

Bowman's notes—
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**THE SECOND EPISTLE
OF
THE APOSTLE PAUL
TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH**

2nd Corinthians

God's Instructions To the New Testament Church

“Life in the Son”

Studies in the Pauline Epistles

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A VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY

2 CORINTHIANS

Preface

We are blessed at BridgePoint Bible Church to have a young man as God's under-shepherd who has the great heart of a true pastor. This is a wonderful provision of the Spirit for service to us, but an enormous burden to be borne on behalf of the Lord's congregation. Your joy is his joy, and your pain is his pain as well. When you come alongside him in prayer, be mindful of all that he is assuming on our behalf and, before God, lift that burden and present it before the throne, where the ascended Jesus is at the right hand of the Father.

Introduction

As we study this second letter of Paul to the believers in Corinth, you will see the Apostle's heart, the heart of a pastor, displayed in joy and anguish. He is troubled by the possibility that his first letter has caused them much grief, and is making another attempt to guide them in their life before God as *new creation* believers. He defends his apostolic authority and his personal character. He speaks of his motives and of his approach to ministry to the Body of Christ. Those against him belittled him, calling his "bodily presence weak, and his speech contemptible" (10:10). His answer; "though I am rude in speech, yet not in knowledge" (11:6). Remember that Paul means "little," and he referred to himself in just that way in his letter to the Ephesians; "less than the least of all saints" (Ephesians 3:8).

Bishop Handly Carr Glyn Moule (1841-1920) was elected Norrison Professor of Divinity at Cambridge in 1899, and after an inaugural address his first set of lectures was on 2 Corinthians. His original notes were preserved and finally published in 1962 as the last work of his to become available. I find his work to be inspiring in a special way; therefore, you will find notes inserted into this commentary, especially in the outline of the different divisions. CB

Christian Ministry Revealed
The life and character of the Apostle
Chapter 1 through 7

Chapter 1

(From Macedonia, approximately 54-55 A.D.)

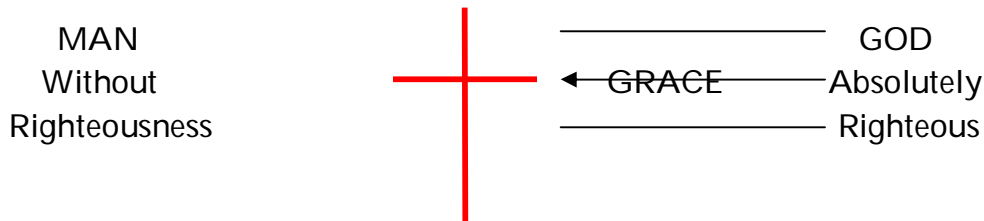
The Power of the Divine Paraklete **παράκλησις** in Acute Trial
(2 Corinthians 1:1-11) Moule.

At Corinth, this letter would have been first read aloud, perhaps in the house of Justus (Acts 18:7), or in another large room suitable to the purpose of gathering. As Moule notes, the scroll would be opened, and a leading disciple would begin to read, sentence by sentence, pouring the words into their "open ears and hearts." They were the first to hear them and represented all Christendom, then and now. So we take our seats beside them, time and space of no consequence, for we are of the same family of God, and listen as those who have never heard these things before.

