

CHAPTER 2

The apostle proceeds to further exhortations to several duties, to be like-minded, and lowly-minded, which he presses from the example of Christ (v. 1-11), to be diligent and serious in the Christian course (v. 12, 13), and to adorn their Christian profession by several suitable graces (v. 14-18). He then concludes with particular notice and commendation of two good ministers, Timothy and Epaphroditus, whom he designed to send to them (v. 19-30).

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

GLORY AND CONDESCENSION OF CHRIST

The apostle proceeds in this chapter where he left off in the last, with further exhortations to Christian duties. He presses them largely to like-mindedness and lowly-mindedness, in conformity to the example of the Lord Jesus, the great pattern of humility and love. Here we may observe,

I. The great gospel precept passed upon us; that is, to love one another. This is the law of Christ's kingdom, the lesson of his school, the livery of his family. This he represents (v. 2) by being *like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind*. We are of a like mind when we have the same love. Christians should be one in affection, whether they can be one in apprehension or no. This is always in their power, and always their duty, and is the likeliest way to bring them nearer in judgment. *Having the same love*. Observe, The same love that we are required to express to others, others are bound to express to us. Christian love ought to be mutual love. Love, and you shall be loved. *Being of one accord, and of one mind*; not crossing and thwarting, or driving on separate interests, but unanimously agreeing in the great things of God and keeping the *unity of the Spirit* in other differences. Here observe,

1. The pathetic pressing of the duty. He is very importunate with them, knowing what an evidence it is of our sincerity, and what a means of the preservation and edification of the body of Christ. The inducements to brotherly love are these: —

(1.) “If there is any *consolation in Christ*. Have you experienced consolation in Christ? Evidence that experience by loving one another.” The sweetness we have found in the doctrine of Christ should sweeten our spirits. Do we expect consolation in Christ? If we would not be disappointed, we must love one another. If we have not consolation in Christ, where else can we expect it? Those who have an interest in Christ have consolation in him, strong and everlasting consolation (^{scrips} Hebrews 6:18; ^{scrips} 2 Thessalonians 2:16), and therefore ought to love one another.

(2.) “*Comfort of love*. If there is any comfort in Christian love, in God's love to you, in your love to God, or in your brethren's love to us, in consideration of all this, be you like-minded. If you have ever found that comfort, if you would find it, if you indeed believe that the grace of love is a comfortable grace, abound in it.”

(3.) “*Fellowship of the Spirit*. If there is such a thing as communion with God and Christ by the Spirit, such a thing as the communion of saints, by virtue of their being animated and actuated by *one and the same Spirit*, be you like-minded; for Christian love and like-mindedness will preserve to us our communion with God and with one another.”

(4.) “*Any bowels and mercies*, in God and Christ, towards you. If you expect the benefit of God's compassions to yourselves, be you compassionate one to another. If there is such a thing as mercy to be found among the followers of Christ, if all who are sanctified have a disposition to holy pity, make it appear this way.” How cogent are these arguments! One would think them enough to tame the most fierce, and mollify the hardest, heart.

(5.) Another argument he insinuates is the comfort it would be to him: *Fulfil you my joy*. It is the joy of ministers to see people like-minded and living in love. He had been instrumental in bringing them to the grace of Christ and the love of God. “Now,” says he, “if you have found any benefit by your participation of the gospel of Christ, if you have any comfort in it, or advantage by it, *fulfil the joy* of your poor minister, who preached the gospel to you.”

2. He proposes some means to promote it.

(1.) *Do nothing through strife and vain glory*, v. 3. There is no greater enemy to Christian love than pride and passion. If we do things in

contradiction to our brethren, this is doing them through strife; if we do them through ostentation of ourselves, this is doing them through vain-glory: both are destructive of Christian love and kindle unchristian heats. Christ came to slay all enmities; therefore let there not be among Christians a spirit of opposition. Christ came to humble us, and therefore let there not be among us a spirit of pride.

(2.) We must *esteem others in lowliness of mind better than ourselves*, be severe upon our own faults and charitable in our judgments of others, be quick in observing our own defects and infirmities, but ready to overlook and make favourable allowances for the defects of others. We must esteem the good which is in others above that which is in ourselves; for we best know our own unworthiness and imperfections.

