

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE CORINTHIANS

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

INTRODUCTION

THE following reasons seem to have induced Paul to write this Second Epistle to the Corinthians:

- (1) That he might explain the reasons for his having deferred to pay them his promised visit, by taking Corinth as his way to Macedonia (⁴⁰⁹1 Corinthians 4:19 ⁴¹⁵2 Corinthians 1:15,16; compare ⁴⁶⁶1 Corinthians 16:5); and so that he might set forth to them his apostolic walk in general (⁴⁰²2 Corinthians 1:12,24 6:3-13 7:2).
- (2) That he might commend their obedience in reference to the directions in his First Epistle, and at the same time direct them now to forgive the offender, as having been punished sufficiently (⁴⁷⁰2 Corinthians 2:1-11 7:6-16).
- (3) That he might urge them to collect for the poor saints at Jerusalem (⁴⁰⁶2 Corinthians 8:1-9,15).
- (4) That he might maintain his apostolic authority and reprove gainsayers.

The external testimonies for *its genuineness* are IRENAEUS [*Against Heresies*, 3,7,1]; ATHENAGORAS [*Of the Resurrection of the Dead*]; CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA [*Miscellanies*, 3, p. 94; 4, p. 101]; TERTULLIAN [*On Modesty*, 13].

The TIME OF WRITING was after Pentecost, A.D. 57, when Paul left Ephesus for Troas. Having stayed in the latter place for some time preaching the Gospel with effect (⁴⁷⁰2 Corinthians 2:12), he went on to

Macedonia, being eager to meet Titus there, having been disappointed in his not coming to Troas, as had been agreed on between them. Having heard from him the tidings he so much desired of the good effect produced on the Corinthians by his First Epistle, and after having tested the liberality of the Macedonian churches (^{<4000>}2 Corinthians 8:1), he wrote this Second Epistle, and then went on to Greece, where he abode for three months; and then, after travelling by land, reached Philippi on his return at Passover or Easter, A.D. 58 (^{<4001>}Acts 20:1-6). So that this Epistle must have been written about autumn, A.D. 57.

Macedonia was THE PLACE from which it was written (^{<4000>}2 Corinthians 9:2, where the present tense, "I boast," or "am boasting," implies his presence *then* in Macedonia). In Asia (Lydian Asia) he had undergone some great peril of his life (^{<4000>}2 Corinthians 1:8,9), whether the reference be [PALEY] to the tumult at Ephesus (^{<4023>}Acts 19:23-41), or, as ALFORD thinks, to a dangerous illness in which he despaired of life. Thence he passed by Troas to Philippi, the first city which would meet him in entering Macedonia. The importance of the Philippian Church would induce him to stay there some time; as also his desire to collect contributions from the Macedonian churches for the poor saints at Jerusalem. His anxiety of mind is recorded (^{<4005>}2 Corinthians 7:5) as occurring *when he came into Macedonia*, and therefore must have been at *Philippi*, which was the first city of Macedonia in coming from Troas; and here, too, from ^{<4006>}2 Corinthians 7:6, compared with ^{<4006>}2 Corinthians 7:5, must have been the scene of his receiving the comforting tidings from Titus. "Macedonia" is used for *Philippi* in ^{<4019>}2 Corinthians 11:9, as is proved by comparison with ^{<4045>}Philippians 4:15,16. So it is probably used here (^{<4006>}2 Corinthians 7:5). ALFORD argues from ^{<4006>}2 Corinthians 8:1, where he speaks of the "grace bestowed on the *churches* (plural) of Macedonia," that Paul must have visited *other* churches in Macedonia, besides Philippi, when he wrote, for example, Thessalonica, Berea, etc., and that Philippi, the *first* on his route, is less likely to have been the scene of his writing than the *last* on his route, whichever it was, perhaps Thessalonica. But Philippi, as being the chief town of the province, was probably the place to which all the collections of the churches were sent. Ancient tradition, too (as appears from the subscription to this Epistle), favors the view that Philippi was the place from which this Epistle was

sent by the hands of Titus who received, besides, a charge to prosecute at Corinth the collection which he had begun at his first visit (^{<4008>}2 Corinthians 8:6).

The STYLE is most varied, and passes rapidly from one phase of feeling to another; now joyous and consolatory, again severe and full of reproof; at one time gentle and affectionate, at another, sternly rebuking opponents and upholding his dignity as an apostle. This variety of style accords with the warm and earnest character of the apostle, which nowhere is manifested more beautifully than in this Epistle. His bodily frailty, and the chronic malady under which he suffered, and which is often alluded to (^{<4002>}2 Corinthians 4:7 5:1-4 12:7-9; compare *Note*, see on ^{<4008>}2 Corinthians 1:8), must have been especially trying to one of his ardent temperaments. But besides this, was the more pressing anxiety of the “care of all the churches.” At Corinth, as elsewhere, Judaizing emissaries wished to bind legal fetters of letter and form (compare ^{<4008>}2 Corinthians 3:3-18) on the freedom and catholicity of the Church. On the other hand, there were free thinkers who defended their immorality of practice by infidel theories (^{<4052>}1 Corinthians 15:12,32-36). These were the “fightings without,” and “fears within” (^{<4008>}2 Corinthians 7:5,6) which agitated the apostle’s mind until Titus brought him comforting tidings from Corinth. Even then, while the majority at Corinth had testified their repentance, and, as Paul had desired, excommunicated the incestuous person, and contributed for the poor Christians of Judea, there was still a minority who, more contemptuously than ever, resisted the apostle. These accused him of crafty and mercenary motives, as if he had personal gain in view in the collection being made; and this, notwithstanding his scrupulous care to be above the possibility of reasonable suspicion, by having others besides himself to take charge of the money. This insinuation was palpably inconsistent with their other charge, that he could be no true apostle, as he did not claim maintenance from the churches which he founded. Another accusation they brought of cowardly weakness; that he was always threatening severe measures without daring to execute them (^{<4008>}2 Corinthians 10:8-16 13:2); and that he was vacillating in his teaching and practice, circumcising Timothy, and yet withholding circumcision from Titus; a Jew among the Jews, and a Greek among the Greeks. That most of these opponents were of the Judaizing party in the Church, appears from ^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 11:22. They seem to

have been headed by an emissary from Judea (“he that cometh,” [2 Cor](#) Corinthians 11:4), who had brought “letters of commendation” ([2 Cor](#) Corinthians 3:1) from members of the Church at Jerusalem, and who boasted of his purity of Hebrew descent, and his close connection with Christ Himself ([2 Cor](#) Corinthians 11:13,23). His partisans contrasted his high pretensions with the timid humility of Paul ([1 Cor](#) 1 Corinthians 2:3); and his rhetoric with the apostle’s plain and unadorned style ([2 Cor](#) Corinthians 11:6,10:10,13). It was this state of things at Corinth, reported by Titus, that caused Paul to send him back forthwith thither with this Second Epistle, which is addressed, not to Corinth only ([1 Cor](#) 1 Corinthians 1:2), but to all the churches also in Achaia ([2 Cor](#) Corinthians 1:1), which had in some degree been affected by the same causes as affected the Corinthian Church. The widely different tone in different parts of the Epistle is due to the diversity which existed at Corinth between the penitent majority and the refractory minority. The former he addresses with the warmest affection; the latter with menace and warning. Two deputies, chosen by the churches to take charge of the contribution to be collected at Corinth, accompanied Titus ([2 Cor](#) Corinthians 8:18,19,22).

CHAPTER 1

2 CORINTHIANS 1:1-24.

THE HEADING; PAUL'S CONSOLATIONS IN RECENT TRIALS IN ASIA; HIS SINCERITY TOWARDS THE CORINTHIANS; EXPLANATION OF HIS NOT HAVING VISITED THEM AS HE HAD PURPOSED.

1. Timothy our brother — When writing *to* Timothy himself, he calls him “my son” (⁵⁰¹⁸1 Timothy 1:18). Writing *of* him, “brother,” and “my beloved son” (⁴⁶⁰⁷1 Corinthians 4:17). He had been sent before to Macedonia, and had met Paul at Philippi, when the apostle passed over from Troas to Macedonia (compare ⁴⁰⁰²2 Corinthians 2:12,13; see on ⁴⁶⁶¹1 Corinthians 16:10,11).

in all Achaia — comprising Hellas and the Peloponnese. The Gentiles themselves, and Annaeus Gallio, the proconsul (⁴⁴⁸²Acts 18:12-16), strongly testified their disapproval of the accusation brought by the Jews against Paul. Hence, the apostle was enabled to labor in the whole province of Achaia with such success as to establish several churches there (⁵¹⁰⁸1 Thessalonians 1:8 ⁵¹⁰⁰2 Thessalonians 1:4), where, writing from Corinth, he speaks of the “churches,” namely, not only the Corinthian, but others also — Athens, Cenchrea, and, perhaps, Sicyon, Argos, etc. He addresses “the Church in Corinth,” *directly*, and all “the saints” in the province, *indirectly*. In ⁴⁰⁰²Galatians 1:2 all the “churches” are addressed *directly* in the same circular Epistle. Hence, here he does not say, *all the churches*, but “all the saints.”

3. This thanksgiving for his late deliverance forms a suitable introduction for conciliating their favorable reception of his reasons for not having fulfilled his promise of visiting them (⁴⁰¹⁵2 Corinthians 1:15-24).

Father of mercies — that is, the SOURCE of all mercies (compare ⁵⁰¹⁷James 1:17 ⁴⁵¹¹Romans 12:1).

comfort — which flows from His “mercies” experienced. Like a true man of faith, he mentions “mercies” and “comfort,” before he proceeds to speak of *afflictions* (^{<4004>}2 Corinthians 1:4-6). The “tribulation” of believers is not inconsistent with God’s mercy, and does not beget in them suspicion of it; nay, in the end they feel that He is “the God of ALL comfort,” that is, who imparts *the only true and perfect comfort in every instance* (^{<4849>}Psalm 146:3,5,8 ^{<4941>}James 5:11).

4. us — idiomatic for *me* (^{<4928>}1 Thessalonians 2:18).

that we may ... comfort them which are in any trouble — Translate, as the *Greek* is the same as before, “tribulation.” The apostle lived, not to himself, but to the Church; so, whatever graces God conferred on him, he considered granted not for himself alone, but that he might have the greater ability to help others [CALVIN]. So participation in all the afflictions of man peculiarly qualified Jesus to be man’s comforter in all his various afflictions (^{<4849>}Isaiah 50:4-6 ^{<4945>}Hebrews 4:15).

5. sufferings — standing in contrast with “salvation” (^{<4006>}2 Corinthians 1:6); as “tribulation” (distress of mind), with *comfort* or “consolation.”

of Christ — Compare ^{<4942>}Colossians 1:24. The *sufferings* endured, whether by Himself, or by His Church, with which He considers Himself identified (^{<4850>}Matthew 25:40,45 ^{<4906>}Acts 9:4 ^{<4947>}1 John 4:17-21). Christ calls His people’s sufferings His own suffering:

- (1) because of the sympathy and mystical union between Him and us (^{<4887>}Romans 8:17 ^{<4904>}1 Corinthians 4:10);
- (2) They are borne for His sake;
- (3) They tend to His glory (^{<4904>}Ephesians 4:1 ^{<4944>}1 Peter 4:14,16).

abound in us — *Greek*, “abound unto us.” The order of the *Greek* following words is more forcible than in *English Version*, “Even so through Christ aboundeth also our comfort.” The *sufferings* (plural) are many; but the *consolation* (though singular) swallows up them all. Comfort preponderates in this Epistle above that in the first Epistle, as now by the effect of the latter most of the Corinthians had been much impressed.

6. we ... afflicted ... for your consolation — exemplifying the communion of saints. Their hearts were, so to speak, mirrors reflecting the likenesses of each other (^{<572>}Philippians 2:26,27) [BENGE]. Alike the afflictions and the consolations of the apostle tend, as in him so in them, as having communion with him, to their consolation (^{<600>}2 Corinthians 1:4 4:15). The *Greek* for “afflicted” is the same as before, and ought to be translated, “Whether we *be in tribulation.*”

which is effectual — literally, “worketh effectually.”

in the enduring, etc. — that is, in enabling you to endure “the same sufferings which we also suffer.” Here follows, in the oldest manuscripts (not as *English Version* in the beginning of ^{<600>}2 Corinthians 1:7), the clause, “And our hope is steadfast on your behalf.”

7. so shall ye be — rather, “So *are* ye.” He means, there *is* a community of consolation, as of suffering, between me and you.

8, 9. Referring to the imminent risk of life which he ran in Ephesus (^{<402>}Acts 19:23-41) when the whole multitude were wrought up to fury by Demetrius, on the plea of Paul and his associates having assailed the religion of Diana of Ephesus. The words (^{<600>}2 Corinthians 1:9), “we had the sentence of death in ourselves,” mean, that *he looked upon himself as a man condemned to die* [PALEY]. ALFORD thinks the danger at Ephesus was comparatively so slight that it cannot be supposed to be the subject of reference here, without exposing the apostle to a charge of cowardice, very unlike his fearless character; hence, he supposes Paul refers to some deadly *sickness* which he had suffered under (^{<600>}2 Corinthians 1:9,10). But there is little doubt that, had Paul been found by the mob in the excitement, he would have been torn in pieces; and probably, besides what Luke in Acts records, there were other dangers of an equally distressing kind, such as, “lyings in wait of the Jews” (^{<409>}Acts 20:19), his ceaseless foes. They, doubtless, had incited the multitude at Ephesus (^{<449>}Acts 19:9), and were the chief of the “many adversaries” and “[wild] beasts,” which he had to fight with there (^{<465>}1 Corinthians 15:32 16:9). His weak state of health at the time combined with all this to make him regard himself as all but dead (^{<412>}2 Corinthians 11:29 12:10). What makes my supposition probable is, that the very cause of his not having visited Corinth directly as he had intended, and for which he proceeds to apologize (^{<605>}2 Corinthians 1:15-

23), was, that there might be time to see whether the evils arising there not only from Greek, but from *Jewish* disturbers of the Church (^{471B}2 Corinthians 11:29), would be checked by his first Epistle; there not being fully so was what entailed on him the need of writing this second Epistle. His not specifying this here *expressly* is just what we might expect in the outset of this letter; towards the close, when he had won their favorable hearing by a kindly and firm tone, he gives a more distinct reference to Jewish agitators (^{471B}2 Corinthians 11:22).

above strength — that is, ordinary, natural powers of endurance.

despaired — as far as human help or hope from man was concerned. But in respect to help from God we were “not in despair” (^{400B}2 Corinthians 4:8).

9. But — “Yea.”

in God which raiseth the dead — We had so given up all thoughts of life, that our only hope was fixed on the coming resurrection; so in ^{485B}1 Corinthians 15:32 his hope of the resurrection was what buoyed him up in contending with foes, savage as wild beasts. Here he touches only on the doctrine of the resurrection, taking it for granted that its truth is admitted by the Corinthians, and urging its bearing on their practice.

10. doth deliver — The oldest manuscripts read, “will deliver,” namely, as regards *immediately imminent* dangers. “In whom we trust that He will also (so the *Greek*) yet deliver us,” refers to the *continuance* of God’s delivering help *hereafter*.

11. helping together by prayer for us — rather, “helping together on our behalf by your *supplication*”; the words “for us” in the *Greek* following “helping together,” not “prayer.”

that for the gift, etc. — literally, “That on the part of many persons the gift (literally, ‘gift of grace’; the mercy) bestowed *upon us* by means of (that is, through the prayers of) many may be offered thanks for (may have thanks offered for it) on our behalf.”

12. For — reason why he may confidently look for their prayers for him.

our rejoicing — *Greek*, “our glorying.” Not that he glories in the testimony of his conscience, as something *to boast of*; nay, this testimony is itself the thing *in which* his glorying consists.

in simplicity — Most of the oldest manuscripts read, “in holiness.” *English Version* reading is perhaps a gloss from ^{<400>}Ephesians 6:5 [ALFORD]. Some of the oldest manuscripts and versions, however, support it.

godly sincerity — literally, “sincerity of God”; that is, sincerity as in the presence of God (^{<400>}1 Corinthians 5:8). We *glory* in this in spite of all our adversities. *Sincerity* in *Greek* implies the non-admixture of any foreign element. He had no sinister or selfish aims (as some insinuated) in failing to visit them as he had promised: such aims belonged to his adversaries, not to him (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 2:17). “Fleshly wisdom” suggests tortuous and insincere courses; but the “grace of God,” which influenced him by God’s gifts (^{<400>}Romans 12:3 15:15), suggests holy straightforwardness and sincere faithfulness to promises (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 1:17-20), even as God is faithful to His promises. The prudence which subserves selfish interests, or employs unchristian means, or relies on human means more than on the Divine Spirit, is “fleshly wisdom.”

in the world — even in relation to the world at large, which is full of disingenuousness.

more abundantly to you-ward — (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 2:4). His greater love to them would lead him to manifest, especially to them, proofs of his sincerity, which his less close connection with *the world* did not admit of his exhibiting towards it.

13. We write none other things (in this Epistle) than what ye read (in my former Epistle [BENGEL]; *present*, because the Epistle *continued still* to be read in the Church as an apostolic rule). CONYBEARE and HOWSON think Paul had been suspected of writing privately to some individuals in the Church in a different strain from that of his public letters; and translates, “I write nothing else to you but what ye read *openly* (the *Greek* meaning, ‘ye read aloud,’ namely, when Paul’s Epistles were publicly read in the congregation, ^{<400>}1 Thessalonians 5:27); yea, and what you acknowledge *inwardly*.”

or acknowledge — *Greek*, “or even acknowledge.” The *Greek* for “read” and for “acknowledge” are words kindred in sound and root. I would translate, “None other things than what ye know by reading (by comparing my former Epistle with my present Epistle), or even know as a matter of fact (namely, the consistency of my acts with my words).”

even to the end — of my life. Not excluding reference to *the day of the Lord* (end of ^{<A014>}2 Corinthians 1:14 ^{<A015>}1 Corinthians 4:5).

14. in part — In contrast to “even to the end”: the testimony *of his life* was not yet completed [THEOPHYLACT and BENDEL]. Rather, “in part,” that is, some of you, not all [GROTIUS, ALFORD]. So in ^{<A016>}2 Corinthians 2:5 ^{<A017>}Romans 11:25. The majority at Corinth had shown a willing compliance with Paul’s directions in the first Epistle: but some were still refractory. Hence arises the difference of tone in different parts of this Epistle. See *Introduction*.

your rejoicing — your subject of *glorying* or *boast*. “Are” (not merely *shall be*) implies the present recognition of one another as a subject of mutual *glorying*: that *glorying* being about to be realized in its fullness “in the day (of the coming) of the Lord Jesus.”

15. in this confidence — of my character for sincerity being “acknowledged” by you (^{<A018>}2 Corinthians 1:12-14).

was minded — I was intending.

before — “to come unto you before” visiting Macedonia (where he now was). Compare *Note*, see on ^{<A019>}1 Corinthians 16:5; also see on ^{<A020>}1 Corinthians 4:18, which, combined with the words here, implies that the insinuation of some at Corinth, that he would not come at all, rested on the fact of his having thus *disappointed* them. His change of intention, and ultimate resolution of going through Macedonia first, took place before his sending Timothy from Ephesus into Macedonia, and therefore (^{<A021>}1 Corinthians 4:17) before his writing the first Epistle. Compare ^{<A022>}Acts 19:21,22 (the order there is “Macedonia and Achaia,” not *Achaia*, *Macedonia*); ^{<A023>}Acts 20:1,2.

that ye might have a second benefit — one in going to, the other in returning from, Macedonia. The “benefit” of his visits consisted in the

grace and spiritual gifts which he was the means of imparting (⁴⁰¹¹Romans 1:11,12).

16. This intention of visiting them *on the way* to Macedonia, as well as after having passed through it, must have reached the ears of the Corinthians in some way or other — perhaps in the lost Epistle (⁴⁰¹³1 Corinthians 4:18 5:9). The sense comes out more clearly in the *Greek* order, “By you to pass into Macedonia, and from Macedonia to come again unto you.”

17. use lightness — Was I guilty of levity? namely, by promising more than I performed.

or ... according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea ... nay, nay? — The “or” expresses a different alternative: Did I act with levity, or (on the other hand) do I purpose what I purpose like worldly (fleshly) men, so that my “yea” must at all costs be yea, and my “nay” nay [BENGEL, WINER, CALVIN], (⁴⁰⁴⁷Matthew 14:7,9)? The repetition of the “yea” and “nay” hardly agrees with ALFORD’S view, “What I purpose do I purpose according to the changeable purposes of the fleshly (worldly) man, that there may be with me the yea yea, and the nay nay (that is, both affirmation and negation concerning the same thing)?” The repetition will thus stand for the single yea and nay, as in ⁴⁰⁵⁵Matthew 5:37 ³⁰⁸²James 5:12. But the latter passage implies that the double “yea” here is not equivalent to the single “yea”: BENGEL’S view, therefore, seems preferable.

18. He adds this lest they might think his DOCTRINE was changeable like his *purposes* (the change in which he admitted in ⁴⁰¹⁷2 Corinthians 1:17, while denying that it was due to “lightness,” and at the same time implying that *not* to have changed, where there was good reason, would have been to imitate the *fleshly-minded* who at all costs obstinately hold to their purpose).

true — *Greek*, “faithful” (⁴⁰⁰⁹1 Corinthians 1:9).

our word — the *doctrine* we preach.

was not — The oldest manuscripts read “*is not*.”

yea and nay — that is, inconsistent with itself.

19. Proof of the unchangeableness of the doctrine from the unchangeableness of the subject of it, namely, Jesus Christ. He is called “the Son of God” to show the impossibility of change in One who is co-equal with God himself (compare ^{<4152>}1 Samuel 15:29 ^{<3101>}Malachi 3:6).

by me ... Silvanus and Timotheus — The Son of God, though preached by different preachers, was one and the same, unchangeable. *Silvanus* is contracted into *Silas* (^{<4152>}Acts 15:22; compare ^{<4152>}1 Peter 5:12).

in him was yea — *Greek*, “*is made yea in Him*”; that is, our preaching of the Son of God is confirmed as true in Him (that is, *through Him*; through the miracles wherewith He has confirmed our preaching) [GROTIUS]; or rather, by the witness of the Spirit which He has given (^{<4102>}2 Corinthians 1:21,22) and of which miracles were only one, and that a subordinate manifestation.

20. Rather, How many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the “*yea*” (“*faithfulness in His word*”: contrasted with the “*yea and nay*,” ^{<4102>}2 Corinthians 1:19, that is, *inconstancy as to one’s word*).

and in him Amen — The oldest manuscripts read, “*Wherefore through Him is the Amen*”; that is, In Him is *faithfulness* (“*yea*”) to His word, “*wherefore through Him*” is the immutable verification of it (“*Amen*”). As “*yea*” is His *word*, so “*Amen*” is His *oath*, which makes our assurance of the fulfillment doubly sure. Compare “*two immutable things (namely, His word and His oath) in which it was impossible for God to lie*” (^{<3018>}Hebrews 6:18 ^{<4101>}Revelation 3:14). The whole range of Old Testament and New Testament promises are secure in their fulfillment for us in Christ.

unto the glory of God by us — *Greek*, “*for glory unto God by us*” (compare ^{<4105>}2 Corinthians 4:15), that is, by our ministerial labors; by us His promises, and His unchangeable faithfulness to them, are proclaimed. CONYBEARE takes the “*Amen*” to be the Amen at the close of thanksgiving: but then “*by us*” would have to mean what it cannot mean here, “*by us and you*.”

21. stablisheth us ... in Christ — that is, in the faith of Christ — in believing in Christ.

anointed us — As “Christ” is the “Anointed” (which His name means), so “He hath *anointed* (*Greek, “chrisas”*) us,” ministers and believing people alike, with the Spirit (^{<4002>}2 Corinthians 1:22 ^{<4021>}1 John 2:20,27). Hence we become “a sweet savor of Christ” (^{<4025>}2 Corinthians 2:15).

22. sealed — A *seal* is a token assuring the possession of property to one; “sealed” here answers to “stablisheth us” (^{<4002>}2 Corinthians 1:21 ^{<4002>}1 Corinthians 9:2).

the earnest of the Spirit — that is, the Spirit as the earnest (that is, money given by a purchaser as a pledge for the full payment of the sum promised). The Holy Spirit is given to the believer now as a first instalment to assure him his full inheritance as a son of God shall be his hereafter (^{<4003>}Ephesians 1:13,14). “*Sealed* with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the *earnest* of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession” (^{<4023>}Romans 8:23). The Spirit is the pledge of the fulfillment of “all the promises” (^{<4002>}2 Corinthians 1:20).

23. Moreover I — *Greek*, “But *I* (for my part),” in contrast to GOD who hath assured us of *His* promises being hereafter fulfilled certainly (^{<4002>}2 Corinthians 1:20-22).

call God — the all-knowing One, who avenges wilful unfaithfulness to promises.

for a record upon my soul — As a witness *as to* the secret purposes of my soul, and a witness *against* it, if I lie (^{<4005>}Malachi 3:5).

to spare you — in order not to come in a rebuking spirit, as I should have had to come to you, if I had come *then*.

I came not as yet — *Greek*, “no longer”; that is, I *gave up my purpose of then* visiting Corinth. He wished to give them time for repentance, that he might not have to use severity towards them. Hence he sent Titus before him. Compare ^{<4002>}2 Corinthians 10:10,11, which shows that his detractors represented him as threatening what he had not courage to perform (^{<4008>}1 Corinthians 4:18,19).

