. I am willing that my character and reputation, that the estimate in which I shall be held by mankind, shall rest on that. I do not wish that my character among people shall be determined by my secret feelings; or by any secret extraordinary communication from heaven which I may have, and which cannot be subjected to the observation of my fellow-men. I am willing to be estimated by my public life; and however valuable such extraordinary manifestations may be to me as an individual; or however much they may comfort me, I do not wish to make the basis of my public reputation. I expect to stand and be estimated by my public deeds; by what all people see and hear of me; and I would not have them form even a favorable opinion of me beyond that." This is the noble language of a man who was willing to enjoy such a reputation as his public life entitled him to. He wished to have the basis of his reputation such that all people could see and examine it. Unlike enthusiasts and fanatics, he appealed to no secret impulses; did not rest his claims for public confidence on any special communications from heaven; but wished to be estimated by his public deeds. And the important truth taught is, that however much the communion we may have with God; however much comfort and support in prayer and in our favored moments of fellowship with God; or however much we may fancy in this way that we are the favorites of heaven; and however much this may support us in trial: still this should not be made the foundation of claim to the favorable opinions of our fellow-men. By our public character; by our well-known actions; by our lives as seen by people, we should desire to be estimated, and we should be satisfied with such a measure of public esteem as our deportment shall fairly entitle us to. We should seldom, perhaps, refer to our moments of secret, happy, and most favored communion with God. Paul kept his most elevated joys in this respect, secret for fourteen years: what an example to those who are constantly emblazoning their Christian experience abroad, and boasting of what they have enjoyed! We should never refer to such moments as a foundation for the estimate in which our character shall be held by our fellow-men. We should never make this the foundation of a claim to the

public confidence in us. For all such claims; for all the estimate in which we shall be held by people, we should be willing to be tried by our lives. Paul would not even make a vision of heaven; not even the privilege of having beheld the glories of the upper world, though a favor conferred on no other living man, a ground of the estimate in which his character should be held! What an example to those who wish to be estimated by secret raptures, and by special communications to their souls from heaven! No. Let us be willing to be estimated by people by what they see in us; to enjoy such a reputation as our conduct shall fairly entitle us to. Let our communion with God cheer our own hearts; but let us not obtrude this on people as furnishing a claim for an exalted standard in their estimation.

2 Corinthians 12:7. *And lest I should be exalted* Lest I should be spiritually proud; lest I should become self-confident and vain, and suppose that I was a special favorite of Heaven. If Paul was in danger of spiritual pride, who is not? If it was necessary for God to adopt some special measures to keep him humble, we are not to be surprised that the same thing should occur in other cases. There is abundant reason to believe that Paul was naturally a proud man. He was by nature self-confident; trusting in his own talents and attainments, and eminently ambitious. When he became a Christian, therefore, one of his besetting sins would be pride; and as he had been especially favored in his call to the apostleship; in his success as a preacher; in the standing which he had among the other apostles, and in the revelations imparted to him, there was also special danger that he would become self-confident and proud of his attainments. There is no danger that more constantly besets Christians, and even eminent Christians, than pride. There is no sin that is more subtle, insinuating, deceptive; none that lurks more constantly around the heart and that finds a more ready entrance, than pride. He who has been characterized by pride before his conversion will be in special danger of it afterward; he who has eminent gifts in prayer, or in conversation, or in preaching, will be in special danger of it; he who is eminently successful will be in danger of it; and he who has any extraordinary spiritual comforts will be in danger of it. Of this sin he who lives nearest to God may be in most special danger; and he who is most eminent in piety should feel that he also occupies a position where the enemy will approach him in a sly and subtle manner, and where he is in special danger of a fall. Possibly the fear that he might be in danger of being made proud by the flattery of his friends may have been one reason why Paul kept this thing concealed for

14 years; and if people wish to keep themselves from the danger of this sin, they should not be forward to speak even of the most favored moments of their communion with God.

Through the abundance of the revelations By my being raised thus to heaven, and by being permitted to behold the wonders of the heavenly world, as well as by the numerous communications which God had made to me at other times.

There was given to me That is, God was pleased to appoint me. The word which Paul uses is worthy of special notice. It is that this “thorn in the flesh” was given to him, implying that it was a favor. He does not complain of it; he does not say it was sent in cruelty; he does not even speak of it as an affliction; he speaks of it as a gift, as any man would of a favor that had been bestowed. Paul had so clear a view of the benefits which resulted from it that he regarded it as a favor, as Christians should every trial.

A thorn in the flesh The word used here (σκολοπις ^{<4647>}) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means properly anything pointed or sharp, e. g., a stake or palisade (Xenophon, Anabasis v. 2, 5); or the point of a hook. The word is used in the Septuagint to denote a thorn or prickle, as a translation of רִיס ^{<45518>}, in ^{<48116>}Hosea 2:6, “I will hedge up thy way with thorns;” to denote a pricking briar in ^{<4324>}Ezekiel 28:24, as a translation of ׀ַלִּס ^{<45544>}, meaning a thorn or prickle, such as is found in the shoots and twigs of the palm-tree; and to denote “pricks in the eyes” (^{<44355>}Numbers 33:55), as a translation of μυκν, thorns or prickles. So far as the word used here is concerned, it means a sharp thorn or prickle; and the idea is, that the trial to which he refers was as troublesome and painful as such a thorn would be in the flesh. But whether he refers to some infirmity or pain in the flesh or the body is another question, and a question in which interpreters have been greatly divided in opinion. Every one who has become familiar with commentaries knows that almost every expositor has had his own opinion about this. and also that no one has been able to give any good reason for his own. Most of them have been fanciful; and many of them eminently ridiculous. Even Baxter, who was subject himself to some such disorder, supposes that it might be the stone or gravel; and the usually very judicious Doddridge supposes that the view which he had of the glories of heavenly objects so affected his nerves as to produce a paralytic disorder, and particularly a stammering in his speech, and perhaps also a ridiculous distortion of the countenance. This opinion was suggested

by Whitby, and has been adopted also by Benson, Macknight, Slade, and Bloomfield. But though sustained by most respectable names, it would be easy to show that it is mere conjecture, and perhaps quite as improbable as any of the numerous opinions which have been maintained on the subject. If Paul's speech had been affected, and his face distorted, and his nerves shattered by such a sight, how could he doubt whether he was in the body or out of it when this occurred? Many of the Latin fathers supposed that some unruly and ungovernable lust was intended. Chrysostom and Jerome suppose that he meant the headache; Tertullian an earache; and Rosenmuller supposes that it was the gout in the head, *kopfgicht*, and that it was a periodical disorder such as affected him when he was with the Galatians; ^{<R013>}Galatians 4:13. But all conjecture here is vain; and the numerous strange and ridiculous opinions of commentators is a melancholy attestation of their inclination to fanciful conjecture where it is impossible in the nature of the case to ascertain the truth. All that can be known of this is, that it was some infirmity of the flesh, some bodily affliction or calamity, that was like the continual piercing of the flesh with a thorn (^{<R013>}Galatians 4:13); and that it was something that was designed to prevent spiritual pride. It is not indeed an improbable supposition that it was something that could be seen by others, and that thus tended to humble him when with them.

The messenger of Satan Among the Hebrews it was customary to attribute severe and painful diseases to Satan; compare ^{<R016>}Job 2:6,7; compare note on ^{<R016>}Luke 13:16. In the time of the Saviour malignant spirits are known to have taken possession of the body in numerous cases, and to have produced painful bodily diseases, and Paul here says that Satan was permitted to bring this calamity on him.

To buffet me To buffet, means to smite with the hand; then to maltreat in any way. The meaning is, that the effect and design of this was deeply to afflict him. Doddridge and Clarke suppose that the reference is here to the false teacher whom Satan had sent to Corinth, and who was to him the source of perpetual trouble. But it seems more probable to me that he refers to some bodily infirmity. The general truth taught in this verse is, that God will take care that his people shall not be unduly exalted by the manifestations of his favor, and by the spiritual privileges which he bestows on them. He will take measures to humble them; and a large part of his dealings with his people is designed to accomplish this. Sometimes it will be done, as in the case of Paul, by bodily infirmity or trial, by sickness, or

by long and lingering disease; sometimes by great poverty and by an humble condition of life; sometimes by reducing us from a state of affluence where we were in danger of being exalted above measure; sometimes by suffering us to be slandered and calumniated, by suffering foes to rise up against us who shall blacken our character and in such a manner that we cannot meet it; sometimes by persecution; sometimes by lack of success in our enterprises, and if in the ministry, by withholding his Spirit; sometimes by suffering us to fall into sin, and thus greatly humbling us before the world. Such was the case with David and with Peter; and God often permits us to see in this manner our own weakness, and to bring us to a sense of our dependence and to proper humility by suffering us to perform some act that should be ever afterward a standing source of our humiliation; some act so base, so humiliating, so evincing the deep depravity of our hearts as forever to make and keep us humble. How could David be lifted up with pride after the murder of Uriah? How could Peter after having denied his Lord with a horrid oath? Thus, many a Christian is suffered to fall by the temptation of Satan to show him his weakness and to keep him from pride; many a fall is made the occasion of the permanent benefit of the offender. And perhaps every Christian who has been much favored with elevated spiritual views and comforts can recall something which shall be to him a standing topic of regret and humiliation in his past life. We should be thankful for any calamity that will humble us; and we should remember that clear and elevated views of God and heaven are, after all, more than a compensation for all the sufferings which it may be necessary to endure in order to make us humble.

2 Corinthians 12:8. *For this thing* On account of this; in order that this calamity might be removed.

I besought the Lord The word “Lord” in the New Testament, when it stands without any other word in connection to limit its signification, commonly denotes the Lord Jesus Christ; see the note on **Acts 1:24**. The following verse here shows conclusively that it was the Lord Jesus to whom Paul addressed this prayer. The answer was that his grace was sufficient for him; and Paul consoled himself by saying that it was a sufficient support if the power of Christ implied in that answer, should rest on him. He would glory in trials if such was their result. Even Rosenmuller maintains that it was the Lord Jesus to whom this prayer was addressed, and says that the Socinians themselves admit it. So Grotius (on **2 Corinthians 12:9**) says that the answer was given by Christ. But if this

refers to the Lord Jesus, then it proves that it is right to go to him in times of trouble, and that it is right to worship him. Prayer is the most solemn act of adoration which we can perform; and no better authority can be required for paying divine honors to Christ than the fact that Paul worshipped him and called upon him to remove a severe and grievous calamity.

