

2 Corinthians 1:1

THE ARGUMENT

Concerning the sacred penman as well of this as the former Epistle, and the church to whom this as well as that Epistle was sent, enough hath been said before. It is plain, that the apostle, when he wrote it, was in Macedonia; probably at Philippi, which was the first city of Macedonia, Ac 16:12, whither Paul went after the uproar that Demetrius had made at Ephesus, of which we read, Ac 20:1. The occasion of his writing this Second Epistle seemeth to be, partly the false teachers' aspersing him:

1. As an inconstant man, because he had promised to come in person to Corinth, and was not yet come; the reason of which he showeth, 2Co 1:1-24, was not levity, but the troubles he met with in Asia, and his desire to hear they had first reformed the abuses he had taxed them for.
2. As an imperious man, because of the incestuous person against whom he had wrote; which charge he avoids, by showing the necessity of his writing in that manner, and giving new orders for the restoring him, upon the repentance he had showed.
3. As a proud and vain glorious man.
4. As a contemptible person; base in his person, as he expresseth it.

The further occasions of his writing were: To commend them for their kind reception of and compliance with the precepts and admonitions of his former Epistle, and their kind reception of Titus: as also to exhort them to a liberal contribution to the necessities of the saints in Judea, to which they had showed their forwardness a year before: and his hearing that there was yet a party amongst them bad enough, that went on in vilifying him and his authority, as well as in other sinful courses; against whom he vindicateth himself, magnifying his office, assuring them he was about to come to Corinth; when they should find him present such as, being absent, he had by his letters declared himself, if they were not reformed. The substance therefore of this Epistle is partly apologetical, or excusatory, where he excuseth himself for his not coming to Corinth so soon as he thought, and for his so severe writing as to the incestuous person: partly hortatory,

where he persuadeth them, more generally, to walk worthy of the gospel; more specially, 2Co 8:1-24 and 2Co 9:1-15, to a liberal contribution to the saints: partly minatory, or threatening, where he threateneth severity against those whom, when he came amongst them, he should find contumacious and impenitent offenders. He concludes the Epistle (as usually) with a salutation of them, pious exhortations to them, and a prayer for them.

Chapter Summary

2Co 1:1,2 Paul saluteth the Corinthians,
2Co 1:3-7 and blesseth God for the comforts and deliverances given him, not solely for his own sake, but for the comfort and encouragement of others also.
2Co 1:8-11 He telleth them of a deliverance he had lately had from a great danger in Asia, and expresseth his trust in God's protection for the future through their prayers.
2Co 1:12-14 He calleth both his own conscience and theirs to witness his sincerity in preaching the gospel,
2Co 1:15-22 and excuseth his not coming to them, as not proceeding from lightness,
2Co 1:23,24 but from lenity towards them.

Ver. 1. *The will of God* here doth not signify the bare permission, but the calling and precept of God; he was *called to be an apostle*, Ro 1:1 1Co 1:1, making him *a minister and a witness*, Ac 26:16. His joining of *Timothy* with him, showeth both the great humility of the apostle, and his desire to give him a reputation in the churches, though he was a very young man. The Epistle is not directed only to the church of God which was at Corinth, (the metropolis of Peloponnesus), but also to all those Christians which lived in Achaia: by which name probably he doth not understand all Greece, (though that anciently had that name, from one Achaeus, that was king there, from whom the Grecians had the name of Achivi,) but that region of Peloponnesus which lay in a neck of land between the Aegean and Ionian Seas; which obtained that name in a more special and restrained sense.

2 Corinthians 1:2

Ver. 2. This was the apostle's common salutation, Ro 1:7. See Poole on "Ro 1:7". 1Co 1:3; where it is observable, that not the Father only, but the Lord Jesus Christ is invoked, and made the Author of *grace*, which is the free love of God, and of *peace*, which signifieth either reconciliation with God upon the free pardon of our sin, or union with men, and brotherly love amongst themselves. The heathens used to begin their epistles with wishing one another health and prosperity; but the apostle hath shown us a more Christian way, and more suited to the faith of Christians, who believe the love and favour of God the greatest and most desirable blessings.

2 Corinthians 1:3

Ver. 3. It is a usual form of thanksgiving, Ro 1:25 9:5. It is in use with us, signifying our sincere and hearty desire that both we ourselves might be enabled, and others by our examples might be quickened, to speak well of God, and to praise his name. This God is called *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, that is, by eternal generation: he is also called *the Father of mercies*, because he is the Fountain of all that good which floweth to poor creatures. And upon the same account he is also called *the God of all comfort*.

2 Corinthians 1:4

Ver. 4. *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation; us*, who are the ministers of the gospel, (as it may appear by what followeth), for the apostle saith, that God doth it, that ministers might, from the comforts wherewith God had comforted them, be able to comfort his people when they are under any trouble, either of body or mind, by the same methods and arguments which the Holy Spirit had used and brought to their minds under trouble to relieve any of them. Two things are observable from this verse:

1. That the apostle attributeth all the support, relief, and comfort, which he had under any tribulation, to God, as the Fountain and Author of all mercy; for though possibly our comforts may be caused from the application of some promises in holy writ, either called to our minds by

the act of our own minds, or brought to our remembrance by some others; yet it is God who must make those plasters to stick, and to become healing and sanative to our souls: so that he is the principal efficient cause, though the Scriptures, or men, may be instrumental causes.

2. That the gifts, graces, and mercies that God bestowed upon his ministers, are bestowed upon them, not merely for their own use, but for the use and good of others; to enable them to be serviceable in doing good to others' souls.

2 Corinthians 1:5

Ver. 5. He calleth his and the other apostles' sufferings, *the sufferings of Christ*, either because they were sufferings for Christ, that is, for doing the work which Christ had given them to do; or his and their personal sufferings, as members of that body of which Christ is the Head. Christ calleth Saul's persecuting the saints, a persecuting of himself, Ac 9:4. Thus we read of Paul's filling up *that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ*, Col 1:24.

So our consolation also aboundeth by Christ; but, saith the apostle, blessed be God, as we have many sufferings for Christ, so also we have many consolations by Christ. Christ, as God, is the efficient cause of the saints' consolation; as Mediator, dying for us, he is the meritorious cause; and it is by his Spirit (who is called the Comforter) that they are applied to us.

2 Corinthians 1:6

Ver. 6. *And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation;* our sufferings tend to *your consolation and salvation*, your souls being upheld and supported by the sight of our boldness, and courage, and confidence in our sufferings: thus, Php 1:13,14: *My bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.* And his sufferings also were for their

salvation, as they encouraged them to suffer also; and, if we suffer with him, we shall reign with him; and our light and momentary afflictions shall work *for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2Co 4:17.

Which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; and (saith the apostle) our suffering hath had a good effect amongst you, while you, with faith and patience, endure sufferings of the same sort which we endure and suffer.

Or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation; and if we be supported, upheld, and comforted under our sufferings, the advantage of this also redoundeth to you, as you are encouraged to suffer for the gospel and profession of Christ, from seeing how God supporteth us under our sufferings.

2 Corinthians 1:7

Ver. 7. We have a *stedfast hope* of you, that as you have endured sufferings for Christ and his gospel, so you will still endure them, as we have done. And we know, *that as you are partakers of the sufferings* of Christ and his gospel, so you shall also share in those Divine consolations that those feel who endure such sufferings.

2 Corinthians 1:8

Ver. 8. We are at a great loss to determine what these troubles were in Asia, of which the apostle doth here speak. We read of several troubles Paul met with in Asia: it was there he was in danger through the tumult raised by Demetrius, Ac 19:23. It was there (at Ephesus) where he fought with beasts after the manner of men, as he told us in the former Epistle, 1Co 15:32. Whoso readeth Ac 19:1-41 and Ac 20:1-38, will find the largest account we have in Scripture of the troubles Paul met with in Asia. But this Epistle is thought to have been written at a time that will not agree to the time of those troubles; therefore they are thought to have been some troubles of which we have a mention no where else in holy writ.

We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we

despaired even of life: whatsoever they were, this text tells us they were very great, and above his natural strength to have borne; some think, above the strength of ordinary Christians, insomuch that if the apostle had not found the more than ordinary assistances of the Spirit of God, he could not have stood under them.

2 Corinthians 1:9

Ver. 9. *But we had the sentence of death in ourselves;* we verily thought we should have been killed; and so it is expounded by the last words of the former verse, *we despaired even of life*. And this God did to teach us, that we should, when we are in dangers, look above the creature, and have no confidence in created means, but only look up to him, who *raiseth the dead*; as Abraham offered up Isaac, Heb 11:17-19, *accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead*. Abraham had a promise to bottom such a faith upon; God had told him: *That in Isaac his seed should be called*: so had Paul, God having revealed to him, that he had a farther work for him to do. So have not all Christians; we do not know our courses, nor what work God hath in his eternal counsels laid out for us, and therefore cannot be confident of deliverances in this life by the Almighty power of God; but yet we, under our greatest trials, may trust in God, who will certainly raise us from the dead; of which faith we have an instance in Job, Job 19:25-27. However, for our comfort in our distresses we may observe: That God, in his great deliverances of his people, useth to suffer them first to be brought to the greatest extremities; that in the mount of the Lord it may be seen, and that they may learn to know that their salvations are from him; more from his Almighty power, than from the virtue of any means they can use, though yet it be our duty to use what lawful means his providence affordeth us.

2 Corinthians 1:10

Ver. 10. *So great a death*, in this text, signifies no more than so great a trial of affliction; as he elsewhere saith, he was *in deaths often*, that is, in dangers of death. Nor (saith the apostle) were we only at that time in danger of our lives, nor had we only at that time an experience of God's power, goodness, and faithfulness in our deliverance; but we are *in*

jeopardy every hour, and experience the power of God in our deliverance yet every day. And it being for the advantage of the church of Christ, that our lives should be prolonged, (though we desire rather to be dissolved, and to be with Christ), we are confident that he will yet deliver. Former experiences of God's goodness in delivering us out of troubles, ought to increase our faith, and beget a confidence in us, that God will yet deliver us, if it may be for his own glory, and our good.

2 Corinthians 1:11

Ver. 11. *Ye also helping together by prayer for us:* faith ought; not to hinder prayer; nor doth God's principal efficiency, as to any mercy or deliverance bestowed upon us, give a *supersedeas* to us, as to the use of any means, whether natural or spiritual, by which the mercy may be obtained. Nor are the prayers of the meanest saints useless for the greatest, or beneath their desires; men and women's favour with God depends not upon their order, station, and repute in the world.

That for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf: by the gift here he means the deliverance before mentioned; which he calls a *gift*, to denote, not only God's principal efficiency in it, but his free bestowing of it: this gift (saith he) is *bestowed by the means of many*, because obtained upon the intercession or prayers of many. God doth therefore bestow mercies upon particular persons at the intercession of many others on their behalf, that he may not only have the praises of those persons upon whom he so bestoweth the mercy, but of those who have been so praying. The apostle hereby hinteth to us, that we ought no more to forget to give thanks for others, for whom God hath heard us, than to pray for them when in distress.

2 Corinthians 1:12

Ver. 12. He declareth the confidence that he had, that he should not want their prayers, because his own heart told him, to his joy and satisfaction, that however others might reproach him, as if he had carried himself deceitfully, or craftily, yet he had not done so, but had lived in the world in

all *simplicity and sincerity of God* (so the Greek is). Simplicity is opposed to double-mindedness; where there is a composition in a man, a mixture of truth and falsehood, fairness in speech and falsehood in heart or action. Sincerity is opposed to hypocrisy. It is said to be of God, because he is the God of truth, hath commanded it, approveth it, worketh it, and disposeth the heart of man to it. This is opposed to *fleshly wisdom*, which prompteth a man to seek his own ends any way, good or bad.

But (saith the apostle) *we have had our conversation in the world*, not by the guidance of any such corrupt habit or principle, but *by the grace of God*, the love and fear of God dwelling in us; or, we have done this, not of ourselves, but by the guidance and assistance of Divine grace, helping us so to live, and to have our conversation in the world.

And more abundantly to you-ward; and more especially you are our witnesses of this, amongst whom we have preached the gospel freely, so as we have not made it chargeable to you.

2 Corinthians 1:13

Ver. 13. I do not tell you stories; the things which I write, and which you read, either in my Epistles to you, or to other churches of Christ, are what you know, must own and acknowledge, to be truth; and I hope you shall acknowledge them to be so to the end both of my life and yours.

2 Corinthians 1:14

Ver. 14. *In part*, may either refer to persons or things; part of you have so owned and acknowledged us, though others of you have abused us. Or you have *in part*, or at some times, owned us, that you had cause to bless God for us, and to rejoice that God ever sent us to preach the gospel amongst you. And as some have owned us as their joy, or all of you have at some times acknowledged us as such, so you are also *our rejoicing*; we rejoice that God hath made our labour successful to your souls, and I trust, in the day when the Lord Jesus shall come to judge the world, you shall be more our rejoicing.

2 Corinthians 1:15

Ver. 15. Being confident that my presence with you would be matter of rejoicing both to you and also to me, I purposed: to come unto you before I went into Macedonia, visiting you shortly in my journey thither, that so you might have, a second longer visit in kindness to you. We find, Ac 16:9, that Paul received his first call into Macedonia in a vision; we read again of his passing through Macedonia to go to Jerusalem: the apostle seemeth to speak here of the latter.

2 Corinthians 1:16

Ver. 16. He had purposed to take Corinth in his way unto Macedonia, and after he had finished his business in Macedonia, his resolutions were to have come back to Corinth, and to stay with them some time, hoping to have some of their company some part of the way toward Judea: but it seems, though he thus purposed, yet God had otherwise ordered his motions.

2 Corinthians 1:17

Ver. 17. *When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness?* Though the apostle doth not in so many words tell us so, yet it is apparent from this verse, that some of the Corinthians had taken occasion from his not coming at this time to Corinth, to charge him with levity and inconstancy, as if his words were not to be regarded. It is very observable, how little things the men of the world will take advantage from, to vilify and lessen the reputation of God's faithful ministers and people. How many others might have promised to be in such a place at such a time, and have failed, without the reproach of the men of the world! Who would have been so charitable to them, as to have excused them, by saying: They spake according to their present intentions and resolutions, but they were hindered by the providence of God; but if Paul fails, they will interpret it to be from the lightness and inconstancy of his mind: so charitable is the world to its own; so uncharitable to those who are not of the world, but by God called out of the world. From this imputation the apostle cleareth

himself, denying that he used *lightness*, and that his not coming proceeded from any levity or inconstancy of mind; for he did fully purpose to have come.

Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh? Or (saith he) did I purpose after the manner of carnal men, who make no conscience of their word, who promise and deny both in a breath?

That with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay; should there be in me such a spirit as to speak a thing with my lips which my heart doth not agree to? This lets us know, that truth and steadiness are things which do highly commend either a minister or a Christian, but especially him who is a minister of the gospel.

2 Corinthians 1:18

Ver. 18. *As God is true* to his promises, so he hath taught me to be true to mine. Some make these words not to be merely declarative of the truth of God, but a kind of an oath, or calling the God of truth to witness, that his *word toward* them; by which some understand the gospel, or the word which he had preached amongst them (and of that indeed he speaketh in the next verse); but to me it seemeth much less strained, to interpret Paul's *word*, in this verse, of that word of promise of which he had before spoken, the promise which he owned before that he had made them of his coming to them. That *word*, he saith, *was not yea and nay*, that is, he did not make it with a quite contrary intention; but when he promised, he faithfully intended to have justified his word, and indeed to have come; but the providence of God, to which all men are subjected, had otherwise ordered him and disposed of him; which was the cause why he had not yet been as good as his word. It is very observable, how careful this great apostle was to clear himself from any imputations of levity and falsehood; and it should teach us to be careful to maintain our reputation in the world for truth and steadiness.

2 Corinthians 1:19

Ver. 19. The apostle here giveth a reason why he had made truth and

sincerity so much his business (which reason obligeth us also, who are as much bound as he to study a conformity to Christ); saith he: *The Son of God, who was preached among you, that is, Jesus Christ*; who, though (as some observe) he is in these Epistles no where called God, but Lord, is here called *the Son of God*; which can be understood in no other sense, than by eternal generation; for those who are only the sons of God by adoption, are not the subjects of ministers' preaching. We read of this *Silvanus*, 1Th 1:1 1Pe 5:12: some think that he was the same person who is called Silas, Ac 16:19.

Of *Timothy* we have heard before. They were both ministers who (as well as Apollos before mentioned) had laboured in the gospel amongst the Corinthians.

Was not yea and nay, but in him was yea: now (saith the apostle) that Christ, whom both I, and other ministers of the gospel, have preached to you, is not uncertain and unconstant, one thing at one time, and in one place, another thing at another time, and in another place. He was only one and the same; his doctrine was always certain and uniform, and consistent with itself; and our conversation ought to be suitable to him and his doctrine.

2 Corinthians 1:20

Ver. 20. As Christ was *yea*, and all his doctrine certain and uniform, so *all the promises of God are yea*; the promises of the Messiah have their yea and Amen in him; all the promises of grace, whatsoever is promised to believers, shall be verified by him, that so God may be glorified, and have from men the honour of being always esteemed a true and faithful God, one that cannot fail and falsify his word. But how are the promises of God yea and Amen in Christ by us?

Answer. As the ministers of the gospel are the ministers of Christ for the explication and application of them. The promises are from the Father, through Christ as the meritorious cause, and internally applied by the Holy Spirit, while they are more externally applied by the ministers of the gospel.

2 Corinthians 1:21

Ver. 21. The anointing here mentioned is, doubtless, the same mentioned by St. John, 1Jo 2:20,27, by which is understood the Holy Spirit: so as God's anointing his people signifies his giving them his Holy Spirit, to dwell and to work in them; which Holy Spirit diffuseth itself throughout the whole soul of the believer, as the oil of old poured out upon the heads of the kings, high priests, and prophets. Believers are said to be *anointed*, because God hath, by his Spirit given to them, declared, that he hath set them apart to be kings and priests, a royal priesthood. The same God also *establisheth* their souls both in faith and love, and all *in Christ*; in him as our Head, and through him as the meritorious cause of all that grace wherein we stand. It is observable, that how much soever vain man may ascribe to the power of man's will, yet the blessed apostle attributeth all to God; both our anointing, the first infusion of gracious habits, and also our establishing. It is grace by which we stand.

2 Corinthians 1:22

Ver. 22. The use of a seal is for confirmation of the thing to which it is affixed; the effect of it is the making the impression of itself upon the wax: so as sealing us, both in this and other texts, signifies both the confirmation of the love of God to our souls, and also the renewing and sanctification of our natures, imprinting the image of God upon our souls, making us (as the apostle Peter saith, 2Pe 1:4) *partakers of the Divine nature*; but the first seemeth probably to be most intended here.

And given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts: we have the same expression, 2Co 5:5 Eph 1:14. We read of *the first-fruits of the Spirit*, Ro 8:23. The giving unto believers the Holy Spirit, and those saving spiritual habits which are his effects in the soul, are both the first-fruits and an earnest; for as the first-fruits assured the harvest, and the earnest is a sure pledge of the bargain, when those who give it are honest and faithful; so the sanctifying habits, wrought in the soul by the Spirit of holiness, are a certain pledge of that glory which shall be the portion of believers.

2 Corinthians 1:23

Ver. 23. Here is a perfect form of an oath, which is nothing else but a solemn calling of God to witness the truth of what we speak, whether promising or asserting. Those words, *upon my soul*, also have the force of an imprecation; but it is in a very serious thing: the apostle was deeply charged with levity, for not making good his promise in coming; and because he reasonably presumed, that some amongst them would be difficult to believe the true cause, to gain credit with them, he takes a voluntary oath, which in weighty matters is lawful (though sometimes it be done not before a magistrate). The thing he thus attests is: That he hitherto had forbore to come out of kindness to them; to *spare* them, (as he phraseth it), which may either be understood of their purses, for he could not have gone without some charge to them, though he took no standing salary from them for preaching: or (as others possibly judge better) to spare their persons; for if he had come before they had reformed those abuses that were amongst them, he must (as he before spake) have come unto them *with a rod*.

2 Corinthians 1:24

Ver. 24. *Not for that we have dominion over your faith;* not (say some) that we pretend or boast of any dominion over you because of your faith, as if upon that account we would be chargeable, and exact monies of you. But their interpretation is better, who think that by these words the apostle removes from himself, and much more from all inferior ministers, any power of imposing upon people to believe any thing, but what God had in his word revealed as the object of faith. He had in the verse before used the phrase *spare you*, which he thought might sound harsh in their ears, and give some occasion to carp at him, as if he designed some lordly power over them: No, (saith the apostle), though I speak of sparing you, I intend no exercise of lordly power, *but only to promote your joy*, by removing those things which hinder your true rejoicing. Your present glorying is not good, while these disorders, contrary to the will of God, are amongst you; and you are full of contentions and divisions, which hinder your comfortable society and communion together, as one body.

For by faith ye stand; the most of you stand in the faith (so some interpret

this). I should rather make this the sense, by faith you must stand; if you err in matters of faith, (as some of this church had done in the business of the resurrection, as the apostle told us in 1Co 15:1-58), you fall; you no longer stand than you keep the faith pure and uncorrupt. For, because of their errors as to the resurrection, I cannot tell how to make the apostle's sense to be what some learned men make it to bear, that he had nothing to blame in them in matters of faith, but only in some things referring to order; and therefore they need not to suspect his exercise of any dominion over their faith.

2 Corinthians 2:1

Chapter Summary

2Co 2:1-5 Paul, having shown a motive of tenderness for not coming to Corinth, as also for writing his former Epistle,

2Co 2:6-9 declareth himself satisfied with the censure inflicted on the incestuous person, and desireth them to forgive and comfort him,

2Co 2:10,11 as he himself had forgiven him in Christ's name.

2Co 2:12,13 His uneasiness for not finding Titus at Troas had caused him to go forth with into Macedonia.

2Co 2:14-16 He blesseth God for the successfulness of his labour every where,

2Co 2:17 professing his sincerity and disinterestedness before God.

Ver. 1. One reason why I put off my formerly intended journey to you, was, that I might give you time to repent, and reform those disorders that were amongst you, that my coming to you might neither cause heaviness in you, seeing me come with a rod, to chide and reprove you; nor yet in myself, who do not delight in censures and chidings, but must myself have been sad to have seen such errors and disorders amongst you, as I must by my paternal and apostolical authority have corrected.

2 Corinthians 2:2

Ver. 2. When I am there, I have no refreshment or joy in that part of the citizens who are pagans, all my joy is in that part which are Christians, and constitute the church of God in that city: so as I could have had no pleasure or joy in my being there, if I had had nothing but occasion of sadness and heaviness from you, in whom was all my expectation of any joy or refreshing.

2 Corinthians 2:3

Ver. 3. This hath been the cause of my writing this Second Epistle to you, before I myself came in person, that you might have a time more fully and perfectly to reform such things as are amiss amongst you, and I have formerly given you notice of; lest when I come, instead of rejoicing in you, as I ought to do, or having any just occasion so to do, I might meet with what would give me nothing but trouble and sadness; which would not only be grievous to me, but would be contrary to your duty, for *I ought to rejoice* in you, and you ought so to behave yourselves, that I may have cause to rejoice in you. And I have confidence in the most of you, or in all you who are sincere, that you would all be glad to see me glad and cheerful, rejoicing in my society with you.

2 Corinthians 2:4

Ver. 4. Every man that deriveth from God, is in this made partaker of the Divine nature, that like as God doth not grieve willingly, nor willingly afflict the children of men, so neither will he; but if, by reason of his office or trust reposed in him, he be under an obligation sometimes to speak smartly, or to chastise and punish others for their errors, yet he will so do it as one that hath no pleasure and delight in it. Thus the good judge weepeth, or at least showeth sorrow and compassion, when he giveth sentence against malefactors. So, this great apostle, to whom God had committed a care over all the Christian churches, saw a necessity of reproving this church that was at Corinth, for enduring the incestuous person in their communion, and not casting him out; for their errors about the resurrection, for their divisions, schisms, and contentions, &c.: but he

professeth that he did this *with many tears*; and those not shed in hypocrisy, but forced from the anguish and affliction of his heart; that he had nothing less in his design, than to put them to any excessive grief or trouble, but what he wrote was out of a principle of love and good will, both to the welfare of their whole church, and to the good of the particular souls of those that were the members of that church. Ministers or others do no good by their censures or reproofs, if they do not so dispense them, as people may see that what they do, or say, is out of their abundant love to their souls.

2 Corinthians 2:5

Ver. 5. The particle *if* doth not here signify any doubting or uncertainty (for the incestuous person, of whom the apostle here, and in the following verses, speaks, had certainly caused grief both to the apostle, and also the church whereof he was a member). It is as much as although; or the apostle speaketh in this form, because by his repentance his grief was much allayed. But how doth the apostle say, that he had grieved him *but in part*? Some think he saith so, because the apostle's grief for his sin was now turned into joy by his repentance: others think, that those words, *in part*, signify that it was not the whole church that had grieved him, but only a part of it, viz. this incestuous person, and those who took part with him. Others say, the apostle saith, *in part*, to let us know, that it was not a grief to him only, but to them also. The last would bid very fair for the sense of the place, if the apostle had not in his First Epistle, 1Co 5:2, said that they were puffed up, and had not mourned. So as I judge the second more like to be the sense of the apostle; viz. that it was not the whole church that had grieved him, but a part of it only: and therefore the next words are added, *that I may not overcharge you all*, that is, that I might not load you all with that imputation, as if you were all involved in it.

2 Corinthians 2:6

Ver. 6. This verse maketh it clear, that by *any*, 2Co 2:5, he means the incestuous person, mentioned in 1Co 5:1-13, whom he had ordered to be cast out, and delivered to Satan; which (as appeareth from this verse) they had done, which is the *punishment* mentioned in this verse. They who

think, that the punishment here mentioned was not excommunication, but another being delivered to Satan, and vexed by him:

1. Beg a grave question, viz. Whether delivering to Satan in this place signifieth any more than a casting of the person out of Christ's kingdom on earth, (which is his church), and making him one of the world again, of which Satan is the god?
2. They seem not to consider, that if this church had delivered him to Satan, they could have done no more: so as the apostle would not have said: *Sufficient is this punishment*, when it was the greatest that they could inflict.

Some object, that it is not probable that the apostle (had he been cast out of the communion of the church, for so notorious a crime) would have given order for his being restored in so short a time, as was that between his writing the First and this his Second Epistle.

1. Some think, that he was as yet only under a suspension, and the church had not proceeded to excommunication: this opinion is favoured by the Greek word here used, which is *επιτιμια*, the gentlest of all the words in use in that language to express punishment by.
2. Though in the times following the apostles', a longer time was set after excommunication, for testifying the repentance of sinners notoriously scandalous, before the church did again admit them into her fellowship: yet that it was so in the apostles' time, is more than appears. Possibly it might be so ordered afterwards, when, as the church multiplied, so sin more abounded; and they might, from many experiences of relapses, be quickened to make such orders.
3. The gift of discerning spirits was more usual in the apostles' times than afterward; so that though in following times, when the apostles were dead, and the extraordinary gift of discerning spirits was failed or abated, the church being not able any other way to judge of the truth of sinners' repentance, than from their changed life and conversation, which asked time, might set a longer time for such penitents; yet there might not be the same reason for the apostles doing it.

4. Notwithstanding any thing that appears, there might be the distance of a year or two between Paul's writing these two Epistles.