24. Not for that — that is, Not that. “*Faith*” is here emphatic. He had “dominion” or a right to control them in matters of *discipline*, but in

matters of “*faith*” he was only a “*fellow helper* of their joy” (namely, in believing, ^{<659>}Romans 15:13 ^{<502>}Philippians 1:25). The *Greek* is, “Not that we *lord* it over your faith.” This he adds to soften the magisterial tone of ^{<402>}2 Corinthians 1:23. His desire is to cause them not *sorrow* (^{<411>}2 Corinthians 2:1,2), but “*joy*.” The *Greek* for “helpers” implies a mutual leaning, one on the other, like the mutually supporting buttresses of a sacred building. “By faith (^{<612>}Romans 11:20) ye stand”; therefore it is that I bestow such pains in “helping” your faith, which is the source of all true “*joy*” (^{<659>}Romans 15:13). I want nothing more, not to *lord it over your faith*.

CHAPTER 2

2 CORINTHIANS 2:1-17.

REASON WHY HE HAD NOT VISITED THEM ON HIS WAY TO MACEDONIA; THE INCESTUOUS PERSON OUGHT NOW TO BE FORGIVEN; HIS ANXIETY TO HEAR TIDINGS OF THEIR STATE FROM TITUS, AND HIS JOY WHEN AT LAST THE GOOD NEWS REACHES HIM.

1. with myself — in contrast to “you” (2 Corinthians 1:23). The same antithesis between Paul and them appears in 2 Corinthians 2:2.

not come again ... in heaviness — “sorrow”; implying that he had *already* paid them *one* visit *in sorrow* since his coming for the first time to Corinth. At that visit he had warned them “he would not spare if he should come again” (see on 2 Corinthians 13:2; compare 2 Corinthians 12:14 13:1). See *Introduction* to the first Epistle. The “in heaviness” implies *mutual* pain; they grieving him, and he them. Compare 2 Corinthians 2:2, “I make you sorry,” and 2 Corinthians 2:5, “If any have caused grief (sorrow).” In this verse he accounts for having postponed his visit, following up 2 Corinthians 1:23.

2. For — proof that he shrinks from causing them *sorrow* (“heaviness”).

if I — The “I” is emphatic. Some detractor may say that *this* (2 Corinthians 2:1) is not my reason for not coming as I proposed; since I showed no scruple in causing “heaviness,” or *sorrow*, in my Epistle (the first Epistle to the Corinthians). But I answer, If *I* be the one to cause you sorrow, it is not that I have any pleasure in doing so. Nay, my object was that he “who was made sorry by me” (namely, *the Corinthians in general*, 2 Corinthians 2:3; but with tacit reference to *the incestuous person in particular*) should repent, and so “make me glad,” as has actually taken place; “for ... who is he then that?” etc.

3. I wrote this same unto you — namely, that I would not come to you *then* (⁴⁰⁰2 Corinthians 2:1), as, if I were to come then, it would have to be “in heaviness” (causing *sorrow* both to him and them, owing to their impenitent state). He refers to the first Epistle (compare ⁴³⁰1 Corinthians 16:7; compare ⁴⁰⁰1 Corinthians 4:19,21 5:2-7,13).

sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice — that is, *sorrow* from their impenitence, when he ought, on the contrary, to have *joy* from their penitent obedience. The latter happy effect was produced by his first Epistle, whereas the former would have been the result, had he *then* visited them as he had originally proposed.

having confidence ... that my joy is the joy of you all — trusting that you, too, would feel that there was sufficient reason for the postponement, if it interfered with our mutual joy [ALFORD]. The communion of saints, he feels confident in them “ALL” (his charity overlooking, for the moment the small section of his detractors at Corinth, ⁴³⁰1 Corinthians 13:7), will make *his joy* (⁴⁰⁰2 Corinthians 2:2) *their joy*.

4. So far from my change of purpose being due to “lightness” (⁴⁰⁰2 Corinthians 1:17), I wrote my letter to you (⁴⁰⁰2 Corinthians 2:3) “out of much affliction (*Greek*, ‘trouble’) and anguish of heart, and with many tears.”

not that ye should be grieved — Translate, “be made sorry,” to accord with the translation, ⁴⁰⁰2 Corinthians 2:2. My ultimate and main object was, “not that ye might be made sorry,” but that through sorrow you might be led to repentance, and so to joy, redounding both to you and me (⁴⁰⁰2 Corinthians 2:2,3). I made you sorry before going to you, that when I went it might not be necessary. He is easily made sorry, who is admonished by a friend himself weeping [BENGEL].

that ye might know the love — of which it is a proof to rebuke sins openly and in season [ESTIUS], (⁴³⁰Psalms 141:5 ⁴³⁰Proverbs 27:6). “Love” is the source from which sincere reproof springs; that the Corinthians might ultimately recognize this as his motive, was the apostle’s aim.

which I have more abundantly unto you — who have been particularly committed to me by God (⁴³⁰Acts 18:10 ⁴⁰⁰1 Corinthians 4:15 9:2).

5. grief ... grieved — Translate as before, “sorrow ... made sorry.” The “any” is a delicate way of referring to the incestuous person.

not ... me, but in part — He has grieved me only in part (compare ⁴⁰¹²2 Corinthians 1:14 ⁴¹²⁵Romans 11:25), that is, *I am not the sole party aggrieved*; most of *you*, also, were aggrieved.

that I may not overcharge — that I may not unduly lay the weight of the charge on you all, which I should do, if I made myself to be the sole party aggrieved. ALFORD punctuates, “He hath not made sorry me, but in part (that I press not too heavily; namely, on him) you all.” Thus “you all” is in contrast to “me”; and “*in part*” is explained in the parenthetical clause.

6. Sufficient — without increasing it, which would only drive him to despair (⁴⁰¹⁷2 Corinthians 2:7), whereas the object of the punishment was, “that (his) spirit might be saved” in the last day.

to such a man — a milder designation of the offender than if he had been *named* [MEYER]. Rather, it expresses estrangement from *such a one* who had caused such grief to the Church, and scandal to religion (⁴⁰²²Acts 22:22 ⁴⁰¹⁵1 Corinthians 5:5).

this punishment — His being “delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh”; not only excommunication, but bodily disease (see on ⁴⁰¹⁴1 Corinthians 5:4,5).

inflicted of many — rather, “by the majority” (the more part of you). Not by an individual priest, as in the Church of Rome, nor by the bishops and clergy alone, but by the whole body of the Church.

7. with overmuch sorrow — *Greek*, “with HIS overmuch sorrow.”

8. confirm your love toward him — by giving effect in act, and showing in deeds your love; namely, by restoring him to your fellowship and praying for his recovering from the sickness penally inflicted on him.

9. For — Additional reason why they should restore the offender, namely, as a “proof” of their obedience “in all things”; now in *love*, as previously in *punishing* (⁴⁰¹⁶2 Corinthians 2:6), at the apostle’s desire. Besides his other reasons for deferring his visit, he had the further view, though, perhaps, unperceived by them, of making an experiment of their fidelity.

This accounts for his deferring to give, in his Epistle, the *reason* for his change of plan (resolved on before writing it). This full discovery of his motive comes naturally from him now, in the second Epistle, after he had seen the success of his measures, but would not have been a seasonable communication before. All this accords with reality, and is as remote as possible from imposture [PALEY, *Horae Paulinae*]. The interchange of feeling is marked (^{<418D>}2 Corinthians 2:4), “I wrote ... that ye might know the love,” etc.: here, “I did write, that *I* might know the proof of you.”

10. Another encouragement to their taking on themselves the responsibility of restoring the offender. They may be assured of Paul’s apostolic sanction to their doing so.

for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it — The oldest manuscripts read, “For even what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything.”

for your sakes *forgave I it* — He uses the past tense, as of a thing already determined on; as in ^{<418B>}1 Corinthians 5:3, “I have judged already”; or, as speaking generally of forgiveness granted, or to be granted. It is for your sakes I have forgiven, and do forgive, that the Church (of which you are constituent members) may suffer no hurt by the loss of a soul, and that ye may learn leniency as well as faithfulness.

in the person of Christ — representing Christ, and acting by His authority: answering to ^{<418A>}1 Corinthians 5:4, “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ ... my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

11. Literally, “That we may have no advantage gained over us by Satan,” namely, by letting one of our members be lost to us through despair, we ourselves furnishing Satan with the weapon, by our repulsive harshness to one now penitent. The loss of a single sinner is a common loss; therefore, in ^{<418D>}2 Corinthians 2:10, he said, “for your sakes.” Paul had “delivered” the offender “to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit might be saved” (^{<418B>}1 Corinthians 5:5). Satan sought to destroy the spirit also: to let him do so, would be to give him an advantage, and let him *overreach* us.

not ignorant of his devices — “Ignorant” and “devices” are words akin in sound and root in *Greek*: we are not without *knowledge* of his *knowing* schemes.

12. Paul expected to meet Titus at Troas, to receive the tidings as to the effect of his first Epistle on the Corinthian Church; but, disappointed in his expectation *there*, he passed on to Macedonia, where he met him at last (⁴⁰⁰²2 Corinthians 7:5,6,7) The *history* (Acts) does not record his passing through Troas, in going from Ephesus *to* Macedonia; but it does in coming *from* that country (⁴⁰⁰⁶Acts 20:6); also, that he had disciples there (⁴⁰⁰⁵Acts 20:7), which accords with the *Epistle* (⁴⁰⁰²2 Corinthians 2:12, “a door was opened unto me of the Lord”). An undesigned coincidence marking genuineness [PALEY, *Horae Paulinae*]. Doubtless Paul had fixed a time with Titus to meet him at Troas; and had desired him, if detained so as not to be able to be at Troas at that time, to proceed at once to Macedonia to Philippi, the next station on his own journey. Hence, though a wide door of Christian usefulness opened to him at Troas, his eagerness to hear from Titus the tidings from Corinth, led him not to stay longer there when the time fixed was past, but he hastened on to Macedonia to meet him there [BIRKS].

to preach — literally, “for the Gospel.” He had been at Troas before, but the vision of a man from Macedonia inviting him to come over, prevented his remaining there (⁴⁰⁰⁸Acts 16:8-12). On his return to Asia, after the longer visit mentioned here, he stayed seven days (⁴⁰⁰⁶Acts 20:6).

and — that is, *though* Paul would, under ordinary circumstances, have gladly stayed in Troas.

door ... opened ... of the Lord — *Greek*, “in the Lord,” that is, in His work, and by His gracious Providence.

13. no rest in my spirit — rather, “no rest *for* my spirit” (⁴⁰⁰⁹Genesis 8:9). As here his “spirit” had no rest; so in ⁴⁰⁰⁵2 Corinthians 7:5, his “flesh.” His “spirit” under the Holy Spirit, hence, concluded that it was not necessary to avail himself of the “door” of usefulness at Troas any longer.

taking ... leave of them — the disciples at Troas.

14. Now — *Greek*, “But.” Though we left Troas disappointed in not meeting Titus there, and in having to leave so soon so wide a door, “thanks be unto God,” we were triumphantly blessed in both the good news of you from Titus, and in the victories of the Gospel everywhere in our progress. The cause of triumph cannot be restricted (as ALFORD explains) to the former; for “always,” and “in every place,” show that the latter also is intended.

causeth us to triumph — The *Greek*, is rather, as in ^{<3025>}Colossians 2:15, “triumphs over us”: “leadeth us in triumph.” Paul regarded himself as a signal trophy of God’s victorious power in Christ. His Almighty Conqueror was leading him about, through all the cities of the Greek and Roman world, as an illustrious example of His power at once to subdue and to save. The foe of Christ was now the servant of Christ. As to be led in triumph by man is the most miserable, so to be led in triumph by God is the most glorious, lot that can befall any [TRENCH]. Our only true triumphs are God’s triumphs over us. His defeats of us are our only true victories [ALFORD]. The image is taken from the triumphal procession of a victorious general. The *additional* idea is perhaps included, which distinguishes God’s triumph from that of a human general, that the captive is brought into *willing* obedience (^{<4015>}2 Corinthians 10:5) to Christ, and so *joins in the triumph*: God “leads him in triumph” as one not merely *triumphed over*, but also as one *triumphing over* God’s foes with God (which last will apply to the apostle’s triumphant missionary progress under the leading of God). So BENGEL: “*Who shows us in triumph*, not [merely] as conquered, but as the ministers of His victory. Not only the victory, but the open ‘showing’ of the victory is marked: for there follows, *Who maketh manifest*.”

savor — retaining the image of a triumph. As the approach of the triumphal procession was made known by the *odor* of incense scattered far and wide by the incense-bearers in the train, so God “makes manifest by us” (His now at once triumphed over and triumphing captives, compare ^{<4150>}Luke 5:10, “Catch,” literally, “Take captive so as to preserve alive”) the sweet savor of the knowledge of Christ, the triumphant Conqueror (^{<3025>}Colossians 2:15), everywhere. As the *triumph* strikes the eyes, so the savor the nostrils; thus every sense feels the power of Christ’s Gospel. This *manifestation* (a word often recurring in his Epistles to the

Corinthians, compare ^{<4015>}1 Corinthians 4:5) refutes the Corinthian suspicions of his *dishonestly*, by reserve, *hiding* anything from them (^{<4017>}2 Corinthians 2:17 ^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 4:2).

15. The order is in *Greek*, “For (it is) of Christ (that) we are a sweet savor unto God”; thus, the “for” justifies his previous words (^{<4014>}2 Corinthians 2:14), “the savor of HIS (Christ’s) knowledge.” We not only scatter the savor; but “we *are* the sweet savor” itself (^{<2113>}Song of Solomon 1:3; compare ^{<4014>}John 1:14,16 ^{<4011>}Ephesians 5:2 ^{<4017>}1 John 2:27).

in them that are saved — rather, “that *are being* saved ... that are perishing” (see on ^{<4018>}1 Corinthians 1:18). As the light, though it blinds in darkness the weak, is for all that still light; and honey, though it taste bitter to the sick, is in itself still sweet; so the Gospel is still of a sweet savor, though many perish through unbelief [CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies*, 5.467], (^{<4013>}2 Corinthians 4:3,4,6). As some of the conquered foes led in triumph were put to death when the procession reached the capitol, and to them the smell of the incense was the “savor of death unto death,” while to those saved alive, it was the “savor of life,” so the Gospel was to the different classes respectively.

and in them — in the case of them. “Those being saved” (^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 3:1-4:2): “Those that are perishing” (^{<4013>}2 Corinthians 4:3-5).

16. savor of death unto death ... of life unto life — *an odor* arising *out of death* (a mere announcement of a *dead* Christ, and a virtually lifeless Gospel, in which light unbelievers regard the Gospel message), *ending* (as the just and natural consequence) *in death* (to the unbeliever); (but to the believer) *an odor* arising *out of life* (that is, the announcement of a risen and *living* Savior), *ending in life* (to the believer) (^{<4014>}Matthew 21:44 ^{<4013>}Luke 2:34 ^{<4013>}John 9:39).

who is sufficient for these things? — namely, for diffusing aright everywhere the savor of Christ, so diverse in its effects on believers and unbelievers. He here prepares the way for one purpose of his Epistle, namely, to vindicate his apostolic mission from its detractors at Corinth, who denied his sufficiency. The *Greek* order puts prominently foremost the momentous and difficult task assigned to him, “For these things, who is sufficient?” He answers his own question (^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 3:5,6), “Not

that we are *sufficient* of ourselves, but our *sufficiency* is of God, who hath made us *able* (*Greek*, ‘sufficient’) ministers,” etc.

17. not as many — (⁴⁷¹¹⁸2 Corinthians 11:18 ⁴⁶²²¹Philippians 2:21). Rather, “*the many*,” namely, *the* false teachers of whom he treats (tenth through twelfth chapters, especially ⁴⁷¹¹³2 Corinthians 11:13 ⁴⁵¹¹³1 Thessalonians 2:3).

which corrupt — *Greek*, “adulterating, as hucksters do wine for gain” (⁴⁷⁰¹²2 Corinthians 4:2 ⁴³⁰²²Isaiah 1:22 ⁴⁶⁰¹³2 Peter 2:3, “Make *merchandise* of you”).

as of sincerity ... as of God — as one speaking from (out of) sincerity, as from (that is, by the command of, and so in dependence on) God.

in Christ’s — as united to Him in living membership, and doing His work (compare ⁴⁷¹²⁹2 Corinthians 12:19). The *whole* Gospel must be delivered such as it is, without concession to men’s corruptions, and without selfish aims, if it is to be blessed with success (⁴⁴⁰²⁷Acts 20:27).

CHAPTER 3

2 CORINTHIANS 3:1-18.

THE SOLE COMMENDATION HE NEEDS TO PROVE GOD'S SANCTION OF HIS MINISTRY HE HAS IN HIS CORINTHIAN CONVERTS: HIS MINISTRY EXCELS THE MOSAIC, AS THE GOSPEL OF LIFE AND LIBERTY EXCELS THE LAW OF CONDEMNATION.

1. Are we beginning again to recommend ourselves (^{<4182>}2 Corinthians 5:12) (as some of them might say he had done in his first Epistle; or, a reproof to “some” who had *begun* doing so)!

commendation — recommendation. (Compare ^{<4182>}2 Corinthians 10:18). The “some” refers to particular persons of the “many” (^{<4127>}2 Corinthians 2:17) teachers who opposed him, and who came to Corinth with letters of recommendation from other churches; and when leaving that city obtained similar letters from the Corinthians to other churches. The thirteenth canon of the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) ordained that “clergymen coming to a city where they were unknown, should not be allowed to officiate without letters commendatory from their own bishop.” The history (^{<4187>}Acts 18:27) confirms the existence of the custom here alluded to in the Epistle: “When Apollos was disposed to pass into Achaia [Corinth], *the brethren* [of Ephesus] *wrote*, exhorting the disciples to receive him.” This was about two years before the Epistle, and is probably *one* of the instances to which Paul refers, as many at Corinth boasted of their being followers of Apollos (^{<4112>}1 Corinthians 1:12).

2. **our epistle** — of recommendation.

in our hearts — not letters borne merely *in the hands*. Your conversion through my instrumentality, and your faith which is “known of all men” by widespread report (^{<4104>}1 Corinthians 1:4-7), and which is written by memory and affection on my inmost heart and is borne about wherever I go, is my letter of recommendation (^{<4102>}1 Corinthians 9:2).

known and read — words akin in root, sound, and sense (so ^{<G113>}2 Corinthians 1:13). “Ye are *known* to be my converts by general knowledge: then ye are *known* more particularly by your reflecting my doctrine in your Christian life.” The handwriting is first “known,” then the Epistle is “read” [^{<G102>}GROTIUS] (^{<G102>}2 Corinthians 4:2 ^{<G105>}1 Corinthians 14:25). There is not so powerful a sermon in the world, as a consistent Christian life. The eye of the world takes in more than the ear. Christians’ lives are the only religious books the world reads. IGNATIUS [*Epistle to the Ephesians*, 10] writes, “Give unbelievers the chance of believing through you. Consider yourselves employed by God; your lives the form of language in which He addresses them. Be mild when they are angry, humble when they are haughty; to their blasphemy oppose prayer without ceasing; to their inconsistency, a steadfast adherence to your faith.”

3. declared — The letter is written so legibly that it can be “read by all men” (^{<G102>}2 Corinthians 3:2). Translate, “Being manifestly shown to be an Epistle of Christ”; a letter coming manifestly from Christ, and “ministered by us,” that is, carried about and presented by us as its (ministering) bearers to those (the world) for whom it is intended: Christ is the Writer and the Recommender, ye are the letter recommending us.

written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God — Paul was the ministering pen or other instrument of writing, as well as the ministering bearer and presenter of the letter. “Not with ink” stands in contrast to the letters of commendation which “some” at Corinth (^{<G102>}2 Corinthians 3:1) used. “Ink” is also used here to include all outward materials for writing, such as the Sinaitic tables of stone were. These, however, were not written with ink, but “graven” by “the finger of God” (^{<G101>}Exodus 31:18 32:16). Christ’s Epistle (His believing members converted by Paul) is better still: it is written not merely with the *finger*, but with the “*Spirit of the living God*”; it is not the “ministration of death” as the law, but of the “*living Spirit*” that “giveth life” (^{<G102>}2 Corinthians 3:6-8).

not in — not *on* tables (tablets) of stone, as the ten commandments were written (^{<G102>}2 Corinthians 3:7).

in fleshy tables of the heart — ALL the best manuscripts read, “On [your] *hearts* [which are] tables of flesh.” Once your hearts were

spiritually what the tables of the law were physically, tables of stone, but God has “taken away the stony heart out of your flesh, given you a heart of flesh” (*fleshy*, not *fleshly*, that is, carnal; hence it is written, “out of your *flesh*” that is, your *carnal* nature), ^{<3119>}Ezekiel 11:19 36:26. Compare ^{<4082>}2 Corinthians 3:2, “As ye are our Epistle written in our hearts,” so Christ has in the first instance made you “His Epistle written with the Spirit in (on) your hearts.” I bear on my heart, as a testimony to all men, that which Christ has by His Spirit written in your heart [ALFORD]. (Compare ^{<4189>}Proverbs 3:3 7:3 ^{<2831>}Jeremiah 31:31-34). This passage is quoted by PALEY [*Horae Paulinae*] as illustrating one peculiarity of Paul’s style, namely, his *going off at a word into a parenthetic reflection*: here it is on the word “Epistle.” So “savor,” ^{<4214>}2 Corinthians 2:14-17.

4. And — *Greek*, “But.” “Such confidence, however (namely, of our ‘sufficiency,’ ^{<4785>}2 Corinthians 3:5,6 ^{<4026>}2 Corinthians 2:16 — to which he reverts after the parenthesis — as ministers of the New Testament, ‘not hinting,’ ^{<4001>}2 Corinthians 4:1), we have through Christ (not through ourselves, compare ^{<4788>}2 Corinthians 3:18) toward God” (that is, in our relation to God and His work, the ministry committed by Him to us, for which we must render an account to Him). Confidence toward God is solid and real, as looking to Him for the strength needed now, and also for the reward of grace to be given hereafter. Compare ^{<4215>}Acts 24:15, “hope toward God.” Human confidence is unreal in that it looks to man for its help and its reward.

5. The *Greek* is, “Not that we are (even yet after so long experience as ministers) sufficient to think anything OF ourselves as (coming) FROM ourselves; but our sufficiency is (derived) FROM God.” “*From*” more definitely refers to the *source* out of which a thing comes; “of” is more general.

to think — *Greek*, to “reason out” or “devise”; *to attain to* sound preaching *by our reasonings* [THEODORET]. The “we” refers here to *ministers* (^{<4021>}2 Peter 1:21).

anything — even the least. We cannot expect too little from man, or too much from God.

6. able — rather, as the *Greek* is the same, corresponding to ^{<4086>}2 Corinthians 3:5, translate, “*sufficient as ministers*” (^{<4087>}Ephesians 3:7 ^{<502>}Colossians 1:23).

the new testament — “the new *covenant*” as contrasted with the *Old Testament* or covenant (^{<4125>}1 Corinthians 11:25 ^{<402>}Galatians 4:24). He reverts here again to the contrast between the law on “tables of stone,” and that “written by the Spirit on fleshly tables of the heart” (^{<4083>}2 Corinthians 3:3).

not of the letter — joined with “ministers”; ministers not of *the mere literal precept*, in which the old law, as then understood, consisted; “but of the Spirit,” that is, *the spiritual holiness* which lay under the old law, and which the new covenant brings to light (^{<4057>}Matthew 5:17-48) with new *motives* added, and a new *power* of obedience imparted, namely, the Holy Spirit (^{<4080>}Romans 7:6). Even in *writing the letter* of the New Testament, Paul and the other sacred writers were ministers *not of the letter, but of the spirit*. No piety of spirit could exempt a man from the yoke of the letter of each legal ordinance under the Old Testament; for God had appointed this as the way in which He chose a devout Jew to express his state of mind towards God. Christianity, on the other hand, makes the spirit of our outward observances everything, and the letter a secondary consideration (^{<4024>}John 4:24). Still the moral law of the ten commandments, being written by the finger of God, is as obligatory now as ever; but put more on the Gospel spirit of “love,” than on the letter of a servile obedience, and in a deeper and fuller spirituality (^{<4057>}Matthew 5:17-48 ^{<4539>}Romans 13:9). No literal precepts could fully comprehend the wide range of holiness which LOVE, the work of the Holy Spirit, under the Gospel, suggests to the believer’s heart instinctively from the word understood in its deep spirituality.

letter killeth — by bringing home the knowledge of guilt and its punishment, *death*; ^{<4087>}2 Corinthians 3:7, “ministration of death” (^{<4080>}Romans 7:9).

spirit giveth life — The spirit of the Gospel when brought home to the heart by the Holy Spirit, gives new spiritual life to a man (^{<4060>}Romans 6:4,11). This “spirit of life” is for us in Christ Jesus (^{<4080>}Romans 8:2,10), who dwells in the believer as a “quickening” or “life-giving Spirit” (^{<4556>}1

Corinthians 15:45). Note, the spiritualism of rationalists is very different. It would admit no “stereotyped revelation,” except so much as man’s own inner instrument of revelation, the conscience and reason, can approve of: thus making the conscience judge of the written word, whereas the apostles make the written word the judge of the conscience (^{<AHT1>}Acts 17:11 ^{<AHT1>}1 Peter 4:1). True spirituality rests on the whole written word, applied to the soul by the Holy Spirit as the only infallible interpreter of its far-reaching spirituality. The *letter* is nothing without the *spirit*, in a subject essentially spiritual. The *spirit* is nothing without the *letter*, in a record substantially historical.