Thrice This may either mean that he prayed for this often, or that he sought it on three set and solemn occasions. Many commentators have supposed that the former is meant. But to me it seems probable that Paul on three special occasions earnestly prayed for the removal of this calamity. It will be recollected that the Lord Jesus prayed three times in the garden of Gethsemane that the cup might be removed from him, ~~<0184>~~ Matthew 26:44. At the third time he ceased, and submitted to what was the will of God. There is some reason to suppose that the Jews were in the habit of praying three times for any important blessing or for the removal of any calamity; and Paul in this would not only conform to the usual custom, but especially he would be disposed to imitate the example of the Lord Jesus. Among the Jews three was a sacred number, and repeated instances occur where an important transaction is mentioned as having been done thrice; see ~~<0228>~~ Numbers 22:28; 24:10; ~~<0188>~~ 1 Samuel 3:8; 20:41; ~~<0184>~~ 1 Kings 18:44; ~~<0221>~~ Proverbs 22:20; ~~<0204>~~ Jeremiah 7:4; 22:29; ~~<0217>~~ John 21:17. The probability, therefore, is, that Paul on three different occasions earnestly besought the Lord Jesus that this calamity might be removed from him. It might have been exceedingly painful, or it might, as he supposed, interfere with his success as a preacher; or it might have been of such a nature as to expose him to ridicule; and he prayed, therefore, if it were possible that it might be taken away. The passage proves that it is right to pray earnestly and repeatedly for the removal of any calamity. The Saviour so prayed in the garden; and Paul so prayed here. Yet it also proves that there should be a limit to such prayers. The Saviour prayed three times; and Paul limited himself to the same number of petitions and then submitted to the will of God. This does not prove that we should be limited to exactly this number in our petitions; but it proves that there should be a limit; that we should not be over-anxious, and that when it is plain from any cause that the calamity will not be removed, we should submit to it. The Saviour in the garden knew that the cup would not be removed, and he acquiesced. Paul was told indirectly that his calamity would not be removed, and he submitted. We may expect no such revelation from heaven, but we may know in other ways that the calamity will not be removed; and we should

submit. The child or other friend for whom we prayed may die; or the calamity, as, e.g., blindness, or deafness, or loss of health, or poverty, may become permanent, so that there is no hope of removing it; and we should then cease to pray that it may be removed, and we should cheerfully acquiesce in the will of God. So David prayed most fervently for his child when it was alive; when it was deceased, and it was of no further use to pray for it, he bowed in submission to the will of God, ^{<1021>}2 Samuel 12:20.

^{<1711>}**2 Corinthians 12:9.** *And he said unto me* The Saviour replied. In what way this was done, or whether it was done at the time when the prayer was offered, Paul does not inform us. It is possible, as Macknight supposes, that Christ appeared to him again and spoke to him in an audible manner. Grotius supposes that this was done by the ^{<1132>}tb ^{<1132>}l ^{<1132>}wq ^{<1132>} — “daughter of the voice,” so frequently referred to by the Jewish writers, and which they suppose to be referred to in ^{<1192>}1 Kings 19:12, by the phrase, “a still small voice.” But it is impossible to determine in what way it was done, and it is not material. Paul was in habits of communion with the Saviour, and was accustomed to receive revelations from him. The material fact here is, that the request was not granted in the exact form in which he presented it, but that he received assurance of grace to support him in his trial. It is one of the instances in which the fervent prayer of a good man, offered undoubtedly in faith, was not answered in the form in which he desired, though substantially answered in the assurance of grace sufficient to support him. It furnishes, therefore, a very instructive lesson in regard to prayer, and shows as that we are not to expect as a matter of course that all our prayers will be literally answered, and that we should not be disappointed or disheartened if they are not. It is a matter of fact that not all the prayers even of the pious, and of those who pray having faith in God as a hearer of prayer, are literally answered. Thus, the prayer of David (^{<1026>}2 Samuel 12:16-20) was not literally answered; the child for whose life he so earnestly prayed died. So the Saviour’s request was not literally answered, ^{<1146>}Mark 14:36. The cup of suffering which he so earnestly desired should be taken away was not removed. So in the case before us; compare also ^{<1182>}Deuteronomy 3:23-27; ^{<1810>}Job 30:20; ^{<2178>}Lamentations 3:8. So in numerous cases now, Christians pray with fervour and with faith for the removal of some calamity which is not removed; or for something which they regard as desirable for their welfare which is withheld. Some of the reasons why this is done are obvious:

(1) The grace that will be imparted if the calamity is not removed will be of greater value to the individual than would be the direct answer to his prayer. Such was the case with Paul; so it was doubtless with David; and so it is often with Christians now. The removal of the calamity might be apparently a blessing, but it might also be attended with danger to our spiritual welfare; the grace imparted may be of permanent value and may be connected with the development of some of the loveliest traits of Christian character.

(2) It might not be for the good of the individual who prays that the exact thing should be granted. When a parent prays with great earnestness and with insubmission for the life of a child, he knows not what he is doing. If the child lives, he may be the occasion of much more grief to him than if he had died. David had far more trouble from Absalom than he had from the death of the child for which he so earnestly prayed. At the same time it may be better for the child that he should be removed. If he dies in infancy he will be saved. But who can tell what will be his character and destiny should he live to be a man? So of other things.

(3) God has often some better thing in store for us than would be the immediate answer to our prayer. Who can doubt that this was true of Paul? The promised grace of Christ as sufficient to support us is of more value than would be the mere removal of any bodily affliction.

(4) It would not be well for us, probably, should our petition be literally answered. Who can tell what is best for himself? If the thing were obtained, who can tell how soon we might forget the benefactor and become proud and self-confident? It was the design of God to humble Paul; and this could be much better accomplished by continuing his affliction and by imparting the promised grace, than by withdrawing the affliction and withholding the grace. The very thing to be done was to keep him humble; and this affliction could not be withdrawn without also foregoing the benefit. It is true, also, that where things are in themselves proper to be asked, Christians sometimes ask them in an improper manner, and this is one of the reasons why many of their prayers are not answered. But this does not pertain to the case before us.

My grace is sufficient for thee A much better answer than it would have been to have removed the calamity; and one that seems to have been entirely satisfactory to Paul. The meaning of the Saviour is that he would support him; that he would not suffer him to sink exhausted under his

trials; that he had nothing to fear. The infliction was not indeed removed; but there was a promise that the favor of Christ would be shown to him constantly, and that he would find his support to be ample. If Paul had this support, he might well bear the trial; and if we have this assurance, as we may have, we may welcome affliction, and rejoice that calamities are brought upon us. It is a sufficient answer to our prayers if we have the solemn promise of the Redeemer that we shall be upheld and never sink under the burden of our heavy woes.

My strength is made perfect in weakness That is, the strength which I impart to my people is more commonly and more completely manifested when my people feel that they are weak. It is not imparted to those who feel that they are strong and who do not realize their need of divine aid. It is not so completely manifested to those who are vigorous and strong as to the feeble. It is when we are conscious that we are feeble, and when we feel our need of aid, that the Redeemer manifests his power to uphold, and imparts his purest consolations. Grotius has collected several similar passages from the classic writers which may serve to illustrate this expression. Thus, Pliny, vii. Epis. 26, says, "We are best where we are weak." Seneca says, "Calamity is the occasion of virtue." Quintilian, "All temerity of mind is broken by bodily calamity." Minutius Felix, "Calamity is often the discipline of virtue." There are few Christians who cannot bear witness to the truth of what the Redeemer here says, and who have not experienced the most pure consolations which they have known, and been most sensible of his comforting presence and power in times of affliction.

Most gladly, therefore ... I count it a privilege to be afflicted, if my trials may be the means of my more abundantly enjoying the favor of the Redeemer. His presence and imparted strength are more than a compensation for all the trials that I endure.

That the power of Christ The strength which Christ imparts; his power manifested in supporting me in trials.

May rest upon me (ἐπισκηνώσῃ ^{<1981>}). The word properly means to pitch a tent upon; and then to dwell in or upon. Here it is used in the sense of abiding upon, or remaining with. The sense is, that the power which Christ manifested to his people rested with them, or abode with them in their trials, and therefore he would rejoice in afflictions, in order that he might partake of the aid and consolation thus imparted. Hence, learn:

(1) That a Christian never loses anything by suffering and affliction. If he may obtain the favor of Christ by his trials he is a gainer. The favor of the Redeemer is more than a compensation for all that we endure in his cause.

(2) The Christian is a gainer by trial. I never knew a Christian that was not ultimately benefitted by trials. I never knew one who did not find that he had gained much that was valuable to him in scenes of affliction. I do not know that I have found one who would be willing to exchange the advantages he has gained in affliction for all that the most uninterrupted prosperity and the highest honors that the world could give would impart.

(3) Learn to bear trials with joy. They are good for us. They develop some of the most lovely traits of character. They injure no one if they are properly received. And a Christian should rejoice that he may obtain what he does obtain in affliction, cost what it may. It is worth more than it costs; and when we come to die, the things that we shall have most occasion to thank God for will be our afflictions. And, O! if they are the means of raising us to a higher seat in heaven, and placing us nearer the Redeemer there who will not rejoice in his trials?

2 Corinthians 12:10. *Therefore I take pleasure* Since so many benefits result from trials; since my afflictions are the occasion of obtaining the favor of Christ in so eminent a degree, I rejoice in the privilege of suffering. There is often real pleasure in affliction, paradoxical as it may appear. Some of the happiest persons I have known are those who have been deeply afflicted; some of the purest joys which I have witnessed have been manifested on a sick-bed, and in the prospect of death. And I have no doubt that Paul, in the midst of all his infirmities and reproaches, had a joy above that which all the wealth and honor of the world could give. See here the power of religion. It not only supports, it comforts. It not only enables one to bear suffering with resignation, but it enables him to rejoice. Philosophy blunts the feelings: infidelity leaves people to complain and repine in trial; the pleasures of this world have no power even to support or comfort in times of affliction; but Christianity furnishes positive pleasure in trial, and enables the sufferer to smile through his tears.

In infirmities In my weaknesses; see the note on **2 Corinthians 11:30**.

In reproaches In the contempt and scorn with which I meet as a follower of Christ, note, **2 Corinthians 11:21**.

In necessities In want: see the notes on ^{<4704>}2 Corinthians 6:4,5.

In distresses for Christ's sake note, ^{<4704>}2 Corinthians 6:4. In the various needs and difficulties to which I am exposed on account of the Saviour, or which I suffer in his cause.

For when I am weak, then am I strong When I feel weak; when I am subjected to trial, and nature faints and fails, then strength is imparted to me, and I am enabled to bear all. The more I am borne down with trials, the more do I feel my need of divine assistance, and the more do I feel the efficacy of divine grace. Such was the promise in ^{<6325>}Deuteronomy 33:25: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." So in ^{<8124>}Hebrews 11:24: "Who out of weakness were made strong." What Christian has not experienced this, and been able to say that when he felt himself weak and felt like sinking under the accumulation of many trials, he has found his strength according to his day, and felt an arm of power supporting him? It is then that the Redeemer manifests himself in a special manner; and then that the excellency of the religion of Christ is truly seen and its power appreciated and felt.

^{<4721>}**2 Corinthians 12:11.** *I am become a fool in glorying* The meaning of this expression I take to be this. "I have been led along in speaking of myself until I admit I appear foolish in this kind of boasting. It is folly to do it, and I would not have entered on it unless I had been driven to it by my circumstances and the necessity which was imposed on me of speaking of myself." Paul doubtless desired that what he had said of himself should not be regarded as an example for others to follow. Religion repressed all vain boasting and self-exultation; and to prevent others from falling into a habit of boasting, and then pleading his example as an apology, he is careful to say that he regarded it as folly; and that he would by no means have done it if the circumstances of the case had not constrained him. If, anyone, therefore, is disposed to imitate Paul in speaking of himself and what he has done, let him do it only when he is in circumstances like Paul, and when the honor of religion and his usefulness imperiously demand it; and let him not forget that it was the deliberate conviction of Paul that boasting was the characteristic of a fool!