(3.) We must interest ourselves in the concerns of others, not in a way of curiosity and censoriousness, or as *busy-bodies in other men's matters*, but in Christian love and sympathy: *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others*, v. 4. A selfish spirit is destructive of Christian love. We must be concerned not only for our own credit, and ease, and safety, but for those of others also; and rejoice in the prosperity of others as truly as in our own. We must love our neighbour as ourselves, and make his case our own.

II. Here is a gospel pattern proposed to our imitation, and that is the example of our Lord Jesus Christ: *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*, v. 5. Observe, Christians must be of Christ's mind. We must bear a resemblance to his life, if we would have the benefit of his death. *If we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of his*, ⁴⁸⁹Romans 8:9. Now what was the mind of Christ? He was eminently humble, and this is what we are peculiarly to learn of him. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*, ⁴¹²Matthew 11:29. If we were lowly-minded, we should be like-minded; and, if we were like Christ, we should be lowly-minded. We must walk in the same spirit and in the same steps with the Lord Jesus, who humbled himself to sufferings and death for us; not only to satisfy God's justice, and pay the price of our redemption, but to set us an example, and that we might *follow his steps*. Now here we have the two natures and the two states of our Lord Jesus. It is observable that the apostle, having occasion to mention the Lord Jesus, and the mind which was in him, takes the hint to enlarge upon his person, and to give a particular description of him. It is a pleasing subject, and a gospel minister

needs not think himself out of the way when he is upon it; any fit occasion should be readily taken.

1. Here are the two natures of Christ: his divine nature and his human nature.

(1.) Here is his divine nature: *Who being in the form of God* (v. 6), partaking of the divine nature, as the eternal and only begotten Son of God. This agrees with ^{<301>}John 1:1, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God*: it is of the same import with being the *image of the invisible God* (^{<515>}Colossians 1:15), and the *brightness of his glory, and express image of his person*, ^{<308>}Hebrews 1:3. *He thought it no robbery to be equal with God*; did not think himself guilty of any invasion of what did not belong to him, or assuming another's right. He said, *I and my Father are one*, ^{<309>}John 10:30. It is the highest degree of robbery for any mere man or mere creature to pretend to be equal with God, or profess himself *one with the Father*. This is for a man to rob God, not in tithes and offerings, but of the rights of his Godhead, ^{<308>}Malachi 3:8. Some understand *being in the form of God* — *en morphe Theou hyparchon*, of his appearance in a divine majestic glory to the patriarchs, and the Jews, under the Old Testament, which was often called the *glory*, and the *Shechinah*. The word is used in such a sense by the Septuagint and in the New Testament. *He appeared to the two disciples, en hetera morphe* — *In another form*, ^{<412>}Mark 16:12. *Metemorphothe* — *he was transfigured* before them, ^{<412>}Matthew 17:2. And *he thought it no robbery to be equal with God*; he did not greedily *catch at*, nor covet and affect to appear in that glory; he laid aside the majesty of his former appearance while he was here on earth, which is supposed to be the sense of the peculiar expression, *ouk harpagmon hegesato*. Vid. *Bishop Bull's Def.* cap. 2 sect. 4 et alibi, and *Whitby* in loc.

(2.) His human nature: He was *made in the likeness of men*, and *found in fashion as a man*. He was really and truly man, *took part of our flesh and blood*, appeared in the nature and habit of man. And he voluntarily assumed human nature; it was his own act, and by his own consent. We cannot say that our participation of the human nature is so. Herein he *emptied himself*, divested himself of the honours and glories of the upper world, and of his former appearance, to clothe himself with the rags of human nature. *He was in all things like to us*, ^{<307>}Hebrews 2:17.