7. the ministration of death — the legal dispensation, summed up in the Decalogue, which denounces *death* against man for transgression.

written and engraven in stones — There is no “and” in the *Greek*. The literal translation is, “The ministration of death *in letters*,” of which “engraven on stones” is an explanation. The preponderance of oldest manuscripts is for the *English Version* reading. But one (perhaps the oldest existing manuscript) has “in the letter,” which refers to the preceding words (^{<AHT2>}2 Corinthians 3:6), “*the letter killeth*,” and this seems the probable reading. Even if we read as *English Version*, “The ministration of death (written) in letters,” alludes to *the literal precepts* of the law as only bringing us the knowledge of sin and “*death*,” in contrast to “*the Spirit*” in the Gospel bringing us “*life*” (^{<AHT2>}2 Corinthians 3:6). The opposition between “the letters” and “the Spirit” (^{<AHT2>}2 Corinthians 3:8) confirms this. This explains why the phrase in *Greek* should be “in letters,” instead of the ordinary one which *English Version* has substituted, “written *and*.”

was glorious — literally, “was made (invested) in glory,” glory was the atmosphere with which it was encompassed.

could not steadfastly behold — literally, “fix their eyes on.” ^{<AHT3>}Exodus 34:30, “The skin of his face shone; and they were AFRAID to come nigh him.” “Could not,” therefore means here, “for FEAR.” The “glory of Moses’ countenance” on Sinai passed away when the occasion was over: a type of the transitory character of the dispensation which he represented (^{<AHT1>}2 Corinthians 3:11), as contrasted with the permanency of the Christian dispensation (^{<AHT1>}2 Corinthians 3:11).

8. be rather glorious — literally, “be rather (that is, still more, invested) in glory.” “Shall be,” that is, shall be found to be in part now, but fully when the glory of Christ and His saints shall be revealed.

9. ministration of condemnation — the law regarded in the “letter” which “killeth” (^{400B}2 Corinthians 3:6 ^{400B}Romans 7:9-11). The oldest existing manuscript seems to read as *English Version*. But most of the almost contemporary manuscripts, versions, and Fathers, read, “If to the ministration of condemnation there be glory.”

the ministration of righteousness — the Gospel, which especially reveals the righteousness of God (^{400B}Romans 1:17), and imputes righteousness to men through faith in Christ (^{400B}Romans 3:21-28 4:3,22-25), and imparts righteousness by the Spirit (^{400B}Romans 8:1-4).

exceed — “abound.”

10. *For even* the ministration of condemnation, the law, ^{400B}2 Corinthians 3:7 (*which has been glorified* at Sinai in Moses’ person), *has* now (*English Version* translates less fitly, “*was made ... had*”) *lost its glory in this respect by reason of the surpassing glory* (of the Gospel): as the light of the stars and moon fades in the presence of the sun.

11. was glorious — literally, “was with glory”; or “marked *by* glory.”

that which remaineth — abideth (^{404B}Revelation 14:6). Not “the ministry,” but the Spirit, and His accompaniments, life and righteousness.

is glorious — literally, “is *in* glory.” The *Greek* “with” or “by” is appropriately applied to that of which the glory was *transient*. “In” to that of which the glory is permanent. The contrast of the Old and New Testaments proves that Paul’s chief opponents at Corinth were Judaizers.

12. such hope — of the future glory, which shall result from the ministration of the Gospel (^{400B}2 Corinthians 3:8,9).

plainness of speech — openness; without reserve (^{400B}2 Corinthians 2:17 4:2).

13. We use no disguise, “as Moses put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel might not look steadfastly upon the end of that which

was to be done away” [ELLICOTT and others]. The view of ^{<128B>}Exodus 34:30-35, according to the *Septuagint* is adopted by Paul, that Moses in going in to speak to God *removed the veil till he came out and had spoken to the people; and then when he had done speaking, he put on the veil that they might not look on the end, or the fading, of that transitory glory.* The veil was the symbol of *concealment*, put on directly after Moses’ speaking; so that God’s revelations by him were interrupted by intervals of concealment [ALFORD]. But ALFORD’s view does not accord with ^{<128B>}2 Corinthians 3:7; the Israelites “could not look steadfastly on the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance.” Plainly Moses’ veil was put on *because of their not having been able to “look steadfastly at him.”* Paul here (^{<128B>}2 Corinthians 3:13) passes from the literal fact to the truth symbolized by it, the blindness of Jews and Judaizers to the ultimate end of the law: stating that Moses *put on the veil that they might not look steadfastly at* (Christ, ^{<128B>}Romans 10:4) *the end of that* (law) *which* (like Moses’ glory) *is done away.* Not that *Moses* had this *purpose*; but often God attributes to His prophets the purpose which He has Himself. Because the Jews *would not see*, God judicially gave them up *so as not to see.* The glory of Moses’ face is antitypically Christ’s glory shining behind the veil of legal ordinances. The veil which has been taken off to the believer is left on to the unbelieving Jew, so that he should not see (^{<128B>}Isaiah 6:10 ^{<128B>}Acts 28:26,27). He stops short at the letter of the law, not seeing the end of it. The evangelical glory of the law, like the shining of Moses’ face, cannot be borne by a carnal people, and therefore remains veiled to them until the Spirit comes to take away the veil (^{<128B>}2 Corinthians 3:14-17) [CAMERON].

14-18. Parenthetical: *Of Christians in general.* He resumes the subject of *the ministry*, ^{<128B>}2 Corinthians 4:1.

minds — *Greek*, “mental perceptions”; “understandings.”

blinded — rather, “hardened.” The opposite to “looking steadfastly at the end” of the law (^{<128B>}2 Corinthians 3:13). *The veil on Moses’ face* is further typical of *the veil that is on their hearts.*

untaken away ... which veil — rather, “the same veil ... remaineth untaken away [literally, *not unveiled*], so that they do not see THAT it (not the *veil* as *English Version*, but ‘THE OLD TESTAMENT,’ or covenant of

legal ordinances) is done away (^{<407>}2 Corinthians 3:7,11,13) in Christ” or, as BENGEL, “Because it is done away in Christ,” that is, it is not done away save in Christ: the veil *therefore* remains untaken away from them, *because* they will not come to Christ, who does away, with the law as a mere letter. If they once saw that the law is done away in Him, the veil would be no longer on their hearts in reading it publicly in their synagogues (so “reading” means, ^{<415>}Acts 15:21). I prefer the former.

15. the veil is — rather, “*a veil lieth upon their heart*” (their understanding, affected by the corrupt will, ^{<438>}John 8:43 ^{<414>}1 Corinthians 2:14). The *Tallith* was worn in the synagogue by every worshipper, and to this veil hanging over the breast there may be an indirect allusion here (see on ^{<410>}1 Corinthians 11:4): the apostle making it symbolize the spiritual veil on their heart.

16. Moses took off the veil on entering into the presence of the Lord. So as to the Israelites whom Moses represents, “whenever their heart (it) *turns* (not as *English Version*, ‘shall turn’) to the Lord, the veil is (by the very fact; not as *English Version*, ‘shall be’) taken away.” ^{<434>}Exodus 34:34 is the allusion; not ^{<430>}Exodus 34:30,31, as ALFORD thinks. Whenever the Israelites turn to the Lord, who is the Spirit of the law, the veil is taken off their hearts in the presence of the Lord: as the literal veil was taken off by Moses in going before God: no longer resting on the dead letter, *the veil*, they by the Spirit commune with God and with the inner spirit of the Mosaic covenant (which answers to the glory of *Moses’ face unveiled* in God’s presence).

17. the Lord — Christ (^{<414>}2 Corinthians 3:14,16 ^{<405>}2 Corinthians 4:5).

is that Spirit — is THE Spirit, namely, *that Spirit* spoken of in ^{<406>}2 Corinthians 3:6, and here resumed after the parenthesis (^{<407>}2 Corinthians 3:7-16): Christ is the Spirit and “end” of the Old Testament, he giveth life to it, whereas “the letter killeth” (^{<455>}1 Corinthians 15:45 ^{<690>}Revelation 19:10, end).

where the Spirit of the Lord is — in a man’s “heart” (^{<405>}2 Corinthians 3:15 ^{<410>}Romans 8:9,10).

there is liberty — (^{<4889>}John 8:36). “There,” and *there only*. Such cease to be slaves to the letter, which they were while the veil was on their heart. They are free to serve God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus (^{<1888>}Philippians 3:3): they have no longer the spirit of bondage, but of free sonship (^{<6185>}Romans 8:15 ^{<4847>}Galatians 4:7). “Liberty” is opposed to the letter (of the legal ordinances), and to the veil, the badge of slavery: also to the *fear* which the Israelites felt in beholding Moses’ *glory unveiled* (^{<1888>}Exodus 34:30 ^{<6181>}1 John 4:18).

18. But we all — Christians, as contrasted with the Jews who have a veil on their hearts, answering to Moses’ veil on his face. He does not resume reference to *ministers* till ^{<4002>}2 Corinthians 4:1.

with open face — Translate, “with *unveiled* face” (the *veil* being removed at conversion): contrasted with “hid” (^{<4048>}2 Corinthians 4:3).

as in a glass — in a mirror, namely, the Gospel which reflects the glory of God and Christ (^{<4004>}2 Corinthians 4:4 ^{<4332>}1 Corinthians 13:12 ^{<5023>}James 1:23,25).

are changed into the same image — namely, the image of Christ’s glory, spiritually now (^{<682>}Romans 8:29 ^{<6181>}1 John 3:3); an earnest of the bodily change hereafter (^{<1888>}Philippians 3:21). However many they be, believers all reflect the *same* image of Christ more or less: a proof of the truth of Christianity.

from glory to glory — from one degree of glory to another. As Moses’ face caught a reflection of God’s glory from being in His presence, so believers are changed into His image by beholding Him.

even as, etc. — Just such a transformation “*as*” was to be expected from “the Lord the Spirit” (not as *English Version*, “the Spirit of the Lord”) [ALFORD] (^{<4087>}2 Corinthians 3:17): “who receives of the things of Christ, and shows them to us” (^{<6184>}John 16:14 ^{<6180>}Romans 8:10,11). (Compare as to hereafter, ^{<9175>}Psalms 17:15 ^{<6214>}Revelation 22:4).

CHAPTER 4

2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-18.

HIS PREACHING IS OPEN AND SINCERE, THOUGH TO MANY THE GOSPEL IS HIDDEN.

For he preaches Christ, not himself: the human vessel is frail that God may have the glory; yet, though frail, faith and the hope of future glory sustain him amidst the decay of the outward man.

1. Therefore — *Greek*, “For this cause”: Because we have the liberty-giving Spirit of the Lord, and with unveiled face behold His glory (2 Corinthians 3:17,18).

seeing we have this ministry — “The ministration of the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:8,9): the ministry of such a spiritual, liberty-giving Gospel: resuming 2 Corinthians 3:6,8.

received mercy — from God, in having had *this ministry* conferred on us (2 Corinthians 3:5). The sense of “mercy” received from God, makes men active for God (1 Timothy 1:11-13).

we faint not — in boldness of speech and action, and patience in suffering (2 Corinthians 4:2,8-16, etc.).

2. renounced — literally, “bid farewell to.”

of dishonesty — rather, “of shame.” “I am not *ashamed* of the Gospel of Christ” (Romans 1:16). Shame would lead to *hiding* (2 Corinthians 4:3); whereas “we use great plainness of speech” (2 Corinthians 3:12); “by *manifestation* of the truth.” Compare 2 Corinthians 3:3, “*manifestly declared*.” He refers to the disingenuous artifices of “many” teachers at Corinth (2 Corinthians 2:17 3:1 11:13-15).

handling ... deceitfully — so “corrupt” or *adulterate* “the word of God” (2 Corinthians 2:17; compare 1 Thessalonians 2:3,4).

commending — recommending ourselves: recurring to ^{<401>}2 Corinthians 3:1.

to — to the verdict of.

every man's conscience — (^{<401>}2 Corinthians 5:11). Not to men's carnal judgment, as those alluded to (^{<401>}2 Corinthians 3:1).

in the sight of God — (^{<407>}2 Corinthians 2:17 ^{<410>}Galatians 1:10).

3. But if — Yea, even if (as I grant is the case).

hid — rather (in reference to ^{<406>}2 Corinthians 3:13-18), “veiled.” “Hid” (*Greek*, ^{<508>}Colossians 3:3) is said of that withdrawn from view altogether. “Veiled,” of a thing within reach of the eye, but *covered* over so as not to be seen. So it was in the case of Moses' face.

to them — in the case only of them: for *in itself* the Gospel is quite plain.

that are lost — rather, “that are perishing” (^{<418>}1 Corinthians 1:18). So the same cloud that was “light” to the people of God, was “darkness” to the Egyptian foes of God (^{<404>}Exodus 14:20).

4. In whom — Translate, “In whose case.”

god of this world — The worldly *make him their God* (^{<508>}Philippians 3:19). He is, *in fact*, “the prince of the power of the air, *the spirit that ruleth in the children of disobedience*” (^{<410>}Ephesians 2:2).

minds — “understandings”: “mental perceptions,” as in ^{<414>}2 Corinthians 3:14.

them which believe not — the same as “them that are lost” (or “are perishing”). Compare ^{<510>}2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. SOUTH quaintly says, “when the malefactor's eyes are covered, he is not far from his execution” (^{<708>}Esther 7:8). Those perishing unbelievers are not merely veiled, but blinded (^{<414>}2 Corinthians 3:14,15): *Greek*, not “blinded,” but “*hardened*.”

light of the glorious gospel of Christ — Translate, “The illumination (*enlightening*: the *propagation* from those already enlightened, to others of *the light*) of the Gospel of the glory of Christ.” “The glory of Christ” is

not a mere *quality* (as “glorious” would express) of the Gospel; it is its very *essence and subject matter*.

image of God — implying identity of nature and essence (^{<4018>}John 1:18 ^{<5015>}Colossians 1:15 ^{<3000>}Hebrews 1:3). He who desires to see “the glory of God,” may see it “in the face of Jesus Christ” (^{<4002>}2 Corinthians 4:6 ^{<5044>}1 Timothy 6:14-16). Paul here recurs to ^{<4018>}2 Corinthians 3:18. Christ is “the image of God,” into which “same image” we, looking on it in the mirror of the Gospel, are changed by the Spirit; but this image is not visible to those blinded by Satan [ALFORD].

5. For — Their blindness is not our fault, as if we had self-seeking aims in our preaching.

preach ... Christ ... the Lord — rather, “Christ *as Lord*,” and ourselves as your servants, etc. “*Lord*,” or “*Master*,” is the correlative term to “servants.”

6. For — proof that we are true servants of Jesus unto you.

commanded the light — *Greek*, “By speaking the word, commanded light” (^{<0000>}Genesis 1:3).

hath shined — rather, as *Greek*, “*is He who shined*.” (*It is God*) *who commanded light*, etc., *that shined*, etc., (^{<3875>}Job 37:15): Himself our Light and Sun, as well as the Creator of light (^{<3000>}Malachi 4:2 ^{<4012>}John 8:12). The physical world answers to the spiritual.

in our hearts — in themselves dark.

to give the light — that is, to propagate *to others* the light, etc., *which is in us* (compare *Note*, see on ^{<4002>}2 Corinthians 4:4).

the glory of God — answering to “the glory of Christ” (see on ^{<4002>}2 Corinthians 4:4).

in the face of Jesus Christ — Some of the oldest manuscripts retain “Jesus.” Others omit it. Christ is the manifestation of the glory of God, as His image (^{<6149>}John 14:9). The allusion is still to the brightness on Moses’ “face.” The only true and full manifestation of God’s brightness and glory is “in the face of Jesus” (^{<3000>}Hebrews 1:3).

7. “Lest any should say, How then is it that we continue to enjoy *such unspeakable glory* in a mortal body? Paul replies, this very fact is one of the most marvellous proofs of God’s power, that an earthen vessel could bear such splendor and keep *such a treasure*” [CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies*, 8.496, A]. The treasure or “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.” The fragile “earthen vessel” is the *body*, the “outward man” (☞2 Corinthians 4:16; compare ☞2 Corinthians 4:10), liable to afflictions and death. So the light in Gideon’s pitchers, the type (☞Judges 7:16-20,22). The ancients often kept their treasures in jars or vessels of earthenware. “There are earthen vessels which yet may be clean; whereas a golden vessel may be filthy” [BENGEL].

that the excellency of the power, etc. — that the *power* of the ministry (the Holy Spirit), in respect to its surpassing “excellency,” exhibited in winning souls (☞1 Corinthians 2:4) and in sustaining us ministers, might be ascribed solely to God, we being weak as earthen vessels. God often allows the vessel to be chipped and broken, that the excellency of the treasure contained, and of the power which that treasure has, may be all His (☞2 Corinthians 4:10,11 ☞John 3:30).

may be of God ... not of us — rather, as *Greek*, “may be *God’s* (may be seen and be thankfully [☞2 Corinthians 4:15] acknowledged to *belong* to God), and not (to come) *from* us.” The power not merely comes *from* God, but *belongs to* Him continually, and is to be ascribed to him.

8. *Greek*, “BEING hard pressed, yet not inextricably straitened; reduced to inextricable straits” (nominative to “we have,” ☞2 Corinthians 4:7).

on every side — *Greek*, “in every respect” (compare ☞2 Corinthians 4:10, “always”; ☞2 Corinthians 7:5). This verse expresses *inward* distresses; ☞2 Corinthians 4:9, *outward* distresses (☞2 Corinthians 7:5). “*Without* were fightings; *within* were fears.” The first clause in each member of the series of contrasted participles, implies the *earthiness* of the *vessels*; the second clause, *the excellency of the power*.

perplexed, but not in despair — *Greek*, “not utterly perplexed.” As *perplexity* refers to the future, so “troubled” or “hard pressed” refers to the present.

9. not forsaken — by God and man. Jesus was forsaken by both; so much do His sufferings exceed those of His people (^{<4174>}Matthew 27:46).

cast down — or “struck down”; not only “persecuted,” that is, *chased* as a deer or bird (^{<4951>}1 Samuel 26:20), but actually *struck* down as with a dart in the chase (^{<5815>}Hebrews 11:35-38). The *Greek* “always” in this verse means, “throughout the whole time”; in ^{<4011>}2 Corinthians 4:11 the *Greek* is different, and means, “at every time,” “in every case when the occasion occurs.”

10. bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus — that is, having my body exposed to being put to death in the cause of Jesus (the oldest manuscripts omit “the Lord”), and having in it the marks of such sufferings, I thus bear about wheresoever I go, an image of the suffering Savior in my own person (^{<4011>}2 Corinthians 4:11 ^{<4005>}2 Corinthians 1:5; compare ^{<4651>}1 Corinthians 15:31). Doubtless, Paul was exposed to more dangers than are recorded in Acts (compare ^{<4005>}2 Corinthians 7:5 11:26). The *Greek* for “the dying” is literally, “the being made a *corpse*,” such Paul regarded his body, yet a corpse which shares in the life-giving power of Christ’s resurrection, as it has shared in His dying and death.

that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body — rather, “may be.” The name “Jesus,” by itself is often repeated here as Paul seems, amidst sufferings, peculiarly to have felt its sweetness. In ^{<4011>}2 Corinthians 4:11 the same words occur with the variation, “in our *mortal flesh*. The fact of a dying, corpse-like body being sustained amidst such trials, manifests that “the (resurrection) life also,” as well as the dying, “of Jesus,” exerts its power in us. I thus bear about in my own person an image of the risen and *living*, as well as of the suffering, Savior. The “our” is added here to “body,” though not in the beginning of the verse. “For the body is *ours* not so much in death, as in life” [BENGE].

11. we which live — in the power of Christ’s “life” manifested in us, in our whole man body as well as spirit (^{<4800>}Romans 8:10,11; see on ^{<4011>}2 Corinthians 4:10; compare ^{<4055>}2 Corinthians 5:15). Paul regards his preservation amidst so many exposures to “death,” by which Stephen and James were cut off, as a standing miracle (^{<4123>}2 Corinthians 11:23).

delivered unto — not by chance; by the ordering of Providence, who shows “the excellency of His power” (^{<4007>}2 Corinthians 4:7), in *delivering unto* DEATH His living saints, that He may manifest LIFE also in their dying flesh. “Flesh,” the very element of decay (not merely their “body”), is by Him made to manifest *life*.

12. The “*death*” of Christ manifested in the continual “perishing of our outward man” (^{<4006>}2 Corinthians 4:16), works peculiarly in us, and is the means of working *spiritual “life”* in you. The *life* whereof we witness in our bodily *dying*, extends beyond ourselves, and is brought by our very dying to you.

13. Translate as *Greek*, “BUT having,” etc. that is, notwithstanding the trials just mentioned, we having, etc.

the same spirit of faith, according as it, etc. — Compare ^{<4015>}Romans 8:15, on the usage of “spirit of faith.” The Holy Spirit acting on our spirit. Though “death worketh in us, and life in you” (^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 4:12), yet *as we have the same spirit of faith as you*, we therefore [believingly] look for the same immortal *life* as you [ESTIUS], and *speak* as we believe. ALFORD not so well translates, “The *same ... faith with that described* in the Scriptures” (^{<4010>}Psalms 116:10). The balance of the sentence requires the parallelism to be this, “According to that which is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak,” namely, without fear, amidst “afflictions” and “deaths” (^{<4017>}2 Corinthians 4:17).

14. Knowing — by faith (^{<4011>}2 Corinthians 5:1).

shall raise up us also — at the resurrection (^{<4013>}1 Corinthians 6:13,14).

by Jesus — The oldest manuscripts have “*with Jesus.*”

present us — vividly picturing the scene before the eyes (^{<4012>}Jude 1:24).

with you — (^{<4014>}2 Corinthians 1:14 ^{<4019>}1 Thessalonians 2:19,20 3:13).

15. For — Confirming his assertion “with you” (^{<4014>}2 Corinthians 4:14), and “life ... worketh in you” (^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 4:12).

all things — whether the afflictions and labors of us ministers (^{<4008>}2 Corinthians 4:8-11), or your prosperity (^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 4:12 ^{<4011>}1 Corinthians 3:21,22 4:8-13).

for your sakes — (^{<5100>}2 Timothy 2:10).

abundant grace, etc. — rather, “That grace (*the* grace which preserves us in trials and works life in you), being made the greater (multiplied), by means of the greater number (of its recipients), may cause the thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.” [CHRYSOSTOM] (^{<4011>}2 Corinthians 1:11 9:11,12). The *Greek* is susceptible also of this translation, “That grace, being made the greater (multiplied) on account of the thanksgiving of the greater number (for grace already received), may abound (abundantly redound) to,” etc. Thus the *Greek* for “abound” has not to be taken in an active sense, but in its ordinary neuter sense, and so the other *Greek* words. Thanksgiving invites more abundant grace (^{<4019>}2 Chronicles 20:19-22 ^{<4023>}Psalm 18:3 50:23).

16. we faint not — notwithstanding our sufferings. Resuming ^{<4001>}2 Corinthians 4:1.

outward man — the body, the flesh.

perish — “is wearing away”; “is wasted away” by afflictions.

inward man — our spiritual and true being, the “life” which even in our mortal bodies (^{<4011>}2 Corinthians 4:11) “manifests the life of Jesus.”

is renewed — “is being renewed,” namely, with fresh “grace” (^{<4015>}2 Corinthians 4:15), and “faith” (^{<4013>}2 Corinthians 4:13), and hope (^{<4017>}2 Corinthians 4:17,18).

17. which is but for a moment — “Our PRESENT light (burden of) affliction” (so the *Greek*; compare ^{<4030>}Matthew 11:30), [ALFORD]. Compare “*now for a season ... in heaviness*” (^{<4006>}1 Peter 1:6). The contrast, however, between this and the “ETERNAL weight of glory” requires, I think, the translation, “Which is but for *the present passing moment*.” So WAHL. “The *lightness* of affliction” (he does not *express* “burden” after “light”; the *Greek* is “the light of affliction”) contrasts beautifully with the “*weight* of the glory.”

worketh — rather, “worketh out.”

a far more exceeding *and* — rather, “in a surpassing and still more surpassing manner” [ALFORD]; “more and more exceedingly” [ELLCOTT, TRENCH, and others]. *Greek*, “in excess and to excess.” The glory exceeds beyond all measure the affliction.

18. look not at — as our aim.

things ... seen — “earthly things” (^{<STR>}Philippians 3:19). We mind not the things seen, whether affliction or refreshment come, so as to be seduced by the latter, or deterred by the former [CHRYSOSTOM].

things ... not seen — not “the invisible things” of ^{<RT>}Romans 1:20, but the things which, though not seen now, shall be so hereafter.

temporal — rather, “for a time”; in contrast to eternal. *English Version* uses “temporal” for *temporary*. The *Greek* is rightly translated in the similar passage, “the pleasures of sin *for a season*.”

CHAPTER 5

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-21.

THE HOPE (2 CORINTHIANS 4:17,18) OF ETERNAL GLORY IN THE RESURRECTION BODY.

Hence arises his ambition to be accepted at the Lord's coming judgment. Hence, too, his endeavor to deal openly with men, as with God, in preaching; thus giving the Corinthians whereof to boast concerning him against his adversaries. His constraining motive is the transforming love of Christ, by whom God has wrought reconciliation between Himself and men, and has committed to the apostle the ministry of reconciliation.

1. For — Assigning the reason for the statement (2 Corinthians 4:17), that *affliction* leads to *exceeding glory*.

we know — assuredly (2 Corinthians 4:14 Job 19:25).

if — For *all* shall not die; many shall be “changed” without “dissolution” (1 Corinthians 15:51-53). If this daily *delivering unto death* (2 Corinthians 3:11) should end in actual death.

earthly — not the same as *earthy* (1 Corinthians 15:47). It stands in contrast to “in the heavens.”

house of *this* tabernacle — rather, “house of the tabernacle.” “House” expresses more *permanency* than belongs to the body; therefore the qualification, “of the tabernacle” (implying that it is *shifting*, not stationary), is added (compare Job 4:19 2 Peter 1:13,14). It thus answers to the tabernacle in the wilderness. Its wooden frame and curtains wore out in course of time when Israel dwelt in Canaan, and a fixed temple was substituted for it. The temple and the tabernacle in all essentials were one; there was the same ark, the same cloud of glory. Such is the relation between the “earthly” body and the resurrection body. The Holy Spirit is enshrined in the believer's body as in a sanctuary (1 Corinthians 3:16).