Ye have compelled me You have made it necessary for me to vindicate my character and to state the evidence of my divine commission as an apostle.

For I ought to have been commended of you By you. Then this boasting, so foolish, would have been unnecessary. What a delicate reproof! All the fault of this foolish boasting was theirs. They knew him intimately. They had derived great benefits from his ministry, and they were bound in gratitude and from a regard to right and truth to vindicate him. But they had not done it; and hence, through their fault, he had been compelled to go into this unpleasant vindication of his own character.

For in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles Neither in the evidences of my call to the apostolic office (see <400>1 Corinthians 9:1ff); nor in the endowments of the Spirit; nor in my success; nor in the proofs of a divine commission in the power of working miracles; see the note on <471>2 Corinthians 11:5.

Though I be nothing This expression was either used in sarcasm or seriously. According to the former supposition it means, that he was regarded as nothing; that the false apostles spoke of him as a mere nothing, or as having no claims to the office of an apostle. This is the opinion of Clarke, and many of the recent commentators. Bloomfield inclines to this. According to the latter view, it is an expression of humility on the part of Paul, and is designed to express his deep sense of his unworthiness in view of his past life — a conviction deepened by the exalted privileges conferred on him, and the exalted rank to which he had been raised as an apostle. This was the view of most of the early commentators. Doddridge unites the two. It is not possible to determine with certainty which is the true interpretation; but it seems to me that the latter view best accords with the scope of the passage, and with what we have reason to suppose the apostle would say at this time. It is true that in this discussion (2 Corinthians 10ff) there is much that is sarcastic. But in the whole strain of the passage before us he is serious. He is speaking of his sufferings, and of the evidences that he was raised to elevated rank as an apostle, and it is not quite natural to suppose that he would throw in a sarcastic remark just in the midst of this discussion. Besides, this interpretation accords exactly with what he says, <465>1 Corinthians 15:9: “For I am the least of all the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle.” If this be the correct interpretation, then it teaches:

(1) That the highest attainments in piety are not inconsistent with the deepest sense of our nothingness and unworthiness.

(2) That the most distinguished favors bestowed on us by God are consistent with the lowest humility.

(3) That those who are most favored in the Christian life, and most honored by God, should not be unwilling to take a low place, and to regard and speak of themselves as nothing. Compared with God, what are they? — Nothing. Compared with the angels, what are they? — Nothing. As creatures compared with the vast universe, what are we? — Nothing. An atom, a speck. Compared with other Christians, the eminent saints who have lived before us, what are we? Compared with what we ought to be, and might be, what are we? — Nothing. Let a man look over his past life, and see how vile and unworthy it has been; let him look at God, and see how great and glorious he is; let him look at the vast universe, and see how immense it is; let him think of the angels, and reflect how pure they are; let him think of what he might have been, of how much more he might have done for his Saviour; let him look at his body, and think how frail it is, and how soon it must return to the dust; and no matter how elevated his rank among his fellow-worms, and no matter how much God has favored him as a Christian or a minister, he will feel, if he feels right, that he is nothing. The most elevated saints are distinguished for the deepest humility; those who are nearest to God feel most their distance; they who are to occupy the highest place in heaven feel most deeply that they are unworthy of the lowest.

~~402~~ **2 Corinthians 12:12.** *Truly the signs of an apostle* Such miracles as the acknowledged apostles worked. Such “signs” or evidences that they were divinely commissioned; see the note on ~~467~~ Mark 16:17; ~~402~~ Acts 2:22; ~~619~~ Romans 15:19.

Were wrought among you That is, by me; see the note, ~~402~~ 1 Corinthians 9:2.

In all patience I performed those works notwithstanding the opposition which I met with. I patiently persevered in furnishing the evidence of my divine commission. There was a succession of miracles demonstrating that I was from God, notwithstanding the unreasonable opposition which I met with, until I convinced you that I was called to the office of an apostle.

In signs and wonders In working miracles; compare note, ~~402~~ Acts 2:22. What these miracles at Corinth were, we are not distinctly informed. They probably, however, were similar to those performed in other places, in

healing the sick, etc.; the most benevolent as it was one of the most decisive proofs of the divine power.

2 Corinthians 12:13. *For what is it ...* This verse contains a striking mixture of sarcasm and irony, not exceeded, says Bloomfield, by any example in Demosthenes. the sense is, "I have given among you the most ample proof of my apostolic commission. I have conferred on you the highest favors of the apostolic office. In these respects you are superior to all other churches. In one respect only are you inferior — it is in this, that you have not been burdened with the privilege of supporting me. If you had had this, you would have been inferior to no others. But this was owing to me; and I pray that you will forgive me this I might have urged it; I might have claimed it; I might have given you the privilege of becoming equal to the most favored in all respects. But I have not pressed it, and you have not done it, and I ask your pardon." There is a delicate insinuation that they had not contributed to his needs (see the note, **2 Corinthians 11:8**); an intimation that it was a privilege to contribute to the support of the gospel, and that Paul might have been "burdensome to them" (see the notes on **1 Corinthians 9:1-12**); and an admission that he was in part to blame for this, and had not in this respect given them an opportunity to equal other churches in all respects.

Was not burdensome to you see this explained in the notes on **2 Corinthians 10:8**.

Forgive me this wrong "If it be a fault, pardon it. Forgive me that I did not give you this opportunity to be equal to other churches. It is a privilege to contribute to the support of the gospel, and they who are permitted to do it should esteem themselves highly favored. I pray you to pardon me for depriving you of any of your Christian privileges." What the feelings of the Corinthians were about forgiving Paul for this we know not; but most churches would be as ready to forgive a minister for this as for any other offence.

2 Corinthians 12:14. *Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you* That is, this is the third time that I have purposed to come and see you, and have made preparation for it. He does not mean that he had been twice with them and was now coming the third time, but that he had twice before intended to go and had been disappointed; see **1 Corinthians 16:5**; **2 Corinthians 1:15,16**. His purpose had been to visit them on his way to

Macedonia and again on his return from Macedonia. He had now formed a third resolution, which he had a prospect of carrying into execution.

And I will not be burdensome to you I resolve still, as I have done before, not to receive a compensation that shall be oppressive to you, see the notes on ^{<410>}2 Corinthians 11:9,10.

For I seek not yours, but you I desire not to obtain your property, but to save your souls. This was a noble resolution; and it is the resolution which should be formed by every minister of the gospel. While a minister of Christ has a claim to a competent support, his main purpose should not be to obtain such a support. It should be the higher and nobler object of winning souls to the Redeemer. See Paul's conduct in this respect explained in the notes on ^{<403>}Acts 20:33.

For the children ... There is great delicacy and address in this sentiment. The meaning is, "It is not natural and usual for children to make provisions for their parents. The common course of events and of duty is, for parents to make provision for their offspring. I, therefore, your spiritual father, choose to act in the same way. I make provision for your spiritual needs; I labor and toil for you as a father does for his children. I seek your welfare, as he does, by constant self-denial. In return, I do not ask you to provide for me, any more than a father ordinarily expects his children to provide for him. I am willing to labor as he does, content with doing my duty, and promoting the welfare of those under me." The words rendered "ought out" ^{<375>}ου ^{<374>}οφειλει are to be understood in a comparative sense. Paul does not mean that a child ought never to provide for his parents, or to lay anything up for a sick, a poor, and an infirm father, but that the duty of doing that was slight and unusual compared with the duty of a parent to provide for his children. The one was of comparatively rare occurrence; the other was constant and was the ordinary course of duty. It is a matter of obligation for a child to provide for an aged and helpless parent; but commonly the duty is that of a parent to provide for his children. Paul felt like a father toward the church in Corinth; and he was willing, therefore, to labor for them without compensation.

^{<425>}2 Corinthians 12:15. *And I will very gladly spend* I am willing to spend my strength, and time, and life, and all that I have, for your welfare, as a father cheerfully does for his children. Any expense which may be necessary to promote your salvation I am willing to submit to. The labor of a father for his children is cheerful and pleasant. Such is his love for them

that he delights in toil for their sake, and that he may make them happy. The toil of a pastor for his flock should be cheerful. He should be willing to engage in unremitted efforts for their welfare; and if he has any right feeling he will find a pleasure in that toil. He will not grudge the time demanded; he will not be grieved that it exhausts his strength, or his life, anymore than a father will who toils for his family. And as the pleasures of a father who is laboring for his children are among the purest and most pleasant which people ever enjoy, so it is with a pastor. Perhaps, on the whole, the pleasantest employment in life is that connected with the pastoral office; the happiest moments known on earth are the duties, arduous as they are, of the pastoral relation. God thus, as in the relation of a father, tempers toil and pleasure together; and accompanies most arduous labors with present and abundant reward.

Be spent Be exhausted and worn out in my labors. So the Greek word means. Paul was willing that his powers should be entirely exhausted and his life consumed in this service.

For you Margin, as in the Greek, for your souls. So it should have been rendered. So Tyndale renders it. The sense is, that he was willing to become wholly exhausted if by it he might secure the salvation of their souls.

Though the more abundantly I love you ... This is designed doubtless as a gentle reproof. It refers to the fact that notwithstanding the tender attachment which he had evinced for them, they had not manifested the love in return which he had a right to expect. It is possible that there may be an allusion to the case of a fond, doting parent. It sometimes happens that a parent fixes his affections with undue degree on some one of his children; and in such cases it is not uncommon that the child evinces special ingratitude and lack of love. Such may be the allusion here — that Paul had fixed his affections on them like a fond, doting father, and that he had met with a return by no means corresponding with the fervour of his attachment; yet still he was willing, like such a father, to exhaust his time and strength for their welfare. The doctrine is, that we should be willing to labor and toil for the good of others, even when they evince great ingratitude. The proper end of laboring for their welfare is not to excite their gratitude, but to obey the will of God; and no matter whether others are grateful or not; whether they love us or not; whether we can promote our popularity with them or not, let us do them good always. It better

shows the firmness of our Christian principle to endeavor to benefit others when they love us the less for all our attempts, than it does to attempt to do good on the swelling tide of popular favor.

2 Corinthians 12:16. *But be it so* This is evidently a charge of his enemies; or at least a charge which it might be supposed they would make. Whether they ever in fact made it, or whether the apostle merely anticipates an objection, it is impossible to determine. It is clearly to be regarded as the language of objectors; for:

(1) It can never be supposed that Paul would state as a serious matter that he had caught them with deceit or fraud.

(2) He answers it as an objection in the following verse. The meaning is, “We admit that you did not burden us. You did not exact a support from us. But all this was mere trick. You accomplished the same thing in another way. You professed when with us not to seek our property but our souls. But in various ways you contrived to get our money, and to secure your object. You made others the agents for doing this, and sent them among us under various pretexts to gain money from us.” It will be remembered that Paul had sent; Titus among them to take up the collection for the poor saints in Judea (**2 Corinthians 8:6**), and it is not at all improbable that some there had charged Paul with making use of this pretence only to obtain money for his own private use. To guard against this charge. was one of the reasons why Paul was so anxious to have some persons appointed by the church to take charge of the contribution; see **1 Corinthians 16:3**; compare the notes on **2 Corinthians 8:19-21**.