2. Here are his two estates, of humiliation and exaltation.

(1.) His estate of humiliation. He not only took upon him the likeness and fashion of a man, but the *form of a servant*, that is, a man of mean estate. He was not only God's servant whom he had chosen, but he came to minister to men, and was among them as one who serveth in a mean and servile state. One would think that the Lord Jesus, if he would be a man, should have been a prince, and appeared in splendour. But quite the contrary: *He took upon him the form of a servant*. He was brought up meanly, probably working with his supposed father at his trade. His whole life was a life of humiliation, meanness, poverty, and disgrace; he had nowhere to lay his head, lived upon alms, was a *man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*, did not appear with external pomp, or any marks of distinction from other men. This was the humiliation of his life. But the lowest step of his humiliation was his dying the death of the cross. *He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross*. He not only suffered, but was actually and voluntarily obedient; he obeyed the law which he brought himself under as Mediator, and by which he was obliged to die. *I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again: this commandment have I received of my Father*, ^{<STB>}John 10:18. And he was *made under the law*, ^{<STB>}Galatians 4:4. There is an emphasis laid upon the manner of his dying, which had in it all the circumstances possible which are humbling: *Even the death of the cross*, a cursed, painful, and shameful death, — a death accursed by the law (*Cursed is he that hangeth on a tree*) — full of pain, the body nailed through the nervous parts (the hands and feet) and hanging with all its weight upon the cross, — and the death of a malefactor and a slave, not of a free-man, — exposed as a public spectacle. Such was the condescension of the blessed Jesus.

(2.) His exaltation: *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him*. His exaltation was the reward of his humiliation. Because he humbled himself, God exalted him; and he *highly exalted him*, *hyperypose*, raised him to an exceeding height. He exalted his whole person, the human nature as well as the divine; for he is spoken of as being in the form of God as well as in the fashion of man. As it respects the divine nature, it could only be the recognizing of his rights, or the display and appearance of the *glory he had with the Father before the world was* (^{<STB>}John 17:5), not any new acquisition of glory; and so the Father himself is said to be exalted. But the proper exaltation was of his human nature, which alone seems to be capable of it, though in conjunction with the divine. His exaltation here is made to consist in honour and power. In honour; so *he had a name above*

every name, a title of dignity above all the creatures, men and angels. And in power: *Every knee must bow to him*. The whole creation must be in subjection to him: *things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth*, the inhabitants of heaven and earth, the living and the dead. *At the name of Jesus*; not at the sound of the word, but the authority of Jesus; all should pay a solemn homage. And that *every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord* — every nation and language should publicly own the universal empire of the exalted Redeemer, and that *all power in heaven and earth is given to him*, ^{<188>}Matthew 28:18. Observe the vast extent of the kingdom of Christ; it reaches to heaven and earth, and to all the creatures in each, to angels as well as men, and to the dead as well as the living. — *To the glory of God the Father*. Observe, It is to the glory of God the Father to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord; for it is his will that *all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father*, ^{<183>}John 5:23. Whatever respect is paid to Christ redounds to the honour of the Father. *He who receiveth me receiveth him who sent me*, ^{<100>}Matthew 10:40.

^{<182>}PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13

PRACTICAL RELIGION

I. He exhorts them to diligence and seriousness in the Christian course: *Work out your own salvation*. It is the salvation of our souls (^{<100>}1 Peter 1:9), and our eternal salvation (^{<189>}Hebrews 5:9), and contains deliverance from all the evils sin had brought upon us and exposed us to, and the possession of all good and whatsoever is necessary to our complete and final happiness. Observe, It concerns us above all things to secure the welfare of our souls: whatever becomes of other things, let us take care of our best interests. It is our own salvation, the salvation of our own souls. It is not for us to judge other people; we have enough to do to look to ourselves; and, though we must promote the common salvation (^{<100>}Jude 1:3) as much as we can, yet we must upon no account neglect our own. We are required to *work out our salvation, katargazesthe*. The word signifies *working thoroughly* at a thing, and taking *true pains*. Observe, We must be diligent in the use of all the means which conduce to our salvation. We must not only work at our salvation, by doing something now and then about it; but we must work out our salvation, by doing all that is to be done, and persevering therein to the end. Salvation is the great

thing we should mind, and set our hearts upon; and we cannot attain salvation without the utmost care and diligence. He adds, *With fear and trembling*, that is, with great care and circumspection: “Trembling for fear lest you miscarry and come short. Be careful to do every thing in religion in the best manner, and fear lest under all your advantages you should so much as *seem to come short*,” ^{<301>}Hebrews 4:1. Fear is a great guard and preservative from evil.