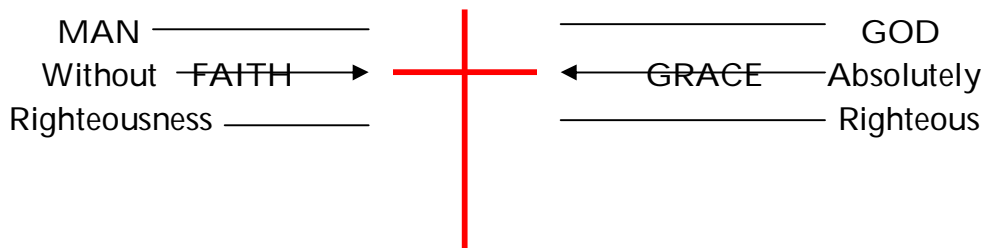
(1:1) He emphasizes again that he is an "apostle" *apostolos* who belongs to "Jesus Christ." "Of" is a genitive of possession, denoting ownership by another. "By" speaks of instrumentality; thus, his position as a property of Jesus Christ is literally "by means of God's will," speaking specifically of the Father. Here you see the Only Begotten Son of God willingly laying aside His own prerogatives to do the will of His Father. The Son, standing before the Father who dwells in 'unapproachable light' lays His divine rights at the Father's feet and accepts His Father's supreme will as His own. That's exactly what He asks of us! He would have us do the Father's will because His Father is our Father (John 20:17). "Assembly" is *ekklesia*, those "called out to a purpose." The genitive "of" tells us that this assembly belongs to "God." "Saints" *hagios* means one "set apart" and speaks of those who make up the *ekklesia*, reinforcing the idea of being taken out of mankind and separated unto God for His purposes. Paul indicates that his letter is to be circulated to "all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia," even though it is being sent to the church in Corinth. (Note how often Paul refers to **God the Father** as the center of his thoughts and prayers.)

Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ by **God's** will, and the brother Timotheus, to the assembly **of God** which is in Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia.

(1:2) Note the order that he uses here; “grace” comes before “peace.” This is appropriate, for it is through grace that the love and mercy of God is made available to us through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Because of the sin of Adam, all men are born with the flaw of the Adamic Nature that separates us from our righteous God.



God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love He has for us, established this marvelous conduit of GRACE, through which He could pour His love and mercy to us through the cross and His Son. The wonder of it is that He did this while we were yet His enemies. He did not wait until we wanted it to happen, but while we were actively opposing His love and entreaty.



But, God’s work in us did not leave us without access to this wonderful gift of salvation, for He endowed us with enlightening faith. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul put it this way—“By grace you are having been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God, lest anyone should boast.” So, based on the Father’s enabling, we appropriate the grace of God through the faith that He gives us and become the objects of His mercy and unending love. Now He moves us from the ground of condemnation onto the ground of Peace in Christ, who is our Peace (See Notes on Ephesians 2:13-14).

This brings us to the second point of order in this verse—“Grace” and “peace” come “**from God our Father**, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Note the primary point of focus on the *Father*. The tendency of most Christians today is to focus all of our attention on either Jesus the Son, or the Holy Spirit. Paul constantly reminds us that everything we have is provided on the basis of the will and plan of the Father. He is to occupy the principle position in our thoughts and prayers. Christ taught His disciples to pray to the Father (Matthew 6:6), and the Apostle Paul insists that we do the same, following his example.

Grace to you and peace from **God our Father**, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(1:3-4) Look at where he focuses his blessing—it is to “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This does not diminish our adoration of the Son one bit; it enhances it, because it has us join the Son in following the will of the Father, the Father of Divine mercies, who “encourages us in all our tribulation.” As always, “that” introduces a purpose clause—The Father encourages us in order that “we may be able to encourage those who are in any tribulation whatever.” This is the *fellowship of suffering* that we share with the Savior, and is one of the ways that we complete, or bring to fruition, His suffering for us.

Blessed be the **God and Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ, the **Father** of compassions, and **God** of all encouragement; who encourages us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to encourage those who are in any tribulation whatever, through the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged of **God**.

(1:5) That stream of grace, which flows from the Father, joins with the suffering of Christ on the cross, and then “abounds towards us” as an unquenchable flow of God’s provision for every need. The acknowledgement of that love of the Father towards us is the heart of “our encouragement also abounds” (overflows) to those around us in need. Your trials are for a purpose; to encourage your brothers and sisters in Christ in their struggles. You are not forgotten, or neglected, but loved through every hurt and moment of need.

Because, even as the sufferings of the Christ abound towards us, so through the Christ does our encouragement also abound.