Being crafty Being cunning That is, by sending persons to obtain money on different pretences.

I caught you with guile I took you by deceit or fraud. That is, making use of fraud in pretending that the money was for poor and afflicted saints, when in reality it was for my own use. It is impossible that Paul should have ever admitted this of himself; and they greatly pervert the passage who suppose that it applies to him, and then plead that it is right to make use of guile in accomplishing their purposes. Paul never carried his measures by dishonesty, nor did he ever justify fraud; compare the notes on **Acts 23:6**.

2 Corinthians 12:17. *Did I make a gain ...* In refuting this slander, Paul appeals boldly to the facts, and to what they knew. “Same the man,” says he, “who has thus defrauded you under my instructions. If the charge is well-founded, let him be specified, and let the mode in which it was done be distinctly stated.” The phrase “make a gain” (from **πλεονεκτεω** ^{<4122>}), means properly to have an advantage; then to take advantage, to seek unlawful gain. Here Paul asks whether he had defrauded them by means of anyone whom he had sent to them.

2 Corinthians 12:18. *I desired Titus* To go and complete the collection which you had commenced; see **2 Corinthians 8:6**.

And with him I sent a brother see note on **2 Corinthians 8:18**.

Did Titus make a gain of you They knew that he did not. They had received him kindly, treated him with affection, and sent him away with every proof of confidence and respect; see **2 Corinthians 7:7**. How then could they now pretend that he had defrauded them?

Walked we not in the same spirit? Did not all his actions resemble mine? Was there not the same proof of honesty, sincerity, and love which I have ever manifested? This is a very delicate turn. Paul’s course of life when with them they admitted was free from guile and from any attempt to get money by improper means. They charged him only with attempting it by means of others. He now boldly appeals to them and asks whether Titus and he had not in fact acted in the same manner; and whether they had not alike evinced a spirit free from covetousness and deceit?

2 Corinthians 12:19. *Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you?* see the note on **2 Corinthians 5:12**. The sense is, Do not suppose that this is said from mere anxiety to obtain your favor, or to ingratiate ourselves into your esteem. This is said doubtless to keep himself from the suspicion of being actuated by improper motives. He had manifested great solicitude certainly in the previous chapter to vindicate his character; but he here says that it was not from a mere desire to show them that his conduct was right; it was from a desire to honor Christ.

We speak before God in Christ We declare the simple and undisguised truth as in the presence of God. I have no mere desire to palliate my conduct; I disguise nothing; I conceal nothing; I say nothing for the mere purpose of self-vindication, but I can appeal to the Searcher of hearts for

the exact truth of all that I say. The phrase “before God in Christ,” means probably, “I speak as in the presence of God, and as a follower of Christ, as a Christian man.” It is the solemn appeal of a Christian to his God for the truth of what he said, and a solemn asseveration that what he said was not for the mere purpose of excusing or apologizing for (the sense of the Greek) his conduct.

But we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying All that I have done has been for your welfare. My vindication of my character, and my effort to disabuse you of your prejudices, has been that you might have unwavering confidence in the gospel and might be built up in holy faith. On the word “edify,” see the notes on ^{<549>}Romans 14:19; ^{<600>}1 Corinthians 8:1; 10:23.

^{<612>}**2 Corinthians 12:20.** *For I fear, lest, when I come* see ^{<614>}2 Corinthians 12:14.

I shall not find you such as I would That is, walking in the truth and order of the gospel. He had feared that the disorders would not be removed, and that they would not have corrected the errors which prevailed, and for which he had rebuked them. It was on this account that he had said so much to them. His desire was that all these disorders might be removed, and that he might be saved from the necessity of exercising severe discipline when he should come among them.

And that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not That is, that I shall be compelled to administer discipline, and that my visit may not be as pleasant to you as you would desire. For this reason he wished all disorder corrected, and all offences removed; that everything might be pleasant when he should come; see ^{<601>}1 Corinthians 4:21; compare note on ^{<610>}2 Corinthians 10:2.

Lest there be debates I fear that there may be existing there debates, etc., which will require the interposition of the authority of an apostle. On the meaning of the word “debate,” see the note on ^{<612>}Romans 1:29.

Envyings see the note on ^{<608>}1 Corinthians 3:3.

Wraths Anger or animosities between contending factions, the usual effect of forming parties.

Strifes Between contending factions; see note on ^{<608>}1 Corinthians 3:3.

Backbitings see the note on ^{<413>}Romans 1:30.

Whisperings see the note on ^{<412>}Romans 1:29.

Swellings Undue elation; being puffed up (see the note on ^{<411>}2 Corinthians 8:1; ^{<406>}1 Corinthians 4:6,18,19; 5:2) — such as would be produced by vain self-confidence.

Tumults Disorder and confusion arising from this existence of parties. Paul, deeply sensible of the evil of all this, had endeavored in this correspondence to suppress it, that all things might be pleasant when he should come among them.

^{<412>}**2 Corinthians 12:21.** *And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me ...* Lest I should be compelled to inflict punishment on those whom I suppose to have been converted under my ministry. I had rejoiced in them as true converts: I had counted them as among the fruit of my ministry. Now to be compelled to inflict punishment on them as having no religion would mortify me and humble me. The infliction of punishment on members of the church is a sort of punishment to him who inflicts it as well as to him who is punished. Members of the church should walk uprightly, lest they overwhelm the ministry in shame.

And that I shall bewail many ... If they repented of their sin he could still rejoice in them. If they continued in their sin until he came, it would be to him a source of deep lamentation. It is evident from the word “many” here that the disorders had prevailed very extensively in the church at Corinth. The word rendered “have sinned already” means “who have sinned before,” and the idea is, that they were old offenders, and that they had not yet repented.

The uncleanness see note, ^{<412>}Romans 1:24.

And fornication and lasciviousness ... see the notes on ^{<411>}1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:18. This was the sin to which they were particularly exposed in Corinth, as it was the sin for which that corrupt city was particularly distinguished. See the introduction to the First Epistle. Hence, the frequent cautions in these epistles against it; and hence, it is not to be wondered at that some of those who had become professing Christians had fallen into it. It may be added that it is still the sin to which converts from the corruptions and licentiousness of paganism are particularly exposed.

NOTES ON 2 CORINTHIANS 13

This closing chapter (2 Corinthians 13) of the Epistle relates to the following subjects.

I. The assurance of Paul that he was about to come among them (~~4710~~2 Corinthians 13:1-4), and that he would certainly inflict punishment on all who deserved His enemies had reproached him as being timid and pusillanimous; see the notes on ~~4701~~2 Corinthians 10:1,2,10,11. They had said that he was powerful to threaten, but afraid to execute. It is probable that they had become more bold in this from the fact that he had twice proposed to go there and had failed. In reply to all this, he now in conclusion solemnly assures them that he was coming, and that in all cases where an offence was proved by two or three witnesses, punishment would be inflicted; He assures them (~~4712~~2 Corinthians 13:2) that he would not spare; and that since they sought a proof that Christ had sent him they should witness that proof in the punishment which he would inflict (~~4713~~2 Corinthians 13:3); for that Christ was now clothed with power and was able to execute punishment, though he had been crucified; ~~4714~~2 Corinthians 13:4.

II. Paul calls on them solemnly to examine themselves and to see whether they had any true religion; ~~4715~~2 Corinthians 13:5,6. In the state of things which existed there; in the corruption which had abounded in the church, he solemnly commands them to institute a faithful inquiry, to know whether they had not been deceived; at the same time expressing the hope that it would appear as the result of their examination that they were not reprobates.

III. He earnestly prays to God that they might do no evil; that they might be found to be honest and pure, whatever might be thought of Paul himself or whatever might become of him; ~~4717~~2 Corinthians 13:7. Their repentance would save. Paul from exerting his miraculous power in their punishment, and might thus prevent the proof of his apostolic authority which they desired, and the consequence might be that they might esteem him to be a reprobate, for he could not exert his miraculous power except in the cause of truth; ~~4718~~2 Corinthians 13:8. Still he was willing to be esteemed an impostor if they would do no evil.

IV. He assures them that he earnestly wished their perfection, and that the design of his writing to them severe as he had appeared, was their edification; <4713>2 Corinthians 13:9,10.

V. Then he bids them an affectionate and tender farewell, and closes with the usual salutations and benedictions; <4731>2 Corinthians 13:11-14.

<4713> **2 Corinthians 13:1.** *This is the third time ...* see the note on <4724>2 Corinthians 12:14. For an interesting view of this passage, see Paley's *Horae Paulinae* on this Epistle, No. 11: It is evident that Paul had been to Corinth but once before this, but he had resolved to go before a second time, but had been disappointed.

In the mouth of two or three witnesses ... This was what the Law of Moses required; <4806>Deuteronomy 20:16; see the note on <4817>John 8:17; compare <4836>Matthew 18:16. But in regard to its application here, commentators are not agreed. Some suppose that Paul refers to his own epistles which he had sent to them as the two or three witnesses by which his promise to them would be made certain; that he had purposed it and promised it two or three times, and that as this was all that was required by the Law, it would certainly be established. This is the opinion of Bloomfield, Rosenmuller, Grotius, Hammond, Locke, and some others. But, with all the respect due to such great names, it seems to me that this would be trifling and childish in the extreme. Lightfoot supposes that he refers to Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, who would be witnesses to them of his purpose; see <4847>1 Corinthians 16:17. But the more probable opinion, it seems to me, is that of Doddridge, Macknight, and others, that he anticipated that there would be necessity for the administration of discipline there, but that he would feel himself under obligation in administering it to adhere to the reasonable maxim of the Jewish Law. No one should be condemned or punished where there was not at least two or three witnesses to prove the offence. But where there were, discipline would be administered according to the nature of the crime.

<4713> **2 Corinthians 13:2.** *I told you before* That I would not spare offenders; that I would certainly punish them. He had intimated this before in the First Epistle (<4802>1 Corinthians 4:21; 1 Corinthians 5).

And foretell you Now apprise you of my fixed determination to punish every offender as he deserves.

As if I were present, the second time The mention of the second time here proves that Paul had been with them but once before. He had formed the resolution to go to them, but had been disappointed. The time when he had been with them is recorded in ~~4180~~ Acts 18:1ff. He now uses the same language to them which he says he would use if he were with them, as he had expected to be, the second time. See the remarks of Paley on this passage, referred to above.

And being absent see the note on ~~4180~~ 1 Corinthians 5:3.

To them which have heretofore sinned To all the offenders in the church. They had supposed that he would not come to them (~~4180~~ 1 Corinthians 4:18), or that if he came he would not dare to inflict punishment, 2 Corinthians 9-11. They had, therefore, given themselves greater liberty, and had pursued their own course, regardless of his authority and commands.

I will not spare I will punish them. They shall not escape.