As the ark went first in taking down the wilderness tabernacle, so the soul (which like the ark is sprinkled with blood of atonement, and is the sacred deposit in the inmost shrine, ^{<3012>}2 Timothy 1:12) in the dissolution of the body; next the coverings were removed, answering to the flesh; lastly, the framework and boards, answering to the bones, which are last to give way (^{<0001>}Numbers 4:1-49). Paul, as a *tent-maker*, uses an image taken from his trade (^{<418B>}Acts 18:3).

dissolved — a mild word for death, in the case of believers.

we have — in *assured* prospect of possession, as certain as if it were in our hands, laid up “in the heavens” for us. The tense is *present* (compare ^{<438B>}John 3:36 6:47, “*hath*”).

a building of God — rather “*from* God.” A solid *building*, not a temporary *tabernacle* or *tent*. “*Our*” body stands in contrast to “*from God*.” For though our present body be also *from God*, yet it is not fresh and perfect from His hands, as our resurrection body shall be.

not made with hands — contrasted with houses erected by *man’s* hands (^{<454H>}1 Corinthians 15:44-49). So Christ’s body is designated, as contrasted with the tabernacle reared by Moses (^{<414B>}Mark 14:58 ^{<3001>}Hebrews 9:11). This “house” can only be the *resurrection body*, in contrast to the “earthly house of the tabernacle,” our present body. The intermediate state is not *directly* taken into account. A comma should separate “eternal,” and “in the heavens.”

2. For in this — *Greek*, “For *also* in this”; “*herein*” (^{<4000>}2 Corinthians 8:10). ALFORD takes it, “in this” tabernacle. ^{<4000>}2 Corinthians 5:4, which seems parallel, favors this. But the parallelism is sufficiently exact by making “in this we groan” refer generally to what was just said (^{<4000>}2 Corinthians 5:1), namely, that we cannot obtain our “house in the heavens” except our “earthly tabernacle” be first dissolved by death.

we groan — (^{<402B>}Romans 8:23) under the body’s weaknesses now and liability to death.

earnestly desiring to be clothed upon — translate, “earnestly *longing* to have ourselves clothed upon,” etc., namely, by being found *alive* at Christ’s coming, and so to escape *dissolution* by death (^{<4000>}2 Corinthians

5:1,4), and to have our heavenly body put on over the earthly. The groans of the saints prove the existence of the longing desire for the heavenly glory, a desire which cannot be planted by God within us in vain, as doomed to disappointment.

our house — different *Greek* from that in ^{<STR>}2 Corinthians 5:1; translate, “our habitation,” “our domicile”; it has a more distinct reference to the *inhabitant* than the general term “house” (^{<STR>}2 Corinthians 5:1) [BENGE].

from heaven — This domicile is “*from heaven*” in its origin, and is to be brought to us by the Lord at His coming again “from heaven” (^{<STR>}1 Thessalonians 4:16). Therefore this “habitation” or “domicile” is not heaven itself.

3. If so be, etc. — Our “desire” holds good, should the Lord’s coming find us alive. Translate, “If so be that having ourselves clothed (with our natural body, compare ^{<STR>}2 Corinthians 5:4) we shall not be found naked (stripped of our present body).”

4. For — resuming ^{<STR>}2 Corinthians 5:2.

being burdened: not for that — rather, “*in that* we desire *not* to have ourselves unclothed (of our present body), but clothed upon (with our heavenly body).”

that mortality, etc. — rather, “that what is mortal (our mortal part) may be swallowed up of (absorbed and transformed into) life.” Believers shrink from, not the *consequences*, but the mere *act* of dying; especially as believing in the possibility of their being found alive at the Lord’s coming (^{<STR>}1 Thessalonians 4:15), and so of having their mortal body absorbed into the immortal without death. Faith does not divest us of all natural feeling, but subordinates it to higher feeling. Scripture gives no sanction to the contempt for the body expressed by philosophers.

5. wrought us — framed us by redemption, justification, and sanctification.

for the selfsame thing — “unto” it; namely, unto what is mortal of us being swallowed up in life (^{<STR>}2 Corinthians 5:4).

who also — The oldest manuscripts omit “also.”

earnest of the Spirit — (See on ^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 1:22). It is the Spirit (as “the first-fruits”) who creates in us the groaning desire for our coming deliverance and glory (^{<4023>}Romans 8:23).

6. Translate as *Greek*, “Being therefore always confident and knowing,” etc. He had intended to have made the verb to this nominative, “we are willing” (rather, “well content”), but digressing on the word “confident” (^{<4016>}2 Corinthians 5:6,7), he resumes the word in a different form, namely, as an assertion: “We are confident and well content.” “Being confident ... we are confident” may be the *Hebraic* idiom of emphasis; as ^{<4073>}Acts 7:34, *Greek*, “Having seen, I have seen,” that is, I have *surely seen*.

always — under all trials. BENGEL makes the contrast between “*always* confident” and “confident” especially at the prospect of being “absent from the body.” We are confident as well *at all times*, as also most of all in the hope of a blessed departure.

whilst ... at home ... absent — Translate as *Greek*, “While we sojourn *in our home* in the body, we are *away from our home* in the Lord.” The image from a “house” is retained (compare ^{<4011>}Philippians 3:20 ^{<40113>}Hebrews 11:13-16 13:14).

7. **we walk** — in our Christian course here on earth.

not by sight — *Greek*, “not by appearance.” Our life is governed by faith in our immortal hope; not by the outward specious *appearance* of present things [TITTMANN, *Greek Synonyms of the New Testament*]. Compare “apparently,” the *Septuagint*, “by appearance,” ^{<40118>}Numbers 12:8. WAHL supports *English Version*. ^{<4018>}2 Corinthians 4:18 also confirms it (compare ^{<4023>}Romans 8:24 ^{<4032>}1 Corinthians 13:12,13). God has appointed in this life *faith* for our great duty, and in the next, vision for our reward [SOUTH] (^{<4018>}Peter 1:8).

8. **willing** — literally, “well content.” Translate also, “To go (literally, *migrate*) from our home in the body, and to come to our home with the Lord.” We should prefer to be found alive at the Lord’s coming, and to be clothed upon with our heavenly body (^{<4016>}2 Corinthians 5:2-4). But feeling, as we do, the sojourn in the body to be a separation from our true home “with the Lord,” we prefer even dissolution by death, so that *in the*

intermediate disembodied state we may go to be “with the Lord” (^{<302>}Philippians 1:23). “To be with Christ” (the disembodied state) is distinguished from Christ’s coming to take us to *be with Him* in soul and body (^{<304>}1 Thessalonians 4:14-17, “with the Lord”). Perhaps the disembodied spirits of believers have fullness of communion *with Christ* unseen; but not the mutual recognition of one another, until clothed with their visible bodies at the resurrection (compare ^{<303>}1 Thessalonians 4:13:17), when they shall with joy recognize Christ’s image in each other perfect.

9. Wherefore — with such a sure “confidence” of being blessed, whether we die before, or be found alive at Christ’s coming.

we labor — literally, “make it our ambition”; the only lawful ambition.

whether present or absent — whether we be found at His coming present in the body, or absent from it.

accepted — *Greek*, “well-pleasing.”

10. appear — rather, “be made manifest,” namely, in our true character. So “appear,” *Greek*, “be manifested” (^{<504>}Colossians 3:4; compare ^{<605>}1 Corinthians 4:5). We are at all times, even now, manifest to God; *then* we shall be so to the assembled intelligent universe and to ourselves: for the judgment shall be not only in order to assign the everlasting portion to each, but to vindicate God’s righteousness, so that it shall be manifest to all His creatures, and even to the conscience of the sinner himself.

receive — His reward of grace proportioned to “the things done,” etc. (^{<402>}2 Corinthians 9:6-9 ^{<608>}2 John 1:8). Though salvation be of grace purely, independent of works, the saved may have a greater or less *reward*, according as he lives to, and labors for, Christ more or less. Hence there is scope for the holy “ambition” (see on ^{<402>}2 Corinthians 5:9; ^{<300>}Hebrews 6:10). This verse guards against the Corinthians supposing that *all* share in the house “from heaven” (^{<402>}2 Corinthians 5:1,2). There shall be a searching judgment which shall sever the bad from the good, according to their respective deeds, the *motive* of the deeds being taken into account, not the mere external act; faith and love to God are the sole motives recognized by God as sound and good (^{<423>}Matthew 12:36,37 25:35-45),

done in his body — The *Greek* may be, “by the instrumentality of the body”; but *English Version* is legitimate (compare *Greek*, ^{<427>}Romans 2:27). Justice requires that *substantially the same* body which has been the instrument of the unbelievers’ sin, should be the object of punishment. A proof of the essential identity of the natural and the resurrection body.

11. terror of the Lord — the coming judgment, so full of terrors to unbelievers [ESTIUS]. ELLICOTT and ALFORD, after GROTIUS and BENDEL, translate, “The fear of the Lord” (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 7:1 ^{<412>}Ecclesiastes 12:13 ^{<431>}Acts 9:31 ^{<438>}Romans 3:18 ^{<452>}Ephesians 5:21).

persuade — Ministers should use the terrors of the Lord to *persuade* men, not to rouse their enmity (^{<412>}Jude 1:23). BENDEL, ESTIUS, and ALFORD explain: “Persuade men” (by our whole lives, ^{<431>}2 Corinthians 5:13), namely, of our integrity as ministers. But this would have been expressed after “persuade,” had it been the sense. The connection seems as follows: He had been accused of seeking to please and win men, he therefore says (compare ^{<411>}Galatians 1:10), “It is as knowing the terror (or *fear*) of the Lord that we persuade men; but (whether *men* who hear our preaching recognize our sincerity or not) we are made manifest unto God as acting on such motives (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 4:2); and I trust also in your consciences.” Those so “manifested” need have no “terror” as to their being “manifested (*English Version*, ‘appear’) before the judgment-seat” (^{<431>}2 Corinthians 5:10).

12. For — the reason why he leaves the manifestation of his sincerity in preaching to their consciences (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 3:1), namely, his not wishing to “commend” himself again.

occasion to glory — (^{<414>}2 Corinthians 1:14), namely, as to our sincerity.

in appearance — *Greek*, “face” (compare ^{<401>}1 Samuel 16:7). The false teachers gloried in their *outward appearance*, and in external recommendations (^{<418>}2 Corinthians 11:18) their learning, eloquence, wisdom, riches, not in vital religion in their *heart*. Their conscience does not attest their inward sincerity, as mine does (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 1:12).

13. be — rather as *Greek*, “have been.” The contrast is between the single act implied by the past tense, “If we *have ever been* beside ourselves,” and

the habitual state implied by the present, “Or whether we *be* sober,” that is, *of sound mind*. beside ourselves — The accusation brought by Festus against him (^{<404>}Acts 26:24). The holy enthusiasm with which he spake of what God effected by His apostolic ministry, seemed to many to be *boasting madness*.

sober — humbling myself before you, and not using my apostolic power and privileges.

to God ... for your cause — The glorifying of his office was not for his own, but for God’s glory. The abasing of himself was in adaptation to their infirmity, to gain them to Christ (^{<402>}1 Corinthians 9:22).

14. For — Accounting for his being “beside himself” with enthusiasm: the love of Christ towards us (in His death for us, the highest proof of it, ^{<405>}Romans 5:6-8), producing in turn love in us to Him, and not mere “terror” (^{<401>}2 Corinthians 5:11).

constraineth us — with irresistible power *limits* us to the one great object to the exclusion of other considerations. The *Greek* implies *to compress forcibly* the energies into one channel. Love is *jealous* of any rival object engrossing the soul (^{<402>}2 Corinthians 11:1-3).

because we thus judge — literally, “(as) having judged thus”; implying a judgment formed at conversion, and ever since regarded as a settled truth.

that if — that is, that *since*. But the oldest manuscripts omit “if.” “That one died for all (*Greek*, ‘in behalf of all’).” Thus the following clause will be, “Therefore all (literally, ‘*the* all,’ namely, for whom He ‘died’) died.” *His* dying is just the same as if *they all died*; and in their so dying, they died to sin and self, that they might live to God their Redeemer, whose henceforth they are (^{<406>}Romans 6:2-11 ^{<402>}Galatians 2:20 ^{<403>}Colossians 3:3 ^{<404>}1 Peter 4:1-3).

15. they which live — in the present life (^{<401>}2 Corinthians 4:11, “we which live”) [ALFORD]; or, they who are thus indebted to Him for life of soul as well as body [MENOCHIUS].

died for them — He does not add, “rose again for them,” a phrase not found in Paul’s language [BENGEL]. He died *in their stead*, He arose again

for their good, “for (the effecting of) their justification” (⁶¹⁰²Romans 4:25), and that He might be their Lord (⁶¹⁴⁷Romans 14:7-9). ELLICOTT and ALFORD join “for them” with both “died” and “rose again”; as Christ’s death is *our death*, so His resurrection is *our resurrection*; *Greek*, “Who for them died and rose again.”

not henceforth — *Greek*, “no longer”; namely, now that His death for them has taken place, and that they know that His death saves them from death eternal, and His resurrection life brings spiritual and everlasting life to them.

16. Wherefore — because of our settled *judgment* (⁶¹⁵⁴2 Corinthians 5:14),

henceforth — since our knowing Christ’s constraining love in His death for us.

know we no man after the flesh — that is, according to his mere worldly and external relations (⁶¹¹⁸2 Corinthians 11:18 ⁶¹⁸⁵John 8:15 ⁶¹⁰⁰Philippians 3:4), as distinguished from what he is *according to the Spirit*, as a “new creature” (⁶¹⁵⁷2 Corinthians 5:17). For instance, the outward distinctions of Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, slave or free, learned or unlearned, are lost sight of in the higher life of those who are dead in Christ’s death, and alive with Him in the new life of His resurrection (⁶¹⁸⁶Galatians 2:6 3:28).

yea, though — The oldest manuscripts read, “if even.”

known Christ after the flesh — Paul when a Jew had looked for a temporal reigning, not a spiritual, Messiah. (He says “Christ,” not *Jesus*: for he had not known personally Jesus in the days of His flesh, but he had looked for Christ or the Messiah). When once he was converted he no longer “conferred with flesh and blood” (⁶¹¹⁶Galatians 1:16). He had this advantage over the Twelve, that as one born out of due time he had never known Christ save in His heavenly life. To the Twelve it was “expedient that Christ should go away” that the Comforter should come, and so they might know Christ in the higher spiritual aspect and in His new life-giving power, and not merely “after the flesh,” in the carnal aspect of Him (⁶¹⁰⁰Romans 6:9-11 ⁶¹⁵⁵1 Corinthians 15:45 ⁶¹⁸⁸1 Peter 3:18 4:1,2). Doubtless Judaizing Christians at Corinth prided themselves on the mere fleshly (⁶¹¹⁸2 Corinthians 11:18) advantage of their belonging to Israel, the nation of

Christ, or on their having seen Him in the flesh, and thence claimed superiority over others as having a nearer connection with Him (^{<402>}2 Corinthians 5:12 ^{<407>}2 Corinthians 10:7). Paul here shows the true aim should be to know Him spiritually as new creatures (^{<405>}2 Corinthians 5:15,17), and that outward relations towards Him profit nothing (^{<408>}Luke 18:19-21 ^{<407>}John 16:7,22 ^{<408>}Philippians 3:3-10). This is at variance with both Romish Mariolatry and transubstantiation. Two distinct *Greek* verbs are used here for “know”; the first (“*know* we no man”) means “to be personally acquainted with”; the latter (“known Christ ... know ... more”) is to *recognize*, or estimate. Paul’s *estimate* of Christ, or the expected Messiah, was carnal, but is so now no more.

17. Therefore — connected with the words in ^{<406>}2 Corinthians 5:16, “We know Christ no more after the flesh.” As Christ has entered on His new heavenly life by His resurrection and ascension, so all who are “in Christ” (that is, united to Him by faith as the branch is In the vine) are new creatures (^{<409>}Romans 6:9-11). “New” in the *Greek* implies a new nature quite different from anything previously existing, not merely *recent*, which is expressed by a different *Greek* word (^{<405>}Galatians 6:15).

creature — literally, “creation,” and so the *creature* resulting from the creation (compare ^{<408>}John 3:3,5 ^{<409>}Ephesians 2:10 4:23 ^{<409>}Colossians 3:10,11). As we are “in Christ,” so “God was in Christ” (^{<405>}2 Corinthians 5:19):hence He is Mediator between God and us.

old things — selfish, carnal views (compare ^{<406>}2 Corinthians 5:16) of ourselves, of other men, and of Christ.

passed away — spontaneously, like the snow of early spring [BENGEL] before the advancing sun.

behold — implying an allusion to ^{<286>}Isaiah 43:19 65:17.

18. all — *Greek*, “THE.”

things — all our privileges in this new creation (^{<405>}2 Corinthians 5:14,15).

reconciled us — that is, *restored us* (“the world,” ^{<405>}2 Corinthians 5:19) *to His favor* by satisfying the claims of justice against us. Our position judicially considered in the eye of the law is altered, not as though the

mediation of Christ had made a change in God's character, nor as if the love of God was produced by the mediation of Christ; nay, the mediation and sacrifice of Christ was the provision of God's love, not its moving cause (⁽⁴¹⁸²⁾Romans 8:32). Christ's blood was the price paid at the expense of God Himself, and was required to reconcile the exercise of mercy with justice, not as separate, but as the eternally harmonious attributes in the one and the same God (⁽⁴¹⁸²⁾Romans 3:25,26). The *Greek* "reconcile" is *reciprocally* used as in the *Hebrew* Hithpahel conjugation, *appease, obtain the favor of*. ⁽⁴¹⁸²⁾Matthew 5:24, "Be reconciled to thy brother"; that is, take measures that he be reconciled to thee, as well as thou to him, as the context proves. *Diallagethi*, however (⁽⁴¹⁸²⁾Matthew 5:24), implying *mutual* reconciliation, is distinct from *Katallagethi* here, the latter referring to the *change* of status wrought in *one* of the two parties. The manner of God reconciling the world to Himself is implied (⁽⁴¹⁸²⁾2 Corinthians 5:19), namely, by His "not imputing their trespasses to them." God not merely, as subsequently, reconciles the world by inducing them to lay aside their enmity, but in the first instance, does so by satisfying His own justice and righteous enmity against sin (⁽⁴¹⁸²⁾Psalms 7:11). Compare ⁽⁴¹⁸²⁾1 Samuel 29:4, "Reconcile himself unto his master"; not remove his own anger against his master, but his master's against him [ARCHBISHOP MAGEE, *Atonement*]. The reconciling of *men to God* by their laying aside their enmity is the consequence of God laying aside His just enmity against their sin, and follows at ⁽⁴¹⁸²⁾2 Corinthians 5:20.

to us — ministers (⁽⁴¹⁸²⁾2 Corinthians 5:19,20).

19. God was in Christ, reconciling — that is, God was BY Christ (*in virtue of Christ's intervention*) reconciling," etc. Was reconciling" implies the time when the act of reconciliation was being carried into effect (⁽⁴¹⁸²⁾2 Corinthians 5:21), namely, when "God made Jesus, who knew no sin, to be sin for us." The compound of "was" and the participle "reconciling," instead of the imperfect (*Greek*), may also imply the *continuous* purpose of God, from before the foundation of the world, to reconcile man to Himself, whose fall was foreseen. The expression "IN Christ" for "by Christ" may be used to imply *additionally* that God was IN Christ (⁽⁴¹⁸²⁾John 10:38 14:10), and so by Christ (the God-man) was reconciling ... The *Greek* for "by" or "through" Christ (the best manuscripts omit "Jesus"), ⁽⁴¹⁸²⁾2 Corinthians 5:18, is different. "In" must mean here *in the*

person of Christ. The *Greek Katallasson* implies “changing” or *altering* the judicial status from one of condemnation to one of justification. The *atonement* (*at-one-ment*), or *reconciliation*, is the removal of the bar to peace and acceptance with a holy God, which His righteousness interposed against our sin. The first step towards restoring peace between us and God was on God’s side (⁴⁸¹⁶John 3:16). The *change* therefore *now* to be effected must be on the part of offending man, God the offended One being already reconciled. It is man, not God, who now needs to be reconciled, and to lay aside his enmity against God (⁴⁸¹⁵Romans 5:10,11). (“We have *received the atonement*” [*Greek, reconciliation*], cannot mean “We have received the laying aside of *our own* enmity”). Compare ⁴⁸¹⁴Romans 3:24,25.

the world — all men (⁵¹⁰⁰Colossians 1:20 ⁴⁸¹¹1 John 2:2). The *manner* of the reconciling is by His “not imputing to men their trespasses,” but imputing them to Christ the Sin-bearer. There is no incongruity that a father should be offended with that son whom he loveth, and at that time offended with him when he loveth him. So, though God loved men whom He created, yet He was offended with them when they sinned, and gave His Son to suffer for them, that through that Son’s obedience He might be reconciled to them (reconcile them to Himself, that is, restore them WITH JUSTICE to His favor) [BISHOP PEARSON, *Exposition of the Creed*].

hath committed unto us — *Greek*, “hath put into our hands.” “Us,” that is, ministers.

20. for Christ ... in Christ’s stead — The *Greek* of both is the same: translate in both cases “on Christ’s behalf.”

beseech ... pray — rather, “entreat [plead with you] ... beseech.” Such “beseeching” is uncommon in the case of “ambassadors,” who generally stand on their dignity (compare ⁴⁷¹⁰2 Corinthians 10:2 ⁴⁸¹⁶1 Thessalonians 2:6,7).

be ye reconciled to God — *English Version* here inserts “ye,” which is not in the original, and which gives the wrong impression, as if it were emphatic thus: *God* is reconciled to you, be ye reconciled to God. The *Greek* expresses rather, God was the RECONCILER in Christ ... let this

reconciliation then have its designed effect. *Be reconciled to God*, that is, let God reconcile you to Himself (^{<458>}2 Corinthians 5:18,19).

21. For — omitted in the oldest manuscripts. The grand reason why they should be reconciled to God, namely, the great atonement in Christ provided by God, is stated without the “for” as being part of *the message of reconciliation* (^{<459>}2 Corinthians 5:19).

he — God.

sin — not a *sin offering*, which would destroy the antithesis to “righteousness,” and would make “sin” be used in different senses in the same sentence: not a *sinful person*, which would be untrue, and would require in the antithesis “righteous men,” not “righteousness”; but “sin,” that is, the representative *Sin-bearer* (vicariously) of *the aggregate sin* of all men past, present, and future. The sin of the world is one, therefore the *singular*, not the *plural*, is used; though its *manifestations* are manifold (^{<462>}John 1:29). “Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the SIN of the world.” Compare “made a curse for us,” ^{<463>}Galatians 3:13.

for us — *Greek*, “in our behalf.” Compare ^{<464>}John 3:14, Christ being represented by the brazen *serpent*, the *form*, but not the *substance*, of the old serpent. At His death on the cross the sin-bearing for us was consummated.

knew no sin — by personal experience (^{<486>}John 8:46) [ALFORD].
^{<372>}Hebrews 7:26 ^{<402>}1 Peter 2:22 ^{<485>}1 John 3:5.

might be made — not the same *Greek* as the previous “made.” Rather, “might become.”

the righteousness of God — Not merely righteous, but *righteousness* itself; not merely righteousness, but the *righteousness of God*, because Christ is God, and what He is we are (^{<647>}1 John 4:17), and He is “made of God unto us righteousness.” As our sin is made over to Him, so His righteousness to us (in His having fulfilled all the righteousness of the law for us all, as our representative, ^{<236>}Jeremiah 23:6 ^{<413>}1 Corinthians 1:30). The innocent was punished voluntarily as if guilty, that the guilty might be gratuitously rewarded as if innocent (^{<404>}1 Peter 2:24). “Such are we in the sight of God the Father, as is the very Son of God himself” [HOOKER].

in him — by virtue of our standing in Him, and in union with Him
[ALFORD].

CHAPTER 6

2 CORINTHIANS 6:1-18.

HIS APOSTOLIC MINISTRY IS APPROVED BY FAITHFULNESS IN EXHORTATION, IN SUFFERINGS, IN EXHIBITION OF THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY GHOST: HIS largeness of heart to them calls for enlargement of their heart to him. EXHORTATIONS TO SEPARATION FROM POLLUTION.

1. workers together — with God (⁴⁴⁵⁰⁴Acts 15:4 ⁴⁴⁰⁰¹1 Corinthians 3:9). Not only as “ambassadors.”

beseech — entreat (⁴⁴⁵⁰²2 Corinthians 5:20). He is describing his ministry, not exhorting directly.

you also — rather, “WE ALSO (as well as God, ⁴⁴⁵⁰²2 Corinthians 5:20) beseech” or “entreat you”: ⁴⁴⁰¹⁴2 Corinthians 6:14,15, on to ⁴⁴⁰⁰²2 Corinthians 7:1, is part of this entreaty or exhortation.

in vain — by making the grace of God a ground for continuance in sin (⁴⁴⁰⁰²2 Corinthians 6:3). By a life of sin, showing that the word of reconciliation has been *in vain*, so far as you are concerned (⁸⁰²¹⁵Hebrews 12:15 ⁴⁴⁰⁰⁴Jude 1:4). “The grace of God” here, is “the reconciliation” provided by God’s love (⁴⁴⁵⁰²2 Corinthians 5:18,19; compare ⁴⁴⁰⁰²Galatians 2:2).