Which was inflicted of many: who these many were, by whom the apostle saith this punishment was inflicted, is a little disputed; whether the presbytery, or the community. Their opinion seemeth (to me) best, who think that the officers of the church of Corinth heard and judged of matters of faith, and reported it to the community; but he was not cast out without the consent and approbation of the community.

2 Corinthians 2:7

Ver. 7. *So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him:* forgiveness in this place doth not signify the taking away or remitting of the guilt of sin, (that is God's work, not man's), but remitting of the punishment. And this maketh that probable, that they had not as yet proceeded with this person to excommunication, only kept him (like a suspected leper, without the camp) out of a communion with the church: or if they had actually cast him out, forgiving here can signify nothing but restoring him again to a full communion with them; which is also the comforting which is here mentioned.

Lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow: it is plain from hence, that the apostle had intelligence that this person expressed abundant sorrow; otherwise he would not have expressed his fear of his being drowned in his own tears. Though the condition of such, at this day, is sad enough, who are regularly cast out of the communion of any true church of Christ, for crimes which deserve such a punishment, yet we must imagine it much sadder then. Now churches are multiplied, whole cities and nations are Christianized, and though a person be cast out of a church, yet it is not so taken notice of, but he may yet have converse with other Christians, &c.: but there, the greater part of the city being heathens, and the whole countries of Achaia and Greece (contiguous to it) being heathens; one cast out of the communion of the church (if he had the least sense of religion) could not but be deeply afflicted to be in such a case, as none but heathens and professed idolaters would keep him company, or have any intimacy with him.

2 Corinthians 2:8

Ver. 8. That you would restore him to a communion with you in your church assemblies, and take him into the bosom of your church again, and be (as before) friendly towards him. The word which we translate *confirm*; is κυρωσαι, which signifieth authoritatively to establish or confirm. Some observe, that the apostle speaks to them as judges, to gain their good opinion, and make them more pliable, whereas he might authoritatively have absolved him. It is hard: to say what authority the apostles had, or had not, to excommunicate; but we want a precedent in holy writ of the apostles, or any of them, exercising such a power, as being absent, and so in no capacity to hear the proof of any fact against scandalous persons. Paul (1Co 5:1-13) writes to the church of Corinth to do it, and doth only himself command them to do their duty; and here again he writeth to them to forgive him, and restore him. There being no mention, either in the former Epistle, or here, of any command that the incestuous person should put away his wife taken unlawfully, or that he did any such thing in testification of his repentance, makes it very probable, that his crime was not using his father's wife as his wife, but as his harlot; had it been otherwise, we should, very probably, have read of something in the one or the other place, signifying such a command of the apostle, or the thing done by him.

2 Corinthians 2:9

Ver. 9. As for other ends, so for this also I wrote my former Epistle to you, and I now write this Second Epistle to you also, that I might have an experiment of you, what regard you would show to that apostolical authority wherewith God hath invested me.

2 Corinthians 2:10

Ver. 10. The word so often repeated in this verse, and translated *forgive*, is χαριζομαι, which signifies to give, or gratify, or do a kindness, as well as to forgive; so as it needeth not always to be interpreted of any judicial act of absolution. If you see reason to remit any thing of the punishment

inflicted upon the incestuous person, I am satisfied with what you do, I shall take no offence at you for it. If I have showed any favour to any person amongst you that hath fallen under my reproof and chastisement, it hath been for your sake, for the good and advantage of your church, or upon their motion and intercession; and I have done it sincerely in the sight of Christ (the Greek is, in the face of Christ).

2 Corinthians 2:11

Ver. 11. As I have done it in kindness to you, so I have also done it for the advantage both of that person, who is so forgiven, and of your whole church, which is concerned in the welfare or miscarriage of every individual member.

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: the Greek is: That we be not overcome by Satan: *πλεονεκτειν* properly signifies to get again, or to gain a superiority, to get the upper hand. The advantage Satan was like to get by their continuing severity to this offender, was either by his over much grief, or by the hardening of his heart; so as he, seeing no probability to be restored again to his communion with the church, should be exposed, either to temptations to some desperate courses, (which are often the effects of minds full of sorrow and discontent), or else to courses of idolatry or looseness, in giving up himself to the devil's kingdom in the world, because he could not be admitted into the church, which is the kingdom of Christ.

For (saith the apostle) we are not ignorant of his devices, νοηματα, his thoughts and counsels, how he continually walketh about both like *a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;* and like an *old serpent,* seeking whom and how he may deceive. This lets us know, with how much prudence those who are trusted with the souls of others, ought to manage their reproofs, or severe dealings with others: the end of all these is the amendment and reformation of such persons, not their spiritual ruin and destruction; and all reproofs and censures must be given, and made, and managed with reference to that end. We have not only the concern of God's glory (which is the main) to be looked at, but the good also of their souls, whom we so reprove, censure, or alienate ourselves from: and indeed, without consulting this, we cannot consult God's glory; who hath

told us, that he desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live: and therefore we must have an eye about us, and beneath us, to the devil, as well as above us, to God; and prudently judge how such afflictive and harsh actions may be so done by us, that in the mean time Satan get no advantage, and we lose the souls of those with whom we so deal, instead of gaining them to God; which is the main and principal end we ought in all those actions to aim at, 1Co 5:5; so 1Ti 1:20.

2 Corinthians 2:12

Ver. 12. This *Troas* was either the city, or the whole country, called Troy or Ilium, or the lesser Phrygia. We read of Paul's going thither by sea from Philippi, Ac 20:6, and of his having been there, 2Ti 4:13. He tells us, that the business why he went thither, was to preach the gospel; for it was not the apostles' business to stay, as fixed ministers, in any one place, but to carry the gospel up and down the world to several places; which they did by virtue of their general commission to go, preach, and baptize all nations; though sometimes they had a more special call and commission, as Paul had to go into Macedonia. The *door opened*, either signifieth the free liberty he had there to preach, or the great success which God gave him in his work; which he elsewhere calleth an *effectual door*.

2 Corinthians 2:13

Ver. 13. He tells us, that when he came there, he was much troubled because he did not find his brother Titus; where the humility of this great apostle is considerable, in that he disdained not to call *Titus* (a person, though a minister, yet much inferior to him as an apostle) *brother*. Several reasons are given of Paul's trouble. That which is most probable is, that he did expect at Troas to have met with Titus come from Corinth, from whom he might more perfectly have understood the affairs of that church: not finding him there, he tells us he went forward into Macedonia; whither, after the uproar at Ephesus, he designed to go, (as we read, Ac 20:1), but went first into Greece, and stayed there three months, intending to come to Macedonia in his return, 2Co 2:3.

2 Corinthians 2:14

Ver. 14. *Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ:* the translation of the Greek here is not certain; for to translate it word for word, it is: But thanks be to God always, triumphing us in Christ; which makes it uncertain, whether there be not a defect of a preposition, upon the supply of which it would be, who triumpheth over us in Christ, having subdued our hearts to the kingdom and obedience of Christ. But the most interpreters rather agree with our translators, and think the sense of the apostle is *who maketh us to triumph*. In the Hebrew there is a conjugation, where the active verb signifieth to make another to do a thing; and there are several instances brought by learned men out of the Septuagint, where the active verb in the Greek also hath that sense; that which cometh nearest it in the original in holy writ, is that, Ro 8:26, where the Spirit is said to make *intercession for us*, because it causeth us to make intercession. According to this, the sense is: Blessed be God, who though we meet with many enemies, yet through Christ he maketh us *more than conquerors*, Ro 8:37, so that we are not overcome by any of them, but, on the contrary, we triumph over them as conquered by us.

And maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place; and this by manifesting by us in every place *the savour of the knowledge* of Christ; that is, of the gospel. He calleth it a *savour*, either with allusion to that sweet perfumed ointment, with which the high priest, under the law, was anointed, Ex 30:23 Ps 133:2; or with reference to the incense used also under the law; or with relation to Solomon's expression, So 1:3, where we read of *the savour of Christ's good ointments*, and that his name is as an ointment poured forth. By the savour of the knowledge of Christ here mentioned, the apostle plainly meaneth the reputation or good report that the gospel had in every place: see Ho 14:7.

2 Corinthians 2:15

Ver. 15. For the God whom we serve doth not judge of us, nor will reward us, according to our success, but according to our faithfulness and diligence in his work. We give unto all a good savour by our doctrine; and our labours are a sweet savour in the nostrils of God, whatever effects they

have upon souls. God accepteth of our labours as to good men, to whom we are instruments of eternal life and salvation; and though others despise the gospel, and refuse the sweet sound of it, yet as to them also we are a sweet savour in the nostrils of God: Though Israel be not saved, (saith the prophet, Isa 49:5), yet I shall be glorified. It is not for any neglect in us, as to our duty, if any perish, but from their own wilfulness and perverseness.

2 Corinthians 2:16

Ver. 16. As sweet smells, which are to some pleasant and comfortable, are to others pernicious and deadly; so it is with the sweet savour of the gospel. The report which we in all places make of Christ, to some, through their unbelief and hardness of heart, and fondness of their lusts, proveth but *the savour of death unto death*, hardening their hearts to their eternal ruin and destruction; but to such who, being ordained to eternal life, believe our reports, and embrace the gospel, and live up to the precepts and rule of it, our preaching proves a cause of spiritual and of eternal life, to which that leadeth.

And who is sufficient for these things? And oh how great a work is this! What man, what angel, is sufficient for it? It is a mighty work to preach the gospel as we ought to preach it.

2 Corinthians 2:17

Ver. 17. Lest the false apostles and teachers in this church should slight this exclamation of the apostle's, and the pretended difficulty he made of the ministerial work, the apostle adds these words: I confess (saith he) it is no very difficult thing to speak of Christ, and pretend to preach and do as much as I do; but there are many *καπηλευοντες*, we translate it, *corrupt the word*; the Greek word signifies, to sell wine or victuals for money; and because such kind of people make no conscience to deceive, cheat, and deal fraudulently with their customers, it is sometimes used to signify corrupting or deceiving. We are not (saith the apostle) of the number of those who in preaching merely serve their own bellies, and turn the church into a tavern or victualling house, making a gain of the gospel, and discoursing a little while in a pulpit for gain; and so making no conscience,

either what they speak, or how they speak. But we speak by authority from Christ, and in Christ's name; clothed with his authority, and as his ambassadors; and so dare not say any thing unto people, and deliver to his people what he never gave us any commission to speak, nor yet to speak whatever cometh at our tongue's end; but we must remember that we are *in the sight of God*, and speak as from God of God; and that not fraudulently, but sincerely; sincerely aiming at the glory of God in what we do, and the salvation of the souls of them to whom we speak. This is a great work, first to consult the mind and will of God, and find it out by study and meditation; then faithfully to communicate it unto people, without any vain or corrupt mixtures (which do but adulterate the word preached); then to apply it to the consciences of those that hear us.

Who is sufficient for these things? That is, to discharge the office of the ministry in the preaching of the gospel, as men ought to preach it.

2 Corinthians 3:1

Chapter Summary

2Co 3:1-3 To obviate the imputation of vain glory, Paul showeth that the gifts and graces of the Corinthians were a sufficient commendation of his ministry,

2Co 3:4,5 the efficacy of which he ascribeth entirely to God. 2Co 3:6-11 He proveth the superior excellency of the gospel ministry to that of the law, 2Co 3:12-18 and thereupon justifieth his plain speaking, as under a dispensation of greater light and liberty than that of Moses.

Ver. 1. The apostle, in the former Epistle, had spoken much in the vindication of himself and of his office; he seeth reason to return again to something of the like discourse, being provoked by the many imputations which the false apostles and teachers, in this church, had

laid upon him: therefore he saith: *Do we begin again?*
Or else
these words may have a special reference to the last
verse of the
former chapter; where he had commended himself, as
being none of those
who corrupted the word of God, but had preached as of
God, and in the
sight of God. No, (saith the apostle), though some
others stand in
need of commendatory letters, and are very careful to
procure them,
(by which *others* he very probably means the false
apostles and
teachers, which were Paul's great enemies), yet I trust
I need not any
letters commendatory to recommend me to you, any more
than letters of
recommendation from you to commend me unto any other
churches of Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:2

Ver. 2. Your Christianity, and embracing of the gospel of Christ, your faith and holiness, are instead of an epistle to me, to let the world know, both with what faithfulness, and with what blessing of God, and success upon my labours, I have preached the gospel; and you are such an epistle as I do not carry about in my pockets, or lay up in my closet, but it is written in my heart, where I carry continually both a thankful and honourable remembrance of you. Nor are you only taken notice of by me as a famous church, to the planting and watering of which God hath blessed my labours, and the labours of other ministers; but, as he saith to the Romans, Ro 1:8: *Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world,* so he saith here: *Ye are our epistle, known and read of all men;* that is, all Christians take notice of you as a church to which God hath particularly blessed my ministry; so as I need no other recommendation than what I have from your receiving, and the proficiency you have made in, the gospel. Nothing so commends a minister as the proficiency of his people.

2 Corinthians 3:3

Ver. 3. He had told them before that they were his epistle, his epistle

recommendatory, the change which God had wrought in their hearts did more recommend him than all the epistles in the world could; but here he tells them that they were *the epistle of Christ*, it was Christ that wrote his law in their hearts, (which writing was that which commended the apostle, who himself had but a ministration in the work), nor was it a writing *with ink*, but the impression of *the Spirit of the living God*. An epistle *not written in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart*: he alludeth to the writing of the law, which was written in *tables of stone*, Ex 31:18, and also to the promises, Eze 11:19 Eze 36:26. That work of grace in the hearts of these Corinthians, which recommended the apostle, was wrought by Christ, and the apostles were but ministers in the working of it; it was a work more admirable than the writing of the law in tables of stone, and this work (he saith) was *manifestly declared*.

2 Corinthians 3:4

Ver. 4. We are not infallible in the case; but I tell you what confidence we have, hoping in God concerning you, through the merits of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:5

Ver. 5. I would not have you think that we judge ourselves sufficient to work a change in the hearts of men; we are so far from that, that we have no sufficiency so much as to think one good thought, which is the lowest human act. Though the subject, upon which the apostle is here discoursing, be a sufficiency to work a work of grace in the hearts of men; yet here is a strong proof to prove the impotency of man's will unto any thing that is truly and spiritually good: for though the apostle declares here his own and all other ministers' insufficiency to the change of any man's heart, yet he proveth it by an argument, concluding from the lesser to the greater; for if they be not sufficient of themselves, and as of themselves, to think any thing which is truly and spiritually good, they are then much less sufficient for so great a work as the conversion of souls. Nor doth that term, *as of ourselves*, any thing alter the matter; for if we can think good thoughts, in any sense, *as of ourselves*, it is not *of God*, in the sense which the apostle is speaking of; who is not here speaking of God as the God of nature, (from whom indeed we derive our power of thinking), but as the God of grace, from whom we derive our power of thinking holy thoughts, and such as are truly and spiritually good. The apostle determineth all our sufficiency to spiritually good actions to be from God, our sufficiency to the lowest (which is thinking good thoughts) as well as to those of the highest sort; amongst which must those actions be accounted, by which men are made workers together with God, in the bringing of souls out of darkness into marvellous light; opening their eyes, turning

them *from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God*, Ac 26:18. Our sufficiency to think any thoughts, or to do any natural or moral actions, is from God, as he is the God of nature. But it appeareth from all the preceding discourse, that our apostle is here speaking of that sufficiency which floweth from God through the mediation of Christ: our power of thinking floweth from the providence of God towards all men; and if that had been all which the apostle had meant in saying, *our sufficiency is from God*, it had been no more than what they might have learned from the heathen philosophers, who would have acknowledged, that all men's sufficiency to natural actions is from the Divine Being, or the first Mover.

2 Corinthians 3:6

Ver. 6. This verse plainly openeth what he had said before, and lets us know what sufficiency of God that was of which he there spake. He hath (saith the apostle) not found, but *made us* sufficient. We were men before, and, through the creating power and providence of God, we had an ability to think and to speak; but God *hath made us* sufficient, by a supervening act and influence of his grace, to be *ministers of the new testament*, that is, of the gospel; which being the new revelation of the Divine will, and confirmed by the death of Christ, is called the new testament.

Not of the letter, but of the Spirit: by *the letter*, here, the apostle understandeth the law; for the law is called *the letter*, Ro 2:27 Ro 7:6: *Who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law*; that is: While thou, by some external acts, professest a subjection to the law (particularly by circumcision) in a multitude of other actions, (which are more valuable in the sight of God than those external acts), thou transgressest the law. The law, in opposition to the gospel, is called *the letter*, sometimes a dead letter; because it was only a revelation of the will of God concerning man's duty, no revelation of God's grace, either in pardoning men their omissions of duty, and doing acts contrary to duty, or assisting men to the performance of their duty. As the gospel is also called *the Spirit*, both in opposition to the carnal ordinances of the law, and because Christ is the matter, subject, and argument of it; and chiefly because, that the preaching of it is so far attended by the Spirit of grace, that where men do not turn their ears from the hearing of it, nor shut their eyes against the light of it, nor harden their hearts against the precepts and rule of it, it becomes (through the free grace of God) effectual to change their hearts, and to turn them *from the power of Satan unto God*, and to make them truly spiritual and holy.

For the letter (that is, the law) *killeth*; the law showeth men their duty, accuseth, condemneth, and denounceth the wrath of God against men for not doing their

duty, but gives no strength for the doing of it. But the *spirit* (that is, the gospel) *giveth life*: the gospel, in the letter of it, showeth the way to life; and the gospel, in the hand of the Spirit, or with the Spirit, working together with it, (the Holy Spirit using it as its instrument), giveth life; both that life which is spiritual, and that which is eternal, as it prepareth the soul for life and immortality.

2 Corinthians 3:7

Ver. 7. The apostle is manifestly comparing the ministry of the gospel with the ministry of the law, and showing the excellency of the former above the latter. In the former verse he had called the law, *the letter*; and the gospel, in opposition to it, he had called, the spirit: here he calleth the ministration of the law, *the ministration of death*; because it only showed man his duty, or things to be done, but gave no strength or help by which he should do them; only cursing man, but showing him no way by which he might escape that curse: so it did kill men, and led them to eternal death and condemnation, without showing them any means of life and salvation. He also undervalueth the law, in comparison with the gospel, as being only *written and engraven in stones*; whereas (as he had said before) the gospel is written *in the fleshy tables of men's hearts*. Yet (saith he) the ministration of the law (which was indeed but the *ministration of death*) was *glorious*: there was a great deal of the glory and majesty of God attended the giving of the law, of which we read, Ex 19:1-25.

So that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance: of this we read, Ex 34:29,30: *When Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him*. So as it was glorious to be but a minister of the law, that is, of the revelation of the will of God, as to man's duty, *which glory* (saith the apostle) *was to be done away*: Moses's face did not always so shine, neither was the glory of his ministration to abide always, but to cease by the coming in of the new covenant.

2 Corinthians 3:8

Ver. 8. How shall not that ministration, which is more spiritual, and the effects of which are much more spiritual, be accounted much more glorious? Thus the apostle doth not only magnify the gospel above the law, but he also magnifieth his offices in the ministration of the gospel; which ministration he reasonably concludeth to be a more glorious ministration than that which Moses had, in whom the Jews so much gloried.

2 Corinthians 3:9

Ver. 9. What the apostle before called *the ministration of death*, he here calleth *the ministration of condemnation*; and therein gives us a reason why he called it the ministration of death, because it led unto eternal death, as showing men sin, so accusing and condemning men for sinful acts. If it pleased God (saith the apostle) to make that ministration glorious, that the minister of the law (Moses) appeared so glorious in the eyes of Aaron and of the people; *the ministration of righteousness* (by which he means the gospel) must needs be more exceedingly glorious. He tells us, Ro 1:16,17, that he was *not ashamed of the gospel—for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith*; that is, the righteousness wherein a soul must stand and appear righteous before God.

The ministration of righteousness signifieth the ministration of that gospel, that doctrine, which revealeth righteousness.

Righteousness is here opposed to *condemnation*; and therefore signifieth that which is opposed to it, viz. justification. For God doth not so freely remit sins, but that he declares his righteousness in the remission of them; and will show himself just, while he showeth himself *the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus*, Ro 3:26. And from hence it appeareth, that the gospel is called the ministration of righteousness, because he that ministereth in it exhibiteth the righteousness to Christ to be reckoned to the soul, as that whereby it must be justified; for God could not otherwise declare his righteousness in the remission of sins, nor show himself just in justifying the ungodly. This ministration (he saith) must needs be more glorious in the eyes of men than the ministration of the law; for that ministration afforded nothing but terror and death, this affordeth relief, and comfort, and life.

2 Corinthians 3:10

Ver. 10. The law had in it something of intrinsic glory and excellency, as it was the revelation of the will of God to and concerning his creatures; there was an inseparable glory attending it upon that account: and it was made glorious in the ministration of it; as it pleased God that the giving of it should be attended with thunder and lightning, fire and smoke, and an earthquake, and a voice like to the sound of a trumpet, as we read, Ex 19:16-18: this was an accidental and adventitious glory, and made that which was glorious in itself, glorious also in the eyes of the people, that saw and heard these things. But yet, saith the apostle, if we compare it with the glory of the gospel, it had comparatively no glory; so much doth that excel. For though the law was the revelation of the Divine will, as well

as the gospel, yet the law was the revelation of the Divine will but as to duty, and wrath, in case of the nonperformance of that duty: but the gospel is the revelation of the Divine will, as to grace and mercy, as to remission of sin, and eternal life. And although the gospel came not into the world as the law, with thunder, and lightning, and earthquakes; yet that was ushered in by angels, foretelling the birth and office of John the Baptist, and of Christ; by the great sign of the virgin's conceiving and bringing forth a Son; by a voice from heaven, proclaiming Christ the Father's only begotten Son, in whom he was well pleased. But that which the apostle doth here principally intend, is the exceeding excellency of it, in regard of its further usefulness and comfortable nature.

2 Corinthians 3:11

Ver. 11. The apostle, by another argument, proveth the ministration of the gospel to be much more glorious than the ministration of the law, because it is more durable and abiding. The strength of the argument dependeth upon this principle, that any durable good is more excellent and glorious than that which is but transitory, and for a time. The ministration of the law is done away; the law, contained in ordinances, is itself done away, and therefore the ministration of it must needs cease. There are now no priests and Levites, no worldly sanctuary, nor any ministrations in it, or relating to it. But our Saviour hath told us, that the gospel shall be preached to the end of the world; so as that ministration must (according to all principles of reason) be more glorious, as that which is eternal is more glorious than that which is fluid and vanishing.

2 Corinthians 3:12

Ver. 12. *Hope* here signifieth nothing but a confident, certain expectation of something that is hereafter to come to pass. The term *such* referreth to something which went before: the sense is: We being in a certain confident expectation, that our ministration of the gospel shall not cease, as the ministration of the law hath done; and that the doctrine of the gospel brings in not a temporary, but an everlasting righteousness; that there shall never be any righteousness revealed, wherein any soul can stand righteous before God, but that which is revealed in the gospel to be *from faith to faith*; we are neither ashamed nor afraid to preach the gospel with all freedom and boldness. We do not, as Moses, cover ourselves with a veil when we preach the gospel to people, but we speak what God hath given to us in commission to speak, unconcernedly as to any terrors or affrightments from men: we know, that great is the truth which we preach, and that it shall prevail and outlive all the rage and madness of the enemies of it.

2 Corinthians 3:13

Ver. 13. We have the history to which this passage of the apostle relateth, in Ex 34:33,35, where we read, that *when Moses had done speaking, he put a veil on his face*. The apostle here elegantly turns that passage into an allegory, and opens to us a mystery hidden under that piece of history. That shining of Moses's face, in a type, prefigured the shining of Him who was to be the light of the world; as he was from eternity *the brightness of his Father's glory*. Moses's covering himself with a veil, signifies God's hiding the mystery of Christ from ages. Moses did not put a veil on his face for that end, that the children of Israel might not look upon him; but this was the event of it, which also prefigured the blinding of the Jews; they first shut their eyes and would not see, then God judicially sealed their eyes that they should not see, that Christ was *the end of the law for righteousness*, the true Messiah, and the Mediator between God and man; they could not (as the apostle expresseth it) see *to the end of that which is abolished*; to the end of the legal dispensation, to the end of all the types of Christ which were in the Levitical law. Now, (saith the apostle), we do not do so, but make it our business to preach the gospel with as much openness, and plainness, and freedom, as is imaginable. The whole history of the gospel justifieth what this text affirmeth concerning the Jews; that they could not see that Christ, by his coming, had put an end to the law, and the righteousness thereof. We find upon all occasions how much the Pharisees, and those who adhered to that sect, stuck in the law, to the hinderance of their receiving of, or believing in, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:14

Ver. 14. Here the apostle expoundeth what he meant before by the mystical veil, viz. the blinding of the eyes of the Jews; of which we read often in the New Testament, Mt 13:14 Mr 4:12 Lu 8:10 Joh 12:40 Ac 28:26 Ro 11:8: see the notes upon all those texts. And (saith the apostle) to this day the veil remaineth not taken away; that veil, which was signified by the veil with which Moses covered his face.

In the reading of the Old Testament, is, when the Old Testament is read: some part of which was wont to be read in the synagogues every sabbath day. But we shall meet with this in the next verse more fully. But (saith he) this *veil is done away in Christ*. It is really taken away upon the coming of Christ; that is, the veil, that covered the face of Christ, is now truly, taken away upon his coming; the types are thus filled in him, as their complement and antitype; the prophecies are fulfilled in him, as he whom they concerned, and of whom the prophets spake. But the veil, that is drawn over men's hearts, is not taken away, till they come to

receive Jesus Christ as the end of the law for righteousness, to close with him, and to believe in him. God hath taken the veil off from Christ, by sending him personally to fulfil all righteousness; but Christ profiteth nothing particular souls, until they come to believe in him, then it is taken away from their souls, and not before. Which was the reason that it remained still upon the Jews, among whom he came, as among his own, but they received him not.

2 Corinthians 3:15

Ver. 15. *The veil*, mystically signified by the veil upon Moses's face, which hindereth them from seeing or discerning the Messiah to be come. But why doth he say, *when Moses*, that is, the books of Moses, or rather of the Old Testament, are *read*? Possibly he thereby hinteth, that it was their duty, when in the synagogues they heard the chapters of the Old Testament read, which contain the types and prophecies of Christ, they ought to have looked through those veils, and have considered Christ as the end of those things; so the law, as a schoolmaster, should have led them to Christ: but it was quite otherwise. When they heard those portions of the Old Testament read, through the veil upon their hearts, they could not see through the veil of those types, prophecies, and ritual performances, but rested in them as things in the performance of which they laid their righteousness. Or, if they before had some little convictions upon their spirits, yet when they again came into the synagogues, and heard the law read, the veil again appeared over their hearts, so as they could not see Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:16

Ver. 16. *When it shall turn*, may be understood of the whole, or of the generality (at least) of the Jews; when they shall be converted to the faith of Christ, or when any particular person shall be converted to Christ, then *the veil shall be taken away*; not the veil with which God covered and veiled the mysteries of the gospel, (that was already taken away upon Christ's coming in the flesh), but the veil of blindness, which they had drawn over their own souls. Though the light of the gospel shineth clearly, and Christ be unveiled, yet until men, by a true faith, receive Christ, and turn from sinful courses to the obedience of the gospel, they see little or nothing of Christ. The taking away of this veil, and the turning to the Lord, are things done in souls at the same time; therefore nothing is to be concluded here, from the apostle's naming the removal of the impediment, after the effect of which that is a cause.