~~4180~~ **2 Corinthians 13:3.** *Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me* see the notes on the previous chapters. They had called in question his apostolic authority; they had demanded the evidence of his divine commission. He says that he would now furnish such evidence by inflicting just punishment on all offenders, and they should have abundant proof that Christ spoke by him, or that he was inspired.

Which to you-ward is not weak Or who, that is, Christ, is not weak, etc. Christ has manifested his power abundantly toward you, that is, either by the miracles that had been performed in his name; or by the diseases and calamities which they had suffered on account of their disorders and offences (see the note on ~~4180~~ 1 Corinthians 11:30); or by the force and efficacy of his doctrine. The connection, it seems to me, requires that we should understand it of the calamities which had been inflicted by Christ on them for their sins, and which Paul says would be inflicted again if they did not repent. The idea is, that they had had ample demonstration of the power of Christ to inflict punishment, and they had reason to apprehend it again.

~~4180~~ **2 Corinthians 13:4.** *For though he was crucified through weakness* Various modes have been adopted of explaining the phrase “through weakness.” The most probable explanation is that which refers it to the

human nature which he had assumed (^{<1007>}Philippians 2:7,8; ^{<1008>}1 Peter 3:18), and to the appearance of weakness which he manifested. He did not choose to exert his power. He appeared to his enemies to be weak and feeble. This idea would be an exact illustration of the point before the apostle. He is illustrating his own conduct, and especially in the fact that he had not exerted his miraculous powers among them in the punishment of offenders; and he does it by the example of Christ, who though abundantly able to have exerted his power and to have rescued himself from his enemies, yet was willing to appear weak, and to be crucified. It is very clear:

- (1) That the Lord Jesus seemed to his enemies to be weak and incapable of resistance.
- (2) That he did not put forth his power to protect his life. He in fact offered no resistance, as if he had no power.
- (3) He had a human nature that was especially sensitive, and sensible to suffering; and that was borne down and crushed under the weight of mighty woes; see my notes on ^{<2610>}Isaiah 53:2,3. From all these causes he seemed to be weak and feeble; and these appear to me to be the principal ideas in this expression.

Yet he liveth He is not now dead. Though he was crucified, yet he now lives again, and is now capable of exerting his great power. He furnishes proof of his being alive, in the success which attends the gospel, and in the miracles which are performed in his name and by his power. There is a living Redeemer in heaven; a Redeemer who is able to exert all the power which he ever exerted when on earth; a Redeemer, therefore, who is able to save the soul; to raise the dead; to punish all his foes.

By the power of God In raising him from the dead and placing him at his own right hand; see ^{<4019>}Ephesians 1:19-21. Through the power of God he was brought from the tomb, and has a place assigned him at the head of the universe.

For we also are weak in him Margin, "with him." We his apostles, also, are weak in virtue of our connection with him. We are subject to infirmities and trials; we seem to have no power; we are exposed to contempt; and we appear to our enemies to be destitute of strength. Our enemies regard us as feeble; and they despise us.

But we shall live with him ... That is, we shall show to you that we are alive. By the aid of the power of God we shall show that we are not as weak as our foes pretend; that we are invested with power; and that we are able to inflict the punishment which we threaten. This is one of the numerous instances in which Paul illustrated the case before him by a reference to the example and character of Christ. The idea is, that Christ did not exert his power, and appeared to be weak, and was put to death. So Paul says that he had not exerted his power, and seemed to be weak. But, says he, Christ lives, and is clothed with strength; and so we, though we appear to be weak, shall exert among you, or toward you, the power with which he has invested us, in inflicting punishment on our foes.

2 Corinthians 13:5. *Examine yourselves* see the note on ^{<4128>}1 Corinthians 11:28. The particular reason why Paul calls on them to examine themselves was, that there was occasion to fear that many of them had been deceived. Such had been the irregularities and disorders in the church at Corinth; so ignorant had many of them shown themselves of the nature of the Christian religion, that it was important, in the highest degree, for them to institute a strict and impartial examination to ascertain whether they had not been altogether deceived. This examination, however, is never unimportant or useless for Christians; and an exhortation to do it is always in place. So important are the interests at stake, and so liable are the best to deceive themselves, that all Christians should be often induced to examine the foundation of their hope of eternal salvation.

Whether ye be in the faith Whether you are true Christians. Whether you have any true faith in the gospel. Faith in Jesus Christ, and in the promises of God through him, is one of the distinguishing characteristics of a true Christian; and to ascertain whether we have any true faith, therefore, is to ascertain whether we are sincere Christians. For some reasons for such an examination, and some remarks on the mode of doing it; see the note on ^{<4128>}1 Corinthians 11:28.

Prove your own selves The word used here (^{<1381>}δοκιμαζετε) is stronger than that before used, and rendered “examine” (^{<3985>}πειραζετε). This word, prove, refers to assaying or trying metals by the powerful action of heat; and the idea here is, that they should make the most thorough trial of their religion, to see whether it would stand the test; see the note on ^{<4128>}1 Corinthians 3:13. The proof of their piety was to be arrived at by a faithful examination of their own hearts and lives; by a diligent comparison of their

views and feelings with the word of God; and especially by making trial of it in life. The best way to prove our piety is to subject it to actual trial in the various duties and responsibilities of life. A man who wishes to prove an axe to see whether it is good or not, does not sit down and look at it, or read all the treatises which he can find on axe-making, and on the properties of iron and steel, valuable as such information would be; but he shoulders his axe and goes into the woods, and puts it to the trial there. If it cuts well; if it does not break; if it is not soon made dull, he understands the quality of his axe better than he could in any other way. So if a man wishes to know what his religion is worth, let him try it in the places where religion is of any value. Let him go into the world with it. Let him go and try to do good; to endure affliction in a proper manner; to combat the errors and follies of life; to admonish sinners of the error of their ways; and to urge forward the great work of the conversion of the world, and he will soon see there what his religion is worth — as easily as a man can test the qualities of an axe. Let him not merely sit down and think, and compare himself with the Bible and look at his own heart — valuable as this may be in many respects — but let him treat his religion as he would anything else — let him subject it to actual experiment. That religion which will enable a man to imitate the example of Paul or Howard, or the great Master himself, in doing good, is genuine. That religion which will enable a man to endure persecution for the name of Jesus; to bear calamity without complaining; to submit to a long series of disappointments and distresses for Christ's sake, is genuine. That religion which will prompt a man unceasingly to a life of prayer and self-denial; which will make him ever conscientious, industrious, and honest; which will enable him to warn sinners of the errors of their ways, and which will dispose him to seek the friendship of Christians, and the salvation of the world, is pure and genuine. That will answer the purpose. It is like the good axe with which a man can chop all day long, in which there is no flaw, and which does not get dull, and which answers all the purposes of an axe. Any other religion than this is worthless.

Know ye not your own selves That is, “Do you not know yourselves?” This does not mean, as some may suppose, that they might know of themselves, without the aid of others, what their character was; or that they might themselves ascertain it; but it means that they might know themselves, that is, their character, principles, conduct. This proves that Christians may know their true character. If they are Christians, they may know it with as undoubted certainty as they may know their character on any other subject.

Why should not a man be as able to determine whether he loves God as whether he loves a child, a parent, or a friend? What greater difficulty need there be in understanding the character on the subject of religion than on any other subject; and why should there be anymore reason for doubt on this than on any other point of character? And yet it is remarkable, that while a child has no doubt that he loves a parent, or a husband a wife, or a friend a friend, almost all Christians are in very great doubt about their attachment to the Redeemer and to the great principles of religion. Such was not the case with the apostles and early Christians. “I know,” says Paul,” whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him,” etc.; ^{<5012>}2 Timothy 1:12. “We know.” says John, speaking in the name of the body of Christians, “that we have passed from death unto life;” ^{<5114>}1 John 3:14. “We KNOW that we are of the truth;” 19. “We KNOW that he abideth in us;” 24. “We know that we dwell in him;” I ^{<5043>}John 4:13; see also ^{<5110>}John 5:2,19,20. So Job said, “I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth,” etc.; ^{<5125>}Job 19:25. Such is the current language of scripture. Where, in the Bible, do the sacred speakers and writers express doubts about their attachment to God and the Redeemer? Where is such language to be found as we hear from almost all professing Christians, expressing entire uncertainty about their condition; absolute doubt whether they love God or hate him; whether they are going to heaven or hell; whether they are influenced by good motives or bad; and even making it a matter of merit to be in such doubt, and thinking it wrong not to doubt? What would be thought of a husband that should make it a matter of merit to doubt whether he loved his wife; or of a child that should think it wrong not to doubt whether he loved his father or mother? Such attachments ought to be doubted — but they do not occur in the common relations of life. On the subject of religion, people often act as they do on no other subject; and if it is right for one to be satisfied of the sincerity of his attachments to his best earthly friends, and to speak of such attachment without wavering or misgiving, it cannot be wrong to be satisfied with regard to our attachment to God, and to speak of that attachment, as the apostles did, in language of undoubted confidence.

How that Jesus Christ is in you To be in Christ, or for Christ to be in us, is a common mode in the Scriptures of expressing the idea that we are Christians. It is language derived from the close union which subsists

between the Redeemer and his people: see the phrase explained in the note on ^{<6180>}Romans 8:10.

Except ye be reprobates see the note on ^{<6128>}Romans 1:28. The word rendered “reprobates” (^{<96>}αδοκιμοι) means properly not approved, rejected: that which will not stand the trial. It is properly applicable to metals, as denoting that they will not bear the tests to which they are subjected, but are found to be base or adulterated. The sense here is, that they might know that they were Christians, unless their religion was base, false, adulterated; or such as would not bear the test. There is no allusion here to the sense which is sometimes given to the word “reprobate,” of being cast off or abandoned by God, or doomed by him to eternal ruin in accordance with an eternal purpose. Whatever may be the truth on that subject, nothing is taught in regard to it here. The simple idea is, that they might know that they were Christians, unless their religion was such as would not stand the test, or was worthless.

^{<6136>}**2 Corinthians 13:6.** *But I trust ...* The sense of this verse is, “Whatever may be the result of your examination of yourselves, I trust (Greek I hope) you will not find us false and to be rejected; that is, I trust you will find in me evidence that I am commissioned by the Lord Jesus to be his apostle.” The idea is, that they would find when he was among them, that he was endowed with all the qualifications needful to confer a claim to the apostolic office.

^{<6137>}**2 Corinthians 13:7.** *Now I pray to God that ye do no evil* I earnestly desire that you may do right, and only right; and I beseech God that it may be so, whatever may be the result in regard to me, and whatever may be thought of my claims to the apostolic office. This is designed to mitigate the apparent severity of the sentiment in ^{<6136>}2 Corinthians 13:6. There he had said that they would find him fully endowed with the power of an apostle. They would see that he was able abundantly to punish the disobedient. They would have ample demonstration that he was endowed by Christ with all the powers appropriate to an apostle, and that all that he had claimed had been well founded, all that he threatened would be executed. But this seemed to imply that he desired that there should be occasion for the exercise of that power of administering discipline; and he, therefore, in this verse, removes all suspicion that such was his wish, by saying solemnly, that he prayed to God that they might never do wrong; that they might never give him occasion for the exercise of his power in

that way, though as a consequence he would be regarded as a reprobate, or as having no claims to the apostolic office. He would rather be regarded as an impostor; rather lie under the reproach of his enemies that he had no claims to the apostolic character, than that they, by doing wrong, should give him occasion to show that he was not a deceiver.