2. For — God’s own promise is the ground of our exhortation.

he saith — *God the Father* saith to *God the Son*, and so to all believers who are regarded as one with Him.

heard thee — In the eternal purposes of my love I have hearkened to thy prayer for the salvation of thy people (compare ⁴⁴⁰⁰⁹John 17:9,15,20,24).

accepted ... accepted — The *Greek* of the latter is more emphatic, “well-accepted.” What was “*an accepted time*” in the prophecy (²³⁰⁰⁸Isaiah 49:8,

Hebrew, “in the season of grace”) becomes “*the well-accepted time*” in the fulfillment (compare ^{<4943>}Psalm 69:13). As it is *God’s* time of *receiving* sinners, *receive ye* His grace: *accept* (^{<4001>}2 Corinthians 6:1) the word of reconciliation in His *accepted* time.

in the day of salvation — “in *a* day of salvation” (^{<4005>}Luke 4:18,19,21 19:42 ^{<4007>}Hebrews 3:7).

3. Resuming the connection with ^{<4001>}2 Corinthians 6:1, interrupted by the parenthetical ^{<4002>}2 Corinthians 6:2. “Giving no offense” (compare ^{<4301>}1 Corinthians 10:33), “approving ourselves,” and all the other participles down to ^{<4003>}2 Corinthians 6:10, are nominatives to “we also entreat you” (^{<4002>}2 Corinthians 6:1), to show the pains he took to enforce his exhortation by example, as well as precept [ALFORD]. “Offense” would be given, if we were without “patience” and the other qualifications which he therefore subjoins (compare ^{<4543>}Romans 14:13).

4. Translate, to mark the true order of the *Greek* words, “in everything, as God’s ministers recommending ourselves,” that is, that our hearers may give our *message* a favorable hearing, through our consistency in every respect, not that they may glorify us. Alluding to ^{<4001>}2 Corinthians 3:1, he implies, *We commend ourselves*, not like them by word, but by deed.

patience — (^{<4022>}2 Corinthians 12:12). Put first. “Pure-minded” follows (^{<4006>}2 Corinthians 6:6). Three triplets of trials exercising the “patience” (patient endurance) follow: Afflictions (or “tribulations”), necessities, distresses (or “straits”); stripes, imprisonments, tumults; labors, watchings, fastings. The first triplet expresses afflictions generally; the second, those in particular arising from the violence of men; the third, those *which* he brought on himself directly or indirectly.

5. **stripes** — (^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 11:23,24 ^{<4162>}Acts 16:23).

imprisonments — (^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 11:23). He had been, doubtless, elsewhere imprisoned besides at Philippi when he wrote this Epistle.

tumults — (^{<4151>}Acts 13:50 14:5,19 16:22; and recently ^{<4123>}Acts 19:23-41).

labors — in the cause of Christ (^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 11:23 ^{<4562>}Romans 16:12).

watchings — (^{<4012>}2 Corinthians 11:27). Sleepless nights.

fastings — The context here refers to his *trials*, rather than *devotional exercises* (compare ^{<412>}2 Corinthians 11:27). Thus “foodlessness” would seem to be the sense (compare ^{<404>}1 Corinthians 4:11 ^{<404>}Philippians 4:12). But the usual sense of the *Greek* is *fasts*, in the strict sense; and in ^{<412>}2 Corinthians 11:27 it is spoken of independently of “hunger and thirst.” (Compare ^{<423>}Luke 2:37 ^{<403>}Acts 10:30 14:23). However, ^{<463>}Matthew 15:32 ^{<403>}Mark 8:3, justify the sense, more favored by the context, *foodlessness*, though a rare use of the word. GAUSSEN remarks “The apostles combine the highest offices with the humblest exterior: as everything in the Church was to be cast in the mould of death and resurrection, the cardinal principle throughout Christianity.”

6. By ... by, etc. — rather, as *Greek*, “In ... in,” implying not the instrument, but the sphere or element in which his ministry moved.

knowledge — spiritual: in Gospel mysteries, unattainable by mere reason (^{<404>}1 Corinthians 2:6-16 ^{<402>}2 Corinthians 3:6,17,18).

long-suffering ... kindness — associated with “charity” or “love” (^{<434>}1 Corinthians 13:4), as here.

by the Holy Ghost — in virtue of His influences which produce these graces, and other gifts, “love unfeigned” being the foremost of them.

7. By the word of truth, by the power of God — rather, “IN ... in,” etc. As to “the word of truth” (compare ^{<402>}2 Corinthians 4:2 ^{<500>}Colossians 1:5), and “the (miraculous) power of God” (^{<402>}2 Corinthians 4:7); ^{<404>}1 Corinthians 2:4, “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”

by the armor — *Greek*, “through” or “by means of the armor.” “Righteousness,” which is the *breastplate* alone in ^{<403>}Ephesians 6:13-17, here is made the *whole* Christian panoply (compare ^{<402>}2 Corinthians 10:4).

on ... right ... and ... left — that is, guarding on every side.

8. Translate, “*Through glory and dishonor (disgrace)*,” namely, from *those in authority*, and accruing to us *present*. “By,” or “*through evil report and good report*,” from *the multitude*, and affecting us absent [BENJEL]. Regarded “as deceivers” by those who, *not knowing* (^{<402>}2 Corinthians 6:9), *dishonor* and give us an *evil report*; “as true,” by those who “know” (^{<402>}

Corinthians 6:9) us in the real “glory” of our ministry. In proportion as one has more or less of *glory* and *good report*, in that degree has he more or less of *dishonor* and *evil report*.

9. unknown ... yet well known — “unknown” in our true character to those who “evil report” of us, “well known” to those who hold us in “good report” (2 Corinthians 6:8). CONYBEARE explains, “Unknown by men, yet *acknowledged by God*” (1 Corinthians 13:12). Perhaps *both God and men* (believers) are intended as knowing him (2 Corinthians 5:11 11:6).

dying ... live — (2 Corinthians 1:9 4:10,11 11:23). Compare GAUSSEN’S remark, see on 2 Corinthians 6:5. “Behold” calls attention to the fact as something beyond all expectation.

chastened ... not killed — realizing Psalm 118:18.

10. The “as” no longer is used to express the opinion of his adversaries, but the real state of him and his fellow laborers.

making many rich — Spiritually (1 Corinthians 1:5), after the example of our Lord, who “by His poverty made many rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

having nothing — Whatever of earthly goods we have, and these are few, we have as though we had not; as tenants removable at will, not owners (1 Corinthians 7:30).

possessing all things — The *Greek* implies *firm possession, holding fast in possession* (compare 1 Corinthians 3:21,22). The things both of the present and of the future are, in the truest sense, the believer’s in possession, for he possesses them all in Christ, his lasting possession, though the full *fruition* of them is reserved for the future eternity.

11. mouth ... open unto you — I use no concealment, such as some at Corinth have insinuated (2 Corinthians 4:2). I use all freedom and openness of speech to you as to beloved friends. Hence he introduces here, “O Corinthians” (compare Philippians 4:15). The *enlargement* of his *heart* towards them (2 Corinthians 7:3) produced his *openness* of *mouth*, that is, his unreserved expression of his inmost feelings. As an unloving man is *narrow* in heart, so the apostle’s heart is *enlarged* by love,

so as to take in his converts at Corinth, not only with their graces, but with their many shortcomings (compare ^{<100>}1 Kings 4:29 ^{<113>}Psalms 119:32 ^{<205>}Isaiah 60:5).

12. Any constraint ye feel towards me, or narrowness of heart, is not from want of largeness of heart on my part towards you, but from want of it on your part towards me.

bowels — that is, affections (compare ^{<725>}2 Corinthians 12:15).

not straitened in us — that is, for want of room in our hearts to take you in.

13. Translate, “As a recompense in the same kind ... be enlarged also yourselves” [ELLICOTT]. “In the same way” as my heart is enlarged towards you (^{<111>}2 Corinthians 6:11), and “as a recompense” for it (^{<112>}Galatians 4:12).

I speak as unto *my* children — as children would naturally be expected to *recompense* their parents’ love with similar love.

14. Be not — *Greek*, “*Become not.*”

unequally yoked — “yoked with one alien in spirit.” The image is from the symbolical precept of the law (^{<119>}Leviticus 19:19), “Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind”; or the precept (^{<120>}Deuteronomy 22:10), “Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together.” Compare ^{<103>}Deuteronomy 7:3, forbidding marriages with the heathen; also ^{<113>}1 Corinthians 7:39. The believer and unbeliever are utterly *heterogeneous*. Too close intercourse with unbelievers in other relations also is included (^{<116>}2 Corinthians 6:16 ^{<118>}1 Corinthians 8:10 10:14).

fellowship — literally, “share,” or “participation.”

righteousness — the state of the believer, justified by faith.

unrighteousness — rather, as always translated elsewhere, “iniquity”; the state of the unbeliever, the fruit of unbelief.

light — of which believers are the children (^{<115>}1 Thessalonians 5:5).

15. Belial — *Hebrew*, “worthlessness, unprofitableness, wickedness.” As Satan is opposed to God, and Antichrist to Christ; Belial being here opposed to Christ, must denounce all manner of Antichristian uncleanness [BENGEL].

he that believeth with an infidel — Translate, “a believer with an unbeliever.”

16. agreement — accordance of sentiments (compare ^{<1182>}1 Kings 18:21 ^{<407>}Ephesians 5:7,11).

the temple of God — that is, you believers (^{<406>}1 Corinthians 3:16 6:19).

with idols — Compare Dagon before the ark (^{<407>}1 Samuel 5:2-4).

as — “*even as* God said.” Quotation from ^{<632>}Leviticus 26:12 ^{<2633>}Jeremiah 31:33 32:38 ^{<4572>}Ezekiel 37:26,27; compare ^{<481>}Matthew 28:20 ^{<642>}John 14:23.

walk in them — rather, “*among* them.” As “*dwel*l” implies the divine *presence*, so “*walk*,” the divine *operation*. God’s dwelling in the body and soul of saints may be illustrated by its opposite, demoniacal possession of body and soul.

my people — rather, “they shall be *to me* a people.”

17. Quoted from ^{<2511>}Isaiah 52:11, with the freedom of one inspired, who gives variations sanctioned by the Holy Spirit.

be ye separate — “be separated” (^{<3017>}Hosea 4:17).

touch not the unclean thing — rather, “*anything* unclean” (^{<4002>}2 Corinthians 7:1 ^{<3201>}Micah 2:10). *Touching* is more polluting, as implying participation, than seeing.

receive you — The *Greek* implies, “to myself”; as persons heretofore out of doors, but now admitted *within* (^{<4011>}2 Corinthians 5:1-10). With this accords the clause, “*Come out from among* them,” namely, so as to be received to me. So ^{<3504>}Ezekiel 20:41, “I will accept you”; and ^{<3609>}Zephaniah 3:19, “gather her that was driven out.” “The intercourse of believers with the world should resemble that of angels, who, when they have been sent a message from heaven, discharge their office with the utmost promptness,

and joyfully fly back home to the presence of God” (^{<40ES>}1 Corinthians 7:31 5:9,10).

18. Translate, “I will be to you *in the relation of* a Father, and ye shall be *to me in the relation of* sons and daughters.” This is a still more endearing relation than (^{<41R6>}2 Corinthians 6:16), “I will be their *God*, and they ... My *people*.” Compare the promise to Solomon (^{<43R6>}1 Chronicles 28:6 ^{<23R6>}Isaiah 43:6 ^{<62R6>}Revelation 21:3,7 ^{<23R1>}Jeremiah 31:1,9).

Lord Almighty — *The Lord the Universal Ruler*: nowhere else found but in Revelation. The greatness of the Promiser enhances the greatness of the promises.

CHAPTER 7

2 CORINTHIANS 7:1-16.

SELF-PURIFICATION THEIR DUTY RESULTING FROM THE FOREGOING. HIS LOVE TO THEM, AND JOY AT THE GOOD EFFECTS ON THEM OF HIS FORMER EPISTLE, AS REPORTED BY TITUS.

1. cleanse ourselves — This is the conclusion of the exhortation (⁴⁰⁰2 Corinthians 6:1,14 ⁴¹⁸1 John 3:3 ⁴²¹Revelation 22:11).

filthiness — “the unclean thing” (⁴⁶⁷2 Corinthians 6:17).

of the flesh — for instance, *fornication*, prevalent at Corinth (⁴⁸⁵1 Corinthians 6:15-18).

and spirit — for instance, *idolatry*, direct or indirect (⁴⁸⁹1 Corinthians 6:9 8:1,7 10:7,21,22). The spirit (⁴⁸⁹Psalm 32:2) receives pollution through the flesh, the instrument of uncleanness.

perfecting holiness — The *cleansing away* impurity is a positive step towards holiness (⁴⁶⁷2 Corinthians 6:17). It is not enough to begin; the end crowns the work (⁴⁸⁸Galatians 3:3 5:7 ⁴⁰⁰Philippians 1:6).

fear of God — often conjoined with the consideration of the most glorious promises (⁴⁸⁵2 Corinthians 5:11 ⁴⁰⁰Hebrews 4:1). Privilege and promise go hand in hand.

2. Receive us — with *enlarged* hearts (⁴⁸³2 Corinthians 6:13).

we have wronged ... corrupter ... defrauded no man — (compare ⁴⁰⁰2 Corinthians 7:9). This is the ground on which he asks their reception of (making room for) him in their hearts. We *wronged* none by an undue exercise of apostolic authority; ⁴⁰³2 Corinthians 7:13 gives an instance in point. We have corrupted none, namely, by beguilements and flatteries, while preaching “another Gospel,” as the false teachers did (⁴¹³2

Corinthians 11:3,4). We have defrauded none by “making a gain” of you (^{<427>}2 Corinthians 12:17). Modestly he leaves them to supply the *positive* good which he had done; suffering all things himself that they might be benefited (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 7:9,12 ^{<423>}2 Corinthians 12:13).

3. In excusing myself, I do not accuse you, as though you suspected me of such things [MENOCHIUS], or as though you were guilty of such things; for I speak only of the false apostles [ESTIUS and *Greek commentators*]. Rather, “as though you were ungrateful and treacherous” [BEZA].

I have said before — in ^{<461>}2 Corinthians 6:11,12; compare ^{<500>}Philippians 1:7.

die and live with you — the height of friendship. I am ready to die and live with you and for you (^{<500>}Philippians 1:7,20,24 2:17,18). Compare as to Christ, ^{<601>}John 10:11.

4. boldness of speech — (compare ^{<461>}2 Corinthians 6:11).

glorying of you — Not only do I speak with unreserved openness *to you*, but I *glory* (boast) *greatly to others in your behalf*, in speaking *of you*.

filled with comfort — at the report of Titus (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 7:6,7,9,13 ^{<400>}2 Corinthians 1:4).

exceeding joyful — *Greek*, I *overabound* with joy (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 7:7,9,16).

our tribulation — described in ^{<400>}2 Corinthians 7:5; also in ^{<400>}2 Corinthians 4:7,8 6:4,5.

5. *Greek*, “For also” (for “*even*”). This verse is thus connected with ^{<423>}2 Corinthians 2:12,13, “When I came to Troas, I had no rest in my *spirit*”; so “*also*” now, when I came to Macedonia, my “*flesh*” had no rest (he, by the term “*flesh*,” excepts his *spiritual* consolations) from “*fightings*” with adversaries “*without*” (^{<452>}1 Corinthians 5:12), and from fears for the Corinthian believers “*within*” the Church, owing to “*false brethren*” (^{<423>}2 Corinthians 11:26). Compare ^{<400>}2 Corinthians 4:8 ^{<625>}Deuteronomy 32:25, to which he seems to allude.

6. Translate in the order required by the *Greek*, “But he that comforteth those that are cast down, even God.” Those that are of an high spirit are not susceptible of such comfort.

7. **when he told us** — *Greek*, “telling us.” We shared in the comfort which Titus felt in recording your desire (⁴⁰⁰³2 Corinthians 7:13). *He* rejoiced in telling the news; *we* in hearing them [ALFORD].

earnest desire — *Greek*, “longing desire,” namely, *to see me* [GROTIUS]; or, in general, *towards me, to please me*.

mourning — over your own remissness in not having immediately punished the sin (⁴⁰⁰¹1 Corinthians 5:1, etc.). which called forth my rebuke.

fervent mind — *Greek*, “zeal” (compare ⁴⁰⁰²2 Corinthians 7:1 ⁴⁰⁰⁷1 John 2:17).

toward me — *Greek*, “for me”; for my sake. They *in Paul’s behalf* showed the zeal against the sin which Paul would have shown had he been present.

rejoiced the more — more than before, at the mere coming of Titus.

8. **with a letter** — *Greek*, “in the letter” namely, the first Epistle to the Corinthians.

I do not repent, though I did repent — Translate, “I do not *regret* it, though I did *regret* it.” The *Greek* words for *regret* and *repent* are distinct. Paul was almost regretting, through parental tenderness, his having used rebukes calculated to grieve the Corinthians; but now that he has learned from Titus the salutary effect produced on them, he no longer regrets it.

for I perceive, etc. — This is explanatory of “I did repent” or “regret it,” and is parenthetical (“for I perceive *that* that Epistle did make you sorry, though it was but for a season”).

9. **Now I rejoice** — Whereas “I did repent” or regret having made you sorry by my letter, I rejoice NOW, not that ye were caused sorrow, but that your sorrow resulted in your repentance.

ye sorrowed — rather, as before, “ye were made sorry.”

after a godly manner — literally, “according to God,” that is, your sorrow having regard to God, and rendering your mind conformable to God (^{<4102>}Romans 14:22 ^{<4106>}1 Peter 4:6).

that — Translate in *Greek* order, “to the end that (compare ^{<4109>}2 Corinthians 11:9) ye might in nothing receive damage from us,” which ye would have received, had your sorrow been other than that “after a godly manner” (^{<4102>}2 Corinthians 7:10).

10. worketh ... worketh — In the best *Greek* reading the translation is, “worketh (simply) ... worketh out.” “Sorrow” is not repentance, but, where it is “godly,” “worketh” it; that is, *contributes* or *tends to* it (the same *Greek* word is in ^{<4130>}Romans 13:10). The “sorrow of the world” (that is, such as is felt by the worldly) “worketh out,” as its *result at last*, (eternal) death (the same *Greek* verb is in ^{<4107>}2 Corinthians 4:17; also see on ^{<4107>}2 Corinthians 4:17).

repentance ... not to be repented of — There is not in the *Greek* this play on words, so that the word qualified is not “repentance” merely, but “repentance unto salvation”; this, he says, *none will ever regret*, however attended with “sorrow” at the time. “*Repentance*” implies a *coming to a right mind*; “*regret*” implies merely uneasiness of feeling at the past or present, and is applied even to the *remorse* of Judas (^{<4174>}Matthew 27:3; *Greek*, “stricken with remorse,” not as *English Version*, “repented himself”); so that, though always accompanying repentance, it is not always accompanied by repentance. “Repentance” removes the impediments in the way of “salvation” (to which “death,” namely, of the soul, is opposed). “The sorrow of the world” is not at the *sin* itself, but at its *penal consequences*: so that the tears of pain are no sooner dried up, than the pleasures of ungodliness are renewed. So Pharaoh, ^{<1107>}Exodus 9:27,28-30; and Saul, ^{<1153>}1 Samuel 15:23-30. Compare ^{<2191>}Isaiah 9:13 ^{<4160>}Revelation 16:10,11. Contrast David’s “godly sorrow,” ^{<1013>}2 Samuel 12:13, and Peter’s, ^{<4155>}Matthew 26:75.

11. Confirmation of ^{<4107>}2 Corinthians 7:10 from the Corinthians’ own experience.

carefulness — solicitude, literally, “diligence”; opposed to their past negligence in the matter.

in you — *Greek* “for you.”

yea — not only “carefulness” or *diligence*, but also “clearing of yourselves,” namely, to me by Titus: anxiety to show you disapproved of the deed.

indignation — against the offender.

fear — of the wrath of God, and of sinning any more [SCLATER and CALVIN]; fear of Paul [GROTIUS], (⁴⁰⁰²1 Corinthians 4:2,19-21).

vehement desire — longing for restoration to Paul’s approval [CONYBEARE and HOWSON]. “Fear” is in spite of one’s self. “Longing desire” is spontaneous, and implies strong love and an aspiration for correction [CALVIN]. “Desire” *for the presence of Paul*, as he had given them the hope of it (⁴⁰⁰³1 Corinthians 4:19 16:5) [GROTIUS and ESTIUS].

zeal — for right and for God’s honor against what is wrong. Or, “for the good of the soul of the offender” [BENGEL].

revenge — *Translate*, “Exacting of punishment” (⁴⁰⁰⁴1 Corinthians 5:2,3). Their “carefulness” was exhibited in the six points just specified: “clearing of themselves,” and “indignation” in relation to themselves; “fear” and “vehement desire” in respect to the apostle; “zeal” and “revenge” in respect to the offender [BENGEL]; (compare ⁴⁰⁰⁵2 Corinthians 7:7).

In all — the respects just stated.

clear — *Greek*, “pure,” namely, from complicity in the guilty deed. “Approved yourselves,” *Greek*, “commended yourselves.” Whatever suspicion of complicity rested on you (⁴⁰⁰⁶1 Corinthians 5:2,6) through your former remissness, you have cleared off by your present strenuousness in reprobating the deed.

12. though I wrote unto you — “making you sorry with my letter” (⁴⁰⁰⁷2 Corinthians 7:8).

his cause that suffered wrong — the father of the incestuous person who had his father’s wife (⁴⁰⁰⁸1 Corinthians 5:1). The father, thus it seems, was alive.

that our care for you, etc. — Some of the oldest manuscripts read thus, “That YOUR care for us might be made manifest unto you,” etc. But the words, “unto you,” thus, would be rather obscure; still the obscurity of the genuine reading may have been the very reason for the change being made by correctors into the reading of *English Version*. ALFORD explains the reading: “He wrote in order to bring out their zeal on his behalf (that is, to obey his command), and make it manifest *to themselves* in God’s sight, that is, to bring out *among them* their zeal to regard and obey him.” But some of the oldest manuscripts and versions (including the *Vulgate* and old *Italian*) support *English Version*. And the words, “to you,” suit it better than the other reading. ^{<400>}2 Corinthians 2:4, “I wrote ... that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly *unto you*,” plainly accords with it, and disproves ALFORD’s assertion that *English Version* is *inconsistent with the fact* as to the purpose of his letter. His writing, he says, was not so much for the sake of the individual offender, or the individual offended, but from his “earnest care” or concern for the welfare of the Church.

13. The oldest manuscripts read thus, “Therefore (*Greek*, ‘for this *cause*,’ namely, because our aim has been attained) we have been (*English Version*, ‘were,’ is not so accurate) comforted; yea (*Greek*, ‘but’), in OUR comfort we exceedingly the more joyed for the joy of Titus,” etc. (compare ^{<400>}2 Corinthians 7:7).

14. anything — that is, at all.

I am not ashamed — “I am not put to shame,” namely, by learning from Titus that you did not realize the high character I gave him of you.

as ... all things ... in truth, even so our boasting ... is found a truth — As our speaking *in general* to you was true (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 1:18), so our particular boasting to Titus *concerning you* is now, by his report, proved to be truth (compare ^{<400>}2 Corinthians 9:2). Some oldest manuscripts read expressly, “concerning you”; this in either reading is the *sense*.

15. his inward affection — literally, “bowels” (compare ^{<400>}2 Corinthians 6:12 ^{<400>}Philippians 1:8 2:1 ^{<400>}Colossians 3:12).

obedience — (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 2:9).

fear and trembling — with trembling anxiety to obey my wishes, and fearful lest there should be aught in yourselves to offend him and me (⁴⁰⁷¹2 Corinthians 7:11; compare ⁴¹¹⁸1 Corinthians 2:3).

16. therefore — omitted in the oldest manuscripts. The conclusion is more emphatical without it.

that I have confidence in you in all things — rather, as *Greek*, “that in everything I am of good courage concerning (literally, ‘in the case of’) you,” as contrasted with my former doubts concerning you.

CHAPTER 8

2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-24.

THE COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS; THE READINESS OF THE MACEDONIANS A PATTERN TO THE CORINTHIANS; CHRIST THE HIGHEST PATTERN; EACH IS TO GIVE WILLINGLY AFTER HIS ABILITY; TITUS AND TWO OTHERS ARE THE AGENTS ACCREDITED TO COMPLETE THE COLLECTION.

1. we do you to wit — *we make known to you.*

the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia — Their liberality was not of themselves naturally, but of God's grace bestowed on them, and enabling them to be the instrument of God's "grace" to others (⁴⁸⁸2 Corinthians 8:6,19). The importance given in this Epistle to the collection, arose as well from Paul's engagement (⁴⁸⁹Galatians 2:10), as also chiefly from his hope to conciliate the Judaizing Christians at Jerusalem to himself and the Gentile believers, by such an act of love on the part of the latter towards their Jewish brethren.

2. trial of affliction — The *Greek* expresses, "in affliction (or, 'tribulation') which *tested* them"; literally, "in a great testing of affliction."

abundance of their joy — The greater was the depth of their poverty, the greater was the abundance of their joy. A delightful contrast in terms, and triumph, in fact, of spirit over flesh.

their deep poverty — *Greek*, "their poverty down to the death of it."

abounded unto the riches of their liberality — another beautiful contrast in terms: their *poverty* had the effect, not of producing stinted gifts, but of "abounding in the *riches* of liberality" (not as *Margin*, "simplicity"; though the idea of *singleness* of motive to God's glory and man's good, probably enters into the idea); (compare ⁵¹⁸Romans 12:8, and

Margin; ^{<401>}2 Corinthians 9:11, *Margin*; see on ^{<402>}2 Corinthians 9:13; ^{<403>}James 1:5).

3-5. they were willing — rather, supply from ^{<405>}2 Corinthians 8:5, the ellipsis thus, “According to their power ... yea, and beyond their power, THEY GAVE.”

of themselves — not only not being besought, but themselves beseeching us.