2 Corinthians 3:17

Ver. 17. The Lord Christ was a man, but not a mere man; but one who had the Divine nature personally united to his human nature, which is called the *Spirit*, Mr 2:8. But some think, that the article here is not merely prepositive, but emphatical; and so referreth to 2Co 3:6, where the gospel (the substance of which is Christ) was called *the Spirit*. So it is judged by some, that the apostle preventeth a question which some might have propounded, viz. how the veil should be taken away by men's turning unto the Lord? Saith the apostle:

The Lord is that Spirit, or he is that Spirit mentioned 2Co 3:18; he is a Spirit, and he gives out of the Spirit unto his people, the Spirit of holiness and sanctification.

And where the Spirit of the Lord is, (that holy, sanctifying Spirit, which is often called the Spirit of Christ), *there is liberty*; for our Saviour told the Jews, Joh 8:36: *If the Son make you free, then shall ye be free indeed*: a liberty from the yoke of the law, from sin, death, hell; but the liberty which seemeth here to be chiefly intended, is a liberty from that blindness and hardness which is upon men's hearts, until they have received the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18

Ver. 18. Some by *we* here understand all believers; others think it is better understood of ministers: but the universal particle *all* rather guideth us to interpret it of the whole body of believers, of whom the apostle saith, that they *all* behold *the glory of God with open face*; that is, not under those dark types, shadows, and prophecies, that he was of old revealed under, but as in a looking glass, which represents the face as at hand; not as in a perspective, which showeth things afar off. We behold him in the glass of the gospel, fully opened and preached; and this sight of Christ in the gospel is not a mere useless sight, but such a sight as changeth the soul into the image and likeness of Christ, *from glory to glory*; carrying on the souls of believers from one degree of grace to another; or making such a glorious change in the heart, as shall not be blotted out until a soul cometh into those possessions of glory which God hath prepared for his people. And all this is done *by the Spirit of the Lord*, working with the word of God in the mouths of his ministers, but so as the Spirit hath the principal agency and efficiency in the work.

2 Corinthians 4:1

Chapter Summary

2Co 4:1,2 Paul declareth his unwearied zeal and integrity in preaching the gospel,

2Co 4:3-6 so that if any see not the truth of it, it must be owing to their corrupt hearts, not to want of clear light.

2Co 4:7-11 The weakness and sufferings he was exposed to redounded to the praise of God's power.

2Co 4:12-18 That which animated him in undergoing them for the church's sake, was the assurance of a more exceeding and eternal reward.

Ver. 1. It is the opinion of Beza, that the traducers of this great apostle took advantage from his great trials and afflictions, by reason of them, to conclude him no such man as he was by some represented; and that the apostle upon that takes advantage to magnify his office. God (saith he) having intrusted us with so glorious a ministration, as I have proved that of the gospel to be, according to the measure and proportion of gifts and graces which God hath bestowed upon us, or by reason of that infinite grace and mercy which God hath showed us, in calling us to so honourable a station and office, though we meet with many adversaries, many afflictions, many difficulties, yet we bear up and sink not under them, nor faint in our spirits because of them.

2 Corinthians 4:2

Ver. 2. *But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty;* though we be exposed to many sorrows and sufferings, it is not for any dishonest or unwarrantable behaviour amongst men; nay, we have not only declined openly dishonest actions, but any secret or hidden dishonest behaviour. Possibly he reflecteth upon those, whether teachers or others in this church, who, though they behaved themselves very speciously in their more external conversation, yet it was a shame to speak what things were done of them in secret. We (saith the apostle) have renounced all secret, dishonest, shameful actions.

Not walking in craftiness; it hath not been our design to carry ourselves

craftily, to cheat people with a fair outside and external demeanour.

Nor handling the word of God deceitfully; nor in our ministry have we cheated and deceived people, instead of instructing them in the truth; crying: Peace, peace, when God hath said: There is no peace to the wicked, and tempering our discourses to all men's humours, not speaking right things, but smooth things.

But by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God: our business, in the course of our ministry, hath been to commend ourselves to every man's conscience, as in the sight of God, by manifesting to them the truth of God.

2 Corinthians 4:3

Ver. 3. The apostle calls the gospel *his gospel*, because of his instrumentality in the promoting and publishing of it. His meaning is: If the doctrine of the gospel, which I am an instrument to preach, be hidden, so as there yet be any souls that do not understand, receive, and believe it, the fault is not in the word we preach, nor yet in our preaching of it, (which hath been in all simplicity and plainness, without craftiness or deceit), but in themselves, who favour and indulge their lusts to that degree, as that they deserve to be lost, or are at present in their sinful state; in which sense all men are in the parables compared to the lost sheep, or lost goats; and Christ is said to have come to seek and to save those that are lost. Men, mad upon their lusts, may not understand the doctrine of the gospel which we preach; but others understand and believe it. I had rather understand the term *lost* in this sense, than as expressing reprobates; for it seemeth something harsh to make this phrase to signify that God had no more in Corinth at this time that belonged to the election of grace, than those that were already converted; or that all those that were at this time hypocrites in this famous church, were such as perished eternally. Yet the words of the next verse seem rather to favour their notion, who by *lost* here understand reprobates.

2 Corinthians 4:4

Ver. 4. Though some, by *the god of this world*, understand the true and living God, the Lord of heaven and earth; yet the notion of the most interpreters, that it is the devil who is here called *the god of this world*, because he ruleth over the greatest part of the world, and they are his servants and slaves, is most consonant to Scripture: for though we nowhere else find him called the god of this world, yet our Saviour twice calls him *the prince of this world*, Joh 12:31 14:30; and our apostle, Eph 2:2, calls him *the prince of the power of the air*. The effect also doth more properly belong to the devil, than unto God, who no otherwise blindeth the eyes of them than either permissively, by suffering them to shut their own eyes, or judicially. And the apostle declares, that those who are so blinded are such persons as *believe not*. He further declareth the end of the devil's agency in blinding men's eyes with errors, malice, and prejudice, *lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, the express image of his person, (considered as to his Divine nature), should shine unto them, that is, into their hearts.*

2 Corinthians 4:5

Ver. 5. *For we preach not ourselves:* for a man to preach himself, is to preach the devices and imaginations of his own heart, instead of the revealed will of God; to make his discourses the evomitions of his own lusts and passions; or to make himself the end of his preaching; preaching merely for filthy lucre sake, or to supply himself with bread, or for the ostentation of his own wit, and learning, and parts.

But we preach Christ Jesus the Lord; we preach what he hath commanded us to preach, and he is the subject of our discourses; we either preach what Christ is, or declare in our preaching what he hath done and suffered for sinners, or what he hath commanded us to do in order to our and your obtaining of life and salvation through him. And in our preaching, though in the first place we are Christ's servants, who hath commanded us to go and preach, and who is the subject matter of our preaching, and whose honour and glory is the end of all our preaching; yet we are also *your servants:* really so, not in that we serve your lusts and humours, and speak smooth things, Such as may be pleasing to your humours; but *for Jesus' sake,* because in revealing the will of God to you, and in publishing the grace of the gospel to you, we do you the highest service we can in your

eternal concerns.

2 Corinthians 4:6

Ver. 6. The Holy Ghost in the New Testament often compareth the work of the new creation by Jesus Christ, to the work of God in the old creation; intimating to us, that the latter is as great a work of providence and Divine power, as the former: Eph 4:24, *the new man, after God*, is said to be *created in righteousness and true holiness*. For as that is a creation which is a making of something out of nothing, (as God created the heavens and the earth), so the production of one thing out of another, which hath no fitness or aptitude to receive such a form, is also a true creation, and requireth an Almighty power. God made *light to shine out of darkness*, Ge 1:2,3: so (saith the apostle) he hath made Christ (who is the Light of the world) to shine into our hearts, to give us the true knowledge of God, and of his glory, the glory of his grace.

In the face of Jesus Christ; that is, by which we attain the clear and certain knowledge of God: as a man is distinctly known by or from his face, God is clearly and distinctly known only in and by Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:7

Ver. 7. By the *treasure* here mentioned, the apostle meaneth either his ministration, or apostolical office, which he before had proved glorious, more glorious than that of the law; or else, that *light of the knowledge of the glory of God*, which (as he had before said) God had made to shine into their hearts *in the face of Jesus Christ*. This treasure (saith he) we, even we that are the apostles of the Lord, have in our souls, which are clothed with bodies; and these not made of iron, or stone, or any other matter not capable of impressions of violence, but made of earth, like earthen pots or shells, that easily receive impressions of violence, and are presently broken in pieces.

That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us; that the world may see, that whatsoever powerful effects are wrought by us, they are the work of the excellent power of God; not done by us, but by him;

that he, not we, might have all the glory.

2 Corinthians 4:8

Ver. 8. *We are troubled on every side;* we are many ways, indeed every way, afflicted, afflicted with all sorts of afflictions; *yet not distressed;* but yet we are not like persons cooped up into a strait place, so as they are not able to turn them, nor know which way to move (so the word signifies).

We are perplexed; the word signifies doubting, uncertain what shall become of us, or how God will dispose of us; full of anxious, troublesome thoughts about what shall be our lot in the world; *but not in despair;* but yet not despairing of the help, presence, support, and assistance of God.

2 Corinthians 4:9

Ver. 9. *Persecuted;* violently pursued and prosecuted by such as are the adversaries of the gospel, and enemies to our Lord Jesus, because of our profession of him, and preaching his gospel; *but yet not forsaken* of God, nor wholly of men; God, by the inward influences of his Holy Spirit, supporting, upholding, and comforting us; and also, by his providence, raising us up some friends that stick by us.

Cast down, either in our own thoughts, (as it is the nature of worldly troubles and afflictions to sink men's thoughts), or cast down by the violence of men, thrown to the earth; *but not destroyed;* but yet we live, and are by the mighty power of God preserved, that we are not utterly destroyed.

2 Corinthians 4:10

Ver. 10. A Christian beareth about with him *the dying of the Lord Jesus* in his mind and soul, while he fetches strength from it to deaden his heart unto sin; being *buried with Christ into death,* and *planted in the likeness of his death;* having his *old man crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth he may not serve sin,* Ro 6:4-6. He

also beareth about with him *the dying of the Lord Jesus in his body*; either in a representation, while in his sufferings he is made conformable to the death of Christ, Php 3:10; or in his own real sufferings, which he calleth *the dying of the Lord Jesus*, because they were for Christ's sake, and because Christ sympathizeth with them therein, he being afflicted in all their afflictions; yea, and Christ (as the apostle expresseth it, Php 1:20), is magnified in their body, by death, as well as by life. This the apostle tells us he did, *that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in his body*: by the life of Christ must be here understood, either the resurrection of Christ, and that life which he now liveth in heaven with his Father; or that quickening power of the Spirit of Christ, which then mightily showeth itself in believers, when they are not overwhelmed by the waters of affliction, nor conquered by their sufferings; but in, and over all, are more than conquerors, through that mighty power of Christ which showeth forth itself in them: or (as some think) that lively virtue and power of Christ, which showeth itself in the efficacy of the apostles' ministry; by which so many thousands of souls were brought in to Christ, which was not the effect of their own virtue, but of the life of Christ manifested in their body. But the apostle having before spoken of his sufferings, it seems best interpreted of that living power put forth by Christ, in upholding the earthly vessels of his apostles, notwithstanding all the knocks they met with, to carry about that heavenly treasure with which God had intrusted them.

2 Corinthians 4:11

Ver. 11. We who are yet alive, as having breath still in our bodies; in another sense we do not live, viz. as life signifies prosperity and happiness; for we *are always delivered unto death*, that is, under continual threats and dangers of death, so that we have always the sentence of death in ourselves; *for Jesus' sake*, for our owning, preaching, and professing Christ, and the doctrine of the gospel. We are not delivered to death for evil doing, nor merely as innocent persons, but for well doing; and that in the noblest sense, for obeying the commands and for publishing the gospel of Christ.

That the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh; and the infinitely wise providence of God permitteth this, that he might make

manifest in our mortal flesh, that Christ is risen from the dead, and liveth for ever, making intercession for us; and, as a living Head, giving necessary influences of strength, support, and comfort, as to all those who are his members, so more particularly to us, who are some of the principal members of that mystical body, of which he is the Head. So that our sufferings are so far from being an evidence against the truth of our doctrine and of our ministration, that they are rather an evidence of the truth of both; as testifying, that he whom we preach, having died for our sins, is also risen for our justification, and exalted at the right hand of God; from whence he dispenseth his spiritual influences, as to the souls of all his people, so to our souls in particular, by which we are enabled, without fainting, to suffer such things with boldness, courage, and patience.

2 Corinthians 4:12

Ver. 12. You see the difference between us and you; either the real difference, or the fancied difference. We are killed all the day long, in deaths often, delivered to death always; you are rich, and full, and want nothing; *life*, that is, security, happiness, and prosperity, attends you. Or the fancied difference: You bless yourselves, that you are not in so much jeopardy as we are, and some of you are ready to curse us, because vipers stick to our hands, and we are in continually renewed and repeated troubles. Very good interpreters think these words a smart ironical expression, by which the apostle reflecteth upon a party in this church, who from his sufferings concluded against the truth of his doctrine, or his favour with God; and for themselves, because of their immunity and freedom from such sufferings. Others think the sense this, our death is your life; our sufferings are your spiritual advantage.

2 Corinthians 4:13

Ver. 13. *The same spirit of faith* signifieth the same faith, or faith proceeding from the same spirit; thus, Isa 11:2, *the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord*, signifieth wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, &c. It is a question whom the apostle meaneth when he saith: *We having the same faith*. Some think he meaneth the saints under the Old

Testament, whose faith was the same with the faith of believers under the New Testament; and that which guideth them to that interpretation, is the apostle's following quotation out of Ps 116:10. But the scope of the quotation seemeth to be, to prove that all good men will speak as they believe; they therefore seem better to interpret the text, that make this the sense of it: Though God, in the wisdom of his providence, hath assigned us in this world a different lot from you, that you are full, we empty; you in prosperity, we in adversity; yet we are partakers of the same faith with you, and are acted from the same spirit that you are: and as David's spirit guided him to a profession of his faith, and a speaking what he believed; so we also speak, and must speak, according to what we believe. And this is manifestly the sense of the words, if we consider what followeth in the next verse.

2 Corinthians 4:14

Ver. 14. Knowing that God the Father, who raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead, as the first-fruits of them that sleep, shall likewise, by the virtue of his resurrection, and by a power flowing from him, as now alive, and sitting at the right hand of God, quicken our mortal bodies; that both our souls and bodies may be presented with you, to be both eternally glorified: this maketh us that we do not fear death, but are unconcerned, although by wicked men we every day be delivered to it, and brought within the danger and sight of it; still the resurrection of Christ is made the foundation of our resurrection, and a firm ground for our faith of it. And we are from this text confirmed in the truth of this, that although the lot of God's people in this life be very different, (some are poor, some rich, some in prosperity, some in adversity, and encompassed with sorrows and afflictions), yet if they have all the same faith, they shall all meet in the resurrection, and shall, by Christ, be all presented unto God as persons redeemed by him, and washed with his blood, and who shall be glorified together.

2 Corinthians 4:15

Ver. 15. *All things* that Christ hath done and suffered, his death, and his resurrection from the dead, and all things that I have done or suffered, all *are for your sakes*; that the greater benefit it be which you receive from

God, the greater praise, honour, and glory might redound to him by *the thanksgiving of many*; for God can be no otherwise glorified by us, than by the predicating of his mercy and goodness, and the praising of him for the mercies which we receive from him. The more God doth good unto, the more honour, praise, and glory redoundeth to his name.

2 Corinthians 4:16

Ver. 16. Because of this double advantage which accrueth from our sufferings, viz. the furthering of the good of your souls, and the promoting the glory of God from the thanksgivings of many, though we suffer many harsh and bitter things, yet we do not faint nor sink under the burden of our trials; but though, as to our outward man, we are every day dying persons, daily decaying as to the strength, and vigour, and prosperity of our outward man, yet the strength and comfort of our souls and spirits reneweth day by day; we are every day stronger and stronger as to the managing of our spiritual fight, and every day more cheered and comforted in our holy course.

2 Corinthians 4:17

Ver. 17. The apostle in these words wonderfully lesseneth his own, and the rest of the apostles', and all other Christians' sufferings for the gospel: he calleth them *light*, not that they were so in themselves, but with respect to that *weight of glory* which he mentioneth in the latter part of the verse: he calleth them momentary, *but for a moment*, with reference to that eternity which is mentioned. The *afflictions* are *light*, the *glory* will be a *weight*; the *afflictions* are *but for a moment*, the *glory* shall be *eternal*. And (saith the apostle) *our affliction worketh for us this glory*: the glory will not only be a consequent of these afflictions, but these afflictions will be a cause of it; not a meritorious cause, (for what proportion is there between momentary afflictions and eternal glory? Between light afflictions and a weight of glory, an exceeding weight of glory?) But a cause in respect of the infinite goodness and mercy of God, and in respect of the truth and faithfulness of God.

2 Corinthians 4:18

Ver. 18. Two things support the spirits of Christians under trials;

1. The eyeing of him who is invisible; this supported Moses, Heb 11:27:
He endured, as seeing him who is invisible.
2. The seeing by the eye of faith the things which are invisible; the things which God hath prepared in another world for those that love him; the things which eye hath not seen, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.

For (saith the apostle) *the things which are seen*, which fall under the senses of men, they *are* but *temporal*, and of a temporary duration; but the invisible things, the *exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, which are before mentioned, they are of an eternal duration, and therefore much to be preferred before those things which endure but for a moment.

2 Corinthians 5:1

Chapter Summary

2Co 5:1-9 Paul declareth that, in assured hope of a blessed immortality hereafter, he was indifferent to life, and laboured only to approve himself to Christ,

2Co 5:10,11 that knowing the general judgment that would follow, and the terrors of it, he was solicitous to persuade men,

2Co 5:12,13 that this was said not by way of boasting, but purely to furnish the Corinthians with a reply in his justification against false pretenders,

2Co 5:14-16 that, moved by the love of Christ, he was become dead to all former regards,

2Co 5:17-19 and all things being now made new by God in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

2Co 5:20,21 He, as ambassador for Christ, besought men to embrace the offered reconciliation.

Ver. 1. The apostle had before said, that he looked at the things not seen;

in this verse he openeth himself, and showeth what those unseen things are: *We* (saith he) *know*, we have a certain persuasion, we doubt not of it, but that if our body were dissolved. This body he calleth *an earthly house*, either because it is made of the dust of the earth, into which it must again be resolved; or because it is only the habitation of the soul, so long as the soul is on this side of heaven; and therefore he calleth it also, the *earthly house of this tabernacle*. A tabernacle is a moving house or booth built up for a time. This tabernacle (saith the apostle) must be pulled down, and taken in pieces; and we are certain, that if it be dissolved, *we have a building of God*, either a blessed, eternal mansion, (according to that of our Saviour, Joh 14:2: *In my Father's house are many mansions*), or else, God will give us a spiritual, glorious, incorruptible body; not *a house made with hands*, nor a house that shall be dissolved and any more pulled down, but which shall be *eternal in the heavens*; in such a state, as that it shall be incorruptible, and no more subject to any corruption or decay.

2 Corinthians 5:2

Ver. 2. We are so confident of such a blessed state, that we passionately desire to be invested into it; and this groaning is also an evidence of it, for the desire of grace shall not be made frustrate; desirous that our mortality may put on immortality, and our corruption may put on incorruption. It is against the nature of man to desire death, which is the stripping or unclathing the soul of flesh; but not to desire that the garment of immortality may be put upon mortality, which is that our house from heaven, which is mentioned in 2Co 5:1.

2 Corinthians 5:3

Ver. 3. Some make the clothing here spoken of different from the clothing before mentioned; and make this verse restrictive of what the apostle had before said, of the certainty which some have of being clothed upon with a glorious body.

If so be (saith the apostle) *we shall not be found naked*, but *clothed*, i.e. with the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness; for concerning those that do not die in the Lord, that do not watch, and keep their garments, it is

said, Re 16:15, they shall walk naked, and men shall see their shame. But considering the clothing before mentioned was not this clothing, but the superinducing of an immortal, incorruptible, glorious state of body, upon our mortal, corruptible state, some judicious interpreters think, that the clothing here mentioned is the clothing of the soul with the body. It is manifest that the apostles apprehended Christ's second coming much nearer than it hath proved. Therefore he saith, 1Th 4:15: *We that are alive* (supposing that generation might live) to Christ's second coming; and 1Co 15:51: *We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed*. This some think (and that not improbably) is the cause of this passage; the sense of which they judge to be this: If so be that we be, at the resurrection, found in the flesh, clothed still with our bodies, and shall not be found naked, that is, stripped of our flesh, and dead before that time.

2 Corinthians 5:4

Ver. 4. By *tabernacle*, he meaneth (as he had before expounded it) the earthly house of our body.

Do groan; both a groaning of grief, and also of desire.

Being burdened; either with the body of flesh; or with sin, *the body of death*, Ro 7:24; or with the load of trials and afflictions.

Not that we would be unclothed, that is, die, be unclothed of our flesh, (nature abhorreth death, and flieth from it), *but clothed upon*; which is expounded, 1Co 15:54, our *corruptible* having *put on incorruption*, and our *mortal* having *put on immortality*. And this confirmeth what was observed before, that the apostles had some persuasion, (though not from any Divine revelation of that hour), that the resurrection, and day of judgment, would be before the determination of that age and generation; that so we might come into the possession of eternal life (for that the apostle meaneth by *mortality* being *swallowed up of life*). Death is not desirable for its own sake, but upon the account of that immortal life into which it leadeth the souls of believers; nor (as was said before) doth the apostle here directly desire death, (which is that which in this verse he calleth unclothing), but rather the change mentioned 1Co 15:52, which he here calleth a clothing upon.

2 Corinthians 5:5

Ver. 5. *The selfsame thing* is the life, the eternal life, mentioned in the former verse; the *house in the heavens, not made with hands*, 2Co 5:1. God *hath wrought us for it* (as some interpret the text) in creation, and by his providence, forming our bodies in the womb: but it is much better interpreted by others concerning regeneration; for in the first birth (without respect to the decree of election) God hath no more wrought us for it, than the worst of men. The apostle therefore is, doubtless, to be understood, as speaking concerning the work of grace, which is here attributed to God; we have not wrought ourselves into or up to any fitness or any grounded expectation of the future blessed and glorious estate; but it is God who hath prepared us for it, and wrought such a lively hope of it in us.

Who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit; and hath also given us his Holy Spirit as the pledge and earnest of it; (concerning this, see 2Co 1:22;) he hath given us his Spirit to dwell and to work in us, and to assure us of what we speak of, viz. the house in the heavens, the building of God, that is not made with hands. The Spirit of grace given to the people of God, working and dwelling in them, is a certain pledge of that glory and life eternal, which he hath prepared for them.

2 Corinthians 5:6

Ver. 6. We are always full of courage and comfort, being confident of this glory, and the swallowing up of mortality in life: for we know, that while we are in our earthly home (which is our body) we are farthest off from that which is our true home, (which is heaven), from the vision and fruition of God; for believers are but *strangers and pilgrims on the earth*, desiring *a better country, that is, an heavenly*, Heb 11:13,16.

2 Corinthians 5:7

Ver. 7. That is, we live, and order our conversations, *not by sight*, or any evidence of sense, but *by faith*, which is described by the apostle, Heb

11:1, to be *the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*. We see nothing here by the eye of sense but mortality, corruption, and misery; but by faith we see another more excellent and glorious state, and we order our life according to our faith, and sight of things that are invisible: or *sight* here may be taken more strictly for the beatific vision prepared in heaven for the saints.

2 Corinthians 5:8

Ver. 8. We are confident of such a blessed state, and this makes us willing to be out of this body, that we might have the glorious presence and enjoyment of God to all eternity.

2 Corinthians 5:9

Ver. 9. Having such a hope, yea, not such a hope only, but such an assurance and confidence, *we labour*, both actively, doing the will of God, and passively, submitting to the will of God in all afflictive providences; that while we are in the body, and absent from the Lord, *we may be accepted of him*; as we know we shall be, when we shall be present with him, in another sense than we now are.

2 Corinthians 5:10

Ver. 10. The apostle declareth, either the ground of his confidence, or, rather, the reason of his and other believers' labour, so to behave themselves, as that, both in life and death, they might be accepted of God; that was, his knowledge and firm belief of the last judgment. It is called *the judgmentseat of Christ*, because he it is whom God hath appointed to be the *judge both of the quick and the dead*, Ac 10:42. The word translated *appear*, is *πεφανερωσθαι*, which signifieth to be made manifest, and so signifieth not only to appear, but to be inquired into, searched, and examined, and narrowly sifted: and this lets us know, that those texts which speak of believers not being judged, or not coming into judgment, must not be understood of the judgment of inquiry, (for all shall come into that judgment), but of the judgment of condemnation. And it lets

us also know the vanity of their opinion, who think that pagans shall not rise again in the last day.

*That every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad: the end of this judgement is declared, that every man may receive according to what he hath done in his body; that is, according to the thoughts he hath thought, the words that he hath spoken, the actions which he hath done, during the time that his soul dwelt upon the earth in his body; whether the things which he did in that state were good, and such things as God required; or sinful, and contrary to the revealed will of God. What this receiving means, we are told, Mt 25:46: *These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.* Hence we read, Joh 5:29, of a *resurrection of life*, and a *resurrection of damnation*.*

2 Corinthians 5:11

Ver. 11. We believing and being fully persuaded, that there shall be such a great and terrible day of the Lord, when there shall be such a narrow inquiry and search into whatsoever men have thought, spoke, or done in the flesh; *we persuade men* to believe in the *Lord Jesus Christ*, to walk according to the rule of the gospel, to be charitable towards us, and not to censure or judge us, or use against us hard speeches. If any will not be persuaded to think well of us, yet the sincerity of our hearts and ways is *made manifest unto God*; he knoweth what we are, and how we have behaved ourselves: and *I trust* we have so behaved ourselves, that we are not only made manifest unto God, but we *are made manifest in your consciences*; so as your consciences will bear us a testimony, how we have behaved ourselves amongst you.

2 Corinthians 5:12

Ver. 12. I do not speak this to commend myself unto you; he had before declared, that he trusted that he was made manifest to their consciences, and so needed not further to commend himself. But (saith he) I speak it only *to give you occasion to glory*, to glory in me as the apostle of Christ unto you, or to defend me against the scandals and reproaches of those that

reproach me, when themselves have no true inward cause of glorying, though they have in outward appearance, in respect of their riches, wit, wisdom, or the like.

2 Corinthians 5:13

Ver. 13. It should seem, that some amongst the Corinthians, amongst other reproaches, had reproached Paul for a madman; either taking advantage of the warmth and fervour of his spirit, or of those ecstasies in which he sometimes was; or of his speaking things which they could not apprehend and understand: as the Roman governor, in the Acts, told him: *Much learning hath made thee mad.* The apostle tells them, that if indeed he was beside himself in any of their opinion, it was *to God*, that is, for the honour and glory of God: or if he was sober, it was for their sake; in what temper soever he was, it was either for service to God, or them.

2 Corinthians 5:14

Ver. 14. The *love of Christ* signifieth either that love towards the sons of men which was in Christ before the foundation of the world; for even then (as Solomon telleth us, Pr 8:31) he was *rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth, and his delight was with the sons of men:* which love showed itself in time, in his coming and assuming our natures, and dying upon the cross for us; Joh 15:13: *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* Or else it signifieth that habit of love to Christ, which is in every believer; for it is true of either of these, that they constrain a believer's soul.