Not that we should appear approved My great object, and my main desire, is not to urge my claims to the apostolic office and clear up my own character; it is that you should lead honest lives, whatever may become of me and my reputation.

Though we be as reprobates I am willing to be regarded as rejected, disapproved, worthless, like base metal, provided you lead honest and holy lives. I prefer to be so esteemed, and to have you live as becomes Christians, than that you should dishonor your Christian profession, and thus afford me the opportunity of demonstrating, by inflicting punishment, that I am commissioned by the Lord Jesus to be an apostle. The sentiment is, that a minister of the gospel should desire that his people should walk worthy of their high calling, whatever may be the estimate in which he is held. He should never desire that they should do wrong — how can he do it? — in order that he may take occasion from their wrongdoing to vindicate, in any way, his own character, or to establish a reputation for skill in administering discipline or in governing a church. What a miserable condition it is — and as wicked as it is miserable — for a man to wish to take advantage of a state of disorder, or of the faults of others, in order to establish his own character, or to obtain reputation. Paul spurned and detested such a thought; yet it is to be feared it is sometimes done.

2 Corinthians 13:8. *For we* That is, we the apostles.

Can do nothing against the truth ... That is, we who are under the influence of the Spirit of God; who have been commissioned by him as apostles, can do nothing that shall be against the great system of truth which we are appointed to promulgate and defend. You need, therefore, apprehend no partial or severe discipline from us; no unjust construction of your conduct. Our aim is to promote the truth, and to do what is right; and we cannot, therefore, by any regard to our own reputation, or to any personal advantage, do what is wrong, or countenance, or desire what is wrong in others. We must wish that which is right to be done by others, whatever may be the effect on us — whether we are regarded as apostles or deceivers. I suppose, therefore, that this verse is designed to qualify and

confirm the sentiment in the previous verse, that Paul meant to do only right; that he wished all others to do right; and that whatever might be the effect on his own reputation, or however he might be regarded, he could not go against the great system of gospel truth which he preached, or even desire that others should ever do wrong, though it might in any way be for his advantage. It was a fixed principle with him to act only in accordance with truth; to do what was right.

2 Corinthians 13:9. *For we are glad when we are weak ...* We rejoice in your welfare, and are willing to submit to self-denial and to infirmity if it may promote your spiritual strength. In the connection in which this stands it seems to mean, “I am content to appear weak, provided you do no wrong; I am willing not to have occasion to exercise my power in punishing offenders, and had rather lie under the reproach of being actually weak, than to have occasion to exercise my power by punishing you for wrongdoing; and provided you are strong in the faith and in the hope of the gospel, I am very willing, nay, I rejoice that I am under this necessity of appearing weak.”

And this also we wish I desire this in addition to your doing no evil.

Even your perfection The word used here (καταρτισις ^{<2676>}) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, though the verb from which it is derived (καταρτιζω ^{<2675>}) occurs often; ^{<4021>} Matthew 4:21; 21:16; ^{<4019>} Mark 1:19; ^{<4164>} Luke 6:40; ^{<8122>} Romans 9:22; ^{<4111>} 1 Corinthians 1:10; ^{<4731>} 2 Corinthians 13:11; ^{<8001>} Galatians 6:1; ^{<5181>} 1 Thessalonians 3:10, et al.; see the note on ^{<4731>} 2 Corinthians 13:11. On the meaning of the word see ^{<8122>} Romans 9:22. The idea of restoring, putting in order, fitting, repairing, is involved in the word “always,” and hence, the idea of making perfect; that is, of completely restoring anything to its proper place. Here it evidently means that Paul wished their entire reformation — so that there should be no occasion for exercising discipline. Doddridge renders it, “perfect good order.” Macknight, “restoration.” For this restoration of good order Paul had diligently labored in these epistles; and this was an object near to his heart.

2 Corinthians 13:10. *Therefore I write these things ...* This is a kind of apology for what he had said, and especially for the apparently harsh language which he had felt himself constrained to use. He had reproved them; he had admonished them of their faults; he had threatened

punishment, all of which was designed to prevent the necessity of severe measures when he should be with them.

Lest being present I should use sharpness In order that when I come I may not have occasion to employ severity; see the sentiment explained in the note on ^{<4702>}2 Corinthians 10:2.

According to the power ... That I may not use the power with which Christ has invested me for maintaining discipline in his church. The same form of expression is found in ^{<4708>}2 Corinthians 10:8; see the note on that place.

^{<4711>}**2 Corinthians 13:11.** *Finally, brethren* (λοιπον ^{<3063>}). The remainder; all that remains is for me to bid you an affectionate farewell. The word here rendered "farewell" (χαιρετε ^{<5463>}), means usually to joy and rejoice, or to be glad; ^{<4014>}Luke 1:14; ^{<4161>}John 16:20,22; and it is often used in the sense of "joy to you," "hail!" as a salutation; ^{<4169>}Matthew 26:49; 27:29. It is also used as a salutation at the beginning of an epistle, in the sense of greeting; ^{<4453>}Acts 15:23; 23:26; ^{<5001>}James 1:1. It is generally agreed, however, that it is here to be understood in the sense of farewell, as a parting salutation, though it may be admitted that there is included in the word an expression of a wish for their happiness. This was among the last words which Cyrus, when dying, addressed to his friends.

Be perfect See this word explained in the notes on ^{<4730>}2 Corinthians 13:9, and ^{<4102>}Romans 9:22. It was a wish that every disorder might be removed; that all that was out of joint might be restored; that everything might be in its proper place; and that they might be just what they ought to be: A command to be perfect, however, does not prove that it has ever in fact been obeyed: and an earnest wish on the part of an apostle that others might be perfect, does not demonstrate that they were; and this passage should not be adduced to prove that any have been free from sin. It may be adduced, however, to prove that an obligation rests on Christians to be perfect, and that there is no natural obstacle to their becoming such, since God never can command us to do an impossibility. Whether anyone, but the Lord Jesus, has been perfect, however, is a question on which different denominations of Christians have been greatly divided. It is incumbent on the advocates of the doctrine of sinless perfection to produce some one instance of a perfectly sinless character. This has not yet been done.

Be of good comfort Be consoled by the promises and supports of the gospel. Take comfort from the hopes which the gospel imparts. Or the

word may possibly have a reciprocal sense, and mean, comfort one another; see Schleusner. Rosenmuller renders it, “receive admonition from all with a grateful mind, that you may come to greater perfection.” It is, at any rate, the expression of an earnest wish on the part of the apostle, that they might be happy.

Be of one mind They had been greatly distracted, and divided into different parties and factions. At the close of the Epistle he exhorts them as he had repeatedly done before, to lay aside these strifes, and to be united, and manifest the same spirit; see the note on ^{<51216>}Romans 12:16; 15:5; see the note also on ^{<4010>}1 Corinthians 1:10. The sense is, that Paul desired that dissensions should cease, and that they should be united in opinion and feeling as Christian brethren.

Live in peace With each other. Let contentions and strifes cease. To promote the restoration of peace had been the main design of these epistles.

And the God of love and peace The God who is all love, and who is the Author of all peace. What a glorious appellation is this! There can be no more beautiful expression, and it is as true as it is beautiful, that God is a God of love and of peace. He is infinitely benevolent; He delights in exhibiting His love; and He delights in the love which His people evince for each other. At the same time, He is the Author of peace, and He delights in peace among people. When Christians love each other they have reason to expect that the God of love will be with them; when they live in peace, they may expect the God of peace will take up His abode with them. In contention and strife we have no reason to expect His presence; and it is only when we are willing to lay aside all animosity that we may expect the God of peace will fix his abode with us.

^{<4712>}**2 Corinthians 13:12.** *Greet* Salute; see the note, ^{<51618>}Romans 16:3.

With an holy kiss note, ^{<51616>}Romans 16:16.

^{<4713>}**2 Corinthians 13:13.** *All the saints salute you* That is, all who were with Paul, or in the place where he was. The Epistle was written from Macedonia, probably from Philippi. See the introduction, section 3.

^{<4714>}**2 Corinthians 13:14.** *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ* see the note, Rom 16:20. This verse contains what is usually called the apostolic benediction — the form which has been so long, and which is almost so

universally used, in dismissing religious assemblies. It is properly a prayer, and it is evident that the optative εἴη ^{<1498>}, “May the grace,” etc., is to be supplied. It is the expression of a desire that the favors here referred to may descend on all for whom they are thus invoked.

And the love of God May the love of God toward you be manifest. This must refer especially to the Father, as the Son and the Holy Spirit are mentioned in the other members of the sentence. The “love of God” here referred to is the manifestation of his goodness and favor in the pardon of sin, in the communication of his grace, in the comforts and consolations which he imparts to his people, in all that constitutes an expression of love. The love of God brings salvation; imparts comfort; pardons sin; sanctifies the soul; fills the heart with joy and peace; and Paul here prays that all the blessings which are the fruit of that love may be with them.

And the communion of the Holy Ghost compare note, ^{<6016>}1 Corinthians 10:16. The word “communion” (κοινωνία ^{<2842>}) means properly participation, fellowship, or having anything in common; ^{<412>}Acts 2:42; ^{<6136>}Romans 15:26; ^{<4000>}1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:16; ^{<1064>}2 Corinthians 6:14; 8:4; 9:13; ^{<4110>}Galatians 2:9; ^{<4110>}Ephesians 3:9; ^{<6016>}1 John 1:3. This is also a wish or prayer of the apostle Paul; and the desire is either that they might partake of the views and feelings of the Holy Spirit; that is, that they might have fellowship with him; or that they might all in common partake of the gifts and graces which the Spirit of God imparts. He gives love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (^{<4152>}Galatians 5:22), as well as miraculous endowments; and Paul prays that these things might be imparted freely to all the church in common, that all might participate in them; all might share them.

Amen This word is missing, says Clarke, in almost every MS. of any authority. It was however early affixed to the Epistle.

In regard to this closing verse of the Epistle, we may make the following remarks:

(1) It is a prayer; and if it is a prayer addressed to God, it is no less so to the Lord Jesus and to the Holy Spirit. If so, it is right to offer worship to the Lord Jesus and to the Holy Spirit.

(2) There is a distinction in the divine nature; or there is the existence of what is usually termed three persons in the Godhead. If not. why are they mentioned in this manner? If the Lord Jesus is not divine and equal with the

Father, why is he mentioned in this connection? How strange it would be for Paul, an inspired man, to pray in the same breath, “the grace of a man or an angel” and “the love of God” be with you! And if the “Holy Spirit” be merely an influence of God or an attribute of God, how strange to pray that the “love of God” and the participation or fellowship of an “influence of God,” or an “attribute of God” might be with them!