4. that we would receive — omitted in the oldest manuscripts. Translate therefore, “Beseeching of us ... the grace and fellowship of (that is, to grant them *the favor of sharing in*) the ministering unto the saints.” The Macedonian contributions must have been from Philippi, because Philippi was the only church that contributed to Paul’s support (^{<406>}Philippians 4:10,15,16).

5. And *this they did*, not as we hoped — Translate, “And not as we hoped (that is, far beyond our hopes), but their own selves gave they first to the Lord.” “First,” not indicating priority of time, but first of all, *above all in importance*. The giving of themselves takes precedency of their other gifts, as being the motive which led them to the latter (^{<407>}Romans 15:16).

by the will of God — not “*according to the will of God*,” but “*moved by the will of God, who made them willing*” (^{<408>}Philippians 2:13). It is therefore called (^{<409>}2 Corinthians 8:1), “the grace of God.”

6. Inasmuch that — As we saw the Macedonians’ alacrity in giving, we could not but exhort Titus, that as we collected in Macedonia, so he in Corinth should complete the work of collecting which he had already begun there, lest ye, the wealthy people of Corinth, should be outdone in liberality by the poor Macedonians.

as he had begun — *Greek*, “*previously begun*,” namely, the collection at Corinth, *before* the Macedonians began to contribute, during the visit to Corinth from which he had just returned.

finish in you the same grace — complete among you this act of grace or beneficence on your part.

also — as well as other things which he had to do among them [ALFORD].

7. in faith — (2nd Corinthians 1:24).

utterance — (See on 1st Corinthians 1:5). Not as ALFORD, “doctrine” or “word.”

knowledge — (1st Corinthians 8:1).

diligence — in everything that is good.

your love to us — literally, “love from you (that is, on your part) in us” (that is, which has us for its object; which is felt *in the case of us*).

8. not by commandment — “not by way of commandment.”

but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and etc. — rather, “But by (mention of) the forwardness of others (as an inducement to you), and to prove (literally, ‘proving’) the sincerity of your love.” The *Greek* is “*by means of,*” not “*on account of* the forwardness,” etc. BENGEL, ELLICOTT, and others translate, “*By means of* the forwardness of others, Proving the sincerity of your love ALSO.” The former is the simpler construction in the *Greek*.

9. ye know the grace — the act of gratuitous love whereby the Lord emptied Himself of His previous heavenly glory (Philippians 2:6,7) for your sakes.

became poor — Yet this is not demanded of you (2nd Corinthians 8:14); but merely that, without impoverishing yourselves, you should relieve others with your abundance. If the Lord did so much more, and at so much heavier a cost, for your sakes; much more may you do an act of love to your brethren at so little a sacrifice of self.

might be rich — in the heavenly glory which constitutes His riches, and all other things, so far as is really good for us (compare 1st Corinthians 3:21,22).

10. advice — Herein he does not (as some misinterpret the passage) disclaim inspiration for the advice he gives; but under the Spirit, states that it is his “opinion” [ALFORD] or “judgment” [ELLICOTT, and others], not a *command*, that so their offering might be free and spontaneous.

this — my giving you an *advice*, not a command.

who have begun before — “*seeing that ye have begun before*” the *Macedonian churches*; “a year ago” should be connected with this clause.

not only to do, but also to be forward — There were three steps:

(1) the *forwardness*, more literally, “the will”;

(2) the *setting about* it, literally, “doing it”;

(3) *completion* of it [ALFORD]. In the two former, not only the *act*, but the *intention*, the Corinthians *preceded the Macedonians*. BENGEL explains, “Not only to do” FOR THE PAST YEAR, “but also to be forward” or *willing* FOR THIS YEAR. ELLICOTT translates, “already,” instead of “before”: “Ye began already a year ago, not only to do, but also to be forward.” It appears hence, that something had been done in the matter a year before; other texts, however, show the collection was not yet paid (compare ^{<A081>}2 Corinthians 8:11 and ^{<A082>}2 Corinthians 9:5,7). This agrees with one, and only one supposition, namely, that every man had laid by in store the fund from which he was afterwards to contribute, the very case which is shown by ^{<A083>}1 Corinthians 16:2 to have existed [PALEY, *Horae Paulinae*].

11. perform — “complete the doing also” (see on ^{<A084>}2 Corinthians 8:10).

a readiness to will — *Greek*, “the readiness of will”; referring to ^{<A085>}2 Corinthians 8:10, where the *Greek* for “to be forward,” ought to be translated as here, “to will.”

performance — “completion” [ALFORD], The godly should show the same zeal to finish, as well as to begin well, which the worldly exhibit in their undertakings (^{<A086>}Jeremiah 44:25).

12. For — Following up the rule “out of that which ye have” (^{<A087>}2 Corinthians 8:11), and no more.

a willing mind — rather, as *Greek*, “the readiness,” namely, to will, referring to ^{<A088>}2 Corinthians 8:11.

accepted — *Greek* “favorably accepted.”

according to that a man hath — The oldest manuscripts omit “a man.” Translate, “According to whatsoever it have”; the *willing mind*, or

“readiness” to will, is personified [ALFORD]. Or better, as BENGEL, “*He is accepted according to whatsoever he have*”; so ^{<400>}2 Corinthians 9:7, The Lord loveth a cheerful *giver*.” Compare as to David, ^{<1088>}1 Kings 8:18. God accepts the will for the deed. He judges not according to what a man has the opportunity to do, but according to what he would do if he had the opportunity (compare ^{<4148>}Mark 14:8; and the widow’s mite, ^{<427>}Luke 21:3,4).

13. For — Supply from ^{<4088>}2 Corinthians 8:8, “I speak.” My aim is not that others (namely, the saints at Jerusalem) may be relieved at the cost of your being “distressed” (so the *Greek* for “burdened”). The golden rule is, “Love thy neighbor *as thyself*,” not *more* than thyself.

14. by an equality — “by the rule of equality” [ALFORD]: literally, “Out of equality.”

now at this time — *Greek*, “at the present juncture” or season.

that their abundance also — The *Greek* being distinct from the previous “that,” translate, “in order that,” namely, *at another season*, when your relative circumstances may be reversed. The reference is solely to *temporal* wants and supplies. Those, as BENGEL, who quote ^{<6157>}Romans 15:27 for interpreting it of spiritual supplies from the Jews to the Gentiles, forget that ^{<6157>}Romans 15:27 refers to the *past* benefit spiritually, which the Jews have conferred on the Gentiles, as a motive to *gratitude* on the part of the latter, not to a *prospective* benefit to be looked for from the former, which the text refers to.

15. (^{<1068>}Exodus 16:18; *Septuagint*). As God gave an equal portion of manna to all the Israelites, whether they could gather much or little; so Christians should promote by liberality an equality, so that none should need the necessaries of life while others have superfluities. “Our luxuries should yield to our neighbor’s comforts; and our comforts to his necessities” [J. HOWARD].

16, 17. Returning to the subject of ^{<4088>}2 Corinthians 8:6.

for you — Translate, “Which put the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus,” as was in myself. My care for you led me to “*desire*” him (^{<4088>}2 Corinthians 8:6,17, “*exhortation*,” the same *Greek*); but Titus had of

himself the same care, whence he “accepted (gladly) my exhortation” (^{<4087>}2 Corinthians 8:17) to go to you (^{<4086>}2 Corinthians 8:6).

17. being more forward — more earnest than to need such exhortation.

he went — *Greek*, “went forth.” We should say, *he is going* forth; but the ancients put the *past* tense in letter writing, as the things will have been past by the time that the correspondent, receives the letter. “Of his own accord,” that is, it is true he has been exhorted by me to go, but he shows that he has anticipated my desires, and already, “of his own accord,” has desired to go.

18. the brother, whose praise is in the gospel — whose praise is known in connection with the Gospel: *Luke* may be meant; not that “the Gospel” here refers to his *written* Gospel; but the language implies some one well known throughout the churches, and at that time with Paul, as Luke then was (^{<4016>}Acts 20:6). Not a Macedonian, as appears from ^{<4000>}2 Corinthians 9:4. Of all Paul’s “companions in travel” (^{<4089>}2 Corinthians 8:19 ^{<4029>}Acts 19:29), Luke was the most prominent, having been his companion in preaching the Gospel at his first entrance into Europe (^{<4100>}Acts 16:10). The fact that the person here referred to was “chosen of the churches” as their trustee to travel with Paul in conveying the contribution to Jerusalem, implies that he had resided among them some time before: this is true of Luke, who after parting from Paul at Philippi (as he marks by the change from “we” to “they,” ^{<4101>}Acts 16:11) six years before, is now again found in his company in Macedonia. In the interim he had probably become so well known that “his praise was throughout all the churches.” Compare ^{<4028>}2 Corinthians 12:18 ^{<5021>}Philemon 1:24. He who is faithful in the Gospel will be faithful also in matters of inferior importance [BENGL].

19. not that only — not only praised in all the churches.

chosen — by vote: so the *Greek*.

of the churches — therefore these companions of Paul are called “messengers of the churches” (^{<4022>}2 Corinthians 8:23).

to travel — to Jerusalem.

with this grace — *Greek*, “in the case of this grace,” or “gift.”

to the glory of the same Lord — The oldest manuscripts omit “same.”

declaration of your ready mind — The oldest manuscripts read, “our,” not *your*. This and the previous clause, “to the glory of the same Lord,” do not follow “administered by us,” but “chosen of the churches to travel,” etc. The union of the brother with Paul in this affair of the collection was done to guard against suspicions injurious “to the glory” of the Lord. It was also done in order to produce a “readiness” on the part of Paul and the brother to undertake the office which each, by himself, would have been less ready to undertake, for fear of suspicions arising (^{<4082>}2 Corinthians 8:20) as to their appropriation of any of the money.

20. Avoiding — taking precautions against this.

in this abundance — *in the case of this abundance.*

21. The *Septuagint* (^{<2100>}Proverbs 3:4 ^{<6127>}Romans 12:17). The oldest manuscripts read, “For we provide.”

honest things — “things honorable.”

22. This *second* brother, BIRKS supposes to be Trophimus: for a Macedonian is not meant (^{<4004>}2 Corinthians 9:4) probably the same as was sent before with Titus (^{<4728>}2 Corinthians 12:18); and therefore sent from Ephesus, and probably an Ephesian: all this is true of Trophimus.

oftentimes ... in many things — Join and translate as in the *Greek*, “many times in many things.”

upon the great confidence which I have in you — “through the great confidence WHICH HE HAS towards you” [ALFORD]. BENDEL better supports *English Version*, “We have sent ... through the confidence WHICH WE FEEL in regard to your liberality.”

23. fellow helper concerning you — *Greek*, “fellow worker towards you.”

our brethren — the two mentioned in ^{<4088>}2 Corinthians 8:18,22.

messengers — rather, as the *Greek*, “apostles”: in the less strict sense (^{<4444>}Acts 14:14).

of the churches — sent by the churches, as we are by the Lord (Philippians 2:25). There was in the synagogue an ecclesiastical officer, called “the angel of the Church,” whence the title seems derived (compare Revelation 2:1).

24. The oldest manuscripts read “[continue] *manifesting* to them in the face of the churches the manifestation of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.”

CHAPTER 9

2 CORINTHIANS 9:1-15.

REASONS FOR HIS SENDING TITUS. THE GREATER THEIR BOUNTIFULNESS, THE MORE SHALL BE THE RETURN OF BLESSING TO THEM, AND THANKSGIVING TO GOD.

1. For — connected with ^{<4086>}2 Corinthians 8:16: “Show love to the messengers of the churches; for as concerns the ministrations for the saints, it is superfluous for me to *write* to you who are so forward already.”

write — emphatical: It is superfluous to “write,” for you will have witnesses present [BENGEL].

2. ready a year ago — to send off the money, owing to the apostle’s former exhortation (^{<4101>}1 Corinthians 16:1,2).

your zeal — *Greek*, “the zeal from you,” that is, on your part; propagated from you to others.

provoked — that is, stimulated.

very many — *Greek*, “the greater number,” namely, of the Macedonians.

3. have I sent — we should say, “I send”; whereas the ancients put it in the past, the time which it would be by the time that the letter arrived.

the brethren — (^{<4088>}2 Corinthians 8:18,22) — Titus and the two others.

should be in vain in this behalf — “should be proved futile *in this particular*,” however true in general (^{<4000>}2 Corinthians 7:4). A tacit compliment, softening the sharp monition.

as I said — as I was saying (^{<4000>}2 Corinthians 9:2).

4. if they of Macedonia — rather as *Greek*, “if Macedonians.”

unprepared — with your collection; see ^{<400>}2 Corinthians 9:2, “ready,” *Greek*, “prepared.”

we, not to say ye — *Ye* would naturally feel more ashamed for yourselves, than we (who boasted of you) would for you.

confident boasting — The oldest manuscripts read simply “confidence,” namely, in your liberality.

5. that they would go before — Translate, “that they *should*,” etc.

whereof ye had notice before — rather, “promised before”; “long announced by me to the Macedonians” (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 9:2) [BENGEL]. “Your promised bounty” [ELLICOTT and others].

not as *of* covetousness — Translate, “not as matter of covetousness,” which it would be, if you gave niggardly.

6. I say — ELLICOTT and others supply the ellipsis thus: “But *remember* this.”

bountifully — literally, “*with*,” or “*in blessings*.” The word itself implies a *beneficent spirit in the giver* (compare ^{<400>}2 Corinthians 9:7, end), and the *plural* implies the *abundance* and liberality of the gifts. “The reaping shall correspond to the proportions and spirit of the sowing” [BENGEL]. Compare ^{<400>}Ezekiel 34:26, “Showers of blessing.”

7. according as he purposeth in his heart — Let the full consent of the free will go with the gift [ALFORD]. Opposed to “of necessity,” as “grudgingly” is opposed to “a *cheerful* giver” (^{<400>}Proverbs 22:9 11:25 ^{<400>}Isaiah 32:8).

8. all grace — even in external goods, and even while ye bestow on others [BENGEL].

that — “in order that.” God’s gifts are bestowed on us, not that we may have them to ourselves, but that we may the more “abound in good works” to others.

sufficiency — so as not to need the help of others, having yourselves from God “bread for your food” (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 9:10).

in all things — *Greek*, “in everything.”

every good work — of charity to others, which will be “your seed sown” (^{<4090>}2 Corinthians 9:10).

9. As it is written — realizing the highly blessed character portrayed in ^{<4819>}Psalms 112:9.

He — the “good man” (^{<4819>}Psalms 112:5).

dispersed — as seed sown with full and open hand, without anxious thought in what direction each grain may fall. It is implied also that he *has* always what he may disperse [BENGEL]. So in ^{<4819>}Psalms 112:9.

the poor — The *Greek* word is found here only in New Testament, “one in straitened circumstances, who earns his bread by labor.” The word usually employed means “one so poor as to live by begging.”

his righteousness — Here “beneficence”: the evidence of his being *righteous* before God and man. Compare ^{<4819>}Deuteronomy 24:13 ^{<4061>}Matthew 6:1, “alms”; *Greek*, “righteousness.”

remaineth — unexhausted and unfailing.

10. Translate, as in ^{<2510>}Isaiah 55:10, “He that ministereth (supplieth) seed to the sower and bread for food” (literally, “bread for *eating*”).

minister — rather future, as the oldest manuscripts, “*Shall* minister (supply) and multiply.”

your seed — your means for liberality.

the fruits of your righteousness — the heavenly rewards for your Christian charity (^{<4062>}Matthew 10:42). Righteousness shall be itself the reward, even as it is the thing rewarded (^{<2812>}Hosea 10:12 ^{<4066>}Matthew 5:6 6:33).

11. Compare ^{<4098>}2 Corinthians 9:8.

bountifulness — *Greek*, “single-minded liberality.” Translated “simplicity,” ^{<4508>}Romans 12:8.

causeth through us — literally, “worketh through us”; that is, through our instrumentality as the distributors.

thanksgiving — on the part of the recipients.

12. *Greek*, “The *ministration* of this *public service* (on your part) is not only *still further* supplying the wants of the saints (besides the supplies from other quarters), but is abounding also (namely, in respect to relieving the necessities of others in poverty) through many thanksgivings to God.”

13. by — through occasion of.

experiment — Translate, “the experience” [ELLICOTT and others]. Or, “the experimental proof” of your Christian character, afforded by “this ministration.”

they — the recipients.

for your professed subjection — *Greek*, “for the subjection of your profession”; that is, your subjection in accordance with your profession, in relation to the Gospel. Ye yield yourselves in willing subjection to the Gospel precepts, evinced in acts, as well as in profession.

your liberal distribution — *Greek*, “the liberality of your contribution in relation to them,” etc.

14. Translate, “Themselves also with prayer for you, longing after you on account of the exceeding grace of God (resting) upon you.” *English Version* is, however, good sense: They glorify God (^{40B}2 Corinthians 9:13) by the experimental proof, etc., “and by their prayer for you.” But the *Greek* favors the former.

15. his unspeakable gift — the gift of His own Son, which includes all other inferior gifts (^{40B}2 Corinthians 8:9 ^{41B}Romans 8:32). If we have received from God “His unspeakable gift,” what great thing is it, if we give a few perishing gifts for His sake?

CHAPTER 10

2 CORINTHIANS 10:1-18.

HE VINDICATES HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY AGAINST THOSE WHO DEPRECIATED HIM FOR HIS PERSONAL APPEARANCE. HE WILL MAKE HIS POWER FELT WHEN HE COMES. HE BOASTS NOT, AS THEY, BEYOND HIS MEASURE.

1. I Paul myself — no longer “we,” “us,” “our” (⁴⁷⁰¹2 Corinthians 9:11): *I* who am represented by depreciators as “base,” I, the same Paul, *of my own accord* “beseech you”; or rather “entreat,” “exhort” you *for your sake*. As “I beseech you” (a distinct *Greek* verb, ⁴⁷⁰²2 Corinthians 10:2) *for my sake*.

by the meekness and gentleness of Christ — He mentions these graces of Christ especially (⁴⁹⁸⁵Psalm 18:35 ⁴¹¹²Matthew 11:29), as on account of his imitation of them in particular he was despised [GROTIUS]. He entreats them by these, in order to show that though he must have recourse to more severe measures, he is naturally inclined to gentle ones after Christ’s example [MENOCHIUS]. “Meekness” is more in the mind internally; “gentleness” in the external behavior, and in relation to others; for instance, the condescending *yieldingness* of a superior to an inferior, the former not insisting on his strict rights [TRENCH]. BENDEL explains it, “By the meekness and gentleness *derived by me from Christ*,” not from my own nature: he objects to understanding it of *Christ’s* meekness and gentleness, since nowhere else is “gentleness” attributed to Him. But though the exact *Greek* word is not applied to Him, the idea expressed by it is (compare ²³⁰¹Isaiah 40:11 ⁴⁰²⁹Matthew 12:19,20).

in presence — in personal appearance when present with you.

base — *Greek*, “lowly”; timid, humbly diffident: opposed to “bold.” “Am” stands here by ironical concession for “am reputed to be” (compare ⁴⁷⁰⁰2 Corinthians 10:10).

2. I beseech you — Intimating that, as he can *beseech* in letters, so he can be severe in their presence.

that I may not be — that I may not *have to* be bold, etc.

with that confidence — *that authoritative sternness.*

I think — *I am minded* to be.

as if we walked according to the flesh — His Corinthian detractors judged of him by themselves, as if he were influenced by fleshly motives, the desire of favor or fear of giving offense, so as not to exercise his authority when present.

3. For — Reason why they should regard him “beseeching” them (^{<470>}2 Corinthians 10:2) not to oblige him to have recourse to “bold” and stern exercise of authority. “We walk IN the flesh,” and so *in weakness*: but not “ACCORDING TO the flesh” (^{<470>}2 Corinthians 10:2). Moreover, though we WALK in it, we do not WAR according to it. A double contrast or antithesis. “They who accuse us of walking after the flesh, shall find [to their cost] that we do not *war* after the flesh; therefore compel us not to use our weapons” [ALFORD].

4. A confutation of those who try to propagate their creed by force and persecution (compare ^{<405>}Luke 9:54-56).

weapons — for punishing offending members (^{<470>}2 Corinthians 10:6 ^{<402>}1 Corinthians 4:21 5:5,13); boldness of speech, ecclesiastical discipline (^{<470>}2 Corinthians 10:8 ^{<4730>}2 Corinthians 13:10), the power of the word, and of the sacraments, the various extraordinary gifts of the Spirit.

carnal — Translate, “fleshly,” to preserve the allusion to ^{<470>}2 Corinthians 10:2,3.

mighty through God — *Greek*, “mighty to God,” that is, mighty before God: not humanly, but divinely powerful. The power is not ours, but God’s. Compare “fair to God,” that is, divinely fair (^{<402>}Acts 7:20, *Margin*). Also above (^{<470>}2 Corinthians 2:15), “*unto God* a sweet savor.” “The efficacy of the Christian religion proves its truth” [BENGE].

pulling down — As the *Greek* is the same as in ^{<4705>}2 Corinthians 10:5, translate, “casting down.” Compare ^{<3010>}Jeremiah 1:10: the inspired servants of God inherit the commission of the Old Testament prophets.

strongholds — (^{<3012>}Proverbs 21:22); namely, in which sinners entrench themselves against reproof; all that opposes itself to Christ; the learning, and eloquence, and philosophical subtleties on which the Corinthians prided themselves. So Joshua’s trumpet blast was “mighty” under God to overthrow the walls of Jericho.

5. imaginations — rather, “reasonings.” Whereas “thought” expresses men’s own *purpose* and determination of living after their own pleasure [TITTMANN].

high thing — So it ought to be translated (^{<4183>}Romans 8:39). A distinct *Greek* word from that in ^{<4183>}Ephesians 3:18, “height,” and ^{<6216>}Revelation 21:16, which belongs to God and heaven from whence we receive nothing hurtful. But “high thing” is not so much “height” as *something made high*, and belongs to those regions of air where the powers of darkness ::exalt themselves” against Christ and us (^{<4011>}Ephesians 2:2 6:12 ^{<3014>}2 Thessalonians 2:4).

exalteth itself — ^{<3014>}2 Thessalonians 2:4 supports *English Version* rather than the translation of ELLICOTT, etc., “is lifted up.” Such were the *high towers* of Judaic self-righteousness, philosophic speculations, and rhetorical sophistries, the “knowledge” so much prized by many (opposed to “the knowledge of God”), which endangered a section of the Corinthian Church.

against the knowledge of God — True knowledge makes men humble. Where there is exaltation of self, there knowledge of God is wanting [BENGEL]. Arrange the words following thus: “Bringing every thought (that is, *intent of the mind or will*) into captivity to the obedience of Christ,” that is, to obey Christ. The three steps of the apostle’s spiritual warfare are:

- (1) It demolishes what is opposed to Christ;
- (2) It leads captive;

(3) It brings into obedience to Christ (^{<4016>}Romans 1:5 16:26). The “reasonings” (*English Version*, “imagination”) are utterly “cast down.” The “mental intents” (*English Version*, “thoughts”) are taken willing captives, and tender the voluntary obedience of faith to Christ the Conqueror.

6. Translate, “Having ourselves (that is, *being*) in readiness to exact punishment for all disobedience,” etc. We have this in store for the disobedient: it will be brought into action in due time.

when your obedience, etc. — He charitably assumes that most of the Corinthian Church will act obediently; therefore he says “YOUR obedience.” But perhaps some will act otherwise; in order, therefore, to give all an opportunity of joining the obedient, he will not prematurely exact punishment, but wait until the full number of those gathered out to Christ has been “completed,” and the remainder have been proved incorrigible. He had acted already so at Corinth (^{<4186>}Acts 18:6-11; compare ^{<1234>}Exodus 32:34 ^{<4133>}Matthew 13:28-30).

7. Do ye regard mere outward appearance (mere external recommendations, personal appearance, voice, manner, oratory of teachers *present face to face*, such as they admired in the false teachers to the disparagement of Paul, ^{<4700>}2 Corinthians 10:10; see on ^{<4152>}2 Corinthians 5:12)? Even in *outward bearing* when I shall be *present* with you (in contrast to “by letters,” ^{<4709>}2 Corinthians 10:9) I will show that I am more really armed with the authority of Christ, than those who arrogate to themselves the title of being peculiarly “Christ’s” (^{<4012>}1 Corinthians 1:12). A Jewish emissary seems to have led this party.

let him of himself think this again — He may “of himself,” without needing to be taught it in a more severe manner, by “thinking again,” arrive at “this” conclusion, “that even as,” etc. Paul modestly demands for himself only an equal place with those whom he had begotten in the Gospel [BENGEL].

8. “For even if I were to boast somewhat more exceedingly (than I do, ^{<4708>}2 Corinthians 10:3-6) of our (apostolic) authority (^{<4706>}2 Corinthians 10:6 ^{<4730>}2 Corinthians 13:10) ... I should not be put to shame (by the fact; as I should

be if my authority proved to be without foundation: my threats of punishment not being carried into effect).”

for edification ... not for ... destruction — *Greek*, “for building up ... not for ... CASTING DOWN” (the same *Greek* as in ^{<4715>}2 Corinthians 10:5): the image of a building as in ^{<4705>}2 Corinthians 10:4,5. Though we “cast down reasonings,” this is not in order to destroy, but really to *build up* (“edify”), by removing those things which are hindrances to edification, and testing what is unsound, and putting together all that is true in the building [CHRYSOSTOM].

9. I say this lest I should seem to be terrifying you, as children, with empty threats [BENGEL]. ESTIUS explains, “I might boast more of my authority, *but I forbear to do so*, that I may not seem as if,” etc. But this ellipsis is harsh: and ^{<4705>}2 Corinthians 10:10,11 confirm BENGEL’s view.