Because (saith the apostle) *we thus* account, or reason, *that if one died for all.* All here is interpreted according to the various notions of men, about the extent of the death of Christ. Some by the term understanding all individuals; some, all the elect, or all those that should believe in Christ; others, some of all nations, Jews or Gentiles. Be it as it will, that point is not to be determined by this universal particle, which is as often in Scripture used in a restrained sense, as in a more general sense. The apostle here concludeth, *that if one died for all, then were all dead;* which is to be understood of a spiritual death, as Eph 2:1. And the apostle's

argument dependeth upon this, that if all, for whom Christ died, had not been dead in sin, there then had been no need of his dying for to expiate their sin, and to redeem them from the guilt and power of it; but be they what they would, for whom Christ died, whether all individuals, or all the elect only, his dying for them was a manifest evidence that they were dead.

2 Corinthians 5:15

Ver. 15. And he died for all those for whom he died, not only to redeem them from the guilt of sin, but also from their vain conversation; that they which live by his grace, might not make themselves the end of their life, and live to serve themselves, and gratify their own corrupt inclinations; but might make the service of Christ, the honour and glory of him who died for them, and also rose again from the dead, the end of their lives; arguing the reasonableness of a holy and Christian life, from the love and end of Christ in dying for them; according to that, Ro 14:7,8: *For none of us, liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.* This is one way by which a believer fetcheth strength from the death of Christ to die unto sin, and from his resurrection to live unto newness of life; he concluding: If Christ died, and rose again for him, that then he was once dead in trespasses and sins; and therefore he judgeth himself obliged, now that he is made spiritually alive, not to live to himself, or serve his own profit, honour, reputation, lusts, or passions, but to live in obedience to him, and to the honour and glory of him, who died to redeem him from the guilt and power of sin, and rose again to quicken him to newness of life and conversation, to the honour and glory of his Redeemer.

2 Corinthians 5:16

Ver. 16. *Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh:* words of sense in Scripture ordinarily signify more than the act of that sense which they express; particularly this term *know* ordinarily signifieth to approve and acknowledge; and so it signifies here. We *know*, that is, we regard, we acknowledge no man in the discharge of our office; we regard no man with respect to any external fleshly consideration. Under which notion he

comprehends all things not spiritual, whether carnal relations, riches, &c.

*Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh; not from any sight of him, for we read not that Paul at any time saw Christ, but, Ac 9:1-43, when he saw him, not according to the flesh, but as exalted at the right hand of God: but by the hearing of the ear Paul had known Christ, as one that had lived in the flesh, and who had conversed with men for above thirty years; yet (saith he) *we know him no more*, we shall neither see nor hear him any more in the flesh; we now only know him as he hath a glorious body, with which he sitteth at the right hand of God.*

2 Corinthians 5:17

Ver. 17. *If any man be in Christ*, is as much as, if any man be implanted or ingrafted into Christ, by faith united to him, *he is a new creature*; (the Greek is, a new creation); a phrase which argueth the greatest change imaginable, and such a one as can be wrought in the soul by no other power than the power of God. We have the same expression, Ga 6:15. The ellipsis of the verb makes some translate it: *Let him be a new creature*, supplying εστω for εστι. But the next words show us, that the apostle is speaking of what is past: *Old things are passed away*, old affections, passions, notions, &c. He hath the same soul, but new qualities, new apprehensions in his understanding, new inclinations in his will and affections, new thoughts, counsels, and designs. The predicate showeth, that the term, *be in Christ*, cannot be understood of those that are only in the church, and turned from paganism to the Christian faith; for there are many such in the world, in whom there is no new creation, and who have in them nothing of this new creature.

2 Corinthians 5:18

Ver. 18. *And all things are of God*; this change, which is wrought in our hearts, is not of ourselves, but wrought in us by the great and mighty power of God: so Joh 1:13: *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*; of God, as the principal efficient Cause.

Who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ; who, by the blood of his Son Jesus Christ, meritoriously, and by the Spirit of Christ, actually, hath reconciled us unto himself; of enemies hath made us friends.

And hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; hath intrusted us with the preaching of the gospel. It is God that hath reconciled us; it is Christ by whom we are reconciled, his blood is the price of our reconciliation; but he committed to his apostles, and so to the successive ministers of the gospel, the ministry of reconciliation, that is, the ministry of the gospel, by which this reconciliation is published to such as are yet enemies to God. They have but a ministration in it; God hath appointed them to publish and to declare it, and to entreat men to be reconciled unto him.

2 Corinthians 5:19

Ver. 19. *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; by world, here, some would understand all mankind, and by reconciling, no more than making God reconcilable; but this proceedeth from an over fondness of their principle of Christ's dying for all, and every man. For as it is manifest from a multitude of scriptures, that world is many times taken in a much more limited and restrained sense; so there is nothing here that guides us to interpret it in such a latitude; nay, that which followeth, doth manifestly so restrain it; for God was not in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, that is, every man and woman in the world, so as not to impute their sins to them. This the apostle here affirmeth; which makes it manifest, that by world here is meant many, some of all sorts, as well Gentiles as Jews; even so many as he pleaseth not to impute their sins unto.*

And hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation: now, (saith the apostle), the dispensing and publishing that word, by which this reconciliation is made known to the children of men, God hath committed to us; to us, that are apostles, and so to the ministers of the gospel that shall succeed us in the work of the ministry. This mightily commendeth the gospel, and the preaching of it, that it is the word by which, as a means, souls are reconciled unto God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

Ver. 20. The apostle here giveth us a true notion, not only of apostles, which were the first and principal ministers of the gospel, but of all other ministers; teaching us what all ministers should be, and what all true ministers of the gospel are. They *are ambassadors for Christ*. There is by nature an enmity between the creature and God; he naturally hateth God, and God is angry with him. Those *that were sometime alienated, and enemies in their minds by wicked works*, Christ hath reconciled in the *body of his flesh through death*, Col 1:21,22; he hath purchased a reconciliation for them. But yet, till they have received Christ as their Lord and Saviour, they are not actually recovered to God by him. God does by men, as great princes do by such as they are at enmity with; he sends his ministers to them, who are his ambassadors; and as all ambassadors represent the person of him whose ambassadors they are, and speak in his name, and as in his stead, persuading to peace; so these speak as in Christ's name, and in God's stead; their business is to beseech men to be reconciled unto God, to lay down their arms, and to accept of the terms of the gospel for peace and reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:21

Ver. 21. *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: Christ knew no sin*, as he was guilty of no sin; *Which of you* (saith he, Joh 8:46) *convinceth me of sin? 1Pe 2:22*, *He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: but God made him to be sin for us. He was numbered with the transgressors*, Isa 53:12. Our sins were reckoned to him; so as though personally he was no sinner, yet by imputation he was, and God dealt with him as such; for he was made a sacrifice for our sins, a sin offering; so answering the type in the law, Le 4:3,25,29 5:6 7:2.

That we might be made the righteousness of God in him; that so his righteousness might be imputed to us, and we might be made righteous with such a righteousness as those souls must have whom God will accept. As Christ was not made sin by any sin inherent in him, so neither are we made righteous by any righteousness inherent in us, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us; as he was a sinner by the sins of his people reckoned and imputed unto him.

2 Corinthians 6:1

Chapter Summary

2Co 6:1,2 Paul entreateth the Corinthians not to frustrate God's grace,

2Co 6:3-10 setting forth his own inoffensive, painful, and patient demeanour in the discharge of his ministry, 2Co 6:11,12 of which he telleth them he spake more freely out of the great love he bare them,

2Co 6:13 challenging the like affection from them in return.

2Co 6:14,15 He dissuadeth from any intimate connections with unbelievers,

2Co 6:16-18 Christians are the temples of the living God.

Ver. 1. *We then, as workers together with him:* ministers of the gospel are fellow workers together with Christ; though but as instruments, serving him as the principal Agent, and efficient Cause: he trod the wine press of his Father's wrath alone, and had no partner in the purchase of man's salvation; but in the application of the purchased salvation, he admits of fellow workers. Though the internal work be his alone, and the effects of his Spirit upon the souls of those whose hearts are changed; yet there is a ministerial part, which lieth in exhortation and argument, by the ear conveyed to the soul; thus ministers work together with Christ. And without him they can do nothing: they are workers, but they must have Christ work with them, or they will find that they labour in vain.

Beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain: grace signifieth any free gift; and it is in the New Testament variously applied; but here it signifies, the doctrine of the gospel, held forth in the preaching of it, which these Corinthians had received with the ears of their bodies. And this was Paul's, and should be every godly minister's, work, not with roughness, but with all mildness and gentleness, to beseech those to whom they preach the gospel, that they would believe and embrace it, and live up to the holy rules of it; without which, (as to their souls' benefit), all the kindness of God, in affording them the gospel and means of grace, is in

vain, and lost: though God yet hath his end, and his ministers shall he *a sweet savour to God*, as well with, reference to them that perish, as those who shall be saved. For the effectual grace of God in the heart, that cannot be received in vain; nor is that here spoken of.

2 Corinthians 6:2

Ver. 2. *For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee:* the words here quoted, are taken out of the prophet Isaiah, Isa 49:8, according to the Septuagint's translation. Though some think, that the apostle here doth but accommodate to the spiritual salvation brought in by Christ, a temporal salvation mentioned, and primarily intended; yet the most and best interpreters rather judge that whole chapter in Isaiah to refer to Christ, and that the salvation there mentioned, is to be understood of the spiritual salvation of the gospel; of which also the apostle speaketh here, and maketh these words (as in the prophet) the words of God the Father to Christ his Son; testifying both his assistance of him in the accomplishment of the work of man's redemption, and his acceptance of him; according to which sense, the *accepted time* is the same with what the apostle calls, *the fulness of time*, Ga 4:4; (though it may also be so called in the same sense that the apostle calleth the gospel *a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptance*, 1Ti 1:15;) in which sense the gospel time was prophesied of as an acceptable time, Ge 49:10 Hag 1:8.

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation; now is that accepted or acceptable time, now is that day of salvation, spoken of by the prophet; therefore you are concerned to receive this grace of the gospel, and to live up to the rule of it.

2 Corinthians 6:3

Ver. 3. *Giving no offence in any thing:* to give no offence signifies, to avoid all actions which may be occasion of spiritual stumbling unto others, i.e. to make them to sin against God, or estrange their hearts from Christ, and the owning and profession of his gospel. These words may be understood as a general precept given to all Christians; so it agreeth with 1Co 10:30,32; or (which the following verses seem most to favour) as

referring to himself and Timothy, and other ministers of the gospel; like true pastors of the church of Christ, going out before the flock, and showing in their example what they ought to be.

That the ministry be not blamed; the ministry here may either signify the office of the ministry, or the subject of it, the gospel, which, 2Co 5:18, is called *the ministry of reconciliation*: not only the office of the ministry, but the gospel itself, suffereth by the scandalous conversation of ministers and private Christians; ignorant persons being not able, or not willing, to distinguish between the faults of persons and the faults of a doctrine or office.

2 Corinthians 6:4

Ver. 4. *But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God*: ministers of the gospel are in the first place to be considered as *the ministers of God*; secondarily, as ministers and servants of the church; which they ought to serve so far, as in serving it they do obey Christ. None can approve or commend themselves for ministers of God that live a scandalous life; God hath not sent them to lay stumblingblocks in, but to remove them out of, the way of men.

In much patience; patience signifies an enduring of evils quietly and cheerfully, at the command of God; or when we see it is the will of God, we should patiently submit to put our necks into the heaviest yokes. The apostle goes on reckoning up several species of those evils: *afflictions* is a general term, signifying any evils that wear out our bodies.

Necessities signify any bodily wants of food, or raiment, or whatever is for the use of man's life.

Distresses signify, properly, a man's being straitened, or thrust up in a place, so as that he knoweth not how to steer himself; and, metaphorically, a want of counsel, not knowing what to do, or which way to turn ourselves.

2 Corinthians 6:5

Ver. 5. *In stripes:* the apostle, 2Co 11:23, tells us he was *in stripes above measure*; and 2Co 11:24, that *of the Jews he five times received forty stripes save one*: we read of his *many stripes*, Ac 16:23.

In imprisonments; of the imprisonment of him and Silas, Ac 16:23, which was not the only time before the writing of this Epistle, as appeareth by this verse.

In tumults, or seditions raised by the Jews and the heathens; we have a record of one at Ephesus, Ac 19:21-41, caused by Demetrius: others, by *tumults*, here, understand unfixed and uncertain habitations, tossing to and fro, so as they could be quiet in no place; but the former seemeth rather the sense of the word, as Lu 21:9 1Co 14:33.

In labours; he either means labours with his hands, (which Paul was sometimes put to, as Ac 18:3 20:34), or travels and journeys. The word is a general word, significative of any pains that men take.

In watchings; religious watching, 2Co 11:27.

In fastings, as acts of discipline, by which he kept under his body, and brought it into subjection, as he told us, 1Co 9:27.

2 Corinthians 6:6

Ver. 6. *By pureness:* as the apostle in the former words had declared the patience of his conversation, in the enduring of the afflictions of the gospel; so in this verse he declares the more internal holiness of it, under the general notion of *pureness*; showed in his knowledge, faith, gentleness, kindness, or goodness towards all men. The word translated *pureness*, signifieth rather the universal rectitude of his heart and ways, than (as some think) the habit or exercise of any particular virtue. In or *by knowledge*; a right understanding and notion of spiritual things; if it doth not here signify faith, which is a superstructure on this foundation, and that habit which hath a special influence upon purifying the heart, Ac 15:9. Without knowledge there can be no purity, Pr 19:2.

By long-suffering; the apostle means, not being easily provoked by such as had offended him, or done him wrong.

By kindness; the word translated *kindness*, signifies generally any goodness by which a man may show himself either sweet and pleasant, or useful and profitable, unto his neighbour.

By the Holy Ghost; thus the apostle showeth how he behaved himself; but not through his own strength, but through the influence and assistance of the Holy Ghost.

By love unfeigned; the *love unfeigned* here mentioned, is a general term, signifying that habit of grace wrought in his soul by the Holy Spirit of God, which was the principle of the *long-suffering* and *kindness* before mentioned.

2 Corinthians 6:7

Ver. 7. *By the word of truth;* living up to and keeping our eye upon the word of God, which is the word of truth: this seems to be the sense, rather than speaking truth to every one, as some have thought.

By the power of God; by the efficacious working of the Spirit of God upon our hearts, enabling us to live up to the doctrine we preach. Some understand here, by *the power of God*, that extraordinary power of working miracles, which God gave the apostles; others, the gospel, which the apostle calls *the power of God unto salvation*, Ro 1:16. It may be understood of the first and the last joined together; for the gospel is no otherwise the power of God to salvation, than as it is attended to the souls of those to whom it is so made powerful, with the inward, powerful, efficacious working of the Holy Spirit.

By the armour of righteousness; he means a good conscience, (which cannot be without a universal rectitude, or uprightness of life), which is a defence against all temptations, either from prosperity or from adversity. In which sense that of Solomon is true: *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely*, Pr 10:9: and David prayeth, Ps 25:21: *Let integrity and uprightness*

preserve me.

2 Corinthians 6:8

Ver. 8. *By honour and dishonour;* we depart not from our integrity, whether we be honoured or dishonoured.

By evil report and good report; well or evilly reported of. This hath from the beginning been the lot of all the faithful ministers of Christ; some have given them honour, others have cast reproach upon them; some have given a good report of them, some an evil report.

As deceivers, and yet true; some have represented them as impostors, and such as deceived the people; others have spoken of them as true men: their business is to go through good report and bad report, honour and dishonour, still holding fast their integrity.

2 Corinthians 6:9

Ver. 9. *As unknown, and yet well known;* dealt with by Jews and heathens as persons wholly unknown to them, though we be sufficiently known; or being such whom the world knoweth not, as to our state towards God, and interest in him, though it knows us well enough as to our other circumstances.

As dying, and, behold, we live; so hunted and persecuted, as that we appear every day dying; yet such hath been the power of God's providence, that we yet live:

As chastened, and not killed; and though our heavenly Father chasteneth us, yet we are not utterly consumed: the apostle alludeth to that, Ps 118:18: *The Lord hath chastened me sore; but he hath not given me over to death.*

2 Corinthians 6:10

Ver. 10. *As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing;* appearing to others as persons

drowned in griefs and sorrows, yet we are always rejoicing in God, (Hab 3:17,18), and in the testimony of a good conscience, 2Co 1:12.

As poor, yet making many rich; in outward appearance poor, having no abundance of the good things of this life; yet making many rich in knowledge and grace, God by us dispensing to them the riches of his grace.

As having nothing, and yet possessing all things as having nothing, no houses, no lands, no silver or gold, Ac 3:6; yet being as well satisfied and contented, as if all things were ours; as well satisfied with that little which we have, as the men of the world are with their abundance; *possessing all things* in Christ, though having little in the creature.

2 Corinthians 6:11

Ver. 11. *Our mouth is open* to speak freely to you, and to communicate to you the whole will and counsel of God; *our heart is enlarged* both by the love that I have towards you, and by the rejoicing that I have in you. This enlargement of my heart is that which openeth my lips, and makes me speak freely to you, both in admonishing you of your errors, and in exhorting you to your duty.

2 Corinthians 6:12

Ver. 12. *Ye are not straitened in us;* if you cannot mutually rejoice in me, and what I write, or if you do not repay me the like affection, the fault is not in me; I have done my duty, and that too from a true principle of love to you.

But ye are straitened in your own bowels; but it is through mistakes and misapprehensions in yourselves, your not aright conceiving of me in the discharge of my apostolical office. Or the cause of your trouble and sorrow is from yourselves, upon your suffering the incestuous person, and other scandalous persons, to abide in your communion; which was an error I could not but take notice of, according to that apostolical authority which God hath committed to me.

2 Corinthians 6:13

Ver. 13. *Be ye also enlarged,* both in love to me, and also in obedience; it is but a just recompence for that great affection which I have borne, and upon all occasions showed to you; and also for that faithfulness which I have showed in discharging the duty of my relation to you. For I speak as a father unto children, it being but reasonable, that children should recompence to their fathers their love to them, and be as exact and faithful in their duty to their parents, as their parents are in their duty towards them.

2 Corinthians 6:14

Ver. 14. *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:* they too much restrain the sense of this general precept, who either limit it to religious communion with idolaters, or to civil communion in marriages. The precept is delivered in a term of more general significancy, than to be limited by either of these, though both of them, questionless, be comprehended in it: μη γινεσθε ετεροζυγουντες, do not become such as in the same yoke draw another way. It is a metaphor drawn from horses or oxen; which should draw together, being in the same yoke, neither standing still, nor yet holding back. It is a general precept, prohibitive of all unnecessary communion and intimate fellowship with such, as either in matters of faith or worship, or in their lives and conversations, declare themselves to be unbelievers; for why we should expound απιστοις of infidels merely, I cannot tell, especially considering that the apostle, 1Co 5:9-11, seems to allow a further communion with a heathen, than with a notoriously scandalous Christian. So as this precept may reasonably be interpreted by those in the former Epistle, of marrying with such, eating with them at idol feasts, or at the Lord's table, (as 2Co 5:1-21), maintaining intimate communion with them, &c.

For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? The reason he giveth, is, because they could have no comfortable communion with such; they were *righteousness*, those persons were *unrighteousness*; they were *light*, such

persons were *darkness*, that is, full of the darkness of sin and ignorance. In the mean time, this precept ought not to be extended to a total avoiding of commerce with, or being in the company of, either heathens, or scandalous persons; for as to that, the same apostle had before determined it lawful, 1Co 5:11. Whatever communion with such persons is either necessary from the law of God or nature, or for the support and upholding of human life and society, is lawful even with such persons; but all other is unlawful.

2 Corinthians 6:15

Ver. 15. *And what concord hath Christ with Belial?* By *Belial*, in this text, very good interpreters understand the devil; judging that the apostle here opposeth Christ, who is the Head of Believers and of the church, to him who is the head of all unbelievers, and the god of the world. The term is used only in this place in the New Testament, but very often in the Old Testament, to express men notoriously wicked and scandalous, De 13:13 Jud 19:22 1Sa 1:16 2:12 25:17 2Sa 16:7 2Ch 13:7. The Hebrews themselves are not agreed in the etymology of it; Ps 101:3, a *wicked thing* is called a *thing of Belial* (as may be seen in the margin of our bibles); so as the argument is drawn from our duty of conformity to our Head; Christ hath no fellowship with the devil, therefore we ought to have no unnecessary communion with such who manifest themselves to be of their father the devil, by their doing his works; nor hath Christ any communion with the sons of Belial.

Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? What part or portion, that is, what society or communion, hath a believer with one that beheveth not? What hath he to do with him? It was a usual phrase amongst the Jews, Jos 22:25,27. Some by this *part* understand, what portion in the life to come? In which sense it teacheth us, that we should maintain intimate and elective communion in this life only with such as we would gladly have our portion with in another life. But the most judicious interpreters think this is not intended in this place.

2 Corinthians 6:16

Ver. 16. *And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?* This particular instance giveth some expositors occasion to interpret 2Co 6:14, of communion with idolaters in such acts of religion as are proper to them; but nothing hinders but that that precept may be interpreted more generally, though the apostle gives this as one particular instance, wherein he would have them avoid communion with unbelievers.

For ye are the temple of the living God; the argument is drawn from what the apostle had before asserted, 1Co 3:16 6:19, their being the temples of the Holy Ghost; which he proveth from Le 26:12 Eze 37:26,27.

As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: not that what the apostle meaneth here, is the literal meaning of Le 26:11,12; for it is manifest, that God by Moses there is speaking not of God's dwelling in the persons of believers, or in his church, but of that gracious presence and manifestation of himself to his people in the tabernacle erected by his order. Some therefore think, that the place here alluded to, though not quoted verbatim, is that, Eze 37:26,27, which is a promise respecting the kingdom of Christ; where God promiseth to *make a covenant of peace* with his people, and saith, *I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* The words, as they are here quoted, are entirely to be found in no one text of holy writ; it is sufficient that they are to be found there in parts. Nor doth this text so properly speak of God's dwelling in particular believers, as of his dwelling in the churches of his people; therefore, though he speaks of many, *ye are*, yet *temple* is in the singular number. These many are but one body; the church in which God dwelleth, and with which he hath communion, which is expressed by *walk in them*; as in Re 2:1, he is said to *walk in the midst of the golden candlesticks*. Nor is the term *living* vainly added to *God*; for besides that he is usually so called, as being ever-living, and the Fountain of all life; it also showeth the opposition between him and idols, which are dead things: and therefore God could have no more communion with idols, than the living can have with the dead; nor could they have communion with the living God and dead idols. Nor could they be the people of the living God, and the people or worshippers of dead idols; so as those that were idolaters must lose the advantage of that covenant wherein God had said: *I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

2 Corinthians 6:17

Ver. 17. The apostle here quoteth words out of the Old Testament, no where to be found there syllabically, without variation, but keeping to the sense of them, which is a thing very usual with the penmen of the New Testament. The first quotation seemeth to be taken from Isa 52:11: *Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.* Interpreters are not agreed as to the term from whence the prophet there admonisheth the Jews to depart: some make it to be their former sinful courses; others make it to be the kingdom of the devil and antichrist; others make it to be literal Babylon; the prophet foreseeing, that when the Jews should have a liberty given them to leave Babylon, (which happened in the time of Cyrus the Persian monarch), some of them (now as it were incorporated with the Chaldeans) would linger, and find a difficulty to pluck up their stakes in Babylon, though it were in order to their return to Jerusalem, heretofore the joy and praise of the whole earth. Whatever was the prophet's meaning, certain it is, the apostolical precept cannot be interpreted of a leaving literal Babylon, for neither the Christian jews, nor Gentiles, were at this time there; he must therefore be understood of a mystical Babylon. And the sense must be this: *Come out and be ye separate* from those with whom your souls will be in as much danger as the Jews were in the literal Babylon. But whether by these are to be understood idolaters only, or all notorious scandalous livers, is the question: The true determination of which, I conceive, dependeth upon the sense of those words: *Come out, be ye separated*; which words, I think, are not fully interpreted by those that follow, *touch not the unclean thing*; for, doubtless, the former words are a precept concerning the means to be used in order to that as an end, it being a hard thing to touch pitch, and not to be defiled therewith. On the other side, they interpret it too rigidly, who make it to be a prohibition of all commerce or company with such persons; for this is contrary to the apostolical doctrine in his former Epistle to this church, where he had allowed, 1Co 5:1-13, a civil commerce and traffic with the worst of men; and, 1Co 7:1-40, had forbidden the separation of Christians and heathens, once joined in marriage, unless the unbeliever first departed. The text therefore must be understood only of elective and unnecessary, intimate communion; and is much the same with that, 2Co 6:14: *Be ye not*

unequally yoked with unbelievers. So as that it doth by no means justify the withdrawing of all civil or religious communion from those whose judgments or practice in all things we cannot approve; it only justifieth our withdrawing our communion from idolaters, and from notorious scandalous sinners in such duties and actions, or in such degrees, as we are under no obligation to have fellowship and communion with them in; and our forbearing to touch their unclean things in that fellowship and communion which we are allowed with them, having no fellowship with them in their unfruitful works of darkness, but reproving them, even while in civil things, and some religious actions, we have some fellowship with them.

2 Corinthians 6:18

Ver. 18. The latter words, which are a promise of God's reception of them who for his sake withdraw from a sinful communion with idolaters and scandalous persons, are taken out of Jer 31:1,9, and teach us this: That none can reasonably expect that God should fulfil his covenant with them, who make no conscience of fulfilling their part in it with him; nor claim the benefits of a Father, who perform not the duties of his children: but on the contrary, those who are conscientious in the discharge of their duties of filial obedience, may expect from him both the kindness and the protection of a Father; which is the more valuable because he is the *Lord God Almighty*, who wants no power to protect them, or so to influence them, as to make them in all things happy, as the children of so great a Father.

2 Corinthians 7:1

Chapter Summary

2Co 7:1 Paul exhorteth the Corinthians to purity of life,

2Co 7:2 and to receive him, who had done nothing to forfeit their esteem.

2Co 7:3-7 He repeateth the assurance of his love for them, and showeth what comfort he had received in all his troubles from the report which Titus had brought of their good dispositions toward him.

2Co 7:8-12 So that, upon the whole, he did not repent of having grieved them a little by letter, considering the good effects which that godly sorrow had produced.

2Co 7:13-16 Above all, he rejoiced to observe the good impressions which their behaviour, so answerable to his former boastings of them, had left in the mind of Titus.

Ver. 1. *Having therefore these promises;* i.e. of God's dwelling in us, and walking with us; of God's being our Father, and making and owning us as his sons; which promises are made to true penitents that will touch no unclean thing.

Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit; let us, through the assistance of Divine grace, endeavour to cleanse ourselves, or keep ourselves clean, not only from fleshly filthiness, such as are sins of intemperance, drunkenness, uncleanness; but also from spiritual filthiness, extravagant passions, corrupt affections, pride, envy, rash anger, idolatry, contention, division.