II. He urges this from the consideration of their readiness always to obey the gospel: “*As you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence*, v. 12. You have been always willing to comply with every discovery of the will of God; and that in my absence as well as presence. You make it to appear that regard to Christ, and care of your souls, sway more with you than any mode of showing respect whatsoever.” They were not merely awed by the apostle's presence, but did it even *much more in his absence*. “And because *it is God who worketh in you*, do you work out your salvation. Work, for he worketh.” It should encourage us to do our utmost, because our *labour shall not be in vain*. God is ready to concur with his grace, and assist our faithful endeavours. Observe, Though we must use our utmost endeavours in working out our salvation, yet still we must go forth, and go on, in a dependence upon the grace of God. His grace works in us in a way suitable to our natures, and in concurrence with our endeavours; and the operations of God's grace in us are so far from excusing, that they are intended to quicken and engage our endeavours. “And work out our salvation *with fear and trembling*, for *he worketh in you*.” All our working depends upon his working in us. “Do not trifle with God by neglects and delays, lest you provoke him to withdraw his help, and all your endeavours prove in vain. Work with *fear*, for he works of his *good pleasure*.” — *To will and to do*: he gives the whole ability. It is the grace of God which inclines the will to that which is good: and then enables us to perform it, and to act according to our principles. *Thou hast wrought all our works in us*, ^{<292>}Isaiah 26:12. *Of his good pleasure*. As there is no strength in us, so there is no merit in us. As we cannot act without God's grace, so we cannot claim it, nor pretend to deserve it. God's good will to us is the cause of his good work in us; and he is under no engagements to his creatures, but those of his gracious promise.

PHILIPPIANS 2:14-18

PRACTICAL RELIGION

The apostle exhorts them in these verses to adorn their Christian profession by a suitable temper and behaviour, in several instances.

1. By a cheerful obedience to the commands of God (v. 14): “*Do all things, do your duty in every branch of it, without murmurings. Do it, and do not find fault with it. Mind your work, and do not quarrel with it.*” God’s commands were given to be obeyed, not to be disputed. This greatly adorns our profession, and shows we serve a good Master, whose service is freedom and whose work is its own reward.
2. By peaceableness and love one to another. “*Do all things without disputing, wrangling, and debating one another; because the light of truth and the life of religion are often lost in the heats and mists of disputation.*”
3. By a blameless conversation towards all men (v. 15): “*That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke; that you be not injurious to any in word or deed, and give no just occasion of offence.*” We should endeavour not only to be harmless, but to be blameless; not only not to do hurt, but not to come under the just suspicion of it. *Blameless and sincere*; so some read it. Blameless before men, sincere towards God. The *sons of God*. It becomes those to be blameless and harmless who stand in such a relation, and are favoured with such a privilege. The children of God should differ from the sons of men. *Without rebuke* — *amometa*. Momus was a carping deity among the Greeks, mentioned by Hesiod and Lucian, who did nothing himself, and found fault with every body and every thing. From him all carpers at other men, and rigid censurers of their works, were called *Momi*. The sense of the expression is, “Walk so circumspectly that Momus himself may have no occasion to cavil at you, that the severest censurer may find no fault with you.” We should aim and endeavour, not only to get to heaven, but to get thither without a blot; and, like Demetrius, to *have a good report of all men, and of the truth*, ⁶¹¹²3 John 1:12. *In the midst of a crooked and perverse generation*; that is, among the heathens, and those who are without. Observe, Where there is no true religion, little is to be expected but crookedness and perverseness; and the more crooked and perverse others are among whom we live, and the more apt to cavil, the more

careful we should be to keep ourselves blameless and harmless. Abraham and Lot must not *strive, because the Canaanite and Perizzite dwelt in the land*, ^{<113>}Genesis 13:7. *Among whom you shine as lights in the world.* Christ is the light of the world, and good Christians are lights in the world. When God raises up a good man in any place, he sets up a light in that place. Or it may be read imperatively: *Among whom shine you as lights:* compare ^{<116>}Matthew 5:16, *Let your light so shine before men.* Christians should endeavour not only to approve themselves to God, but to recommend themselves to others, that they may also glorify God. They must shine as well as be sincere. — *Holding forth the word of life*, v. 16. The gospel is called the word of life because it reveals and proposes to us eternal life through Jesus Christ. *Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel*, ^{<111>}2 Timothy 1:10. It is our duty not only to hold fast, but to hold forth the word of life; not only to hold it fast for our own benefit, but to hold it forth for the benefit of others, to hold it forth as the candlestick holds forth the candle, which makes it appear to advantage all around, or as the luminaries of the heavens, which shed their influence far and wide. This Paul tells them would be his joy: “*That I may rejoice in the day of Christ; not only rejoice in your steadfastness, but in your usefulness.*” He would have them think his pains well bestowed, and that *he had not run in vain, nor laboured in vain.* Observe,