10. letters — implying that there had been already more letters of Paul received by the Corinthians than the one we have, namely, First Corinthians; and that they contained strong reproofs.

say they — *Greek*, “says one,” “such a one” (^{<4711>}2 Corinthians 10:11) seems to point to some definite individual. Compare ^{<4851>}Galatians 5:10; a similar slanderer was in the Galatian Church.

weak — (^{<4711>}2 Corinthians 12:7 ^{<4711>}1 Corinthians 2:3). There was nothing of majesty or authority in his manner; he bore himself tremblingly among them, whereas the false teachers spoke with authoritative bearing and language.

11. think this — “consider this.”

such will we be — or “are,” in general, not merely shall we be at our next visit.

12. “We do not presume (irony) to judge ourselves among, or in comparison with, some of them that commend themselves.” The charge falsely brought against him of *commending himself* (^{<4711>}2 Corinthians 3:1 5:12), really holds good of the false teachers. The phrase, “judge ourselves of the number,” is drawn from the testing of athletes and senators, the “approved” being set down on the roll [WAHL].

measuring themselves by themselves — “*among* themselves”: to correspond to the previous verb, “judge ourselves *among* them.” Instead of measuring themselves by the public standard, they measure themselves by one made by themselves: they do not compare themselves with others who excel them, but with those like themselves: hence their high self-esteem. The one-eyed is easily king among the blind.

are not wise — with all their boasted “wisdom” (⁴¹⁹1 Corinthians 1:19-26), they are anything but “wise.”

13. not boast ... without ... measure — *Greek*, “to unmeasured bounds.” There is no limit to a man’s high opinion of himself, so long as he measures himself by himself (⁴¹²2 Corinthians 10:13) and his fellows, and does not compare himself with his superiors. It marks the *personal* character of this Epistle that the word “boast” occurs twenty-nine times in it, and only twenty-six times in all the other Epistles put together. Undeterred by the charge of vanity, he felt he must vindicate his apostolic authority by facts [CONYBEARE and HOWSON]. It would be to “boast of things without our measure,” were we to boast of conversions made by “other men’s labors” (⁴¹⁵2 Corinthians 10:15).

distributed — apportioned [ALFORD].

a measure — as a measure [ALFORD].

to reach — “that we should reach as far as even to you”: not that he meant to go no further (⁴¹⁶2 Corinthians 10:16 ⁴⁵¹Romans 15:20-24). Paul’s “measure” is the *apportionment* of his sphere of Gospel labors *ruled* for him by God. A “rule” among the so-called “apostolic canons” subsequently was, that no bishop should appoint ministers beyond his own limits. At Corinth no minister ought to have been received without Paul’s sanction, as Corinth was *apportioned* to him by God as *his apostolic sphere*. The Epistle here incidentally, and therefore undesignedly, confirms the independent history, the Acts, which represents Corinth as the extreme limit as yet of his preaching, *at which he had stopped*, after he had from Philippi passed southward successively through Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens [PALEY, *Horae Paulinae*].

14. “We are not stretching ourselves beyond our measure, *as* (we should be) *if* we did not reach unto you: (but we do), for as far as even to you have we come in preaching the Gospel.”

15. “Not boasting to unmeasured bounds (that is, not exceeding our own bounds by boasting) of (literally, ‘in’) other men’s labors.”

when — “As your faith goes on increasing.” The cause of his not yet reaching with the Gospel the regions beyond Corinth, was the weakness as yet of their faith. He desired not to leave the Corinthians before the proper time, and yet not to put off preaching to others too long.

enlarged by you — *Greek*, “in your case.” Our success in your case will give us an important step towards further progress beyond you (^{<4706>}2 Corinthians 10:16).

according to our rule — according to our divinely assigned apportionment of the area or sphere of our work; for “we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure” (^{<4704>}2 Corinthians 10:14).

abundantly — *Greek*, “unto exceeding abundance”: so as to exceed the limits we have yet reached (^{<4706>}2 Corinthians 10:16).

16. To — that is, *so as to* preach ... beyond you (and) not to boast, etc.

in another man’s line of things made ready to our hand — Do not connect “line of things,” etc.; but “boast of things,” etc. To make this clearer, arrange the words thus, “Not to boast as to things (already made by the preaching of others) ready to our hand in another man’s line (that is, within the line, or sphere of labor, apportioned by God to another).”

17. glorieth — Translate, to accord with ^{<4706>}2 Corinthians 10:16, “boasteth.” In contrast to his opponents’ practice of boasting in another’s line or sphere, Paul declares the only true boasting is in the Lord (^{<4031>}1 Corinthians 1:31 15:10).

18. (^{<1270>}Proverbs 27:2).

whom the Lord commendeth — to whom the Lord has given as His “Epistle of commendation,” the believers whom he has been the instrument of converting: as was Paul’s case (^{<4032>}2 Corinthians 3:1-3).

is approved — can stand the test of the final trial. A metaphor from testing metals (^{<610>}Romans 16:10 ^{<611>}1 Corinthians 11:19). So on the other hand those finally rejected by the Lord are termed “*reprobate silver*” (^{<215>}Jeremiah 6:30).

CHAPTER 11

2 CORINTHIANS 11:1-33.

THROUGH JEALOUSY OVER THE CORINTHIANS, WHO MADE MORE ACCOUNT OF THE FALSE APOSTLES THAN OF HIM, HE IS OBLIGED TO COMMEND HIMSELF AS IN MANY RESPECTS SUPERIOR.

1. Would to God — Translate as *Greek*, “I would that.”

bear with me — I may ask not unreasonably to be borne with; not so the false apostles (2 Corinthians 11:4,20).

my — not in the oldest manuscripts.

folly — The *Greek* is a milder term than that for “foolishness” in 1 Corinthians 3:19 Matthew 5:22 25:2. The *Greek* for “folly” here implies *imprudence*; the *Greek* for “foolishness” includes the idea of *perversity* and *wickedness*.

and indeed bear — A request (so 2 Corinthians 11:16). But the *Greek* and the sense favor the translation, “But indeed (I need not wish it, for) ye do bear with me”; still I wish you to bear with me further, while I enter at large into self-commendations.

2. For I am jealous — The justification of his self-commendations lies in his zealous care lest they should fall from Christ, to whom he, as “the friend of the Bridegroom” (John 3:29), has espoused them; in order to lead them back from the false apostles to Christ, he is obliged to boast as an apostle of Christ, in a way which, but for the motive, would be “folly.”

godly jealousy — literally, “jealousy of God” (compare 2 Corinthians 1:12, “godly sincerity,” literally, “sincerity of God”). “If I am immoderate, I am immoderate to God” [BENJEL]. A jealousy which has God’s honor at heart (1 Kings 19:10).

I ... espoused you — Paul uses a *Greek* term applied properly to *the bridegroom*, just as he ascribes to himself “jealousy,” a feeling properly belonging to the husband; so entirely does he identify himself with Christ.

present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ — at His coming, when the heavenly *marriage* shall take place (^{<4121>}Matthew 25:6 ^{<4101>}Revelation 19:7,9). What Paul here says he desires to do, namely, “present” the Church as “a chaste virgin” to Christ, *Christ Himself* is said to do in the fuller sense. Whatever ministers do effectively, is really done by Christ (^{<4107>}Ephesians 5:27-32). The *espousals* are going on now. He does not say “chaste virgins”; for not individual members, but the whole body of believers conjointly constitute the Bride.

3. I fear — (^{<4121>}2 Corinthians 12:20); not inconsistent with love. His source of fear was their yielding character.

subtilty — the utter foe of the “simplicity” which is intent on ONE object, Jesus, and seeks none “other,” and no “other” and different Spirit (^{<4107>}2 Corinthians 11:4); but loves him with tender SINGLENESS OF AFFECTION. Where Eve first gave way, was in mentally harboring for a moment the possibility insinuated by the serpent, of GOD not having her truest interests at heart, and of this “other” professing friend being more concerned for her than God.

corrupted — so as to lose their virgin purity through seducers (^{<4107>}2 Corinthians 11:4). The same *Greek* stands for “minds” as for “thoughts” (^{<4107>}2 Corinthians 10:5, also see on ^{<4107>}2 Corinthians 10:5); *intents of the will*, or *mind*. The oldest manuscripts after “simplicity,” add, “and the purity” or “chastity.”

in Christ — rather, “that is *towards* Christ.”

4. if, etc. — which in *fact* is impossible. However, if it were possible, ye might then bear with them (see on ^{<4107>}2 Corinthians 11:1). But there can be no *new Gospel*; there is but the *one* which I first preached; therefore it ought not to be “borne” by you, that the false teachers should attempt to supersede me.

he that cometh — the high-sounding title assumed by the false teachers, who arrogated Christ’s own peculiar title (*Greek*, ^{<4111>}Matthew 11:3, and

^{<307}Hebrews 10:37), “He that is coming.” Perhaps he was leader of the party which assumed peculiarly to be “Christ’s” (^{<402}2 Corinthians 10:7 ^{<402}1 Corinthians 1:12); hence his assumption of the title.

preacheth ... receive — is preaching ... ye are receiving.

Jesus — the “Jesus” of Gospel *history*. He therefore does not say “Christ,” which refers to the *office*.

another ... another — *Greek*, “another Jesus ... a *different* Spirit ... a *different* Gospel.” *Another* implies a distinct individual of the same kind; *different* implies one quite distinct in kind.

which ye have not received — from us.

spirit ... received ... gospel ... accepted — The will of man is passive in RECEIVING the “Spirit”; but it is actively concurrent with the will of God (which goes before to give the good will) in ACCEPTING the “Gospel.”

ye might well bear with him — There would be an excuse for your conduct, though a bad one (for ye ought to give heed to no Gospel other than what ye have already heard from me, ^{<406}Galatians 1:6,7); but the false teachers do not even pretend they have “another Jesus” and a “different Gospel” to bring before you; they merely try to supplant me, your accredited Teacher. Yet ye not only “bear with” them, but prefer them.

5. For — My claim is superior to that of the false teachers, “For,” etc.

I suppose — I reckon [ALFORD].

I was not — *Greek*, “That I have not been, and am not.”

the very chiefest apostles — James, Peter, and John, the witnesses of Christ’s transfiguration and agony in Gethsemane. Rather, “those overmuch apostles,” those *surpassers of the apostles* in their own esteem. This sense is proved by the fact that the context contains no comparison between him and the apostles, but only between him and the false teachers; ^{<410}2 Corinthians 11:6 also alludes to these, and not to the apostles; compare also the parallel phrase, “false apostles” (see on ^{<413}2 Corinthians 11:13 and ^{<421}2 Corinthians 12:11) [ALFORD].

6. rude — *Greek*, “a common man”; a “laic”; not rhetorically trained; unskilled in finish of diction. ^{<401>}1 Corinthians 2:1-4,13 ^{<400>}2 Corinthians 10:10,11, shows his *words* were not without *weight*, though his “speech” was deficient in oratorical artifice. “Yet I am not so in my knowledge” (^{<402>}2 Corinthians 12:1-5 ^{<401>}Ephesians 3:1-5).

have been ... made manifest — Read with the oldest manuscripts, “We have made things (Gospel truths) manifest,” thus showing our “knowledge.” *English Version* would mean, I leave it to yourselves to decide whether I be rude in speech ... : for we have been thoroughly (literally, “in everything”) made manifest among you (literally, “in respect to you”; “in relation to you”). He had not by reserve kept back his “knowledge” in divine mysteries from them (^{<407>}2 Corinthians 2:17 4:2 ^{<401>}Acts 20:20,27).

in all things — The *Greek* rather favors the translation, “among all men”; the sense then is, we have manifested the whole truth among all men with a view to your benefit [ALFORD]. But the *Greek* in ^{<402>}Philippians 4:12, “In each thing and in all things,” sanctions *English Version*, which gives a clearer sense.

7. Have I — literally, “OR have I?” Connected with ^{<402>}2 Corinthians 11:6, “Or will any of you make it an objection that I have preached to you gratuitously?” He leaves their good feeling to give the answer, that this, so far from being an objection, was a decided superiority in him above the false apostles (^{<401>}1 Corinthians 9:6-15).

abasing myself — in my mode of living, waiving my right of maintenance, and earning it by manual labor; perhaps with slaves as his fellow laborers (^{<401>}Acts 18:3 ^{<402>}Philippians 4:12).

ye ... exalted — spiritually, by your admission to Gospel privileges.

because — “in that.”

gospel of God — “of God” implies its divine glory to which they were admitted.

freely — “without charge.”

8. I robbed — that is, took from them in order to spare you more than what was their fair share of contribution to my maintenance, for example, the Philippian Church (^{<3045>}Philippians 4:15,16).

wages — “subsidy.”

to do you service — *Greek*, “with a view to ministration to you”; compare “supplied” (*Greek*, “in addition”), ^{<4719>}2 Corinthians 11:9, implying, he *brought with him* from the Macedonians, supplies towards his maintenance at Corinth; and (^{<4719>}2 Corinthians 11:9) *when those resources failed* (“when I wanted”) he received *a new supply*, while there, from the same source.

9. wanted — “was in want.”

chargeable — *Greek*, “burdensome,” literally, “to torpify,” and so to *oppress*. JEROME says it is a Cilician word (^{<4724>}2 Corinthians 12:14,16).

the brethren which came — rather, as *Greek*, “the brethren *when they came*.” Perhaps Timotheus and Silas (^{<481>}Acts 8:1,5). Compare ^{<3045>}Philippians 4:15,16, which refers to donations received from the Philippians (who were in Macedonia) at two distinct periods (“once and again”), one at Thessalonica, the other after his departure from Macedonia, that is, when he came into Achaia to Corinth (from the church in which city he would receive no help); and this “in the beginning of the Gospel,” that is, at its first preaching in these parts. Thus all three, the two Epistles and history, mutually, and no doubt undesignedly, coincide; a sure test of genuineness.

supplied — *Greek*, “supplied in addition,” namely, in addition to their former contributions; or as BENGEL, in addition to the supply obtained by my own manual labor.

10. *Greek*, “There is (the) truth of Christ in me that,” etc. (^{<5901>}Romans 9:1).

no man shall stop me of — The oldest manuscripts read, “This boasting shall not *be shut* (that is, stopped) *as regards me*.” “Boasting is as it were personified ... shall not have its mouth stopped as regards me” [ALFORD].

11. Love is often offended at its favors being not accepted, as though the party to whom they are offered wished to be under no obligation to the offerer.

12. I will do — I will *continue* to decline help.

occasion — *Greek*, “the occasion,” namely, of misrepresenting my motives, which would be afforded to my detractors, if I accepted help.

that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we — BENGEL joins this clause with “the occasion,” namely, of *glorying* or *boasting*; the occasion “that they may be found (a point wherein they glory) even as we,” that is, quite as disinterested, or virtually, quite as gain-seeking and self-seeking. It cannot mean that the false teachers taught gratuitously even as Paul (compare ^{<471B>}2 Corinthians 11:20 ^{<492>}1 Corinthians 9:12). ALFORD less clearly explains by reference to ^{<471B>}2 Corinthians 11:18, etc., where the “glorying” here is taken up and described as “glorying after the flesh”; thus it means, that in the matters of which they boast they may be found even as we, that is, we may be on a fair and equal footing; that there may be no *adventitious* comparisons made between us, arising out of *misrepresentations* of my course of procedure, but that in every matter of boasting we may be fairly compared and judged by *facts*; FOR (^{<471B>}2 Corinthians 11:13) realities they have none, no weapons but misrepresentation, being *false apostles*.

13. For — reason why he is unwilling they should be thought like him [BENGEL].

such — they and those like them.

false apostles — those “overmuch apostles” (see on ^{<471B>}2 Corinthians 11:5) are no apostles at all.

deceitful workers — pretending to be “workmen” for the Lord, and really seeking their own gain.

14. is transformed — rather, “transforms himself” (compare ^{<3005>}Job 1:6); habitually; the first occasion of his doing so was in tempting Eve. “Himself” is emphatical: If their master *himself*, who is the “prince of

darkness,” the most alien to light, does so, it is less marvellous in the case of them who are his servants (^{<4275>}Luke 22:54 ^{<4160>}Ephesians 6:12).

15. no great thing — no difficult matter.

if his ministers also — as well as himself.

righteousness — answering to “light” (^{<4114>}2 Corinthians 11:14); the manifestation wherewith God reveals Himself in Christ (^{<4163>}Matthew 6:33 ^{<4017>}Romans 1:17).

end — The test of things is *the end* which strips off every specious *form* into which Satan’s agents may now “transform” themselves (compare ^{<4189>}Philippians 3:19,21).

according to their works — not according to their pretensions.

16. I say again — again taking up from ^{<4112>}2 Corinthians 11:1 the anticipatory apology for his boasting.

if otherwise — but if ye will not grant this; if ye will think me a fool.

yet as a fool — “yet even as a fool receive me”; grant me the indulgent hearing conceded even to one suspected of folly. The *Greek* denotes one who does not rightly use his mental powers; not having the idea of blame necessarily attached to it; one deceived by foolish vanities, yet boasting himself [TITTMANN], (^{<4117>}2 Corinthians 11:17,19).

that I — The oldest manuscripts read, “that I, *too*,” namely, *as well as they*, may boast myself.

17. not after the Lord — *By inspired guidance* he excepts this “glorying” or “boasting” from the inspired authoritativeness which belongs to all else that he wrote; even this boasting, though undesirable in itself, was permitted by the Spirit, taking into account its aim, namely, to draw off the Corinthians from their false teachers to the apostle. Therefore this passage gives no proof that any portion of Scripture is uninspired. It merely guards against his boasting being made a justification of boasting in general, which is not ordinarily “after the Lord,” that is, consistent with Christian humility.

foolishly — *Greek*, “in foolishness.”

confidence of boasting — (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 9:4).

18. many — including the “false teachers.”

after the flesh — as fleshly men are wont to boast, namely, of external advantages, as their birth, doings, etc. (compare ^{<412>}2 Corinthians 11:22).

I will glory also — that is, I also will boast of such fleshly advantages, to show you that even in these I am not their inferiors, and therefore ought not to be supplanted by them in your esteem; though these are not what I desire to glory in (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 10:17).

19. gladly — willingly. Irony. A plea why they should “bear with” (^{<410>}2 Corinthians 11:1) him in his folly, that is, boasting; ye are, in sooth, so “wise” (^{<408>}1 Corinthians 4:8,10; Paul’s real view of their wisdom was very different, ^{<401>}1 Corinthians 3:1-4) yourselves that ye can “bear with” the folly of others more complacently. Not only *can* ye do so, but ye *are actually* doing this and more.

20. For — Ye may well “bear with” fools; for ye even “bear with” oppressors. Translate, “Ye bear with them.”

a man — as the false apostles do.

bring you into bondage — to himself. Translate “brings,” not “bring”; for the case is not merely a supposed case, but a case actually then occurring. Also “devours” (namely, by exactions, ^{<423>}Matthew 23:24 ^{<450>}Psalms 53:4), “takes,” “exalts,” “smites.”

take of you — So the *Greek* for “take” is used for “take away from” (^{<406>}Revelation 6:4). ALFORD translates, as in ^{<412>}2 Corinthians 12:16, “catches you.”

exalt himself — under the pretext of apostolic dignity.

smite you on the face — under the pretext of divine zeal. The height of insolence on their part, and of servile endurance on yours (^{<122>}1 Kings 22:24 ^{<435>}Nehemiah 13:25 ^{<426>}Luke 22:64 ^{<421>}Acts 23:2 ^{<503>}1 Timothy 3:3).

21. as concerning reproach — rather, “by way of dishonor (that is, *self-disparagement*) I say it.”

as though we ... weak — in not similarly (^{<4112>}2 Corinthians 11:20) showing our *power* over you. “An ironical reminiscence of his own abstinence when among them from all these acts of self-exaltation at their expense” (as if such abstinence was weakness) [ALFORD]. The “we” is emphatically contrasted with the false teachers who so oppressively displayed their power. I speak so as though WE had been weak when with you, because we did not show our power this way. Howbeit (we are not really weak; for), whereinsoever any is bold ... I am bold also.

22. Hebrews ... Israelites ... the seed of Abraham — A climax. “Hebrews,” referring to the *language* and *nationality*; “Israelites,” to the *theocracy* and *descent from Israel*, the “prince who prevailed with God” (^{<6100>}Romans 9:4); “the seed of Abraham,” to the *claim to a share in the Messiah* (^{<6110>}Romans 11:1 9:7). Compare ^{<1185>}Philippians 3:5, “An Hebrew of the Hebrews,” not an Hellenist or Greek-speaking Jew, but a Hebrew in tongue, and sprung from Hebrews.

23. I speak as a fool — rather, as *Greek*, “I speak as if *beside myself*”; stronger than “as a fool.”

I am more — namely, in respect to the credentials and manifestations of my ministry, more faithful and self-denying; and richer in tokens of God’s recognition of my ministry. Old authorities read the order thus, “In prisons above measures, in stripes more abundantly” (*English Version*, less accurately, “more frequent”). ^{<4123>}Acts 16:23-40 records one case of his imprisonment with stripes. CLEMENT OF ROME [*First Epistle to the Corinthians*] describes him as having suffered bonds seven times.

in death oft — (^{<4100>}2 Corinthians 4:10 ^{<4123>}Acts 9:23 13:50 14:5,6,19 17:5,13).

24. ^{<6216>}Deuteronomy 25:3 ordained that not more than forty stripes should be inflicted To avoid exceeding this number, they gave one short of it: thirteen strokes with a treble lash [BENGEL]. This is one of those minute agreements with Jewish usage, which a forger would have not been likely to observe.

25. The beating by Roman magistrates at Philippi (^{<4123>}Acts 16:23) is the only one recorded in Acts, which does not profess to give a complete

journal of his life, but only a sketch of it in connection with the design of the book, namely, to give an outline of the history of the Gospel Church from its foundation at Jerusalem, to the period of its reaching Rome, the capital of the Gentile world.

once was I stoned — (^{<4449>}Acts 14:19).

thrice ... shipwreck — before the shipwreck at Melita (^{<4474>}Acts 27:44). Probably in some of his voyages from Tarsus, where he stayed for some time after his conversion, and from which, as being a seafaring place, he was likely to make missionary voyages to adjoining places (^{<4483>}Acts 9:30 11:25 ^{<4812>}Galatians 1:21).

a night and a day ... in the deep — probably in part swimming or in an open boat.

26. In — rather, “By”: connected with ^{<47123>}2 Corinthians 11:23, but now not with “in,” as there, and as in ^{<47127>}2 Corinthians 11:27, where again he passes to the idea of surrounding circumstances or environments [ALFORD, ELLICOTT and others].

waters — rather, as *Greek*, “rivers,” namely, perils by the flooding of rivers, as on the road often traversed by Paul between Jerusalem and Antioch, crossed as it is by the torrents rushing down from Lebanon. So the traveler Sport lost his life.

robbers — perhaps in his journey from Perga to Antioch in Pisidia. Pisidia was notorious for robbers; as indeed were all the mountains that divided the high land of Asia from the sea.

the heathen — Gentiles.

in the city — Damascus, ^{<4424>}Acts 9:24,25; Jerusalem, ^{<4429>}Acts 9:29; Ephesus, ^{<4423>}Acts 19:23.

false brethren — (^{<4804>}Galatians 2:4).

27. fastings — *voluntary*, in order to kindle devotions (^{<4432>}Acts 13:2,3 14:23 ^{<4407>}1 Corinthians 9:27); for they are distinguished from “hunger and thirst,” which were *involuntary* [GROTIUS]. However, see on ^{<4462>}2 Corinthians 6:5. The context refers solely to *hardships*, not to self-

imposed devotional mortification. “Hunger and thirst” are not synonymous with “foodlessness” (as the *Greek* of “fasting” means), but are its consequences.

cold ... nakedness — “cold” resulting from “nakedness,” or insufficient clothing, as the *Greek* often means: as “hunger and thirst” result from “foodlessness.” (Compare ^{<400>}Acts 28:2 ^{<605>}Romans 8:35). “When we remember that he who endured all this was a man constantly suffering from infirm health (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 4:7-12 12:7-10 ^{<605>}Galatians 4:13,14), such heroic self-devotion seems almost superhuman” [CONYBEARE and HOWSON].

28. without — “Beside” trials falling on me *externally*, just recounted, there is “that which cometh upon me (literally, *the impetuous concourse to me* of business; properly, *a crowd rising up against one again and again, and ready to bear him down*), the care of all the churches” (including those not yet seen in the flesh, ^{<500>}Colossians 2:1): an *internal* and more weighty anxiety. But the oldest manuscripts for “that which cometh,” read, “the *pressure*”: “the *pressing care-taking*” or “inspection that is upon me daily.” ALFORD translates, “Omitting what is BESIDES”; namely, those other trials *besides* those recounted. But the *Vulgate*, ESTIUS, and BENGEL, support *English Version*.

the care — The *Greek* implies, “my *anxious solicitude* for all the churches.”

29. I ... weak — in condescending sympathy with the weak (^{<400>}1 Corinthians 9:22). “*Care* generates sympathy, which causes the minister of Christ personally to enter into the feelings of all his people, as if he stood in their position, so as to accommodate himself to all” [CALVIN].

offended — by some stumbling-block put in his way by others: the “weak” is most liable to be “offended.”

I burn not — The “I” in the *Greek* is emphatic, which it is not in the former clause, “I am not weak.” I not only enter into the feeling of the party offended, but *I burn* with indignation at the offender, *I myself* taking up his cause as my own. “Who meets with a stumbling-block and I am not disturbed even more than himself” [NEANDER].

30. glory of ... infirmities — A striking contrast! *Glorying* or *boasting* of what others make matter of shame, namely, *infirmities*; for instance, his humbling mode of escape in a basket (^{<4713>}2 Corinthians 11:33). A character utterly incompatible with that of an enthusiast (compare ^{<4715>}2 Corinthians 12:5,9,10).