Perfecting holiness in the fear of God; and that, because we are not only obliged to holiness, but to perfect holiness, in, or through, the fear of the Lord; awing our hearts, lest we should profane the temple of the Lord, or behave ourselves as undutiful sons to so good a Father. So far are God's promises, and our belief of them, or affiance in God for the fulfilling of them, from hindering us in the practice and exercise of holiness, that there can be no more potent motive to persuade the perfection of holiness; and that not only from the argument of Divine love, contained in the promises, but from the consideration of the persons to whom, and the conditions upon which, the promises are made.

2 Corinthians 7:2

Ver. 2. *Receive us;* let us have a room in your hearts and esteem, or (more generally) accept us, as you ought to receive and accept the ministers of Christ. As our heart is enlarged towards you, so let your hearts be enlarged towards us; we have done nothing to alienate your hearts from us.

We have wronged no man; we have done no harm to any of you, we have not been like the shepherds that merely take the fleece, and eat the flesh of the flock: Ac 20:33: *I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. We have corrupted no man;* we have corrupted none by any false doctrine, or by flattering speeches, or by bribes or gifts.

We have defrauded no man; we have cheated or defrauded no man. By which vindication of or apology for himself and his fellow labourers, it is not improbably judged, that the apostle reflecteth upon those false apostles and teachers that were crept into this church, who had wronged him, corrupted them, and been too busy in other ways to pick their pockets. Nothing becometh more a minister of the gospel, than innocency and righteousness; nothing more commends him unto his people: for though they are easily persuaded that an innocent and just man must be a pious man, yet they are difficultly persuaded, (and there is no reason for it), that an unjust or mischievous man can be so. Men are so mad of their lusts, that oftentimes teachers who will favour them in them, though never so unjust and unrighteous in their actings, shall find more favour with them, than the most righteous person that will not spare them as to their Herodias: But he who will entertain the least hopes to bring men off from their lusts and sinful practices, is concerned above all men to be innocent and righteous.

2 Corinthians 7:3

Ver. 3. The apostle deals very tenderly with this church, which was (as he knew very well) full of many touchy members; who upon all occasions were ready to reflect upon him, and to take occasion from any expressions of his in letters, as well as other things, to that purpose; to obviate whose whisperings, the apostle tells them, that he did not speak this to reflect upon or expose them, as if they had wronged or defrauded him; for the love which he bare to them was such, as would admit of no such thing; he so loved them, as that he could live and die with them.

2 Corinthians 7:4

Ver. 4. *Great is my boldness of speech toward you;* because I so dearly

love you, therefore I speak so boldly and freely to you (as men use to speak most freely to those whom they most love).

Great is my glorying of you; I boast of your obedience to others, and therefore would be far from exposing you. And this I do not feignedly, for *I am filled with comfort* on your behalf (a further account of this he giveth us afterward).

I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation; yea, (saith he), the report I have received of your carriage and behaviour, upon your receipt of my former Epistle, hath filled me with a joy that balanceth all the affliction and tribulation that I meet with for the gospel. So good news to a faithful minister is the repentance and reformation of any member or members that belong to his flock; whereas the hireling, or false teacher, is not much concerned whether the souls of his people do well or ill.

2 Corinthians 7:5

Ver. 5. Of this motion of the apostle's *into Macedonia*, what he did and suffered there, we have a short account, Ac 20:1-38. He saith his *flesh had no rest*, he met with incessant storms of persecution; and was *troubled* both by Jews and Gentiles in all places where he came.

Without were fightings; by persons that were without the Christian church; such were the generality of the Jews and Gentiles; *within were fears;* and by false brethren within, or with his own fears, lest those violent dealings should be temptations to Christians, being yet tender and young in the faith, to relapse and apostatize.

2 Corinthians 7:6

Ver. 6. *God, that comforteth those that are cast down:* it is observable, how careful the apostle is to ascribe all the supports and reliefs of his spirit unto God. Nor is this notion, or name, of God unuseful to any that fear him, who through any casualties or contingences of this life shall happen to be cast down. It advantageth our faith in prayer, in any such straits, to consider God as having taken to himself the name of him that comforteth

those that are cast down.

Comforted us by the coming of Titus: it is only the coming of Titus, his fellow labourer, and one dear to him, that he mentioneth in this verse, as the means of his support and relief; yet he entitleth God to his comfort under his dejection. God comforteth his people variously, sometimes by his good word, sometimes by his providence; be what will the instrumental cause, God is the principal efficient.

2 Corinthians 7:7

Ver. 7. *And not by big coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you:* I was glad to see Titus, but that was the least of that consolation which he brought me. You had before much comforted and rejoiced him, and he being come to me, made me a partaker of his consolation, upon his beholding or being a witness to *your earnest desire*, to give me satisfaction in the things about which I wrote to you; *your mourning*, either for those scandals amongst you, of which I have given you notice; or for my afflicted state and condition; or for the offence you had given me, which caused me to write that sharp letter to you.

Your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more: your earnest desire to give me satisfaction, and yield obedience to my admonitions, or to maintain and defend my honour and reputation against such as had impeached and wounded it; these things much augmented my rejoicing in and over you. Nothing so much rejoiceth the heart of a conscientious, faithful minister of Christ, as to see his people's obedience to the doctrine of the gospel, which he is an instrument to communicate to them.

2 Corinthians 7:8

Ver. 8. *For though I made you sorry with a letter;* the apostle doubtless meaneth the former Epistle to this church.

I do not repent, though I did repent: as to which, he saith, that although he was sometimes troubled, because (probably) he understood that some truly pious persons in this church were troubled at it, as thinking themselves

intended in the reprehensions of it; for which effect, or mistake, (he saith), he was once sorry, being troubled that he should do any thing to grieve them, whom he so affectionately loved; yet now he tells them he was not sorry.

The same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season; and their sorrow was but a temporary sorrow, until they could reform those abuses, which they were made sensible of by that Epistle, and give the apostle that wrote it just satisfaction.

2 Corinthians 7:9

Ver. 9. *Now I rejoyce, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance:* the apostle takes all advantages to insinuate himself into the good opinion and affections of the members of this famous church, and to obviate any misrepresentations of him to them from those false teachers that were crept in amongst them. Lest they should take some advantage from his saying, that he repented not that he had made them sorry, he here openeth himself, and tells them, he did not rejoyce in their sorrow, but in the blessed product and effect of it; which was their reformation of those abuses and errors which he had reproved them for, the effect of which reproof was this their sorrow for a little season. And that they *were made sorry after a godly manner;* they did but sow in tears, they reaped in joy; they had a wet seed time, but a fair harvest. They sorrowed with a sorrow according to God; the cause of their sorrow was their sin, the root of it a love to God, the manner of it such as was agreeable to the will of God.

That ye might receive damage by us in nothing; the wise God so governing things by his providence, that nothing which the apostle spake or wrote should prove detrimental, but rather advantageous; to this church which he so loved.

2 Corinthians 7:10

Ver. 10. *Godly sorrow;* that sorrow which is according to God, either commanded by him, (as sorrow for our own or others' sins, or for the judgments of God, as they are the indications of God's wrath and

displeasure for sin), or which he, as the God of grace, worketh in the soul, touching the heart by the finger of his Spirit, Zec 12:10. Or that sorrow whose end is the glory of God, in the reformation of the person sorrowing, by a hatred and detestation of sin, and a hearty turning from it.

Worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; it is not repentance, but it produceth that change of heart and life which is repentance; and shall not be imperfect, but perfect, which shall issue in the salvation of the soul, and will never be repented of. Never did any when he came to die repent of true repentance; nor is it possible that reasonable souls should repent of what issueth in their eternal salvation.

But the sorrow of the world worketh death; but all sorrow except this is but *the sorrow of the world*, the effect of which is oftentimes natural death; while men bow down under their burdens, and through impatience destroy themselves, or at least so fix their thoughts upon sad objects, and so afflict themselves with them, that they bring themselves into diseases tending to death. It also worketh spiritual death; as it indisposeth men for their duty, (as it was in the case of Elijah), and is a temptation to them to be angry against God, (as in the case of Jonah), to fret, murmur, and repine against God's providence: and by this means it also worketh towards eternal death, which is the wages belonging to sin.

2 Corinthians 7:11

Ver. 11. The apostle having showed the mischievous effects of worldly sorrow, all which he comprehended under the word *death*, here showeth the blessed effects of that sorrow which is according to God.

What carefulness it wrought in you! The first he mentioneth is great *carefulness*, both to make our peace with God for our former violations of his law, (using all means he hath prescribed and directed thereunto), and also to preserve our peace, by avoiding the like breaches for the time to come.

What clearing of yourselves! The Corinthians' sorrow might work in some of them a *clearing* or purging themselves of that guilt which other members of that church had incurred. But there is another clearing of

ourselves, which true repentance worketh, not by denying the fact, but by confessing it, with taking shame to ourselves; which, though it be not a clearing of a person from the fact, yet, through Divine grace, joined with a reformation, it is a clearing him from the guilt thereof.

What indignation! What a displeasure against yourselves for your follies!

What fear! Not so much of the wrath of God, as lest you should again fall into the like temptations, and be overcome by them.

What vehement desire! What hearty prayers to God, that for the time to come you might be kept from the like temptations!

What zeal! What warmth and great degrees of all sanctified affections; love to God, hatred of sin, fear of offending God, desire to please him!

What revenge! What acts of discipline, fasting, denying of yourselves in some lawful things wherein you may have offended, or the too free use of which may have been to you occasions of offending.

In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter; by these acts, though some of you have been to be blamed, yet the body of you have showed yourselves clear of this matter; or though all of you have been formerly too guilty of some things I have charged you with, yet you have cleared yourselves both to God, who imputeth no sin to him that confesseth his sin and forsaketh it, and to me, who am abundantly satisfied with your declared sorrow, repentance, and reformation.

2 Corinthians 7:12

Ver. 12. *I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong;* for the cause of him that had abused his father's wife, not out of any particular hatred or ill-will I had to him; *nor for his cause that suffered wrong;* nor for the sake of him whose wife was so abused; nor for my own sake, who had been so abused, and suffered wrong by you.

But that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you; but only out of a love to your souls, and a care I had for you, that in all things

you might approve yourselves unto God. Or possibly this text is more generally be interpreted, without respect either to the incestuous person in particular, or to his father; and the sense of the verse no more than this: Though in my former Epistle I wrote something sharply to you, yet I did it not in any passion, nor was I drawn aside by any prejudice or hatred of any person, nor out of any partial affection to any, as to any thing for which I blamed you; but out of that general love and affection which I have to you all, which produceth in me a care of and a solicitude for you, that you might do no evil; which care I was willing should appear to you.

2 Corinthians 7:13

Ver. 13. *We were comforted in your comfort;* the comfort which your letters brought us, and so came from you; or the comfort which you received upon your reformation of those things which were amiss amongst you. And we also *joyed for the joy* that *Titus* conceived, upon his understanding of your affairs, and your ready obedience to the Epistle which I wrote to you: such is the union between the true members of Christ, that they are comforted with one another's comforts, and afflicted with one another's sorrows and griefs.

2 Corinthians 7:14

Ver. 14. The apostle here multiplieth expressions to sweeten the Corinthians, by all manner of ways declaring his value for and affection towards them. It appeareth by this, that the apostle had at some time before spoken something to Titus in commendation of this church of Corinth, which he here calleth a *boasting* of them; he now again boasted, that he had said nothing but the truth, which Titus had experienced, and reported to him.

2 Corinthians 7:15

Ver. 15. By your obedience to my admonitions and exhortations, you have not only obliged me in a debt of love to you, but Titus also; who joyfully remembers, with what *fear and trembling you received him*, lest he should

find any thing amongst you that should grieve and offend him.

2 Corinthians 7:16

Ver. 16. That I can write and speak to you with confidence that you will hearken to my admonitions and exhortations, and that I can confidently boast and glory concerning you.

2 Corinthians 8:1

Chapter Summary

2Co 8:1-5 Paul extolleth the liberal contributions of the Macedonian churches for the relief of the brethren in Judea,

2Co 8:6-8 and recommendeth the like charity to the Corinthians, as well beseeming their other graces,

2Co 8:9 enforced by Christ's example,

2Co 8:10-12 consistent with the alacrity they had already expressed therein,

2Co 8:13-15 and a precedent which might in time be of use to themselves.

2Co 8:16-24 He letteth them know the willingness of Titus to come and further this good work among them; and commendeth him to their love, together with the brethren, men of special worth, who were sent with him on the same errand.

Ver. 1. The apostle in this chapter proceedeth to a new argument, viz. the pressing of this church to acts of charity. This is that which he here calleth *the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia*, putting the cause for the effect. Bounty or liberality to the poor saints and members of Christ, as such, floweth from that habit of love by which men are taught of God to love one another; for though men, from a natural goodness, or habits of moral virtue, may relieve men as men, compassionating persons in misery; yet none, from any such principle, do good to any members of the household of faith, as such; such rather feel from them the effects of their hatred, in taking what is their own from them.

2 Corinthians 8:2

Ver. 2. *In a great trial of affliction;* how great the afflictions of the churches in Macedonia were, both from the Jews and pagans, may be read in Ac 16:1-40 and Ac 17:1-34. Afflictions are called trials, because under them God maketh a trial of our faith, patience, and constancy; and the devil also, ordinarily, by them trieth to draw out our lusts and corruptions.

The abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded into the riches of their liberality; God made their inward peace and joy in the Holy Ghost so to abound in them under their trials, that though they were poor, (deeply poor), yet they abounded in the riches of liberality; not ministering to the necessities of their poor brethren in proportion to their abilities, or as might have been expected from men under their circumstances, but showing themselves rich in their liberality, though poor in their estates, and as to what they had of this world's goods.

2 Corinthians 8:3

Ver. 3. Two things the apostle commendeth in the charity of the churches of Macedonia:

1. The quantity of their gift, which, he saith, was *to their power*, *yea*, (on his knowledge), *beyond* what they were able.
2. Their freedom in the action; so as they did not need the apostle's exhortations and arguments, but did it of themselves freely and cheerfully.

2 Corinthians 8:4

Ver. 4. Bringing what they had freely collected amongst themselves to the apostles, and importuning them to receive it at their hands, and to take upon them the work of distributing it.

2 Corinthians 8:5

Ver. 5. We might have hoped for something from them, though they were in that poor afflicted condition; but what they brought was much beyond what we could hope for, or expect from them. Or else this phrase may refer to what followeth: they did not only bring us their *gift*, but they also *gave up themselves* to us, to be disposed of for the good of the church, according to the will of God; for they first gave themselves up to the Lord, devoting themselves to his service and glory, and then to us, the will of God so ruling and directing them.

2 Corinthians 8:6

Ver. 6. *The same grace*, in this place, signifieth no more than the same gift, or the same good work, in collecting in the church of Corinth. If by *grace* here be understood the grace of God, the cause is put for the effect (as we had it in the first verse); but $\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ being not here added, possibly it had been better translated gift, or free contribution; for how a minister should finish the grace of God, is hard to conceive; and the phrase is at best very hard, but he may be an instrument for completing a good work, which is done from a habit of Divine grace, by exhortations and arguments, which he may use to press the performance of it. Titus (it seemeth) had been diligent in some other places to make this collection; going to Corinth the apostle presseth him to go on with it there also.

2 Corinthians 8:7

Ver. 7. Though the apostle made little use of oratory in his ordinary discourses and epistles, yet he knew how to use it when it might be of probable advantage for the ends which he aimed at, viz. the glory of God, and the good of the souls that were under his care. He did not turn divinity into mere words and rhetorical flourishes; yet he made use of these sometimes, as a waiting maid to divinity. Being therefore to press upon these Corinthians this great duty of charity, he insinuateth himself into them, by telling them, that they abounded in all other spiritual habits:

Faith, by which they had both steadily assented to the truth of gospel propositions, and also received Christ.

Utterance, by which they were enabled either to speak with tongues, or to God in prayer. For to men by prophecy and exhortation.

Knowledge, both of things Divine and human. And in *love* to the ministers of the gospel, which, if it did not appear in all, yet it did in many of them. And from hence he fetcheth an argument to press them to be complete in this habit of grace. The force of the apostle's argument lies, in the duty of all Christians to strive after perfection, and that natural desire, which is in all ingenuous people, to be perfect in that good of which they have a taste in less perfect degrees.

2 Corinthians 8:8

Ver. 8. I do not speak in an imperious way, as one that commandeth you; or rather, God hath no where given an express command as to the quantum of what you should give; but *the forwardness of others* makes me thus speak to you, as not being willing you should in good works come behind any churches; and that I might *prove the sincerity of your love*, to God, to me, and to the poor afflicted saints that are in Judea. Though God hath not directed the particular sums we should give to those that are in need, yet he hath given us general rules; That we should give *as God hath prospered us*, 1Co 16:2; and so as there may be some *equality*, as the apostle speaketh, 2Co 8:14. So, as the sincerity of our love to God dependeth in some measure upon the proportion of what we give at his command, so doth also the sincerity of our love to those poor members of Christ that are in want; that there may be a moderate supply for their want, from our abundance.

2 Corinthians 8:9

Ver. 9. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*; call to mind the free love of your Lord and Master Jesus Christ, which you know, believing the gospel, which gives you a true account of it, and having in your own souls experienced the blessed effects of it: *He was rich*, being the *Heir of*

all things, the Lord of the whole creation, Heb 1:2, all things were put under his feet.

Yet for your sakes he became poor; yet that he might accomplish the work of your redemption, and purchase his Father's love for you, he took upon him the form of a servant, stripped himself of his robes of glory, and clothed himself with the rags of flesh, denied himself in the use of his creatures, had not where to lay down his head, was maintained from alms, people ministering to him of their substance.

That ye through his poverty might be rich; and all this that you might be made rich, with the riches of grace and glory; rich in the love of God, and in the habits of Divine grace; which was all effected by his poverty, by his making himself of no reputation, and humbling himself. If after your knowledge of this, by receiving and believing the gospel, and experiencing this, in those riches of spiritual gifts and graces and hopes of glory which you have, you shall yet be found strait hearted in compassionating the poverty and afflicted state of his poor members, or strait-handed in ministering unto them, how will you in any measure answer this great love, or conform to this great example?

2 Corinthians 8:10

Ver. 10. Giving to those that were in want, was matter of precept (it being what the law of God and nature did require); but giving as the Macedonians had given, not only to, but beyond, their ability, was not so. Or, possibly, the apostle's saying, *I give my advice*, doth not suppose what he advised to be no commanded duty; friends may advise us to what is our duty to do.

For, saith the apostle, *this is expedient for you*; for your profit, or for your honour and reputation. A precept alone ought to oblige us to this doing of the thing commanded, but the profit, credit, and honour of the action adds an edge to the duty, and layeth us under a double obligation; the first, of obedience to God; the second, of being wise for ourselves.

Who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago: the apostle proveth the expediency of it from the concern of their

reputation in it; that they might not be thought to have gone backward, or to become weary of well doing, in regard they had begun this charitable work some time before.

Objection. But how cometh he here to put doing before willing (for so it is in the Greek, *not only to do, but also* θελειν, to will)? Some tell us these hystero-logies, or putting things after which should in order be before, are usual in holy writ; but possibly it is better answered by others, that θελειν here doth not signify the mere inclination of the will, but a forwardness, (thus our translators understood it, and therefore translate it *to be forward*), or a spontaneous willingness, without arguments used by others to persuade them to it. So as the sense is this: You not only began to do the thing a year ago, but you did it of your own accord, without our exhortations and arguments, of your own free mind and will; so as if you should now be behind hand, it would be a reproach to you. This sense is favoured by the next verse, what he here calls a willing, he there calls *a readiness to will*.

2 Corinthians 8:11

Ver. 11. Ye showed yourselves some time since free to will the thing which I am now pressing you unto, you have now opportunity to do it, and the example of other churches going before you in the doing of it; show yourselves now constant by *the doing of it*; that seeing God hath given you something of this world's goods, and that in proportions beyond your poor brethren, as you pretended a great readiness a great while since to relieve them, so you may by your performance justify that it was not all a mere pretence.

2 Corinthians 8:12

Ver. 12. He had before directed them to give out of that which they had, that is, in a proportion to what God had blessed them with; for he tells them that it is the willing mind which God accepteth, not the quantity of the gift. God doth not require of people things not in their power, yet bare velleities, or pretended willings, are not accepted; there must be an acting according to our power to justify the sincerity of our willing mind, and

men vainly pretend to will that towards the performance of which they never move. Though God requireth not of us things that are not within our power, yet he requireth of us the putting forth of our power in doing what he hath commanded us, so far as we are able; which indeed can alone justify the willingness of our mind to be more than a mere pretence. A present impotency, if contracted by our own fault, will not excuse us from the performance of those acts as to which it doth extend, to which some are bound by the just laws of God or men; but it is very unreasonable to think it should excuse as to those acts to which it doth not extend, and as to which it cannot be pleaded.

2 Corinthians 8:13

Ver. 13. I do not press you to such proportions in giving as should make your afflicted brethren rich, and you poor.

2 Corinthians 8:14

Ver. 14. *But by an equality;* but only to bring you and them to some equality, that they might not starve while you have plenty, and what you may well enough spare.

That now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want; I do not urge you to make your necessaries a supply for others' wants; I would only have a supply for their wants out of your abundance.

That their abundance also may be a supply for your want: some by *their abundance* understand their aboundings in the good things of this life: they are now in distress by reason of the great famine that is in Judea, or by reason of the great storm of persecution that is there raised against Christians; yet God may turn the scales, he may send a famine in those parts where you live, and there may be plenty in Judea; then their abundance may supply your wants. Others interpret *their abundance* of the aboundings of their grace, which may quicken them up to pray for you, for the supply of such grace to you as you stand in need of.

That so there may be an equality, they being instruments of spiritual

blessings to you, as you are instruments of temporal blessings and good things to them.

2 Corinthians 8:15

Ver. 15. This quotation would incline us to think, that the *abundance* mentioned in the latter part of the former verse, as also the *equality* mentioned in the end of it, is rather to be understood with reference to the good things of this life, than with reference to spiritual blessings, or to temporal and spiritual put together, balancing one another to make an equality. For certain it is, that this quotation referreth to manna, which was the bread God afforded for the bodies of his people in the wilderness, though, considered typically, it is rightly by the apostle called *spiritual meat*, 1Co 10:3; signifying that bread which came down from heaven, which Moses could not give, as Christ tells us, Joh 6:32,58. These words are quoted from Ex 16:18, though more agreeably to the Septuagint than to our translation. The history is this: The manna being fallen, the text saith, Ex 16:17, that *some gathered more, some less*; but it so fell out, by the providence of God ordering it, that when they came and measured what they had gathered, *he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack*. Now of this the apostle makes an argument to press the Corinthians to this charitable act. The force of which lies in this: As it was in the case of manna; there were some that gathered more, others that gathered less, yet all had enough; so it will be as to the riches of the world that men gather, though some gather more, and others gather less, yet men will find, that those that have gathered little, (have less estates than others), using what they have to the glory of God, and according to the Divine rule, will have no lack; and those that have gathered much, if they do not distribute it according to the will of God, will find that they have nothing over; God will shrink their heap into some equality to those whom at God's command they would not relieve: Ec 5:10: *He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver*. The wisdom of the Divine providence hath not ordained levelling, nor made all men equal in their portions of the good things of this life; but he hath willed such an equality as every one may eat, (unless he or she that will not work), either from the sweat of their own faces, or from the charity of others. Besides, nature craveth no great things, but is satisfied with a little; so that he that hath gathered little shall have no lack, if he can but moderate the excesses of his

appetite; and he that hath gathered much hath nothing over, what is either necessary for himself and his family, or what he ought to part with for the relief of others at the command of God.

2 Corinthians 8:16

Ver. 16,17. The apostle, by his exhortation, put Titus upon this employment of making at Corinth an extraordinary collection for the poor Christians that were in Judea; but it should seem, that when he did it, Titus let him know, that he was before resolved upon it: so as, though he went at the entreaty of the apostle, yet he went also of his own accord, having resolved upon the work before the apostle spoke to him of it. To let us know, that we are not sufficient of ourselves so much as to think one good thought, he gives *thanks to God* for putting this *earnest care into the heart of Titus*.

2 Corinthians 8:18

Ver. 18. Who this other *brother* was, whether Luke, or Barnabas or Silas, or Apollos, or Mark, is not much material; it is plain, whoever he was, that he was a brother and a minister one who had a good repute for preaching the gospel.

2 Corinthians 8:19

Ver. 19. And that he was *chosen by the churches* to go along with Paul and Titus, to carry the charity of other churches to the distressed Christians in Judea; which charity is here again called *grace*, for the reason before mentioned, 2Co 8:1. He declares that their end in this administration, was *the glory of God*, and the proof and *declaration* of these Corinthians' sincerity of brotherly love, and *ready mind* to yield obedience to the will of God declared to them.

2 Corinthians 8:20

Ver. 20. I have sent more than one as witnesses of what is done in this service, that none might reflect upon those trusted with the charity of divers churches, as if they converted any part of it to their own private use, and did not distribute it to those for whom it was given. The apostle here commendeth to all ministers and Christians, a prudent foresight of such scandalous imputations, as they may be exposed to (be their sincerity what it will) from the men of the world, who have no good will towards them; and a provision against them. Paul could have trusted Titus in the distribution of these alms, but he did not know what the world might say, had he discharged the trust alone; he therefore takes in one with him, to be a witness of his actions.

2 Corinthians 8:21

Ver. 21. He had said the same, Ro 12:17. In both places he instructeth us, what is the great duty of all Christians, but of ministers especially, (who are as cities built upon a hill, and cannot be hid, and against whom ill men are much more ready to open their mouths, than against private Christians of a more obscure condition), viz. to *provide things honest, not only in the sight of God*, (having an eye, that in our actions we do nothing which God hath forbidden us, nor omit any thing which God hath commanded us), but also looking that in our conversation we (as much as in us lies) do those things which have a good report amongst men, Php 4:8. For besides that we are obliged to give no offence to Jews or Gentiles, nor any way to alienate them from the ways of God, we are also obliged to do what in us lieth to win and gain them to Christ; to which, the doing of actions which they account dishonest (though, it may be, some are not so upon a strict inquiry) is no fitting mean.

2 Corinthians 8:22

Ver. 22. This *brother* is uncertainly guessed at, nor is it at all material for us to know whether it were Epenetus, or Apollos, or Sosthenes, or any other; it is sufficient for us to know, that he was a brother, and one of whose diligence and faithfulness the apostle, and the churches where Paul

now was, had had experience; and that he was now very ready and forward to be employed in this service, upon the apostle's recommendation of this church unto him.

2 Corinthians 8:23

Ver. 23. This verse contains the apostle's credential letters, given to Titus, and the other two persons, sent about the business of making this collection in the church of Corinth. Many, in matters where the drawing of their purses is solicited and concerned, are very scrupulous and inquisitive, seeking all advantages to excuse themselves; one while pleading their own poverty, another while objecting against the state, or want, or quality of those for whom they are solicited; again, questioning whether their charity shall ever come to those persons for whom it is desired, objecting against the persons intrusted with the conveyance or distribution of it. The apostle having, therefore, before obviated some objections, he here obviateth the last mentioned, letting them know, that the persons intrusted with this service were unexceptionable persons. He calleth Titus his *partner and fellow-helper concerning* them, that is, in the business of the gospel, and promoting the salvation of their souls. For the others, he tells them they were such as *the churches* had thought fit to make their *messengers*; so had the credit of the churches, whose messengers they were, who would not have intrusted them if they had not judged them faithful. He calleth either the churches, or them, *the glory of Christ*. If the words be to be understood of the *messengers*. (which seemeth the fairest application of them), the meaning is, that they were instruments of the glory of Christ: or persons who, by their grace, did bring much glory to Christ. Every one that excelleth in the habits or exercise of grace, is the glory of Christ, because without Christ he can do nothing of that nature: *I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me*, Ga 2:20. The acts and exercises of grace are indeed our acts, but the power by which we do them is from Christ: we glory in Christ, and by our holy conversations glorify Christ; and Christ glorieth in every pious and holy person, as God did concerning Job, Job 1:8 2:3.