Corinthians 1:5

(1:6-7) “But” indicates a contrast; “whether we are in tribulation . . . or whether we are encouraged” is the equation. Either situation “is for *your* encouragement and salvation.” Paul is saying that his tribulation and/or encouragement does not end with his circumstance, but is for the benefit of these saints in Corinth; for we are all in the one Body of Christ. Often, as believers, we lose sight of the fact that the tough spot we find ourselves in is sometimes for the benefit of others, rather than being a direct result of something in our own lives that needs to be corrected. If that’s the case, then shouldn’t we willingly, even joyfully, bear the burden of whatever suffering we are called to endure? “Hope” *elpis* is waiting with a patient, positive, expectation (Robertson), which Paul says here is “sure”

or steadfast. Regardless of the situation, our view is towards a victorious outcome to life and whatever assails us. If not for the resurrection and ascension of Christ that attitude would be foolish. But we are “knowing” with assurance “that as you are partakers” (fellow-sharers) “of the sufferings” on Christ’s behalf, “so also” are you assuredly “of the encouragement,” which lifts us up and carries us on.

But whether we are in tribulation, it is for your encouragement and salvation, wrought in the endurance of the same sufferings which we also suffer, (and our hope for you is sure); or whether we are encouraged; it is for your encouragement and salvation: knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also of the encouragement.
2 Corinthians 1:6-7

(1:8) So do you get discouraged—and then feel guilty because you didn’t have the faith to keep on trusting? Well, look who is keeping you company. The Apostle Paul says that “in Asia . . . we were excessively pressed beyond our power.” In other words, his faith was taken past the point of endurance; it was taken so far that they were in “despair even of living.” He and his companions were afraid for their very lives. However, that’s only half the story. Look at the next verse.

For we do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, as to our tribulation, which happened to us in Asia, that we were excessively pressed beyond our power, so as to despair even of living. 2 Corinthians 1:8

(1:9-11) “But” introduces the other half of the equation; though “we ourselves had the sentence of death in ourselves,” ties the facts together that the prospect of physical death is tempered by the truth of God that they had already died with Christ (See Notes on Romans 6), and their trust was “in God who raises the dead.” Faced with death, they laid firm hold on the truth of resurrection—there is life after death! He has *already* “delivered us from so great a death,” being eternal separation from Him; “and does [continue to] deliver.” They have invested their trust (“in whom we confide”) “that” indicates purpose, “He will also yet deliver.” In other words, His deliverance is not serendipitous but purposeful—it is always according to His eternal plan. The entire history of mankind is in view here. All of time, space, and the course of humanity is but one event in God’s eternal existence.¹ There is not one, single, element in your

¹ That very statement is the essence and definition of Omnipresence, one attribute of the Godhead.

life and circumstance that God is not intimately aware of nor involved in. So why do we pray? Paul says that we “labor together by [means of our] supplication for us [or others. in order] that [when] the gift [of God’s answer] is revealed,” it “may be the subject of the thanksgiving of many for us.” We pray in order that we all might be participants in the thanksgiving to God for His deliverance. Prayer is not only a collective exercise of the Body of Christ, it has as its object a collective goal, our mutual thanksgiving celebration.

But we ourselves had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not have our trust in ourselves, but in **God** who raises the dead; who has delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver; in whom we confide that he will also yet deliver; you also laboring together by supplication for us that the gift towards us, through means of many persons, may be the subject of the thanksgiving of many for us.
2 Corinthians 1:9-11

(1:12) Charles V. Jones was one of my dearest friends in Jackson Mississippi. He provided me with one of the most concise descriptions of the Christian life that I ever heard, and I can hear him saying it now; “Connie, it’s not any more complicated than this; you just go through life braggin’ on Jesus.” That’s exactly what Paul is saying here; “our boasting is this, and our conscience will confirm it, that simply and honestly before God, it is not in human wisdom but according to God’s grace that we have had our manner of life in the world and especially before you.” We live by God’s grace and the work of the Son on the cross. Our entire “manner of life” (conversation) flows from that moment of death and redemption when we were joined to Him.

For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and sincerity before **God**, (not in fleshly wisdom but in **God's** grace,) we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly towards you. 2 Corinthians 1:12

Paul, God’s Apostle to us!