31. This solemn asseveration refers to what follows. The persecution at Damascus was one of the first and greatest, and having no human witness of it to adduce to the Corinthians, as being a fact that happened long before and was known to few, he appeals to God for its truth. Luke (^{<4025>}Acts 9:25) afterwards recorded it (compare ^{<4011>}Galatians 1:20), [BENGEL]. It may ALSO refer to the revelation in ^{<4711>}2 Corinthians 12:1, standing in beautiful contrast to his humiliating escape from Damascus.

32. governor — *Greek*, “Ethnarch”: a Jewish officer to whom heathen rulers gave authority over Jews in large cities where they were numerous. He was in this case under Aretas, king of Arabia. Damascus was in a Roman province. But at this time, A.D. 38 or 39, three years after Paul’s conversion, A.D. 36, Aretas, against whom the Emperor Tiberius as the ally of Herod Agrippa had sent an army under Vitellius, had got possession of Damascus on the death of the emperor, and the consequent interruption of Vitellius’ operations. His possession of it was put an end to immediately after by the Romans [NEANDER]. Rather, it was granted by Caligula (A.D. 38) to Aretas, whose predecessors had possessed it. This is proved by our having no Damascus coins of Caligula or Claudius, though we do have of their immediate imperial predecessors and successors [ALFORD].

CHAPTER 12

2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-21.

REVELATIONS IN WHICH HE MIGHT GLORY: BUT HE RATHER GLORIES IN INFIRMITIES, AS CALLING FORTH CHRIST'S POWER: SIGNS OF HIS APOSTLESHIP: HIS DISINTERESTEDNESS: NOT THAT HE IS EXCUSING HIMSELF TO THEM; BUT HE DOES ALL FOR THEIR GOOD, LEST HE SHOULD FIND THEM NOT SUCH AS HE DESIRED, AND SO SHOULD HAVE TO BE SEVERE AT HIS COMING.

1. He proceeds to illustrate the “glorying in infirmities” (2 Corinthians 11:30). He gave one instance which might expose him to ridicule (2 Corinthians 11:33); he now gives another, but this one connected with a glorious revelation of which it was the sequel: but he dwells not on the glory done to himself, but on the *infirmity* which followed it, as displaying Christ's power. The oldest manuscripts read, “I MUST NEEDS boast (or glory) though it be not expedient; *for* I will come.” The “for” gives a proof that it is “not expedient to boast”: I will take the case of revelations, in which if anywhere boasting might be thought harmless. “Visions” refers to things *seen*: “revelations,” to things heard (compare 1 Samuel 9:15) or *revealed* in any way. In “visions” their signification was not always vouchsafed; in “revelations” there was always an unveiling of truths before hidden (Daniel 2:19,31). All parts of Scripture alike are matter of *inspiration*; but not all of *revelation*. There are degrees of revelation; but not of inspiration.

of — that is, *from* the Lord; Christ, 2 Corinthians 12:2.

2. Translate, “I know,” not “I knew.”

a man — meaning *himself*. But he purposely thus distinguishes between the *rapt and glorified* person of 2 Corinthians 12:2,4, and *himself* the infirmity-laden victim of the “thorn in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:7). Such glory belonged not to *him*, but the *weakness* did. Nay, he did not

even know whether he was in or out of the body when the glory was put upon him, so far was the glory from being *his* [ALFORD]. His spiritual self was his highest and truest self: the flesh with its infirmity merely his temporary self (^{<4812>}Romans 7:25). Here, however, the latter is the prominent thought.

in Christ — a Christian (^{<5101>}Romans 16:7).

above — rather, simply “fourteen years ago.” This Epistle was written A.D. 55-57. Fourteen years before will bring the vision to A.D. 41-43, the time of his second visit to Jerusalem (^{<4027>}Acts 22:17). He had long been intimate with the Corinthians, yet had never mentioned this revelation before: it was not a matter lightly to be spoken of.

I cannot tell — rather as *Greek*, “I know not.” If *in the body*, he must have been caught up bodily; if *out of the body*, as seems to be Paul’s *opinion*, his spirit must have been caught up out of the body. At all events he recognizes the possibility of conscious receptivity in disembodied spirits.

caught up — (^{<4483>}Acts 8:39).

to the third heaven — *even to*, etc. These *raptures* (note the *plural*, “visions,” “revelations,” ^{<4711>}2 Corinthians 12:1) had two degrees: first he was *caught up* “to the third heaven,” and from thence to “Paradise” (^{<4713>}2 Corinthians 12:4) [CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *Miscellanies*, 5.427], which seems to denote an inner recess of the third heaven [BENGEL] (^{<4234>}Luke 23:43 ^{<6111>}Revelation 2:7). Paul was permitted not only to “hear” the things of Paradise, but to see also in some degree the things of the third heaven (compare “visions,” ^{<4711>}2 Corinthians 12:1). The occurrence TWICE of “whether in the body ... I know not, God knoweth,” and of “lest I should be exalted above measure,” marks two stages in the revelation. “Ignorance of the *mode* does not set aside the certain knowledge of the *fact*. The apostles were ignorant of many things” [BENGEL]. The first heaven is that of the clouds, the *air*; the second, that of the stars, the *sky*; the third is *spiritual* (^{<4011>}Ephesians 4:10).

3. Translate, “I know.”

out of — Most of the oldest manuscripts read “apart from.”

4. unspeakable — not in themselves, otherwise Paul could not have heard them; but as the explanation states, “which it is not lawful ... to utter” [ALFORD]. They were designed for Paul’s own consolation, and not for communication to others. Some heavenly words are communicable (^{<4346>}Exodus 34:6 ^{<2369>}Isaiah 6:3). These were not so. Paul had not the power adequately to utter; nor if he had, would he have been permitted; nor would earthly men comprehend them (^{<4382>}John 3:12 ^{<4089>}1 Corinthians 2:9). A man may hear and know more than he can speak.

5. of myself — concerning myself. Self is put in the background, except in respect to his infirmities. His glorying in his other self, to which the revelations were vouchsafed, was not in order to give glory to his fleshly self, but to bring out in contrast the “infirmities” of the latter, that Christ might have all the glory.

6. For — Not but that I might glory as to “myself” (^{<4715>}2 Corinthians 12:5); “FOR if I should desire to glory, I shall not be a fool”; for I have things to glory, or boast of which are good matter for glorying of (not mere external fleshly advantages which when he gloried in [^{<4700>}2 Corinthians 11:1-33] he termed such glorying “folly,” ^{<4700>}2 Corinthians 11:1,16,17).

think of me — *Greek*, “form his estimate respecting me.”

heareth of me — *Greek*, “heareth aught from me.” Whatever haply he heareth from me in person. If on account of healing a cripple (^{<4442>}Acts 14:12,13), and shaking off a viper (^{<4385>}Acts 28:5), the people thought him a god, what would they have not done, if he had disclosed those revelations? [ESTIUS]. I wish each of you to estimate me by “what he sees” my *present* acts and “hears” my teaching to be; not by my boasting of *past* revelations. They who allow themselves to be thought of more highly than is lawful, defraud themselves of the honor which is at God’s disposal [BENGEL] (^{<4344>}John 5:44 12:43).

7. exalted above measure — *Greek*, “overmuch uplifted.” How dangerous must self-exaltation be, when even the apostle required so much restraint! [BENGEL].

abundance — *Greek*, “the excess”; exceeding greatness.

given ... me — namely, by God (^{<4386>}Job 5:6 ^{<3022>}Philippians 1:29).

thorn in the flesh — (^{<1655>}Numbers 33:55 ^{<1339>}Ezekiel 28:24). ALFORD thinks it to be the same bodily affliction as in ^{<4013>}Galatians 4:13,14. It certainly was something personal, affecting him individually, and not as an apostle: causing at once *acute pain* (as “thorn” implies) and *shame* (“buffet”: as slaves are *buffeted*, ^{<1021>}1 Peter 2:20).

messenger of Satan — who is permitted by God to afflict His saints, as Job (^{<8107>}Job 2:7 ^{<1236>}Luke 13:16).

to buffet me — In *Greek, present*: to buffet me even now continuously. After experiencing the state of the blissful angels, he is now exposed to the influence of an evil angel. The chastisement from hell follows soon upon the revelation from heaven. As his *sight* and *hearing* had been ravished with heavenly “revelations,” so his *touch* is pained with the “thorn in the flesh.”

8. For — “concerning this thing.”

thrice — To his first and second prayer no answer came. To his third the answer came, which satisfied his faith and led him to bow his will to God’s will. So Paul’s master, Jesus, *thrice* prayed on the Mount of Olives, in resignation to the Father’s will. The thorn seems (from ^{<1710>}2 Corinthians 12:9, and *Greek*, ^{<1710>}2 Corinthians 12:7, “that he *may* buffet me”) to have continued with Paul when he wrote, lest still he should be “overmuch lifted up.”

the Lord — Christ. Escape from the cross is not to be sought even indirectly from Satan (^{<1407>}Luke 4:7). “Satan is not to be asked to spare us” [BENGE].

9. said — literally, “He hath said,” implying that His answer is enough [ALFORD].

is sufficient — The trial must endure, but the grace shall also endure and never fail thee [ALFORD], (^{<1525>}Deuteronomy 33:25). The Lord puts the words into Paul’s mouth, that following them up he might say, “O Lord, Thy grace is sufficient for me” [BENGE].

my strength — *Greek*, “power.”

is made perfect — has its most perfect manifestation.

in weakness — Do not ask for sensible strength, FOR My power is perfected in man's "strengthlessness" (so the *Greek*). The "for" implies, thy "strengthlessness" (the same *Greek* as is translated "weakness"; and in ^{<4720>}2 Corinthians 12:10, "infirmities") is the very element in which My "power" (which moves coincident with "My grace") exhibits itself more perfectly. So that Paul instead of desiring the infirmity to "depart," "rather" henceforth "*glories* in infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest (*Greek*, 'tabernacle upon,' cover my infirmity all over as with a tabernacle; compare *Greek*, ^{<4812>}John 1:12) upon" him. This effect of Christ's assurance on him appears, ^{<4802>}2 Corinthians 4:7 ^{<4818>}1 Corinthians 2:3,4; compare ^{<4804>}1 Peter 4:14. The "My" is omitted in some of the oldest manuscripts; the sense is the same, "power" (referring to God's power) standing absolutely, in contrast to "weakness" (put absolutely, for man's weakness). Paul often repeats the word "weakness" or "infirmity" (the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth chapters) as being Christ's own word. The Lord has more need of our weakness than of our strength: our strength is often His rival; our weakness, His servant, drawing on His resources, and showing forth His glory. Man's extremity is God's opportunity; man's security is Satan's opportunity. God's way is not to take His children out of trial, but to give them strength to bear up against it (^{<4882>}Psalms 88:7 ^{<4875>}John 17:15).

10. take pleasure in — too strongly. Rather as the *Greek*, "I am well contented in."

infirmities — the *genus*. Two pairs of *species* follow, partly coming from "Satan's messenger," partly from men.

reproaches — "insults."

when — in all the cases just specified.

then — then especially.

strong — "*powerful*" in "the *power of Christ*" (^{<4712>}2 Corinthians 12:9 ^{<4722>}2 Corinthians 13:4 ^{<4813>}Hebrews 11:34).

11. in glorying — omitted in the oldest manuscripts. "I am become a fool." He sounds a retreat [BENJEL].

ye — emphatic. “It is YE who have compelled me; for I ought to have been commended by you,” instead of having to commend myself.

am I behind — rather as *Greek*, “was I behind” when I was with you?

the very chiefest — rather, as in ^{<4710>}2 Corinthians 11:5, “those overmuch apostles.”

though I be nothing — in myself (^{<4850>}1 Corinthians 15:9,10).

12. Truly, etc. — There is understood some such clause as this, “And yet I have not been commended by you.”

in all patience, in signs, etc. — The oldest manuscripts omit “in.” “Patience” is not one of the “signs,” but the element IN which they were wrought: endurance of opposition which did not cause me to leave off working [ALFORD]. Translate, “IN ... patience, BY signs,” etc. His mode of expression is modest, putting himself, the worker, in the background, “were wrought,” not “I wrought.” As the *signs* have not been transmitted to us, neither has the apostleship. The apostles have no literal successors (compare ^{<402>}Acts 1:21,22).

mighty deeds — palpable works of divine omnipotence. The silence of the apostles in fourteen Epistles, as to miracles, arises from the design of those Epistles being hortatory, not controversial. The passing allusions to miracles in seven Epistles prove that the writers were not enthusiasts to whom *miracles* seem the most important thing. *Doctrines* were with them the important matter, save when convincing adversaries. In the seven Epistles the mention of miracles is not *obtrusive*, but marked by a calm air of assurance, as of facts *acknowledged on all hands*, and therefore unnecessary to dwell on. This is a much stronger proof of their reality than if they were formally and obtrusively asserted. Signs and wonders is the regular formula of the Old Testament, which New Testament readers would necessarily understand of supernatural works. Again, in the Gospels the miracles are so inseparably and congruously tied up with the history, that you cannot deny the former without denying the latter also. And then you have a greater difficulty than ever, namely, *to account for the rise of Christianity*; so that the infidel has something infinitely more

difficult to believe than that which he rejects, and which the Christian more rationally accepts.

13. wherein you were inferior — that is, were treated with less consideration by me than were other churches.

I myself — *I made a gain of you neither myself, nor by those others whom I sent, Titus and others* (^{<4727>}2 Corinthians 12:17,18).

wrong — His declining support from the Corinthians might be regarded as the denial to them of a privilege, and a mark of their spiritual inferiority, and of his looking on them with less confidence and love (compare ^{<4719>}2 Corinthians 11:9,11).

14. the third time — See *Introduction* to the first Epistle. His *second* visit was probably a short one (^{<4647>}1 Corinthians 16:7), and attended with humiliation through the scandalous conduct of some of his converts (compare ^{<4721>}2 Corinthians 12:21 ^{<4701>}2 Corinthians 2:1). It was probably paid during his three years' sojourn at Ephesus, from which he could pass so readily by sea to Corinth (compare ^{<4715>}2 Corinthians 1:15,16 13:1,2). The context here implies nothing of a *third preparation* to come; but, "I am coming, and the third time, and will not burden you this time any more than I did at my *two previous visits*" [ALFORD].

not yours, but you — (^{<5047>}Philippians 4:17).

children ... parents — Paul was their spiritual father (^{<4644>}1 Corinthians 4:14,15). He does not, therefore, seek earthly *treasure* from them, but *lays up* the best *treasure* (namely, spiritual) "for their souls" (^{<4725>}2 Corinthians 12:15).

15. I will ... spend — all I have.

be spent — all that I am. This is more than even natural parents do. They "lay up *treasures* for their children." But I spend not merely my treasures, but *myself*.

for you — *Greek*, "for your souls"; not for your mere bodies.

the less I be loved — Love rather descends than ascends [BENJEL]. Love him as a true friend who seeks your good more than your good will.

16. I did not burden you — The “I” in the *Greek* is emphatic. A possible insinuation of the Corinthians is hereby anticipated and refuted: “But, you may say, granted that *I* did not burden you *myself*; nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you (in my net) with guile”; namely, made a gain of you *by means of others* (^{408B}1 Thessalonians 2:3).

17. Paul’s reply: You know well I did not. My associates were as disinterested as myself. An important rule to all who would influence others for good.

18. I desired Titus — namely, to go unto you. Not the mission mentioned ^{408B}2 Corinthians 8:6,17,22; but a mission previous to this Epistle, probably that from which he had just returned announcing to Paul their penitence (^{408B}2 Corinthians 7:6-16).

a brother — rather “OUR (literally, ‘the’) brother”; one well known to the Corinthians, and perhaps a Corinthian; probably one of the two mentioned in ^{408B}2 Corinthians 8:18,22.

same spirit — inwardly.

steps — outwardly.

19. Again — The oldest manuscripts read, “*This long time ye think that we are excusing ourselves unto you? (Nay). It is before God (as opposed to ‘unto you’) that we speak in Christ*” (^{408B}2 Corinthians 2:17). *English Version Greek* text was a correction from ^{408B}2 Corinthians 3:1 5:12.

20. For — Assigning cause why they needed to be thus spoken to “for their edification”; namely, his fear that at his coming he should find them “not such as he would,” and so he should be found by them “such as they would not” like, namely, severe in punishing misconduct.

debates — *Greek*, “strifes,” “contentions.”

envyings — The oldest manuscripts read “envying,” *singular*.

strifes — “factions,” “intrigues,” “factious schemes” [WAHL]. *Ambitious self-seeking*; from a *Greek* root, “to work for hire.”

backbitings, whisperings — *open* “slandering,” and “whispering backbitings” (^{408B}Galatians 5:20).

swellings — arrogant elation; puffing up of yourselves. ^{<6016>}Jude 1:16, “great swelling words” (^{<6028>}2 Peter 2:18).

21. my God — *his* God, however trying the humiliation that was in store for him.

will humble me — The indicative implies that the supposition *will actually be so*. The faithful pastor is “humbled” at, and “bewails” the falls of his people, as though they were his own.

sinned already — before my last coming [BENGEL], that is, before the second visit which he paid, and in which he had much at Corinth to rebuke.

have not repented — shall not have repented [ALFORD].

uncleanness — for example, of married persons (^{<5001>}1 Thessalonians 4:7).

fornication — among the unmarried.

CHAPTER 13

2 CORINTHIANS 13:1-14.

HE THREATENS A SEVERE PROOF OF HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY, BUT PREFERS THEY WOULD SPARE HIM THE NECESSITY FOR IT.

1. This is the third time I am coming to you — not merely *preparing* to come to you. This proves an *intermediate visit* between the two recorded in ~~Acts~~ Acts 18:1 20:2.

In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established — Quoted from ~~Deuteronomy~~ Deuteronomy 19:15, *Septuagint*. “I will judge not without examination, nor will I abstain from punishing upon due evidence” [CONYBEARE and HOWSON]. I will no longer be among you “in all patience” towards offenders (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 12:12). The apostle in this case, where ordinary testimony was to be had, does not look for an immediate revelation, nor does he order the culprits to be cast out of the church before his arrival. Others understand the “two or three witnesses” to mean *his two or three visits* as establishing either

(1) the truth of the facts alleged against the offenders, or

(2) the reality of his threats. I prefer the first explanation to either of the two latter.

2. Rather, “I have already said (at my second visit), and tell you (now) beforehand, AS (I did) WHEN I WAS PRESENT THE SECOND TIME, SO also NOW in my absence (the oldest manuscripts omit the ‘I write,’ which here wrongly follows in *English Version Greek* text) to them which heretofore have sinned (namely, before my second visit, ~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 12:21), and to all others (who have sinned since my second visit, or are in danger of sinning).” The *English Version*, “as if I were present the *second* time,” namely, this next time, is quite inconsistent with ~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 13:1, “this is the *third* time I am coming to you,” as Paul could not have called

the same journey at once “the second” and “the third time” of his coming. The antithesis between “the second time” and “now” is palpable.

if I come again, etc. — that is, *whenever I come again* (^{<406>}Acts 20:2). These were probably the very words of his former threat which he now repeats again.

3. Since — The reason why he will not spare: Since ye challenge me to give a “proof” that Christ speaks in me. It would be better if ye would “*prove your own selves*” (^{<415>}2 Corinthians 13:5). This disproves the assertion of some that Scripture nowhere asserts the infallibility of its writers when writing it.

which — “who” (Christ).

is not weak — in relation to you, by me and in this very Epistle, in exercising upon you strong discipline.

mighty in you — has given many proofs of His power in miracles, and even in punishing offenders (^{<451>}2 Corinthians 5:11,20,21). Ye have no need to put me to the proof in this, as long ago Christ has exhibited great proofs of His power by me among you (^{<422>}2 Corinthians 12:12) [GROTIUS]. It is therefore not me, but Christ, whom ye wrong: it is His patience that ye try in despising my admonitions, and derogating from my authority [CALVIN].

4. though — omitted in some of the oldest manuscripts; then translate, “For He was even crucified,” etc.

through weakness — *Greek*, “from weakness”; that is, His assumption of our weakness was the source, or necessary condition, *from* which the possibility of His crucifixion flowed (^{<524>}Hebrews 2:14 ^{<510>}Philippians 2:7,8).

by — *Greek*, “from”; “owing to.”

the power of God — the Father (^{<500>}Romans 1:4 6:4 ^{<500>}Ephesians 1:20).

weak in him — that is, in virtue of our union with Him, and after His pattern, weakness predominates in us for a time (exhibited in our “infirmities” and weak “bodily presence,” ^{<500>}2 Corinthians 10:10)

12:5,9,10; and also in our not putting into immediate exercise our power of punishing offenders, just as Christ for a time kept in abeyance His power).

we shall live with him — not only hereafter with Him, free from our present infirmities, in the resurrection life (^{40B2}Philippians 3:21), but presently in the exercise of our apostolic authority against offenders, which flows to us *in respect to you* from *the power of God*, however “weak” we now seem to you. “With Him,” that is, even as He now exercises His power in His glorified resurrection life, after His weakness for a time.

5. Examine — *Greek*, “Try (make trial of) yourselves.”

prove your own selves — This should be your first aim, rather than “seeking a proof of Christ speaking *in me*” (^{40B2}2 Corinthians 13:3).

your own selves — I need not speak much in proof of Christ being in me, your minister (^{40B2}2 Corinthians 13:3), for if ye try *your own selves* ye will see that Christ is also in you [CHRYSOSTOM], (^{40B1}Romans 8:10). Finding Christ dwelling in yourselves by faith, ye may well believe that He speaks in me, by whose ministry ye have received this faith [ESTIUS]. To doubt it would be the sin of Israel, who, after so many miracles and experimental proofs of God’s presence, still cried (^{40B7}Exodus 17:7), “Is the Lord among us or not?” (Compare ^{40B1}Mark 8:11).

except ye be reprobates — The *Greek* softens the expression, “*somewhat* reprobates,” that is, not *abiding the “proof”* (alluding to the same word in the context); failing *when tested*. Image from metals (^{40B1}Jeremiah 6:30 ^{40B2}Daniel 5:27 ^{40B3}Romans 1:28).

6. we ... not reprobates — not *unable to abide the proof* to which ye put us (^{40B2}2 Corinthians 13:6). “I trust that” your own Christianity will be *recognized* by you (observe, “ye shall *know*,” answers to “*know* your own selves,” ^{40B2}2 Corinthians 13:5) as sufficient “proof” that ye are not reprobates, but that “Christ speaks in me,” without needing a proof from me more trying to yourselves. If ye doubt my apostleship, ye must doubt your own Christianity, for ye are the fruits of my apostleship.

7. I pray — The oldest manuscripts read, “we pray.”

not that we should appear approved — not to gain credit for ourselves, your ministers, by your Christian conduct; but for your good [ALFORD]. The antithesis to “reprobates” leads me to prefer explaining with BENGEL, “We do *not* pray *that* we may appear *approved*,” by restraining you when ye do evil; “but that ye should do what is *right*” (*English Version*, “honest”).

though we be as reprobates — though we be thereby deprived of the occasion for exercising our apostolic power (namely, in punishing), and so may appear “as reprobates” (*incapable of affording proof* of Christ speaking in us).

8. Our apostolic power is given us that we may use it not against, but for the furtherance of, the truth. Where you are free from fault, there is no scope for its exercise: and this I desire. Far be it from me to use it against the innocent, merely in order to increase my own power (^{<4730>}2 Corinthians 13:10).

9. **are glad** — *Greek*, “rejoice.”

when we are weak — having no occasion for displaying our power; and so seeming “weak,” as being compassed with “infirmities” (^{<4700>}2 Corinthians 10:10 11:29,30).

ye ... strong — “mighty” in faith and the fruits of the Spirit.

and — not in the oldest manuscripts.

we wish — *Greek*, “pray for.”

your perfection — literally, “perfect restoration”; literally, that of a dislocated limb. Compare ^{<4731>}2 Corinthians 13:11, “Be perfect,” the same *Greek* word; also in ^{<4010>}1 Corinthians 1:10, “perfectly joined together”; ^{<4012>}Ephesians 4:12, “the perfecting of the saints.”

10. **Therefore** — because I wish the “sharpness” to be in my *letters* rather than in *deeds* [CHRYSOSTOM].

edification ... not to destruction — *for building up ... not for casting down*. To “use sharpness” would seem to be *casting down*, rather than *building up*; therefore he prefers not to have to use it.

11. farewell — meaning in *Greek* also “rejoice”; thus in bidding farewell he returns to the point with which he set out, “we are helpers of your *joy*” (^{<402>}2 Corinthians 1:24 ^{<504>}Philippians 4:4).

Be perfect — Become perfect by filling up what is lacking in your Christian character (^{<403>}Ephesians 4:13).

be of good comfort — (^{<406>}2 Corinthians 1:6 7:8-13 ^{<508>}1 Thessalonians 4:18).

14. The benediction which proves the doctrine of the Divine Trinity in unity. “The grace of Christ” comes first, for it is only by it we come to “the love of God” the Father (^{<646>}John 14:6). The variety in the order of Persons proves that “in this Trinity none is afore or after other” [*Athanasian Creed*].

communion — joint fellowship, or participation, in the same Holy Ghost, which joins in one catholic Church, His temple, both Jews and Gentiles. Whoever has “the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,” has also “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and “the love of God”; and vice versa. For the three are inseparable, as the three Persons of the Trinity itself [CHRYSOSTOM]. The doctrine of the Trinity was not revealed clearly and fully till Christ came, and the whole scheme of our redemption was manifested in Him, and we know the Holy Three in One more *in their relations to us* (as set forth summarily in this benediction), than in their *mutual relations to one another* (^{<629>}Deuteronomy 29:29).

Amen — omitted in the oldest manuscripts. Probably added subsequently for the exigencies of public joint worship.