(1.) The work of the ministry requires the putting forth of the whole man: all that is within us is little enough to be employed in it; as in running and labouring. Running denotes vehemence and vigour, and continual pressing forward; labour denotes constancy and close application.

(2.) It is a great joy to ministers when they perceive that they have not *run in vain, nor laboured in vain;* and it will be their rejoicing in the day of Christ, when their converts will be their crown. *What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For you are our glory and joy,* ^{<119>}1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20. The apostle not only ran and laboured for them with satisfaction, but shows that he was ready to suffer for their good (v. 17): *Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.* He could reckon himself happy if he could promote the honour of Christ, the edification of the church, and the welfare of the souls of men; though it were not only by hazarding, but by laying down, his life: he could willingly be a sacrifice at their altars, to serve the faith of God's elect. Could Paul think it worth while to shed his blood for the service of

the church, and shall we think it much to take a little pains? Is not that worth our labour which he thought worth his life? *If I be offered, or poured out as the wine of the drink-offerings, spendomai.* ^{<506>}2 Timothy 4:6, *I am now ready to be offered.* He could rejoice to seal his doctrine with his blood (v. 18): *For the same cause also do you joy and rejoice with me.* It is the will of God that good Christians should be much in rejoicing; and those who are happy in good ministers have a great deal of reason to joy and rejoice with them. If the minister loves the people, and is willing to spend and be spent for their welfare, the people have reason to love the minister and to *joy and rejoice with him.*

<569> PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30

PRAISE OF TIMOTHY AND EPAPHRODITUS

Paul takes particular notice of two good ministers; for though he was himself a great apostle, and *laboured more abundantly than they all*, yet he took all occasions to speak with respect of those who were far his inferiors.

I. He speaks of Timothy, whom he intended to send to the Philippians, that he might have an account of their state. See Paul's care of the churches, and the comfort he had in their well-doing. He was in pain when he had not heard of them for a good while, and therefore would send Timothy to enquire, and bring him an account: *For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state.* Timothy was a non-such. There were, no doubt, many good ministers, who were in care for the souls of those for whom they preached; but none comparable to Timothy, a man of an excellent spirit and tender heart. *Who will naturally care for your state.* Observe, It is best with us when our duty becomes in a manner natural to us. Timothy was a genuine son of blessed Paul, and walked in the same spirit and the same steps. *Naturally*, that is, sincerely, and not in pretence only: with a willing heart and upright view, so agreeably to the make of his mind. Note,

1. It is the duty of ministers to care for the state of their people and be concerned for their welfare: *I seek not yours, but you,* ^{<474>}2 Corinthians 12:14.

2. It is a rare thing to find one who does it naturally: such a one is remarkable and distinguished among his brethren. *All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's*, v. 21. Did Paul say this in haste, as David said, *All men are liars*? ^{<BIB>}Psalm 116:11. Was there so general a corruption among ministers so early that there was not one among them who cared for the state of their people? We must not understand it so: he means the generality; *all*, that is, either the most, or all in comparison of Timothy. Note, Seeking our own interest to the neglect of Jesus Christ is a very great sin, and very common among Christians and ministers. Many prefer their own credit, ease, and safety, before truth, holiness, and duty, the things of their own pleasure and reputation before the things of Christ's kingdom and his honour and interest in the world: but Timothy was none of these. — *You know the proof of him*, v. 22. Timothy was a man who had been tried, and had made *full proof of his ministry* (^{<SOB>}2 Timothy 4:5), and was faithful in all that befel him. All the churches with whom he had acquaintance knew the proof of him. He was a man as good as he seemed to be; and *served Christ so as to be acceptable to God, and approved of men*, ^{<SAB>}Romans 14:18. “You not only know the name of him, and the face of him, but the proof of him, and have experienced his affection and fidelity in your service,” *that, as a son with a father, he hath served with me in the gospel*. He was Paul's assistant in many places where he preached, and served with him in the gospel with all the dutiful respect which a child pays to a father, and with all the love and cheerfulness with which a child is serviceable to his father. Their ministrations together were with great respect on the one side and great tenderness and kindness on the other — an admirable example to elder and younger ministers united in the same service. Paul designed to send him shortly: *Him therefore I hope to send presently, as soon as I shall see how it will go with me*, v. 23. He was now a prisoner, and did not know what would be the issue; but, according as it turned, he would dispose of Timothy. Nay, he hoped to come himself (v. 24): *But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly*. He hoped he should soon be set at liberty, and be able to pay them a visit. Paul desired his liberty, not that he might take his pleasure, but that he might do good. — *I trust in the Lord*. He expresses his hope and confidence of seeing them, with a humble dependence and submission to the divine will. See ^{<ABD>}Acts 18:21; ^{<ABD>}1 Corinthians 4:19; ^{<SOB>}James 4:15; and ^{<SOB>}Hebrews 6:3.