(3) The Holy Spirit is a person, or has a distinct personality. He is not an attribute of God, nor a mere divine influence. How could prayer be addressed to an attribute, or an influence? But here, nothing can be plainer than that there were favors which the Holy Spirit, as an intelligent and conscious agent, was expected to bestow. And nothing can be plainer than that they were favors in some sense distinct from those which were conferred by the Lord Jesus, and by the Father. Here is a distinction of some kind as real as that between the Lord Jesus and the Father; here are favors expected from him distinct from those conferred by the Father and the Son; and there is, therefore, here all the proof that there can be, that there is in some respects a distinction between the persons here referred to and that the Holy Spirit is an intelligent, conscious agent.

(4) The Lord Jesus is not inferior to the Father, that is, he has an equality with God. If he were not equal, how could he be mentioned, as he here is, as bestowing favors like God, and especially why is he mentioned first? Would Paul, in invoking blessings, mention the name of a mere man or an angel before that of the eternal God?

(5) The passage, therefore, furnishes a proof of the doctrine of the Trinity that has not yet been answered, and, it is believed, cannot be. On the supposition that there are three persons in the adorable Trinity, united in essence and yet distinct in some respects, all is plain and clear. But on the supposition that, the Lord Jesus is a mere man, an angel, or an archangel, and that the Holy Spirit is an attribute, or an influence from God, how unintelligible, confused, strange does all become! That Paul, in the solemn close of the Epistle, should at the same time invoke blessings from a mere creature, and from God, and from an attribute, surpasses belief. But that he should invoke blessings from him who was the equal with the Father, and from the Father himself, and from the Sacred Spirit sustaining the same rank, and in like manner imparting important blessings, is in accordance with all that we should expect, and makes all harmonious and appropriate.

(6) Nothing could be a more proper close of the Epistle; nothing is a more appropriate close of public worship, than such an invocation. It is a prayer to the ever-blessed God, that all the rich influences which he gives as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, may be imparted; that all the benefits which God confers in the interesting relations in which he makes himself known to us may descend and bless us. What more appropriate prayer can be offered at the close of public worship? How seriously should it be pronounced, as a congregation is about to separate, perhaps to come together no more! With what solemnity should all join in it, and how devoutly should all pray, as they thus separate, that these rich and inestimable blessings may rest upon them! With hearts uplifted to God it should be pronounced and heard; and every worshiper should leave the sanctuary deeply feeling that what he most needs as he leaves the place of public worship; as he travels on the journey of life; as he engages in its duties or meets its trials; as he looks at the grave and eternity, is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the blessings which the Holy Spirit imparts in renewing, and sanctifying, and comforting His people. What more appropriate prayer than this for the writer and reader of these notes! May that blessing rest alike upon us, though we may be strangers in the flesh, and may those divine and heavenly influences guide us alike to the same everlasting kingdom of glory.

In regard to the subscription at the end of this Epistle, it may be observed, that it is missing in a great part of the most ancient MSS., and is of no authority whatever; see the notes at the end of the Epistle to the Romans, and 1 Corinthians. In this case, however, this subscription is in the main correct, since there is evidence that it was written from Macedonia, and not improbably from Philippi. See the introduction to this Epistle.

FOOTNOTES

^{ft9} It cannot fairly be argued from this verse, that the “many” or the whole congregation, were judicially concerned in the act of excommunication; yet as their concurrence was essential, in order to carry the sentence into effect, it was “inflicted of many” in a most emphatic sense. The refusal, on the part of the members of the church, to have any more social contact with the incestuous man, carried into effect what the apostle had judicially pronounced. See the supplementary note on [1 Corinthians 5:4](#).

ft10 There is much truth in this representation. Certainly no great revival of religion can rationally be expected when the ministers of the gospel are not self-denying laborious, and prayerful. Yet we cannot certainly pronounce, that equal diligence in the use of means will in every case be attended with equal success. Allowance must be made for God's sovereignty, in dispensing his grace. Otherwise, wherever the word was preached under most favorable circumstances, as far as excellence of means is concerned, there also, we should expect, and find most success. But it has not been so in reality. Never did hearers enjoy a more favorable opportunity of conversion, than when more than the eloquence of angels fell from the lips of Jesus, and he taught the people as one having authority and not as the scribes. Yet comparatively few, a solitary one here and there, listened to the voice of the charmer, though he charmed so wisely. Was it that he did not display the gospel in all its fullness, sufficiency, and loveliness? Was there any lack of moral persuasion, powerful argument, strung motive, touching appeal, in the Saviour's addresses? No! Yet immediately after the ascension of Jesus, the Word of God subdued thousands on thousands, although employed by apostles only, whose ministrations, considered apart, must have been immeasurably inferior to those of Jesus. The same Jews that persisted in their unbelief, under the ministry of Christ, were disarmed of their prejudice, under the preaching of Peter! Whence the difference of efficacy? Whence the lack of success, where most we should have expected to find it, and the command of it, where least we could have looked for it? One sentence solves the difficulty. "The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

Similar comparisons might he made between the ministrations of different individuals now. People of the highest abilities, persevering diligence, and elevated piety, have been left to complain of comparative barrenness in the sphere which they occupied, while humbler instruments, in a field no way more promising, have been blessed with the harvest of souls. The comparison might even be made of different periods of the same ministry. All other circumstances being equal, or differing so slightly as not to affect the argument, the word spoken at one time seems to fall powerless to the ground, as the arrow on the breast of steel. No shaft hits the mark, no sinner retires like the stricken deer to bleed alone. At another time, the people are made willing in the day of power. Conviction spreads with the rapidity of contagion, and the Lord daily adds to his people such as shall be saved. Now this

difference cannot be explained but by referring it to the different measures in which God is pleased to communicate his SPIRIT.

^{ft11} A measure of truth is, doubtless, involved in this controversy concerning the universality of atonement; and the discussion of the subject in America, and more recently in this country, cannot fail ultimately to produce the most beneficial results. Yet we must express our conviction, that the seeming difference of opinion among evangelical people, has arisen from mutual misunderstanding, and that misunderstanding from the use of ambiguous phraseology. One says, Christ died for all people. No, says another, for the elect only. The dispute goes on and on, until at last the discovery is made, that while the same words were used by the disputants, each attached his own meaning to them. This ambiguity is painfully felt in the treatise of a distinguished writer, who has recently appeared on the limited side of the question. He does not explain, until he has advanced very far in the discussion, what sense be attaches to the common phraseology of "Christ dying for all men." He tells us afterward, however, that he understands it in the highest sense of securing salvation for them; when we are convinced, that much of the argument might have been spared, or at all events better directed, than against a position which few or none maintain. The author is himself sensible of this. "The question," says he, "might, perhaps, have been settled at the outset by a careful definition of terms; but I have purposely deferred doing so, judging, that it might be done with better effect as the discussion proceeded. In speaking of the Saviour's dying for people, or dying for sinners, I have used the expression in what I conceive to be the strict and proper meaning, namely, as signifying his dying with an intention to save them. This, however, is not the only meaning the expression will bear, For all people, for sinners in general, the Saviour died. He died in their nature, he died in their stead, he died doing honor to the Law which they had violated; in other words, he died removing every legal obstruction that lay in the way of their obtaining life." *The Death of Christ the Redemption of his People*, p. 70. Now, it is only in this last sense, that any rational advocate of general aspect in the atonement will maintain that Christ died for all people. Nor could he desire better language in which to express his views, than that which is furnished in the above quotation. That the atonement has certain general aspects is now nearly admitted on all hands. "General it must be in some sense," says the author already quoted, "if in some sense it be applicable to all, and that

this is the case the foregoing statement undeniably proves," p. 68. The general aspect of the atonement is argued, from those well-known passages in which it is declared to have a reference to people, all people, the world, and the whole world. The reader will find some of these passages quoted above in the commentary. Of this universal phraseology various explanations have been given. Some have supplied the qualifying adjective "elect" in these places, where the design of atonement is said to embrace the "world." Modern writers of the highest name, however, and on both sides of the question, have vied with each other in their indignant repudiation of any such expletive.

"I have felt myself," says Dr. Wardlaw, "far from satisfied with a common way of interpreting some of those texts which express the extent of the atonement in universal terms by means of a convenient supplement. According to this method of explanation, the world is, in such occurrences of it, made to signify the 'elect world,' the word 'elect' being inserted as a supplement, conceived to be necessary for the consistency of scripture. An 'elect world' indeed, has become a phrase in common use with a particular class of commentators and divines; being employed with as much matter of course freedom, as if it had actually had the sanction of ordinary usage in the sacred volume; but it is not to be found there."

And subjoins Dr. Marshall, writing on the limited side of the question, "It certainly is not to be found there, and with every word of this well-deserved censure I cordially agree."

Here then is one principle of interpretation fairly exploded, and few nowadays will have the hardihood to espouse it. Again, the phraseology has been explained of the world of Jews and Gentiles indiscriminately, Gentiles as well as Jews; and those who adopt this view tell us, that the Jewish system was narrow and exclusive, embracing only one people, the progeny of Abraham; that it was the design of God, in the fullness of time, to enlarge his church and to receive within her ample arms people of all nations, Jew and Gentile, Barbarian and Scythian, bond and free; that the death of Christ was at once the fulfillment and abrogation of the typical system with all its special and exclusive rites; that by it the middle wall of partition between the Jew and the rest of the world was thrown down; that, therefore, it was natural to represent it as having a reference to all people and to the world, even when absolute universality was not and

could not be intended. Such a vast enlargement of the scale on which spiritual blessings were now to be conferred, in consequence of the death of Christ, could not well have been expressed, it is alleged, in any other or in less universal terms. See this view of the subject well exhibited in Hill's System, vol. ii., 2 Corinthians 5.

To this principle of interpretation we have no great objection. There is doubtless much truth in it. It lends valuable assistance in the investigation of many passages. But is there not some sense in which that atonement has an aspect absolutely to all, and every man? As much we have seen admitted above. Now, if the Saviour "died in the nature and stead of all, removing every legal obstruction that lay in the way of their obtaining life," how comes it to pass, that this universal aspect cannot be found in any of those confessedly the most universal passages in the Bible? If it be true, it must be found somewhere in the scriptures, and nowhere so likely, as in this class of texts; and the language, moreover, is just such as is naturally suited to express this sense. While then we allow, that the phraseology in question may be in part explained by the admission of Gentiles as well as Jews into the kingdom of God; we maintain at the same time, that there is nothing in it which prevents us from including all in each of those divisions of mankind. Nay, if the apostles had wished to express this idea, how otherwise could they have done it? "Say if you will," says Dr. Wardlaw, commenting on ~~EBB6~~ John 3:16,17, "that the 'world' means Jews and Gentiles, still if it is not any definite number of Jews and Gentiles, it is Jews and Gentiles as together composing the world of mankind."

That the atonement, indeed, has a certain benign aspect toward all people, appears from its very nature. The exact equivalent view, as it has been not inappropriately termed, is now nearly abandoned. Rarely do we find any one affirming, that Christ endured exactly what the elect would have suffered and deserved, and that, therefore, there can be sufficiency in his death for that favored number and for none besides. What then is the light in which the atonement of Christ ought to be viewed? We think the only rational and scriptural account of it, is that which regards it as a great remedial scheme, which rendered it consistent with the divine honor and all the interests of the divine administration, to extend mercy to guilty people at large, and which would have been equally requisite, had there been an intention to save

one only, or a million; numbers indeed not forming any part of the question. Here then is something done, which removes legal obstructions and thereby opens the way to heaven for all. And if any do not enter in, their inability is moral, and lies not in any insufficiency of the divine provision. This view, however, seems to furnish a just foundation for the universality of gospel invitations, while it fastens the guilt of rejecting gospel provision on the sinner himself.