2 Corinthians 8:24

Ver. 24. The chapter concludeth with an exhortation to their liberality,

backed with a heap of arguments.

1. It would be an evidence of their love to God, to their afflicted brethren, and to the apostle.
2. It would be a proof of it to those messengers of the churches, and to the churches whose messengers they were.
3. It would evidence that the apostle had not, to Titus and others, boasted on their behalf in vain.

2 Corinthians 9:1

Chapter Summary

2Co 9:1-5 Paul showeth the reason why, though he knew the forwardness of the Corinthians, he had sent the brethren before hand to make up their collections against his coming.

2Co 9:6-11 He stirreth them up to give bountifully and cheerfully, as a likely means to increase their store, 2Co 9:12-15 and as productive of many thanksgivings unto God.

Ver. 1. I should think the particle *γὰρ*, here translated *for*, had been better translated *but*, as in 1Pe 4:15, and 2Pe 1:9, our translators do render it. So these words contain an elegant revocation of himself from the argument he had dwelt upon in the whole former chapter, and the sense amounts to this: But to what purpose do I multiply words to you, to persuade you to minister to the saints in distress? As to you, *it is superfluous*. By this art letting them know, that he had no doubt, but a confident expectation, concerning them; the suggesting of which hath also the force of another argument, that they might not deceive the apostle's good opinion and confidence of them.

2 Corinthians 9:2

Ver. 2. He gives them the reason why he judgeth it superfluous to write to them, because they had a forward mind of themselves, and needed not to be spurred on. This the apostle tells them that he knew, (he had told them of it, 2Co 8:10), he knew it either from themselves, or from some that came from them unto him; and he had boasted of them for this their forwardness in this good work to the churches of Macedonia.

And your zeal hath provoked very many; he tells them, that their warmth unto, and in, this work, had kindled a heat in many in those parts where he was. Having therefore been so forward in this good work, and so good instruments to kindle a heat in others, he would not have them now come behind others, or grow cold in it.

2 Corinthians 9:3

Ver. 3. I did not send the brethren so much to move you to this work, or quicken you to it, for you yourselves purposed it a year ago, and showed a forwardness in it; the motion proceeded from yourselves, and you showed a readiness to it, which gave me occasion to boast of you to the churches of Macedonia; but I thought you might forget it, and I would not have *our boasting in vain on this behalf*. And besides, I would have the work done, that your alms might not be to gather when I come, (as he had said, 1Co 16:2), but might be in a readiness to be taken and carried away; for that is signified here by being *ready*, not that readiness of mind of which he had before spoken, and which he had before mentioned as what he had found in them.

2 Corinthians 9:4

Ver. 4. For if I should come, and any of the members of the churches of Macedonia, who have heard me boasting of you as a people very forward in this charitable work, and when they are come they should find you had done nothing, only talked much of your readiness, both I should be ashamed, and you also might see some cause to blush, which I, who consult your honour and reputation equally with my own, would prevent.

2 Corinthians 9:5

Ver. 5. This was the cause why I judged it reasonable to send the three brethren, before mentioned, unto you, that they might make up your bounty; προκαταρτισωσι, not so much to move, quicken, or exhort you to it, as to hasten the despatch and perfecting of it, that your money might be ready gathered. The word which we translate *bounty*, in the Greek signifieth blessing, which agreeth with the Hebrew dialect. Abigail's present to David in his distress is called בְּרִכָּה, a *blessing*, 1Sa 25:27: so Jacob called his present to his brother Esau, Ge 33:11. Such kind of reliefs are called a blessing in both the Hebrew and the Greek tongue:

1. Because they are a part of God's blessing upon him that gives, Ps 24:5.
2. Because the giving of them is a recognition or acknowledgment how far God hath blessed persons, they giving as the Lord hath prospered them, 1Co 16:2.
3. Because they are an indication of the blessing, or well wishing, of him that giveth to him that receiveth the gift.
4. Because they are a real doing good to the person that receiveth them, an actual blessing of him.
5. Possibly they are (in him that gives) an effectual, real blessing of God; for we then bless God with what we have, when we use and improve it for the ends for which he hath given it to us. It is very observable, that a liberal, free giving to the relief of the servants of God in distress, is called χαρις and ευλογια, *grace* and *blessing*; a heart to it being created in us from the free grace of God, and the work itself being a real, actual blessing of God with our substance, and the fruit of our increase: which two things well digested, will be potent arguments to charity with every soul that knoweth any thing of God, or hath any love for God.

That the same might be ready; that the same may be ready gathered, not to gather when I come. As a blessing, we translate it, *as a matter of bounty*: the sense is the same.

Not as of covetousness: the meaning is, I have also sent the brethren, that they may persuade you to a free and liberal contribution, a giving that may look like a blessing, not as proceeding from a narrow heart, in which the love of money prevaieth above the love of God. Giving to the distressed saints of God sparingly, and disproportionately to what estate we have, no ways looks like a blessing; he that so gives, doth not, according to the apostle's phrase, give *ως ευλογιαν* for he neither gives as the Lord hath blessed and prospered him, nor yet according to what God requires of him; for he withholds a part of what he ought to part with: neither doth he bless his brother; he doth him some little good, but blessing another signifies a more liberal doing good to him.

2 Corinthians 9:6

Ver. 6. Whereas covetous persons think all lost which they give to charitable uses, the apostle correcteth their mistake, by letting them know, that it is no more lost than the seed is which the husbandman casteth into his ground, which bringeth forth thirty, sixty, or sometimes a hundred-fold; though with this difference, that whereas the husbandman's crop dependeth upon the goodness and preparedness of his ground, it is not so with this spiritual crop; a man shall not reap according to the nature of the soil in which he casts his seed; for he that giveth to a prophet or to a righteous man, in the name of a prophet or a righteous man, (though he may be mistaken in the person to whom he so giveth), yet shall he receive the reward of a prophet and of a righteous man. But this spiritual sower shall receive according to the quantity of seed which he soweth: he that soweth niggardly and sparingly shall reap accordingly; he that soweth liberally shall reap liberally: from whence we may be confirmed, that the rewards of another life will not be equal, but bear some proportion to the good works which men have done here.

2 Corinthians 9:7

Ver. 7. Let not any give out of any awe of us, nor as it were forced by our authority, but as God shall put it into his heart, and as he hath purposed in himself, and is inclined from himself, without any grudging or unwillingness; not because he thinks he must give, but out of choice: for

God loveth one that giveth with freedom and cheerfulness, not him that giveth as it were by constraint, or upon force; it is the will and affection of the giver, not the quantity of the gift, that God looks at. The apostle, by naming God and his acceptance in the case, lets the Corinthians know, that God was concerned in what they thus gave, it was not given to men only; according to that: *He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again, Pr 19:17.*

2 Corinthians 9:8

Ver. 8. Having made God, in the verse before, a debtor to those who, by giving to poor distressed saints, would make him their creditor, he here proveth him to be no insolvent debtor, but able to do much more for them, than they in this thing should do at his command out of love to him.

He is (saith he) able to make all grace to abound toward you: the word translated *grace*, signifieth all sorts of gifts, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature; and being here applied to God, (who is the Author of all gifts), it may very properly be interpreted concerning both. God is able to repay you in temporal things what you thus lend him, and so to pay you in specie; and he is able to pay you in value, by spiritual habits and influences.

That ye, always having all sufficieney in all things, may abound to every good work; that you may have a sufficieney in all things, so as that you may abound to and in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:9

Ver. 9. As in the former verse the apostle had asserted God's sufficieney to repay them what they should lend him. So he here asserteth God's readines and willingness. This he confirmeth from a promise taken out of Ps 112:9, where also is further added, *his horn shall be exalted with honour*. Concerning the merciful man, it is true that Solomon saith, Pr 11:24: *There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth*. The psalmist saith: *His righteousness endureth for ever*: by which term some understand his bounty or liberality: I had rather understand by it here his obedience to the

command of God ht his free distribution to the poor; this remaineth in God's book of remembrance for ever, God will not forget this *labour of love*, Heb 6:10. The friends which he maketh with his *mammon of righteousness*, shall receive him *into everlasting habitations*, Lu 16:9. A man's riches cannot remain for ever, but his righteousness, in the distribution of them according to the command of God, that shall remain for ever.

2 Corinthians 9:10

Ver. 10. The God, whose providence and blessing maketh rich, and who giveth this seed to the sower, supply you with whatsoever you stand in need of for this life, and give you a heart to multiply that spiritual seed, by which the fruits of your righteousness shall be increased. Some Greek copies read these words in the future tense, according to which reading they are a formal promise, both of good things, whereby they might show their charity, and also of a free and large heart, disposing them to that exercise of grace. Our translators render it in the form of a prayer; which yet being the prayer of the apostle, put up in faith, doth virtually contain a promise both of a temporal and a spiritual increase.

2 Corinthians 9:11

Ver. 11. The word liere translated *bountifulness*, signifies simplicity, in opposition to deceit and fraud. We had it before, 2Co 8:2; so Ro 12:8: so, Jas 1:5, God is said to give $\alpha\pi\lambda\omega\varsigma$, simply (we translate it *liberally*). We have in these two chapters met with three words, by which the bounty of Christians to persons in distress is expressed; *grace*, *blessing*, *simplicity*, $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\varsigma$, $\epsilon\upsilon\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\alpha$, $\alpha\pi\lambda\omicron\tau\eta\varsigma$. The first lets us know the true root of all acceptable giving to those who are in distress, that must be free love: the second expresseth the true end, blessing God and our neighbour; serving the glory and commands of God, and the necessities of our brethren: this third expresseth the manner how we must give, that is, with simplicity. It is no true liberality where simplicity is wanting, that a man doth not what he doth with a plain heart and design to obey God and do good to his brother.

Which causeth through us thanksgiving to God; as a further argument to

press them to this liberality, he tells them, that it would cause them that were the apostles and ministers of Christ, to offer thanksgiving unto God.

2 Corinthians 9:12

Ver. 12. No than ought to live to himself; the two great ends of every Christian's life ought to be, the glory of God, and the good of others, especially such as belong to the household of faith. This service (saith the apostle) serveth both those ends:

1. It supplieth the necessities of the saints; and:
2. It causeth thanksgivings to God by many persons, and upon many accounts; which he further openeth in the following verses.

2 Corinthians 9:13

Ver. 13. *Whiles by the experiment of this ministration, upon their receiving of what you sent them, they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ; they will see how ready you are to obey the gospel of Christ, (which hath in so many places called you to this duty), and this will give them occasion of blessing God, who in the day of his power hath made such a willing people, willing at God's command, and in consideration of the love of Christ, to strip themselves to clothe his naked members, to restrain their own appetites to feed them. The grace of God bestowed on others, is matter of great thanksgiving to every gracious heart.*

And for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men: another cause of thanksgiving will be God's moving your hearts towards them; they will see reason to bless God, who hath raised them up such friends in their great straits; so as they will both bless God on your behalf, for his grace bestowed on you, that out of the Gentiles he hath picked out a people so subject to the law of his gospel; and also on their own behalf, that God hath stirred up a people to compassionate them in their deep distresses.

2 Corinthians 9:14

Ver. 14. Another way by which the glory of God will be promoted, by your simple, free, and liberal contribution, is, that by this he will have more prayers, which also will redound to your advantage, for it will procure prayers for you; and not prayers only, but a great deal of fervent love; so as they will long after your good, and after your acquaintance, when they shall receive such an experiment of *the exceeding grace of God in you*.

2 Corinthians 9:15

Ver. 15. Interpreters are not agreed what the apostle here meaneth by God's *unspeakable gift*. Some by it understand Christ, who is *the gift of God*, and the Fountain of all grace; and to this the epithet *unspeakable* doth best agree. Others understand the gospel, by which the hearts of men are subdued, effectually disposed, and inclined to obey the will of God. Others think it is to be understood of that habit of brotherly love, which from the Spirit of Christ, by the gospel, was wrought in the hearts of these Corinthians. If the last be meant, (to which the most incline), the apostle declareth his firm persuasion of them, that they would obey him in this thing, and giveth God thanks for giving them such a heart. Seeing the contribution was not yet made, though a year before they had declared their readiness to it, I should rather incline to interpret it concerning Christ; and that the apostle concludeth this whole discourse about contributing to the relief of these poor members of Christ, with a general doxology, or blessing of God for Jesus Christ, who is the Author and Finisher of all grace, without such a particular reference to the preceding discourse; yet hereby hinting to them, that without the influence of his grace they would, they could do nothing.

2 Corinthians 10:1

Chapter Summary

2Co 10:1-11 Paul entreateth the Corinthians not to leave him cause to exert against them that spiritual power, with which he was armed, and meant to chastise

those who undervalued his person and apostolical character.

2Co 10:12-18 He pointeth out the difference between those who, for want of looking beyond themselves, were arrogant and vain intruding into, and taking merit from, the labours of others, and himself, who kept strictly within the province allotted him by God, and, avoiding self-commendation, sought honour from the commendation of Christ.

Chapter Introduction

Hitherto the apostle, who in his former Epistle had blamed this church for so many things, and dealt sharply with them, in this Epistle hath treated them as if they had been a people that had had no faults, or none but what, in obedience to his former Epistle they had reformed, and become a new lump: which argueth, that the major part of the members of it were a good and an obedient people, by whose prevalent vote they had reformed much that was amiss. But in these four last chapters, to let us know that there was yet some of the old leaven amongst them, he useth another style; taking notice, titat lie understood there was amongst them another (though possibly the lesser) party who had much vilified him; and justifying himself against their whisperings and calumnies, not withmut some sharp reflections upon them.

Ver. 1. *Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ: meekness* respecteth the spirit or inward man, being a virtue that moderateth inward anger and rash passions.

Gentleness more respecteth the outward conversation. The apostle mentioneth both these virtues, as eminent in Christ, who is our great example, and to whom all Christians are bound to be conformable.

Who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you: he here repeateth the words of those who, in this church, reproached him; they reported him a man, who, when he was there in presence with them, was lowly and humble enough; but when he was absent from them, then he wrote imperiously and confidently enough. The sense of the words is plainly this: I Paul, (of whom some amongst you say, that when I am

there with you I am low and humble enough, even to some degrees of baseness; but when I am absent, then I write like a lord, boldly and confidently), I beseech you to consider the temper of our common Lord and Saviour, to remember how free he was from rash anger and passion, how gentle he was in his conversation; and by the obligation that is upon you, to love and practise those virtues which you saw, or have heard of, in him.

2 Corinthians 10:2

Ver. 2. It is true, (saith the apostle), when I have been with you I have made it my business to behave myself with all obliging sweetness, not using that authority which I might have used; and I beseech you, as not to blame me for that, (remembering the meekness and gentleness of Christ), so by your conversation not to force me to another kind of conversation amongst you; that you would not constrain me to a severer behaviour towards you when I am present with you, to be so free with some of you, as at present I am resolved to be; such, I mean, as have traduced me, as if I *walked according to the flesh*, that is, not guided by the Holy Spirit of God, and the directions of his word, but by some external, carnal considerations, respecting my own profit, pleasure, or reputation, indulging my own passions or corrupt affections. Walking *after the flesh* is opposed to a walking *after the Spirit*, Ro 8:1. He walketh *after the flesh*, to whom the fleshly appetite is the principle, rule, and end of his actions; as he, on the contrary, to whom those habits of grace which are wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit himself more immediately by his motions or impulses, are the principle of his actions, and the word dictated by the Spirit is the rule of his actions, and the glory of God is the end of his actions, is truly said to walk *after the Spirit*.

2 Corinthians 10:3

Ver. 3. There is a great difference between walking in the flesh, and warring after the flesh. The best of men in this life walk in the flesh, as their souls are not in a state of separation from, but union with, the body; but they do not walk after the flesh, as their fleshly appetite is not the principle of their actions, nor the satisfaction of it the end of their actions.

The apostle, in the latter part of the verse changeth the verb; in the former part he called our conversation, a walking; in the latter part he calleth it a warring; which he describeth negatively in this verse, positively in the following verses. In calling it a warring, he lets us know that it is, and will be, a life of opposition, in which a Christian will have many enemies; though his hand be against none, yet many hands will be against him. But though they be men of strife and contention, in a passive sense, yet they are not so in an active sense, according to the usual notion of warring; for they war not after the flesh, neither as fleshly men, nor in a carnal, fleshly manner, nor yet for fleshly ends. The men of the world war for their honour and glory, or for revenge and satisfaction of their lusts, or for the enlarging of their territories and dominions; but *we do not thus war after the flesh.*

2 Corinthians 10:4

Ver. 4. As our end is spiritual, so are our means; the means by which we manage our spiritual fight are spiritual. Whether by these *weapons* he meaneth the word of God, and his preaching the gospel, or the censures of the church duly administered, it is true, they are not of a carnal nature, or fitted to the subduing of men's bodies, and bringing them into subjection; they are of a spiritual nature, and have their effects upon the mind and inward part of a man; yet, through the concurrence of Divine grace, there is in them a mighty force and power, to pull down *strong holds*: by which metaphorical expression he understands whatsoever opposeth the gospel, and seemeth to defend and uphold men in their sinful courses; subduing the will of man, which is so strong a hold that all the power of hell cannot storm it.

2 Corinthians 10:5

Ver. 5. *Casting down imaginations; λογισμους*, reasonings; and every high thing, every height of reasoning, that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. The great troublers of this church of Corinth were the heathen philosophers, and such as had sucked in their principles; with whose notions, which were conclusions drawn from reason not sanctified and subdued to the will of God, divers doctrines of faith would not agree.

St. Paul tells them, that the gospel, (which was the great weapon of his warfare), through the power of God, was mighty to pull down the strong holds which unbelief had in the carnal understanding of men, to overthrow their reasonings, the heights of them, which exalted themselves against the doctrine of faith; and to bring *παν νοημα*, *every thought*, or counsel into a captivity to the obedience of Christ: so as whatsoever was revealed by the apostles from the Spirit of God, men readily agreed and yielded obedience to; whatever their thoughts or reasonings about it were, they gave credit to it; not because it appeared rational to them, but upon the Divine authority of the revelation; submitting their reason to that, and believing it the most rational thing in the world, that they should believe what God affirmed, and do what God commanded; and this blessed effect the gospel had in all those who heartily embraced it: for indeed to give an assent to a proposition, merely upon a sensible or rational demonstration, is no faith, that is, no Divine faith. Truly to believe, in a Divine sense, is to assent to a proposition upon the credit of the revelation, though we cannot make it out by our reason: and this it is to have our thoughts brought into a captivity to the obedience of Christ. That whereas reason, as it is since the fall subjected in man, riseth up in arms against several Divine propositions, and saith: How can these things be? How can one be three, and three one? How could the Divine and human nature unite in one person? How can the dead rise? &c.: The believer *audit verbum Dei et tacet*, readeth these things, and others of the like nature, plainly asserted in holy writ, and chides down his reason; resolving to give credit to these things merely because God hath said them, who cannot lie. Thus our *νοηματα*, thoughts, counsels, reasonings, deliberations, conclusions, all the product of our understanding, is brought into a captivity to the obedience of Christ; and reason itself, which is the governess and mistress of the soul of man, is made a captive to revelation. And in this appeared the mighty power of the weapons of the apostle's warfare.

2 Corinthians 10:6

Ver. 6. The apostle certainly means by this, excommunication; which was the rod which he had before mentioned, asking them if they would he should come unto them with a rod. This rod he here threateneth them with; telling them, that he had another weapon of his warfare, of a spiritual nature too, to be used against such as preferred themselves to be believers,

but walked disorderly; only he at present spared them, because though a great part of them were obedient, yet there were some amongst them of whose obedience he could not yet glory; but yet he hoped well, and therefore should wait until, by the use of all fair means, (such as exhortations and arguments), he had reduced as many of them as he could unto obedience. But that being done, God had intrusted him with another weapon, with which he would, in the name and by the authority of God, revenge his glory upon the disobedience of others. Herein the apostle hath set a rule and a pattern to all churches, where are multitudes that walk disorderly; not to be too hasty in excommunicating them, but to proceed gradually; first using all fair means, and waiting with all patience, for the reducing them to their duty, who will by any gentle and fair means be reduced; and then revenging the honour and glory of God only upon such as will not be reclaimed.

2 Corinthians 10:7

Ver. 7. Are ye so weak as to judge of persons and things merely from their faces, pretences, or outward appearances? And to magnify these false apostles and teachers, merely because they set forth and magnify themselves, or because they take up a great breadth in the world, and live in a little state and splendour? If any of them do judge that he is the servant or the minister of Christ, why should he not think the same of me? What hath he to say to prove his relation to Christ more than I have? What hath he to glory in upon that account more than I have?

2 Corinthians 10:8

Ver. 8. Here is a remarkable maxim, a rule from which all ecclesiastical superiors ought to measure their actions: God hath given to no superiors a power for *destruction* of the flock, but only for *edification*; so as that no such can pretend to a power received from God, to do or exact any thing which may any ways hinder the salvation of the souls put under their trust; they ought to command or exact nothing, nor to do any thing, but what may probably tend to the promoting of people's faith, and holiness, and eternal salvation. This maxim the apostle puts in in a parenthesis in this verse, to sweeten what he had before spoken, concerning his readiness to

revenge the disobedience of such who should appear to be stubborn and contumacious. But he tells them, he *should not be ashamed* if he did *boast somewhat more of* a just and due *authority* than the false apostles and teachers had, who vilified him; for he was an apostle, and had a more immediate authority than they who were ordinary teachers.

2 Corinthians 10:9

Ver. 9. This was one imputation upon the apostle, as we may learn by the next verse. I tell you, saith the apostle, that I have an authority, and a further authority than those who vilify me can pretend unto: but I also tell you, I have no authority to do any harm to any of you; all the authority I have is for your edification, as much as lieth in me to promote the business of your salvation; so that I need not be reported as one that went about to terrify you by my letters; yet I know there are some who so represent me unto you.

2 Corinthians 10:10

Ver. 10. There are some amongst you that tell you, that indeed (when absent) I write severely, and with authority; but when I am there with you, neither my behaviour, nor my speech, speaks any such authority.

2 Corinthians 10:11

Ver. 11. I would have no such person think so of me, for he shall find me the same in deed when I come, that I have spoken myself to be by my letters. I do not write vainly, merely to terrify you, but what I truly intend to do, and when I come he shall find that I will do.

2 Corinthians 10:12

Ver. 12. This whole verse is a reflection upon the false teachers of the church of Corinth, from whose manners Paul purgeth himself. I (saith he) durst not, as some others, magnify myself, nor compare myself with those

that do so. Neither is it any wisdom in them to contemn and despise others, in comparison of themselves; for observe what measures they take, they only measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves amongst themselves, that is, with birds of their own feather, such as are like unto themselves, and of their own faction and party; which no wise men would do.

2 Corinthians 10:13

Ver. 13. The apostle may be understood as speaking both of spiritual gifts, and also of his travels to the several places whither he had gone preaching the gospel. He reflecteth still upon the false teachers who were crept into this church; who (as it should seem) had much boasted of their gifts and abilities, and of their labours and successes. In opposition to whom, he saith, that he boasted not *without his measure*, or, (as it is in the Greek, *τα αμετρα*) unmeasurable things; but he kept himself within *the measure of the rule*; that is, according to that regular measure which God hath set us. Which *measure* extendeth *even to you*. You have those amongst you who boast unmeasurably of the gifts which they have, and of the great things which they do; I durst not do so (saith the apostle); God hath given me a measure and a rule, according to that I have acted, and of those actings only I will glory. And in my so doing I can boast of you, for to you my measure and line hath reached; God hath made me an instrument to raise him up a church amongst you.

2 Corinthians 10:14

Ver. 14. For in our boasting of you as our converts, amongst whom I have preached the gospel, and God hath made my preaching successful; *we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure*, and arrogate that to ourselves which belongeth not to us: for the thing is true, and ye know that in our *preaching the gospel we have come as far as unto you*, and that God hath given our labours success amongst you.

2 Corinthians 10:15

Ver. 15. So that although we have boasted of you, we have not boasted *of things without our measure*; that is, of things that are not, or (as the apostle expounds himself) of things that were not done by him but by other men; for his line did reach unto them, and his labours had been employed and made successful amongst them. And he declares his hope, that when the gospel should have had its full success amongst them, and their *faith* should be *increased*, (either by the addition of more persons to the church amongst them, or by the perfecting of their faith, and other graces), they, who were apostles and the ministers of the gospel to them, should by it be magnified, or made great; to wit, by their means, who using much navigation, would have opportunities to comment the gospel, and the ministry of it, to other people, amongst whom they should come: wherein yet they should not exceed their rule; for though ordinary ministers be fixed in particular churches and places, yet the apostles' rule was to go and preach the gospel over the whole world, being tied to no certain people or places.

2 Corinthians 10:16

Ver. 16. *To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you*; the apostle here expoundeth what he meaneth by the term magnified, or *enlarged*, in the preceding verse, viz. to have a door opened to preach the gospel in places whither it was not yet come. God honoureth persons when he maketh them instruments to bring any to an acquaintance with, and to the embracing of, his gospel, who formerly had been ignorant of it, and not acquainted with it.

And not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand: he here seemeth to reflect on the false teachers crept into this church, who had nothing to boast in but a pretended building, upon other men's foundations, and carrying on a work by others made ready to their hands; and seemeth to prefer the work of conversion, and an instrumentality in that, before an instrumentality merely in edification, and carrying on the work of God already begun in people's souls.

2 Corinthians 10:17

Ver. 17. But we have none of us any thing to glory in, neither I Paul who plant, nor Apollos who watereth; whether God maketh use of us as the first planters of the gospel, or as instruments to carry on the work of the gospel already planted, we have nothing of our own to glory in.

God giveth the increase; we have therefore no reason to glory in ourselves, or in our own performances, but only to give thanks to God, who maketh use of us, poor earthly vessels, to carry about and distribute that heavenly treasure, by which he maketh souls rich in faith and good works: all that we do is only instrumentally; God is all, and in all, as to primary efficiency.

2 Corinthians 10:18

Ver. 18. Solomon saith, Pr 27:2: *Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.* Self-commendation is an ungrateful sound to ingenuous ears; no man thinks another a jot the better for his commending himself, but always hath the worse opinion of him for such boasting; but this text speaketh of a higher approbation, viz. from God. No man is approved of God for his speaking well of himself; the business is, who they are who approve themselves in the work which God hath committed to them; to whom the Lord will say: Well done, good and faithful servants: to whom the apostle refers both himself, and those who magnified themselves, but vilified him.

2 Corinthians 11:1

Chapter Summary

2Co 11:1-4 Paul unwillingly entereth upon a commendation of himself, out of jealousy lest the Corinthians should be perverted by false apostles from the pure doctrine of Christ.

2Co 11:5,6 He showeth that he was in all respects equal to the chiefest apostles.

2Co 11:7-15 That he declined being chargeable to them, not for want of love toward them, but to cut off occasion from those deceitful workers of taking

shelter under his example.

2Co 11:16-22 That he was not inferior to those, whom they so patiently submitted to, in any of their boasted pretogatives,

2Co 11:23-33 but as a minister of Christ, in labours and sufferings for the gospel's sake, was abundantly their superior.