II. Concerning Epaphroditus, whom he calls *his brother, and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier*, his Christian brother, to whom he bore a tender affection, — his companion in the work and sufferings of the gospel, who submitted to the same labours and hardships with himself, — and their messenger, one who was sent by them to him, probably to consult him about some affairs relating to their church, or to bring a present from them for his relief for he adds, and *who ministered to my wants*. He seems to be the same who is called *Epaphras*, ^{<SIC>}Colossians 4:12. He had an earnest desire to come to them, and Paul was willing he should. It seems,

1. Epaphroditus had been sick: *They had heard that he had been sick*, v. 26. And *indeed he was sick, nigh unto death*, v. 27. Sickness is a calamity common to men, to good men and ministers. But why did not the apostle heal him, who was endued with a power of curing diseases, as well as raising the dead? ^{<SIC>}Acts 20:10. Probably because that was intended as a sign to others, and to confirm the truth of the gospel, and therefore needed not be exercised one towards another. *These signs shall follow those who believe, they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover*, ^{<SIC>}Mark 16:17, 18. And perhaps they had not that power at all times, and at their own discretion, but only when some great end was to be served by it, and when God saw fit. It was proper to Christ, who had *the Spirit above measure*.

2. The Philippians were exceedingly sorry to hear of his sickness. They were full of heaviness, as well as he, upon the tidings of it: for he was one, it seems, for whom they had a particular respect and affection, and thought fit to choose out to send to the apostle.

3. It pleased God to recover and spare him: *But God had mercy on him*, v. 27. The apostle owns it is a great mercy to himself, as well as to Epaphroditus and others. Though the church was blessed at that time with extraordinary gifts, they could even then ill spare a good minister. He was sensibly touched with the thoughts of so great a loss: *Lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow*; that is, “Lest, besides the sorrow of my own imprisonment, I should have the sorrow of his death.” Or perhaps some other good ministers had died lately, which had been a great affliction to him: and, if this had died now, it would have been a fresh grief to him, and *sorrow added to sorrow*.

4. Epaphroditus was willing to pay a visit to the Philippians, that he might be comforted with those who had sorrowed for him when he was sick: “*That when you see him again you may rejoice* (v. 28), that you may yourselves see how well he has recovered, and what reason you have for the thankfulness and joy upon his account.” He gave himself the pleasure of comforting them by the sight of so dear a friend.

5. Paul recommends him to their esteem and affection: “*Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation:* account such men valuable, who are zealous and faithful, and let them be highly loved and regarded. Show your joy and respect by all the expressions of hearty affection and good opinion.” It seems he had caught his illness in the work of God: *It was for the work of Christ that he was nigh to death, and to supply their lack of service to him.* The apostle does not blame him for his indiscretion in hazarding his life, but reckons they ought to love him the more upon that account. Observe,

(1.) Those who truly love Christ, and are hearty in the interests of his kingdom, will think it very well worth their while to hazard their health and life to do him service, and promote the edification of his church.

(2.) They were to receive him with joy, as newly recovered from sickness. It is an endearing consideration to have our mercies restored to us after danger of removal, and should make them the more valued and improved. What is given us in answer to prayer should be received with great thankfulness and joy.