Thus far we feel disposed to agree with our author in his commentary, or rather dissertation on the verse and the subject it involves. We maintain, however, that the atonement has a special as well as a general aspect; that while it is gloriously true that it looks to all people, it has at the same time a special regard to some. We object, therefore, to the statement, "that the atonement in itself considered had no limitation and no particular reference to any class or condition of people, and no particular applicability to one class more than to another." This is similar to certain rash assertions that have recently been current in our own country; as that "while the atonement opens the door of mercy to all, it secures salvation to none;" that "Christ died as much for those who perish, as for those who are saved." We cannot envy that reputation for acuteness which may be gained by the free use of such language. Is it not God's design to save his people? Is not the atonement the means by which he does so, the means by which the purpose of electing love is fulfilled? And yet has that atonement no special reference to the elect? Further, if it be the means of saving them, does it not secure their salvation? Certainly, among people, if any effectual means were devised to accomplish a particular end, that end would be said to be secured by such means. The writer is aware of the ingenious evasion, that it is God's gracious purpose to apply the atonement, and not the atonement itself, that connects it with the elect, and secures their salvation. We are told, moreover, that we should look on the atonement by itself, and consider it in a philosophical way. The purpose to apply is an after arrangement. But first, a purpose to apply the atonement to a special class, differs in nothing from an original design to save such class by it, for that purpose must have been present to the mind of God in determining on atonement. To say that God saves a certain number by the atonement, and that yet in making it he had no special design in their favor, however it may recommend itself to philosophical refinement, will always be rejected by the common sense of mankind. Second. If we must consider the atonement apart

from any special purpose connected with it, why not divest it also of any general purpose, that we may look on it steadily per se, and in this way reduce it to a mere abstraction, about which nothing could be either affirmed or denied?

The advocates of universal atonement, or some of the more forward among them, have recently carried out their views so far, as to deny that God in providing the atonement, or Christ in making it, had any special love to the elect. An eminent writer on that side, however, to whom reference has already been made, while he goes the length of denying special design, maintains the existence of special love, and administers a reproof to those of his own party, who go to this extreme. This is indeed an important concession, for special love is not very different from special design, nor is it easy to see how, in the mind of God, the one could subsist with out the other. "The love of the Father is the same thing as election. Election is nothing but the love of the Father formed into a purpose" — Marshall. Or the point may be put in this way. Had God in providing the atonement special love to the elect? Where is the proof of it? Doubtless in that very provision. But if God in making it had no design to save them by it, the proof is not only weakened but destroyed. Special love, therefore, necessarily involves special design.

To do away with anything like speciality of design, much has been said on the order of the divine decrees, especially as to whether the decree of atonement, or that of election, be first in order of nature. If that of atonement be first, it is asserted speciality is out of the question, as that is secured only by election, which is a posterior arrangement. On this subject it is more easy to darken counsel by words without knowledge, than to speak intelligibly. It may be fairly questioned, if those who have written most on it, fully understand themselves. Nor can we help lamenting, that so great a part of the controversy should have been made to turn on this point, which has hitherto eluded the grasp of the most profound, and drawn the controvertists into regions of thought, too high for the boldest flights of human intellect. After all that can be said on the subject, it must be allowed that the whole arrangement connected with the salvation of man, existed simultaneously in the mind of God, nor will anyone rise much wiser from inquiries into which was first and which last.

The truth on the whole subject, then, seems to be, that while the atonement has a general reference toward all, it has at the same time a special reference to the elect of God, or as it is well expressed in a recent synodical decision, “The Saviour in making the atonement bore special covenant relation to the elect; had a special love to them, and infallibly secured their everlasting salvation, while his obedience unto death, afforded such a satisfaction to the justice of God, as that on the ground of it, in consistency with his character and law, the door of mercy is open to all people, and a full and free salvation is presented for their acceptance.” The special aspect, indeed, ought no more to be denied than the general. It rests on a large number of what may be called special texts; as, “Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it,” etc. “For the transgression of my people was he stricken.” “I lay down my life for the sheep,” ~~4925~~ Ephesians 5:25; ~~2838~~ Isaiah 53:8; ~~6105~~ John 10:15. Nor will it do to say of this numerous class of passages, that they find a sufficient explanation in the purpose of application, which is connected with the remedy for sin, since most of them are of a kind that connect the salvation of the elect directly with the atonement itself, and not with any after design of applying it. This idea seems but an ingenious shift to sustain a favorite theory. How direct, for example, is this connection in the following passage: “who loved me and gave himself for me.” No one who had not a theory to support, would ever think of introducing an after design of application to explain this. Indeed, as an able reviewer in one of our periodicals observes of the scheme that excludes a special design, “it separates too much the atonement from the salvation of man. It does not connect those that are saved, those that are regenerated by divine grace, at all specially with the sacrifice of Christ.” Another important branch of evidence on this point, lies in the special relation which Christ in dying sustained toward his people, as that of shepherd, husband, surety, etc., and which cannot be explained on any other principle than that of special design.

If the question were put, how we preserve our consistency, in thus maintaining both the general and special view, we reply, first, that if both views are found in scripture, it matters not whether we can explain the consistency between them or no. But second, it is not so difficult as some would imagine, to conceive of God appointing a remedy with a general aspect toward the race, but specially intended to secure the salvation of his chosen people.

^{ft12} “They which live.” This spiritual life, doubtless, implies that a man is alive to the worth of the soul, the presence of God, etc.; but it intimates something deeper too, which is the foundation of those things, and without which they could not exist. Scott paraphrases thus, “were quickened and pardoned, and so passed from death to life;” and Guyse still more explicitly, “were made supernaturally alive by his quickening spirit and by faith in him.” This is the root; the things mentioned in the comment, the fruit; this the cause, these only the effects.

^{ft13} See also the supplementary notes on ~~4512~~ Romans 5:12,19, where the subject of imputed sin is considered at length. The argument by which the author attempts here to set aside that doctrine, is not of great force. Because God “graciously provided a plan of pardon,” in consequence of which he can consistently remit or not reckon transgression, he cannot be supposed to hold us guilty of Adam’s sin! This is substantially the argument. We might just reverse the matter, and would then certainly argue more conclusively thus: God does impute the first sin to us, and we are guilty, moreover, of actual sin, therefore in love he has provided a plan by which he can consistently deliver us from this accumulated load of sin. The deeper our guilt, the greater the necessity for the provision. But how the providing of atonement disproves the doctrine of imputed sin, it is impossible to see. Besides the non-imputation of trespasses here spoken of, can only be applied to such as accept the provision in the gospel, and can therefore be no reason for the denial of imputed sin. Neither this nor actual sin will be charged against the believer, and the glory of Christ’s work is that it delivers him from both. Mr. Scott thus interprets, “When, therefore, sinners were brought to God, as ‘in Christ reconciling the world unto himself in humble faith, he no more imputed their trespasses unto them, but blotted them out by a free forgiveness.” Nor can the language mean anything else; for while by the atonement all legal obstructions are removed, sinners are still charged with guilt, until they receive it. It ought also to be noticed, that the author changes the idea in the text into a mere disposition on the part of God not to charge trespasses, whereas the apostle speaks of their actual nonimputation. This last certainly cannot be strictly universal. If that be intended, there should have accompanied it some explanation of the difficulties with which such an opinion is surrounded, and of the manner in which the passage can be reconciled with other passages which speak of non-imputation of guilt, as a privilege exclusively confined to believers. If the

universality of the non-imputation could be made out, there might be something like foundation for the argument against imputed sin; though even in that case, it would not follow, that, because God had remitted the sins of all, or determined not to reckon them. imputed sin had not existed and been remitted too, as well as actual transgressions.

^{ft14} Certainly Christ's being made sin, is not to be explained of his being made sin in the abstract, nor of his having actually become a sinner; yet it does imply, that sin was charged on Christ, or that it was imputed to him, and that he became answerable for it. Nor can this idea be excluded, even if we admit that "sin-offering" is the proper rendering of ἁμαρτία ^{<266>} in the passage. "That Christ," says an old divine commenting on this place, "was made sin for us, because he was a sacrifice for sin, we confess; but therefore was he a sacrifice for sin because our sins were imputed to him, and punished in him." The doctrine of imputation of sin to Christ is here, by plain enough inference at least. The rendering in our Bibles, however, asserts it in a more direct form. Nor, after all the criticism that has been expended on the text, does there seem any necessity for the abandonment of that rendering, on the part of the advocate of imputation. For first ἁμαρτία ^{<266>} in the Septuagint, and the corresponding מִנְּאָה ^{<1817>} in the Hebrew, denote both the sin and the sin-offering, the peculiar sacrifice and the crime itself. Second, the antithesis in the passage, so obvious and beautiful, is destroyed by the adoption of "sin-offering." Christ was made sin, we righteousness.

There seems in our author's comment on this place, and also at Romans 5, an attempt to revive the oft-refuted objection against imputation, namely, that it involves something like a transference of moral character, an infusion, rather than an imputation of sin or righteousness. Nothing of this kind is at all implied in the doctrine. Its advocates with one voice disclaim it; and the reader will see the objection answered at length in the supplementary notes at Romans 4 and Romans 5. What then is the value of such arguments or insinuations as these: "All such views as go to make the Holy Redeemer a sinner, or guilty, or deserving of the sufferings he endured, border on blasphemy," etc. Nor is it wiser to affirm that "if Christ was properly guilty, it would make no difference in this respect, whether it was by his own fault or by imputation." What may be meant in this connection by "properly guilty," we know not. But this is certain, that

there is an immense difference between Christ's having the guilt of our iniquities charged on him, and having the guilt of his own so charged.

It is admitted in the commentary, that God "treated Christ as if he had been a sinner," and this is alleged as the probable sense of the passage. But this treatment of Christ on the part of God, must have some ground, and where shall we find it, unless in the imputation of sin to him? If the guilt of our iniquities, or which is the same thing, the Law obligation to punishment, be not charged on Christ, how in justice can he be subjected to the punishment? If he had not voluntarily come under such obligation, what claim did law have on him? That the very words "sin imputed to Christ" are not found in scripture, is not a very formidable objection. The words in this text are stronger and better "He was made sin," and says Isaiah, according to the rendering of Dr. Lowth,

"The Lord made to meet upon him the iniquities of us all. It was required of him, and he was made answerable." (²⁵¹⁶Isaiah 53:6.)

^{ft15} See the supplementary notes on ⁶⁰¹⁷Romans 1:17; 3:21. See also the additional note above on the first clause of the verse. The "righteousness of God," is doubtless that righteousness which the divine Saviour worked out, in his active and passive obedience, and if ever any of the guilty race of Adam are "treated as righteous" by God, it must be solely on the ground of its imputation.