Ver. 1. That which the apostle here calls his *folly*, was his speaking so much in his own commendation; which indeed is no better than folly, unless there be a great reason; which was here, for it was the false teachers, vilifying his person and office, that put him upon it. The verb in the latter part of the verse, may be read either imperatively, (and so we translate it), as if it were an entreaty of them to excuse him in speaking so much good of himself; or indicatively, you do bear with me.

2 Corinthians 11:2

Ver. 2. Jealousy is a passion in a person which makes him impatient of any rival or partner in the thing or person beloved. The apostle tells them, that he was *jealous over them*, and thereby lets them know, that he so passionately loved them, as that he was not patient that any should pretend more kindness to them than he had for them; and withal, that he had some fear of them, lest they should be perverted and drawn away from the simplicity of the gospel; upon this account he calls it a *godly jealousy*. For (saith he) I have been instrumental to bring you to Christ; this he calls an espousing of them, the union of persons with Christ being expressed in Scripture under the notion of a marriage, Eph 5:23, &c. And he expresseth his earnest desire to *present them to Christ* uncorrupted, like a *chaste virgin*.

2 Corinthians 11:3

Ver. 3. In all jealousy there is a mixture of love and fear: the apostle's love to this church, together with his earnest desire to present them in the day of judgment unto Christ pure and uncorrupted, caused him to write; because he was afraid, lest that as the serpent by his subtlety deceived Eve, so some

subtle seducers should corrupt them, and so withdraw them from the simplicity of their faith in Christ, and obedience to him. This danger was partly from the pagan philosophers, mixing their philosophical notions with the plain doctrine of the gospel; and partly from some that were tenacious of the Judaical rites, and would not understand the abolition of the ceremonial law.

2 Corinthians 11:4

Ver. 4. How our translators have interpreted *καλως ηνειχεσθε*, *ye might well bear*, I cannot tell: the words manifestly are to be interpreted, you have well borne, and so are plainly a reflection upon some in this church, who had patiently endured false teachers, who had preached other doctrine than what Paul had preached. And this the apostle giveth as a reason of his fear, lest they should be corrupted and drawn away from the simplicity of the gospel. This certainly is more obviously the sense of the words, than what others incline to, who make the sense this: If any other could come to you, who could preach to you a better Jesus, a more excellent Saviour, than we have done; or a more excellent spirit than him whom you have received; or a more excellent doctrine than the doctrine of the gospel, which we have preached; you might bear with him. For I see no pretence to interpret the verb as in the potential mood, it is manifestly the indicative mood; and declareth, not what they might do, but what they had done; which made the apostle jealous of them, lest they should be perverted. And our Saviour, Joh 5:43, hath taught us, that those who with the most difficulty receive those who come to them in God's name, are always most easy to receive those who come in their own name, without any due authority or commission from God.

2 Corinthians 11:5

Ver. 5. The apostle, doubtless, meaneth those that were the true apostles of our Lord. those who were immediately sent out by him to preach the gospel, behind whom the apostle was not, either in respect of ministerial gifts and graces, or in respect of labours, or in respect of success which God had given him in his work. One method that false teachers used to vilify Paul, was by magnifying some others of the apostles above him, and

preferring them before him; which makes him, both here, and in Ga 2:1-21, and Ro 11:13, to magnify his office, by showing them, there was no reason why they should make a difference between him and other apostles; for he had the same immediate call, was intrusted with the same power, furnished and adorned with the same gifts, in labours (as he elsewhere saith) he had been more than they all; nor had God been wanting in giving him success in his labours, proportionable to the chiefest of them: so as he *was not a whit behind* them.

2 Corinthians 11:6

Ver. 6. *But though I be rude in speech;* admit (saith the apostle) that I be no orator, speaking to you in high language, or in a neat style and phrase; either having no faculty that way, or, if I have, yet choosing rather to speak plainly, and home to your consciences, than floridly, to tickle your ears with a fine sound and chiming of words.

Yet not in knowledge; yet, I bless God, I am not defective in knowledge; and, as God hath enlightened me with a large knowledge of his will, so I have communicated to you the whole counsel of God.

But we have been throughly made manifest among you in all things; and in all things, which may declare me an apostle, one sent of Christ about the business of the gospel, I have been made manifest amongst you; preaching amongst you the whole doctrine of the gospel, and having been an instrument to convert many of you from paganism to Christianity.

2 Corinthians 11:7

Ver. 7. What is it that hath made you take such offence at me; seeing you cannot say, that either in my call, or in my gifts and graces, or in my labours, or in the success of my labours, I have been inferior to the chiefest of the apostles? Doth this offend you, that for your sake I have veiled my authority, and departed from my right? Which makes some of you say, I am base in presence. Is it for my putting you to no charge in my preaching the gospel? This was a thing wherein he gloried, and told them, 1Co 9:6,12,15, that he would rather die, than have his glorying void in this

particular.

2 Corinthians 11:8

Ver. 8. He interpreteth the term of *robbed other churches*, by a *taking wages of them*; which indeed is no robbery, as he had proved, 1Co 9:1-27. All the robbery that was in it lay in this, that his maintenance, in strictness of right, should have been proportionably from this, as well as from other churches; but for some reasons (which he thinks fit to conceal) he refused to receive any thing from this church; but spared them, and lived upon the maintenance he had from other churches, while he was doing them service. Either he saw the members of this church were poor, or that there were some in this church who would sooner have taken advantage to reproach him for it, and so have hindered the success of the gospel. Whatever it was that caused the apostle to do it, certain it is, that he did it, and make it a great piece of his glorying.

2 Corinthians 11:9

Ver. 9. The word which we translate *chargeable*, signifies to benumb; I benumbed no man: or, (as others), I was not myself more benumbed in any thing. If we take it in the first mentioned sense, it lets us see a reason why Paul refused to take wages of the church of Corinth, lest he should cool and benumb them as to the receiving of the gospel, when they saw it would prove chargeable to them. If in the latter sense, the apostle seems to reflect upon such whom wages only edged to their work, who preached merely for gain and filthy lucre. To distinguish himself from such hirelings, he tells them, that when he was with them, and laboured amongst them in preaching the gospel, he put them to no charge; yet he was not slothful in his work, but as laborious as those who did take wages. As to himself, he had want enough whilst he was amongst them; but the providence of God ordered him a supply from the churches of Macedonia, and by that means he kept himself from being burdensome to them; and, he tells them, so he was resolved that he would still be.

2 Corinthians 11:10

Ver. 10. The apostle often repeateth this, glorying much in it, that in this region of Achaia he had preached the gospel without charge to the hearers: he did so also at Thessalonica, 1Th 2:5,6,9; but concerning them, he saith, what he no where saith of the Corinthians, that they received the word in much affliction; which might, probably, be the cause. It is most likely that he either discerned this people to be more covetous, and too much lovers of their money: or that there was a generation among them, who, if he had taken wages for his labours, would have reproached him as one that was a hireling, and who did all that he did for money. And, indeed, himself seemeth in the next verses to give this as a reason.

2 Corinthians 11:11

Ver. 11. Can you possibly interpret my not being chargeable to you, as proceeding from a want of love in me to you? God knoweth the contrary.

2 Corinthians 11:12

Ver. 12. I know (saith the apostle) that there are some amongst you who, out of their hatred to me, would seek any occasion to asperse me to justify themselves. If I had (as I might) have taken wages amongst you for my labours, they would either have taken occasion from it to have aspersed me, (as doing what I did from a mercenary spirit), or at least to have justified themselves in their exactings upon you. I had a mind to prevent any such occasions of boasting.

That wherein they glory, they may be found even as we: it should seem by these words, that some teachers in this church, being (possibly) men of estates, required no maintenance of the people; and would have taken advantage against the apostle, if he had taken any: or, possibly, some others exacted upon them unreasonably, who, had Paul taken wages, would have justified themselves by his example. The apostle therefore was resolved to cut off from them any pretence or occasion of boasting, and to do whatever any of them did, in sparing the Corinthians as to the business of their purses.

2 Corinthians 11:13

Ver. 13. *For such are false apostles;* that is, persons pretending to be sent of Christ, but were indeed never sent of him.

Deceitful workers; persons whose work is but to cheat and deceive you; and that both with reference to their call and authority which they pretend to, and also to the doctrine which they bring.

Transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ; they were never apostles of Christ, only they put themselves into such a shape and form, that they might have more advantage to deceive.

2 Corinthians 11:14

Ver. 14. It is not at all to be wondered, that the emissaries of Satan dissemble, and pretend themselves to be what they are not, for even Satan himself, who is the prince of darkness, in order to the deceiving and seducing of souls, transformeth himself *into an angel of light;* that is, puts on the appearance and form of a good angel. He calls them *angels of light,* because they were wont to appear in a lightsome brightness; or because of that glory in which they behold the face of God; or because of those great measures of heavenly knowledge which those blessed spirits have. All tempted souls have an experiment of this; for none is tempted to evil under the appearance of evil, (evil as evil being what a reasonable soul cannot be courted to). The devil therefore, in all his temptations to sin, though his end be to ruin and destroy, yet appeareth as *an angel of light;* moving the soul to evil under the notion and appearance of good.

2 Corinthians 11:15

Ver. 15. It is no wonder if there be like servants, like masters: and as the devil, in order to the deceiving of souls, pretends to what he is not, viz. a friend to them; so those who seek their own profit, not your good, show themselves to be *his ministers,* driving the same design with him, also do

the like, and change their shapes, pretending themselves to be ministers of the gospel, and to aim at the good of your souls, by teaching you the way of righteousness; but God will one day judge of their works, and their reward at last will be *according to their works*.

2 Corinthians 11:16

Ver. 16. *I say again, Let no man think me a fool:* I know that he, who is much in magnifying and praising himself, ordinarily is judged to be a fool; but though I do so, let me not lie under that imputation. There is a time for all things; a time for a man to cease from his own praises, and a time for him to praise himself. The time for the latter is, when the glory of God, or our own just vindication, is concerned; both which concurred here: the apostle was out of measure vilified by these false apostles; and the glory of God was eminently concerned, that so great an apostle and instrument in promoting the gospel, should not be exposed to contempt, as a mean and despicable person, or as an impostor and deceiver.

If otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little; but if you will judge me a fool, be it so; yet receive me as such, while I boast a little.

2 Corinthians 11:17

Ver. 17. *That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord;* I do not pretend to have any special command of God, to speak what I shall now say in my own commendation; God hath left that to our liberty, which we may use, or not use, as circumstances of time, place, and occasion direct. Or, I do not speak according to the ordinary practice of Christians and ministers of the gospel; whose ordinary practice is to abase and vilify, not to exalt and set forth themselves, according to the more general rules of the word. Yet what the apostle saith was not contrary to the Lord, or to the directions of his word, which hath no where commanded us to vilify ourselves, or to conceal what God hath wrought in us and by us.

But as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting: this my confident boasting hath an appearance of foolishness in it, though really it be not so;

for nothing can be truly called foolishness, which hath a direct and immediate tendency to the glory of God, and is designed for that end.

2 Corinthians 11:18

Ver. 18. By *the flesh* is meant, carnal and external things; which though they be the gifts and favours of God, yet do not at all commend a man to God. The apostle saith, there are *many that glory after the flesh*; and there needs must be such in all places, because there are many that *walk after the flesh*: now, it is but natural for men to boast and glory in those attainments, which it hath been the business of their lives to pursue after. Such there were, doubtless, in this famous church, who gloried that they were native Jews, or in their riches, or in their knowledge and learning. Now, though (saith the apostle) I know there is nothing in these things truly to be gloried in, yet, others glorying in them: *I will glory also*; and let them know, that if I thought these things worth the glorying in, I have as much to glory in of that nature as any of them have.

2 Corinthians 11:19

Ver. 19. Ye freely suffer others foolishly glorying and boasting of themselves, therefore do ye suffer me therein to judge yourselves wise, and it belongs to the wise to bear with such as are not so wise as themselves.

2 Corinthians 11:20

Ver. 20. If any domineer over you, as if you were their slaves, or if any bring you into subjection to the rites of the ceremonial law; if they *devour* and make a prey of you, take wages of you, and do nothing without hire; if they carry themselves proudly, exalting themselves above you; nay, if they *smite you*, you will suffer and bear with such: this is more than to bear with a little folly and indiscretion in me. This is observable, that men of corrupt hearts and loose lives will better bear with teachers that will humour and spare them in their lusts, than with such as are faithful to their souls in instructing and reproving them, though they carry themselves with

the greatest innocency and justice towards them.

2 Corinthians 11:21

Ver. 21. I speak as to those reproaches they cast on me, who am by them represented to you as though I were weak and contemptible; as indeed I am, as to my person, but not as to my doctrine, and the miracles I have wrought amongst you. And being some of them are so confident in boasting what they are, and what they have done and suffered; let me be a little bold as well as they, in telling you what I am, and what I have done and suffered.

2 Corinthians 11:22

Ver. 22. *Are they Hebrews? so am I:* this would incline us to think, that some, at least, of those corrupt teachers, upon whom the apostle hath so much reflected, were Jews; who had endeavoured to corrupt the Gentile churches with their traditions, and imposing on them the ceremonial rites of the Jewish church. Others think otherwise, and that the words import no more than this; Do they glory in the antiquity of their stock and parentage, as descending from Abraham? I have as much upon that account to glory in as they; for although I was born, not in Judea, but *in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia*, Ac 22:3, yet I was a Jew, *an Hebrew of the Hebrews*, Php 3:5.

Are they Israelites? Will they derive from Jacob, to whom God gave the name of Israel, from whence all his posterity were called Israelites?

So am I, (saith he), I can derive from Jacob as well as they.

Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I: will they glory in this, that they are *the seed of Abraham?* (this was a great boast of the Jews, as we learn from Mt 3:9, and Joh 8:1-59); saith the apostle, I have on that account as much to glory in as they. Some here inquire: What difference there is in these three things? For to be a Hebrew, and an Israelite, and of the seed of Abraham, seem all to signify the same thing. Nor indeed have we any need to assign any difference, it seemeth to be but the same thing amplified in three phrases. But others distinguish more subtly, and think the first may

signify a glorying in the ancientness of their pedigree, or in their ability to speak in the Hebrew tongue; the second, may refer to the nation of which they were; the third, to the promise made to Abraham and his seed.

2 Corinthians 11:23

Ver. 23. Will they glory in this, that they are *ministers of Christ*, employed as the servants of Christ in preaching the gospel? I should not boast about this, (in that I may seem to *speak as a fool*), but I am much more a minister than they, both with respect to my call to the work, and also my performing of it. I had a more immediate call and mission to the work than what they can boast of, and I have done more in that work than any of them have done.

In labours more abundant; I have travelled more to preach it, I have laboured more in the propagation of it.

In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent; I have suffered more for the preaching of it, I have been oftener whipped, oftener imprisoned, than any of them ever were: see 2Co 6:4,5.

In deaths oft; I have been oftener in hazard of my life: he calls dangers threatening death, *deaths*, as 2Co 1:10.

2 Corinthians 11:24

Ver. 24. God, to restrain the passions of his people, which might carry them out to cruelty in the punishments of malefactors, forbade the Jewish magistrates to give any malefactor above forty stripes; (so many they might give them by the Divine law, De 25:3); but they had made an order, that none should receive above thirty-nine. This was amongst their constitutions which they called *sepimenta legis*, hedges to the Divine law; which indeed was a violation of the law: for that did not oblige them to give every malefactor, that had not deserved death, so many stripes; it gave them only a liberty to go so far, but they were not to exceed. Some think, that they punished every such malefactor with thirty-nine stripes: others, more rationally, think, that they did not so, but thirty-nine was the highest

number they laid upon any. And it is most probable, that, out of their hatred to the apostle, they laid as many stripes upon him as their constitution would suffer them to do.

2 Corinthians 11:25

Ver. 25. *Thrice was I beaten with rods;* this was by the pagans, for the Jews whipped malefactor with a whip which had three cords. We read of one of these times. Ac 16:23; and of a second, Ac 22:24, when the captain commanded he should be so punished, but he avoided it, by pleading he was a citizen of Rome.

Once was I stoned: of his stoning, read Ac 14:19, it was by a popular tumult at Lystra.

Thrice I suffered shipwreck: we read but of one time that Paul suffered shipwreck, Ac 27:18; which was none of the three times here mentioned, for it was after the writing of this Epistle. But though many of the acts and sufferings of this apostle were written, yet all were not.

A night and a day I have been in the deep: some by *the deep* here understand the inner prison, mentioned Ac 16:24, or some deep dungeon; but more probably he means, some time when, after a shipwreck, he might be put twenty-four hours to swim up and down the sea upon some broken part of the ship. It refers to some eminent danger Paul was in, of which the Scripture in no other place maketh mention particularly.

2 Corinthians 11:26

Ver. 26. *In journeyings often;* in travellings from place to place for the propagation of the gospel.

In perils of waters; in the Greek, rivers, which were many in those countries through which he travelled.

Of robbers; such as waited to rob passengers by the high-way.

By mine own countrymen, the Jews, who were mortal enemies to Paul, whom they looked upon as an apostate from their religion.

In the city; in many cities where he preached the gospel, as we find in the Acts of the Apostles.

In the wilderness; in wildernesses through which he was forced to pass.

In the sea; storms and shipwrecks.

Among false brethren; false teachers and private persons, who corrupted the Christian religion, and were as great enemies to the apostle as any he had.

2 Corinthians 11:27

Ver. 27. The apostle reckons up several afflictive evils, ordinarily incident to such as travel in foreign countries. Of this nature were the *weariness and painfulness*, the *hunger and thirst*, the *cold and nakedness*, here mentioned. He also mentioneth we *watchings* and *fastings*, as voluntary acts of discipline, which he used for the end mentioned, 1Co 9:27, for the keeping under his body, and bringing it into subjection, and that he might the better attend and discharge the work of the ministry.

2 Corinthians 11:28

Ver. 28. By the *things that are without*, the apostle meaneth either those evils which happened to him from persons that had no relation to the Christian church, but were persons *without*, (as the phrase is used, 1Co 5:13), or else such kinds of troubles and afflictions as very little influenced his mind, but only affected his outward man: such were his labours, travels, journeyings, imprisonment, stripes before mentioned.

Beside these (he saith) there lay upon him an inward *care* and solicitude for *all the Christian churches*; and this was a *daily* care. For an apostle differed from an ordinary pastor, not only in his immediate call from Christ, but also in his work; there lay an obligation upon such to go up and

down preaching the gospel, and they further had, both a power, and also an obligation, to superintend all other churches, and to direct the affairs of them relating to order and government: and thereupon they were mightily concerned about their doing well or ill.

2 Corinthians 11:29

Ver. 29. *Who*, may be either, what church? Or, what particular Christian in any church?

Is weak, ασθενει, through outward afflictions, or in respect of inward spiritual troubles, *and I am not weak*, and I do not sympathize with that church, or with that person?

Who is offended, or scandalized, under temptations to be seduced and fall into sin, *and I burn not*, and I am not on fire with a holy zeal for the glory of God, and the good of his soul, if possible to keep him upright? By which the apostle doth not only show us what was his own holy temper, but what should be the temper of every faithful minister, as to his province, or that part of the church over which he is concerned to watch; viz. to have a true compassion to every member of it, to watch over his flock, inquiring diligently into the state of it; to have a quick sense of any evils under which they, or any of them, labour. This is indeed the duty of ever private member, but more especially of him whose office is to feed any part of the flock of Christ, Ro 12:15. In this the members of the spiritual, mystical body of Christ should answer to the members of the body natural, to which our apostle before resembled it.

2 Corinthians 11:30

Ver. 30. The apostle here calleth the things which he had suffered for the gospel, and the propagation of it, his *infirmities*; and saith, that he chose those things to *glory* in. He would not glory of the divers tongues with which he spake, nor of the miracles which he had wrought; but being by the ill tongues of his adversaries put upon glorying, he chose to glory of what he had suffered for God. For as the mighty power of Christ was seen in supporting him, and carrying him through so many hazards and

difficulties; so these things, probably, were such as his adversaries could not much glory in. Besides, that these things had not that natural tendency to lift up his mind above its due measures, as gifts had, which sometimes puff up (as the apostle saith concerning knowledge); and also these were things which flesh and blood commonly starleth at, and flieth from: that his gifts and miraculous operations spake the power of God in him, and the kindness of God to him, in enabling him to such effects, rather than any goodness in himself; but his patient bearing the cross spake in him great measures of faith, patience, and self-denial, and love to God; and so really were greater and truer causes of boasting, than those things could be.

2 Corinthians 11:31

Ver. 31. Whether this phrase be the form of an oath, or a mere assertion of God's knowledge of the heart, is a point not worth the arguing. If we look upon it in the former notion, it is no profane oath, because made in the name of God; nor no vain oath, because it is used in a grave and serious matter, and for the satisfaction of those who were not very easy to believe the apostle in this matter. But I had rather take it as a solemn assertion of God's particular knowledge of the truth of his heart in what he had said. The term *blessed for evermore*, may either be applied to the Father, or to Jesus Christ. It is applied to the Creator, Ro 1:25, and to Jesus Christ, Ro 9:5. It is here so used, as that it is applicable either to the First or Second Person. The usage of it in these three texts, is an undeniable argument to prove the Godhead of Christ. The apostle, in these words, seemeth rather to refer to what he had said before, of his various labours and sufferings, than to that which followeth; which was but a single thing, and a danger rather than a suffering.

2 Corinthians 11:32

Ver. 32,33. Luke hath shortly given us the history of this danger, Ac 9:23-25. Soon after Paul was converted from the Jewish to the Christian religion, he, disputing with the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, confounded them by his arguments, proving Jesus was the Christ, as we read there, Ac 9:21. This so enraged them, as that they sought to kill him, Ac 9:23. And (as we learn from this text) to effect their design, they had

by some acts or other brought over the governor to favour their design; which, governor was a substitute under Aretas the king, who was father-in-law to Herod; for (as Josephus tells us) Herod put away his wife, the daughter of this Aretas, when he took Herodias. The Jews had got this deputy heathen governor so much on their side, that he shut up the gates, keeping his soldiers in arms. But (as St. Luke tells us, Ac 9:24) Paul coming to the knowledge of this design, though they watched the gates day and night, yet he found a way of escape by the help of those Christians, who at that time were in Damascus; Ac 9:25: *The disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.* Two questions are started upon this passage of Paul's life:

1. Whether it was lawful for him to flee? But besides the particular licence our Lord, in this case, had given his first ministers, Mt 10:23, Paul did in this case no more than what divines make lawful for a more ordinary minister, viz. to flee, when the persecution was directed against him in particular, leaving sufficient supply behind him.
2. The second question raised is: Whether, it being against human laws to go over the walls of a city or garrison, Paul did not sin in this escape? But that is easily answered; for:
 - a) This was lawful in some cases.
 - b) God's glory, and the good of souls, were more concerned in Paul's life, than to have it sacrificed to a punctilio of obedience to a human law made upon a mere politic consideration.

2 Corinthians 12:1

Chapter Summary

2Co 12:1-4 Paul showeth that, though he had been favoured with visions and revelations,
2Co 12:5-10 yet for commendation of his apostleship he chose rather to glory in his infirmities,
2Co 12:11-13 blaming the Corinthians, who had seen in him all the signs of an apostle, for forcing him to

such vain boasting.

2Co 12:14,15 He telleth them of his design of visiting them again with the same disinterestedness and fatherly affection as before.

2Co 12:16-19 He justifieth himself from any crafty extortion by his messengers,

2Co 12:20,21 and expresseth his fears, lest, both to his sorrow and theirs, he should find many notorious disorders still unredressed among them.

Ver. 1. *It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory;* it is neither comely, nor of any advantage to myself, to glory; nor would I do it but in this case of necessity, where glorying is necessary for the glory of God, and for your good, to vindicate myself to you from the imputations that some others lay upon me.

I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: do any of them boast of visions and revelations from God? I have something of that nature to glory in as well as they. Some make this difference between *visions*, and *revelations*; that *visions* signify apparitions, the meaning of which, those that see them do not understand; *revelations* signify the discoveries of the mind and will of God to persons immediately, either by dreams, or by some audible voice, which maybe without any object represented to the eye. Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar seem to have had such visions as they did not understand, till interpreted by Joseph and Daniel; but undoubtedly Paul's visions were not such. The difference therefore seems rather to be, that in all visions which good and holy men had, there was a revelation; but every revelation did not suppose a vision.

2 Corinthians 12:2

Ver. 2. Some doubt whether $\epsilon\nu$ $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omega$, in this place, be so well translated *in Christ*, (so signifying, that the person spoken of was a Christian, one that had embraced the gospel), as by *Christ*, (as the particle is sometimes used), so signifying, that this vision was given to him by the grace and favour of Christ. The *man* he speaketh of was, doubtless, himself, otherwise it had been to him no cause or ground of glorying at all. Thus several times in Scripture, the penmen thereof speaking in commendation

of themselves, they speak in the third person instead of the first. In his saying, it was *about fourteen years ago*, and in that we do not read that he did ever before publish it, he avoids the imputation of any boasting and glorying; and showeth, that had he not been now constrained, for the glory of God, and the vindication of his own reputation, to have spoken of it, he would not now have mentioned it.

Whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body. I cannot tell: what the circumstances of the apostle were in this ecstasy, he professeth not to know; and therefore it seems too bold for us curiously to inquire, or positively to determine about it. It is not very probable that his soul was separated from his body; but whether his body was, by some angel, carried up to the sight of this vision, or things absent were made present to him, the apostle himself, being deprived of the use of his senses, could not tell. But *such an one* (he saith) he knew, *caught up to the third heaven;* by which he means the highest heavens, where God most manifesteth his glory, where the blessed angels see his face, and where are the just souls made perfect. The Scripture, dividing the world into the earth and the heavens, calleth all heaven that is not earth or water; hence it mentioneth an aerial heaven (which is all that space between the earth and the place where the planets and fixed stars are); hence we read of *the fowls of the heaven*, Da 4:12, of *the windows of heaven*, Ge 7:11, of a *starry heaven*, where the stars are, which are therefore called *the stars of the heaven*, Ge 22:17; and then the *highest heaven;* which was meant in the Lord's prayer, when we pray: *Our Father which art in heaven;* and is called *the heaven of heavens*. This is the heaven here spoken of.

2 Corinthians 12:3

Ver. 3,4. *How that he was caught up into paradise:* some by *paradise* understand a place distinct from *the third heaven* before mentioned, and think the apostle here speaks of more visions than one; but they speak much more probably, who interpret it of *the third heaven* before mentioned, called *paradise*, in regard of the delight and pleasures of it. Thus the term is used by our Saviour to the thief upon the cross, Lu 23:43, and thus it is used, Re 2:7.

And heard unspeakable words; what these *unspeakable words*, or things,

were, which the apostle heard in this ecstasy, is vainly inquired; whenas the apostle hath told us twice, that he could not tell *whether he was in or out of the body*; and that the words or things were such as were *unspeakable*.

Which it is not lawful for a man to utter; such as were either impossible to be uttered, or at least which he was prohibited to utter; so they could be made known to none but only to him that heard them. If any inquireth, for what purpose God showed them to Paul, if he might not communicate them for the good of others? The answer is easy; that this vision might be for his own confirmation, as sent of God, and for his consolation under all those hazards and dangers which he was to undergo in the ministry of the gospel, to which God had called him.

2 Corinthians 12:5

Ver. 5. *Of such an one will I glory*: the apostle, as appeareth by what followeth, speaketh of himself; but he does it in a third person. The meaning is, that that man who had been thus dignified of God, in such revelations and visions, might well glory of such a favour; but *yet* (saith he) *of myself will I glory*. But how doth the apostle say, that of himself he will not glory, if he were the person intended?

Answer. Some say, he distinguisheth concerning himself; as to his inward man, his soul, (which was rapt into the third heavens) he did glory; but as to his body, or outward man, he would not glory in any thing which he had done, but only in what he had suffered. I should rather interpret it thus: In this the Lord greatly dignified me; but here was nothing of myself; of myself therefore I will not glory in any thing, except those things which I have suffered for the name of God.

2 Corinthians 12:6

Ver. 6. If I should have a mind to glory, I should not be a fool; for I would not glory in things that were not true. And though a man, in speaking things of himself which are true, may sometimes betray folly (viz. where

he doth it merely to set forth himself, and make himself to appear a greater person than indeed he is); yet for a man to glory of himself, where the honour of God is concerned in the vindication of himself from reproaches and calumnies, speaks not any folly.

But (saith the apostle) *I forbear*, having no desire that any *should think of me above what he seeth in me, or heareth of me* from others' mouths, and not mine own.

2 Corinthians 12:7

Ver. 7. The best of God's people have in them a root of pride, or a disposition to be *exalted above measure*, upon their receipt of favours from God not common to others; of which nature extraordinary revelations are none of the meanest, especially when they are multiplied, as it seems they were here to Paul. To prevent the breaking out of which, the apostle here tells us, that he had *a thorn in the flesh* given him. It is variously guessed what this was; he calleth it *a thorn in the flesh*; but whether (supposing *flesh* to be here strictly taken) he meaneth some disease affecting his body with pain and smart, and if so, what that specific disease was, is no where revealed, and very uncertainly conjectured: or whether (taking *flesh* in a large sense, for his state in the flesh) he meaneth some motions to sin made to him from the devil; the importunity of which made them very grievous and afflictive to him, being *in the flesh*: or (as others think) motions to sin from his own lusts; which God suffured to stir in him, withholding such influence of his grace, by which he ordinarily kept them under, and in subjection; is very uncertain. The last mentioned seem to be least probable. For although the devil hath an influence upon our lusts, to excite and educe them into acts, yet it seems not according to the language of holy writ, to call these *messengers of Satan*; neither is it probable that St. Paul would have reckoned these amongst the gifts of God unto him: nor was this an infirmity which he would have gloried in, or which would have commended him; nor doth the term *buffet* so well agree to this sense. It seems therefore more properly to be interpreted, either of some great bodily affliction, or some diabolical importunate temptation, with which God, after these abundant revelations, suffered this great apostle to be infested; that he might be kept humble, and not lifted up upon this great favour which God had showed him; which, considering the

danger of pride, might well be reckoned amongst the gifts of God to this great apostle. And so he here gives another reason why he would not glory in the abundance of his revelations, because God by this providence had let him know, that his will was, that he should walk humbly notwithstanding them; and it had been very improper for him, being immediately upon this favour humbled by such a providence, to have lifted up himself by reason of it.

2 Corinthians 12:8

Ver. 8. For the removal of this affliction, (of what nature soever it was), for the taking of this thorn out of my flesh, I prayed often. It is lawful for us to pray for the removal of bodily evils, though such prayer must be always attended with a due submission to the wisdom and will of God; they being not evils in themselves, but such trials as God intendeth for our good, (as it was here in Paul's case), and which issue in our spiritual advantage.

2 Corinthians 12:9

Ver. 9. *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee:* Paul prayed, and God answered, not *in specie*, (doing the very thing for him which he asked), but *in valore*, giving him what was every whit as valuable. His answer was: *My grace* (my love and favour, not that which the apostle had already received, but which God was resolved further to show him, strengthening and supporting him under his trials, as also comforting and refreshing him) shall be enough for thee, to uphold thee under the present trial which is so burdensome to thee.

For my strength is made perfect in weakness; for my Divine power, in upholding and supporting my people, is never so glorious as when they are under weaknesses in themselves. When they are sensible of the greatest impotency in themselves, then I delight most to exert and put forth my power in them and for them, my power then is most evident and conspicuous, and will be best acknowledged by my people.

Therefore (saith the apostle) *I will choose to glory in my infirmities, that*

the power of Christ may rest upon me. Those dispensations of providence, in which the souls of men have the greatest experiences of the power and strength of Christ, are most to be gloried in; but such are slates of infirmities. This text confirmeth Christ to be God blessed for ever; for by his power it is that we are supported under trials, his strength it is which is made perfect in the weakness of poor creatures.

2 Corinthians 12:10

Ver. 10. Amongst other reasons why I rather choose to glory in what I suffer for Christ, (which is what he here calleth *infirmities*, and further openeth by *reproaches, necessities, persecutions, and distresses for Christ's sake*), this is one; that I never find myself more *strong* in the habits and acts of the grace that is in me, than *when I am* thus made *weak*. What the apostle here saith of himself, the people of God have ever since his time ordinarily experienced: then it is that they are made strong in the exercises of faith, and patience, and love to God. A child of God seldom walks so much in the view of God as his God, and in the view of his own sincerity, as when, as to his outward condition and circumstances in the world, he walks in the dark and seeth no light.

2 Corinthians 12:11

Ver. 11. *I am become a fool in glorying;* I may amongst some of you (who interpret all things I say into the worst sense) gain nothing but the reputation of a weak man, wanting understanding, for speaking so much in my own commendation (contrary to the rules of modesty in ordinary cases).

Ye have compelled me; but it is not matter of choice, but of necessity to me; the ill-will which some amongst you have to my honour and reputation, and continual defaming me as a vile and contemptible person, hath constrained me, for the honour of Christ, (whose apostle I am), and the vindication of my own reputation, to boast in this manner; at least to relate what God hath done for, and in, and by me.

For I ought to have been commended of you; it was your duty to have

vindicated me from the aspersions cast upon me; so others' mouths should have praised me, and not my own: I must speak, because you hold your peace, or do worse in calumniating me.

For in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing; for you cannot but say that I, neither in my apostolical call and commission, nor yet in my gifts and graces, nor in my labours, nor in my sufferings, come behind those that are commonly thought to be the chiefest of the apostles; though (in some of your opinions) I be nothing; or indeed, of or from myself, am nothing; doing all that I do through Christ that strengtheneth me, and by the grace of God being what I am.

2 Corinthians 12:12

Ver. 12. I had not only a call to my apostleship, (of which indeed you were no witnesses), but I amongst you evidenced my call by such *signs*, as were sufficient to declare me to you to be a true apostle. Amongst these, he reckons:

1. *Patience;*

2. Miracles. The first refers to those many labours which he had, in travelling to propagate the gospel, in preaching, writing, &c.; this manifested him called of God to the work.

2. Miraculous operations were another sign; for though the working of miracles was not restrained to the apostolical office, yet when they were wrought in confirmation of the doctrine which the apostle had first preached, and so were a seal of his ministry, they were truly signs of his apostleship; it being no way probable, that the God of truth would have communicated his power to men for the confirmation of lies, or of an employment to which he had never called them.

2 Corinthians 12:13

Ver. 13. Wherein have not you been used as any other gospel churches were, where Peter, or James, or any other of the apostles have laboured?

Hath not the same doctrine been preached to you? Have not as great miracles been wrought amongst you? Hath not the Holy Ghost been as plentifully shed abroad amongst you, to enrich you with all spiritual gifts, so as you have come behind in no gospel benefit? I know of nothing in which it hath not fared with you as with other churches, except in this; that whereas in other churches the apostles, or their pastors, have been burdensome to them, taking stipends and salaries for their pains, I have forborne it, and have not at all charged you. If this be a *wrong* to you, I hope it is not of that nature, but I may obtain a pardon for it. The reasons of the apostle's thus sparing the church of Corinth more than some other churches, we have before guessed at.

2 Corinthians 12:14

Ver. 14. *Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you:* we read in holy writ but of two journeys which the apostle made to Corinth, Ac 18:1 20:2, and the latter is believed to have been after the writing of this Epistle. We must not think that all these motions are set down in Scripture. It is manifest that Paul had thoughts of going oftener, Ac 19:21 1Co 16:5 2Co 1:15. Man purposeth, but God disposeth. For which reason, James adviseth us to add: *If the Lord will*, to our expressions testifying our resolutions.

And I will not be burdensome to you; he lets them know, that he was coming to them with the same resolutions he had before taken up, not to put them to any charge.

For I seek not yours, but you; for that, which should be the design of every faithful minister, was his design; viz. the gaining of their souls to Christ, and protecting of them, that in the day of judgment he might present them as a pure and chaste virgin unto Christ. His business was not to enrich himself by them; he sought the good of their souls, not their estates.

For the children ought not to lay up for the parents: he looked upon them as his children, upon himself as their parent. And though indeed children ought to relieve their parents, if in want, yet it is not the course of the world for children to lay up for their parents.

But the parents for the children; but, on the contrary, it is the course of parents to maintain their children, and to lay up for them.

2 Corinthians 12:15

Ver. 15. *And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you;* I am so far from desiring your money, that, if I had it, I would willingly spend it for you; and I do spend my strength for you, willing to die in your service, labouring for the good of your immortal souls.

Though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved; but I am very unhappy as to some of you, who will not rightly understand me, but love me the less, the more they see my love to them.

2 Corinthians 12:16

Ver. 16. I hear what some say: It is true, that when I was myself with you, I laid no burden upon you, did not put upon you any collection for me; but, like a crafty man, I set others to take money of you for my use; so as, what I did not by myself, I did by those whom I employed. This appeareth to be the sense by what followeth in the next verse, where he appealeth to them for his vindication of this particular.

2 Corinthians 12:17

Ver. 17,18. The apostle, to avoid or wipe off this imputation, appealeth to themselves to name any person (whom he had sent unto them) that had taken any thing of them for his use. He saith, that he *desired Titus* to come to them: of this desire we read before, 2Co 8:6,16,18,22.

With him (he saith) he *sent another brother:* this is that brother, of whom he had said, 2Co 8:18, that his *praise was in the gospel through—out all the churches.* Some guess it was Luke, but there is no certainty of that. He appeals to them, whether either of these made a *gain* of them? That is, took any thing of them: and whether they did not walk *in the same spirit,* and *in the same steps?* Whether they did not show the same generosity and

freedom? And by their behaviour amongst them did not show, that they did not seek what was theirs, (to be enriched by their estates), but them; to communicate the riches of grace to their souls? The circumstances of God's providence may be such towards faithful ministers, as that they may be constrained to make use of others to do their work; but such, so near as they can judge, will never make use of any therein, but such as are of *the same spirit* with themselves, and walk in *the same steps*.

2 Corinthians 12:19

Ver. 19. *Think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you?* Some of you may think, that I speak all this in my own defence, and seek only my own credit and reputation amongst you. I do not so.

We speak before God in Christ; I speak as a Christian, as one who knows that God knoweth, seeth, and observeth what I say; searching my heart, and trying my reins.

But we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying; all that I say I speak for your good, that you may be built up in faith, and love, and all other graces: a great hinderance to which, is prejudice against me, and such as are the ministers of the gospel to you; which I therefore desire (what in me lieth) to prevent and obviate: The apostle, not only here, but in several other parts of these and other his Epistles, declares what ought to be the great end of him, and all other ministers, viz. the edification of people; the conversion of the unconverted, and the perfecting of those in whom the foundation is laid, building them up in all good spiritual habits; both of these come under the notion of edification. If we consider Christ as the Foundation, conversion is edification; the building up of souls upon Christ, who is the gospel foundation; and *other foundation can no man lay*. If we consider the infusion of the first habits of grace into the soul as the foundation, edification signifies a going on from faith to faith; a growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, a going on to perfection. The true minister of Christ ought to make edification in both of these senses his end, and his great end; for by this means is God glorified, the souls of his people benefited, and eternally saved.

2 Corinthians 12:20

Ver. 20. *For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would;* a good man, especially a faithful minister of the gospel, will be concerned at the sins of others, and as to their spiritual welfare. A profane person either rejoiceth in the sins of others, or at least is unconcerned for them; but a good man cannot be so, as knowing the sins of others reflect dishonour upon God.

And that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not; he also cannot delight in the punishments of others, or doing any thing which may be ungrateful to them. Paul feareth lest the miscarriages of this church should enforce from him some acts of severity. He instanceth in some particular disorders in the members of this church, which he feared that he should find amongst them not amended; all the effects of pride and passion.

Debates, or contentions, such as he had taxed them for, 1Co 1:11 3:3.

Envyings, or heats of passion; envying of one another for their gifts, &c. The other things which he mentioneth, are all sins against that brotherly love which ought to be found amongst Christians, and tending to ruptures amongst them; and teach us how contrary these are to the duty of Christians, who are one body.

2 Corinthians 12:21

Ver. 21. From hence it appeareth, that this church of Corinth, though it had many in it, without doubt, who were true and sincere Christians, yet had also many it which were otherwise; yea, many that were scandalous; for such are those mentioned in this verse. Again, the apostle's mentioning of *many* that had committed *uncleanness, fornication, and lasciviousness, and not repented;* whenas he had only given order for the excommunication of one incestuous person, 1Co 5:1-13, and in this Epistle, 2Co 2:1-17, had given order for the restoring him upon his repentance; lets us know, that the governors of churches ought to use a great deal of prudence in the administering of church censures. We are also further taught, that nothing more afflicteth a godly person, who hath

the charge of the souls of others, than to see them go on in courses of sin without repentance. Whether bewailing, in this verse, implieth proceeding to ecclesiastical censures, (as several interpreters think), I doubt; for as the word doth not necessarily imply it, so his sparing use of that rod, which he could (though absent) have as well used against other unclean persons as one incestuous person; and choosing rather that the sentence should be declared against him by the church in his absence, than by himself when present; inclineth me to think, that by bewailing, here, he only means a Christian, afflictive sense of their miscarriages; whereas his desire was, that he might have a cheerful, comfortable journey to and abode with them. But yet, in the next chapter, he seemeth to threaten something more against some particular offenders.

2 Corinthians 13:1

Chapter Summary

2Co 13:1-4 Paul threateneth to vindicate his authority at his coming by punishing severely unreclaimed offenders.

2Co 13:5,6 He adviseth the Corinthians to try if they had as good proofs of their faith, as he trusted to have of his mission.

2Co 13:7-10 He wisheth that by a blameless conversation they might prevent him from using sharpness toward them, whatever became of his proofs.

2Co 13:11-14 He concludeth with an exhortation, salutation, and prayer.

Chapter Introduction

Not *the third time* when he was upon his journey, (for he was not now travelling), but the third time that he had taken up thoughts of, and was preparing for, such a journey: which, it may be, he hinteth to them, that they might be the more afraid to continue in those sinful courses which he had blamed them for. *In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established*: he alludeth to the law of God, De 19:15, concerning witnesses in any case. God ordered, that the testimony of two or three persons should determine all questions in their law; and that should be taken for certain and established, which such a number of persons asserted.

The apostle would from hence have them conclude, that he would certainly come, because this was *the third time* that he had resolved upon it, and was preparing for it.

2 Corinthians 13:2

Ver. 2. *I told you* in my former Epistle, and now (though I be yet absent) I tell you beforehand, as though *I were present* amongst you.

I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other; I write this for the sake of those who have already sinned scandalously; and not for theirs only, but for the sake of others, who may have temptations so to offend.

That, if I come again, I will not spare; that, if I do come, and find any such who walk in courses of sin, and are hardened in them, so as all that I have said will not bring them to remorse and reformation, *I will not spare* them, either as to sharp reprehensions, or as to ecclesiastical censures; according to the trust which Christ hath reposed in me. Some extend this further, to a power of inflicting bodily pains; but it is not clear that the apostles were intrusted with any such power ordinarily, though sometimes they did exert such a power; as appeareth, both from the instances of Ananias and Sapphira, Ac 5:1-11, and that of Elymas, Ac 13:8-11.

2 Corinthians 13:3

Ver. 3. Christ (saith the apostle) hath openly showed his power in my ministry, speaking to you; how else came your hearts to be turned from dumb idols to serve the living God? How came you to be furnished with those excellent gifts wherewith you abound? But, seeing all this is not judged a sufficient proof of Christ's *speaking in me* to you, but you are yet doubting whether I am an apostle or no, and calling for *a proof of Christ in me*; I will, if I come, and find any that have lived scandalously, and are impenitent, show you another proof of that power and authority with which Christ hath trusted me. Which must be understood, either of his miraculous power to inflict some bodily afflictions upon them, or (which is more probable) of his power as an apostle to cut them off from the

communion of gospel churches.

2 Corinthians 13:4

Ver. 4. He had before said, that Christ in him was *not weak, but mighty*; here he showeth, that there was a time when Christ himself was weak, in a low and contemptible state, in which state *he was crucified*; this state of weakness subjected him to a death upon the cross: but, *by the power of God*, he rose again from the dead, ascended up into heaven, where he *liveth* for ever to make intercession for us.

For we also are weak in him; in conformity to Christ (he saith) he and the rest of the apostles were *weak*; in a low, abject, contemptible condition, exposed to reproaches, deaths, &c.

But we shall live; which some understand of life eternal, consequent to the resurrection of believers; but others better, of the life and vigour of the apostle's ministry. Through *the mighty power of God*, flowing from a living Christ, who hath ascended up on high, and given gifts unto men, our ministry shall be a living, powerful, efficacious ministry *toward you*.

2 Corinthians 13:5

Ver. 5. *Examine yourselves*: it is most commonly seen, that those who are most busy to desire or inquire after *a proof of Christ* in others, are tardiest in making an inquiry after Christ's being in themselves. The apostle therefore calleth the censorious part of this church, who desired *a proof of Christ* in him, to examine themselves.

Whether ye be in the faith; whether they had any true faith; such as works by love, and purifies the heart. For he knew that they were baptized, and Christians in outward profession; nor is he blaming them for any apostacy from the doctrine of faith, only for an ill life, which evidenceth their faith not to be the *faith of God's elect*, a faith of the *operation of God*, &c.

Prove your own selves: he doubleth the exhortation upon them, possibly for this end, to let them know, that if they found themselves in the faith,

they could not reasonably doubt whether he himself was in the faith, or not, whom God had made the instrument to convert them.

Know ye not your own selves: he commends to them the knowledge of themselves, as being a far more desirable piece of knowledge than the knowledge of other men; as to what they are, or what their state is towards God.

How that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? In the inquiry after this, he bids them to inquire, whether Christ was in them, yea or no? The name of Christ was named upon them in their baptism, Christ had been preached to them; this the apostle knew; but all this might be, and yet Christ not dwell in their hearts by faith. This is the great point the apostle directs them to examine and prove themselves about, whether Christ was in them by a lively faith? Apprehended and applied as their Saviour, ruling and governing them as their Lord and King? He lets them know the importance of this inquiry, telling them that Jesus Christ must be in them, if they were not *reprobates*. But (some might say) how could the apostle conclude this? Though at present Christ was not in them, and they as yet were no more than formal professors, yet might not God open their eyes, and work in them afterwards a more full and effectual change?

Answer.

1. The apostle might be allowed to know more than ordinary ministers can know. He had before said: *If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.*
2. When the gospel and the means of grace have been for some considerable time in a place, it is much to be feared, that those who have not in that time felt the saving power and effect of it upon their hearts, never shall. It is ordinarily observed, that where God blesseth the ministry of any to convert souls, their greatest harvest is in the first years of their ministry.
3. Some think, that the word $\alpha\delta\omicron\kappa\iota\mu\omicron\iota$ should not be translated *reprobates*, but rather, not approved by God. If Christ be not in the soul by faith, it cannot be approved of God, because *without faith it is impossible to please God*. But we generally translate the word by

reprobate, rejected, castaway, 1Co 9:27 2Ti 3:8 Tit 1:16 Heb 6:8. It seemeth to signify persons given over by God to a stupidity of mind, &c. So as the apostle here useth a very close argument, to put them upon a search into their own hearts and states, to see if they could find Christ dwelling in them; for otherwise, (considering their long profession, and the revelation of Christ to them), it would be a ground of fear, that they were such as God had cast off for ever. However, as to their present state, they had no ground to conclude better, whatever mercy God might afterwards show them. Men's sitting and continuing long under the means of grace, and an outward profession, without a saving knowledge of Christ, and true savour of the truth, and a reformation of their lives according to the rules and directions of the gospel, is not indeed an infallible sign that he who formed them will never show them any favour; but it is a very great presumption that it will be so with such. Which should therefore strongly engage them to be very often and very seriously proving themselves, as to this thing, whether they be in Christ, and whether they have a true, saving faith?

2 Corinthians 13:6

Ver. 6. You make a doubt whether Christ be in us, and you would fain know how it may be evidenced that he is so. If Christ be not in us we must be reprobates.

But I trust that ye shall know, either in this life, by the evident signs of my apostleship, (which when I come I shall give you), and by the life and power of my ministry amongst you; or in another life, when the sheep shall stand at God's right hand, and the goats at his left; that (whatsoever you think or say of us) we are none of those who are rejected and disapproved of God.

2 Corinthians 13:7

Ver. 7. *Now I pray to God that ye do no evil;* I do not desire that when I come I may find objects for my severity, upon whom I may show a proof of Christ in me, by exercising that authority upon them with which Christ hath intrusted me: no, on the contrary, I heartily pray that ye may be holy

and blameless, *without spot or wrinkle*.

Not that we should appear approved; neither do I desire this for my own sake, that I may be *approved*, but I singly desire it for your good.

But that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates; that you may do that which is good; and then do you, and let the world, think of me as a reprobate, or what they will.

2 Corinthians 13:8

Ver. 8. *Truth* in this place notes integrity of life and conversation; truth in action, opposed to hypocrisy, or scandalous living. He had before prayed, that they might *do no evil*; which if they did not, they need not fear his coming with a rod; for though he had a power from Christ to punish, yet he had no power to punish such as did well; his power was to be used for them, not against them. As the law was not made for the righteous, and the civil magistrate is not ordained of God for the terror of those that do well, but only of those that do evil; so neither did Christ ever ordain ecclesiastical censures for the punishment of good and holy men. And indeed here is the just boundary of all civil and ecclesiastical power; no magistrate or minister, acting as Christ's servants, *can* (lawfully, or as by any commission from him) do any thing *against the truth*, or those that own, defend, and practise it; the power with which they are trusted is for edification, not destruction.

2 Corinthians 13:9

Ver. 9. Some by *weak* here understand a moral impotency; as the apostle had said, he could not do any thing against the truth, that is, rightly and justly he could not: and by *strong* here, a spiritual strength, a reformation, growth, and proficiency in grace. These make the sense to be this; I am so far from coming with a desire to show amongst you my apostolical power in punishing offenders, as that I should be glad to find you so strong in the exercise of grace, that I should find none to punish; that men be made weak (as to the putting forth that power) by your spiritual strength. I incline to a more general interpretation. The apostle by this purgeth

himself from any thing of vain glory, or seeking himself; Though (saith he) I be weak, (as some amongst you report me), yet if you be truly strong, I shall heartily rejoice therein. For I wish nothing more than *your perfection*; my reputation is nothing to me compared with that.

2 Corinthians 13:10

Ver. 10. The apostle here lets them know with how much tenderness he dealt with them; and whereas they might have charged him with sharpness in his letters, he assures them, that he therefore had so wrote, that he might prevent sharper dealings with them when he should come to them, by their hearkening to the admonitions of his letter; for otherwise, he tells them, that after he came he must deal more sharply with them in the execution of that power with which Christ had intrusted him. Yet he further tells them, that that power was for their good, not for their harm; for their edification, not for their destruction: which is the same with what he had said, 2Co 10:8, and in the verse immediately preceding.

2 Corinthians 13:11

Ver. 11. *Finally, brethren, farewell:* the apostle shutteth up his Epistle according to the ordinary form of conclusions of letters, wishing all happiness to them: but he addeth something as a Christian, and a minister of the gospel.

Be perfect: the word *καταρτιζεσθε* signifies to be compact, or united, as members of the same body, or parts of the same house; the perfection of a society lying much in the union of it. The perfection the apostle presseth here, seemeth to be the perfection of the body of the church, by the restoring of such as were separated from its communion, or had, through a spirit of contention, withdrawn themselves, rather than the perfection of the particular members of it, in the habits and exercises of grace. The Greek word seemeth that way to carry the sense; it properly signifies, the putting of members loosed from their joints into their proper place again, and such a perfection as followeth upon such an action, or any action proportionable to it.

Be of good comfort; the word imports exhorted, comforted, confirmed: be exhorted to yield obedience to my precepts, or counsels; be comforted in all the trials or afflictions you do meet with, or may further meet with, for your profession of the gospel; be confirmed in the truths and holy ways of God.

Be of one mind; if possible, of one and the same judgment in the truths of God; however, as pursuing the same scope and end; be one in affection.

Live in peace, free from those contentions and divisions, those debates, and strifes, and wraths, and envyings, which I have before told you of as faults among you. This is the way for to have the presence of God with you, for he is not the God of hatred and strife, but *the God of love and peace;* who hath commanded love and peace amongst those that are brethren, and will be present among them only who live in obedience to his royal law of love.

2 Corinthians 13:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Ro 16:16". See Poole on "1Co 16:20". It was an ancient custom and of common use, when friends met, for them (as a token of mutual love and friendship) to kiss each other: the Christians used it also at their ecclesiastical assemblings. It must not be looked upon as a precept, obliging all Christians to do the like; but only as directing those that then did use it, to use it innocently, chastely, sincerely, and holily.

2 Corinthians 13:13

Ver. 13. That is, all about me in these parts of Macedonia wish you all happiness, and by me send the remembrance of their love and respects to you.

2 Corinthians 13:14

Ver. 14. The free love of our *Lord Jesus Christ,* shown in the application of his redemption; that *grace* which floweth from him as the Fountain of

grace, or cometh by him as the Mediator between God and man; *the actual love of God*; that good-will by which God the Father embraceth creatures in Christ, and for his sake; and all the gracious communications of the Holy Spirit of God, (by which he strengtheneth, quickeneth, or comforteth the souls of God's people), *be with you all*. Whether you value me or not, I heartily wish you well, and all the best things. In this text is an eminent proof of the Trinity, all the Persons being distinctly named in it (as in the commission about baptism). The apostle calleth the Father, *God*; the Son, *Lord*: he attributeth *love* to the Father; (moved by which he sent his only begotten Son into the world, Joh 3:16); *grace* to the Son, who loved us freely, and died for the fellowship or *communion of the Holy Ghost*, by whom the Father and Son communicate their love and grace to the saints.

Amen is here used as a particle of wishing or desiring the thing before mentioned; it is the same with: Let it so be. Whether added by the apostle, or subjoined by the church of Corinth, upon the reading this Epistle among them, (as some think), is not material.

The second (epistle) to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, (a city) of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas.

If the subscriptions to the apostolical Epistles were parts of the text and holy writ, we have it here determined, who that other brother was, mentioned 2Co 8:22, sent along with Titus to carry this letter, and the benevolence of the churches of Macedonia. But it is observed, that even in this subscription there is a certain evidence, that the subscriptions of the Epistles are no part of canonical writ; for in some Greek copies it is said to be sent by Paul and Timothy; whereas Paul was the writer of it, not the messenger, and in Macedonia when it was sent; and Timothy is joined with him in the writing, 2Co 1:1.