Nowhere in Scripture do we come any closer to this marvelous individual than in this Epistle, and who, of all the saints in the Bible, is more a living persona to the Church than Paul? As you read this Second Epistle to the Corinthians, you feel as though you can see his weathered face, touch his gnarled hands, and detect the tears in his tired eyes. All the facets of his character come through, his intelligence and knowledge, his will to continue in his calling, his love for his

Jewish Brethren and for those Gentiles he is bringing to the Lord, anger that boils up from within him and explodes as righteous indignation, and an overarching strength of grace (12:9). You get glimpses of the Lord looking from his eyes, speaking with his lips, moving and acting in each instance, so that what he told the Galatians, "not he, but Christ" (Galatians 2:20) is real before us. This is Paul, God's messenger who sends this Epistle out to the Church, just as God wrote it!

Consistency of message is the key to Christian living

(1:13-14) "Listen," says the Apostle; "we don't write anything to you that you don't already know and will readily recognize," things that we have told you in person. "My hope is that you will recognize this to the very end, with the same familiarity that you recognize us now." "The reason is simple; you are our testimony before the Lord to having lived life as He intended, just as we are your testimony to the same fact, which will be shared in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Now—look around this room in which we sit. You come to worship in the sanctuary, and at the end of the hour, you get up and leave without making any substantive connection with more than 3 or 4 other people; but here, we study together; discuss difficult passages or concepts; hammer out our common understanding of God's directives for us in this place and among these people; and, at the end of the day, our impact on one another is the mark and measure of our lives.

For we do not write other things to you but what you well know and recognize; and I hope that you will recognize to the end, even as also you have recognized us in part, that we are your boast, even as you are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus. 2 Corinthians 1:13-14

(1:15-16) "With this confidence" refers back to the fact that they are following those things that they "recognize" and accept as having been taught them in the past. Because of their consistency, he "purposed to come" to them already in order that they "might have a second favor" of their spending time together *around the revealed word of God* on his way "to Macedonia." Further, his intention was to again visit with them on his way back from Macedonia "to Judea."

And with this confidence I purposed to come to you previously, that you might have a second favor; and to pass through to Macedonia by you, and

again from Macedonia to come to you, and to be set forward by you to Judea. 2 Corinthians 1:15-16

From Paul to God, a grand diversion (1:17-22)

The pathway of the Pauline Gospel from God to the Church (1:17-18)

(1:17-18) To “purpose according to flesh” means to act according to the dictates of how you feel about something at the time. It may be something you are in agreement with (“yea, yea,”) or something you might disagree with at the moment (“nay, nay”). Unstated is the proposition that you might change your mind about it and act differently at some other time. This is because “flesh” has to do with your *soul*, the inheritance from Adam that resides in the ‘*old man*.’ If your motivations are spirit-controlled, then

When Paul says that “God is faithful” regarding his, Paul’s, instructions to them, he is telling them that the connection is from the Father through the Spirit to Paul, and in the power of the Spirit, to the mind of Christ within them. Now do you see why Paul is so protective and insistent that the Gospel he has been teaching and preaching is to be guarded at all times?

your *human* spirit is being led and instructed by the Holy Spirit within and your actions are consistent with the mind of Christ and His character, which you have as a *new creation* believer! When Paul says that “God is faithful” regarding his, Paul’s, instructions to them, he is telling them that the connection is from the Father through the Spirit to Paul, and in the power of the Spirit, to the mind of Christ within them. Now do you see why Paul is so protective and insistent that the Gospel he has been teaching and preaching is to be guarded at all times? (See inset).

Having therefore this purpose, did I then use lightness? Or what I purpose, do I purpose according to flesh, that there should be with me yea yea, and nay nay? Now **God** is faithful that our word to you is not yea and nay. 2 Corinthians 1:17-18

Earthly promises for earthly Kingdoms and blessings laid up in the heavenlies for the Bride (1:19-20)

(1:19-20) He further explains that this same Gospel from God came through Silvanus and Timothy and is to be trusted and guarded, because in that Gospel are to be found “whatever promises of God there are” in the whole vast range of

Scripture. There is your exclusion from all the promises of God in the Old Testament to Israel and the physical progeny of Abraham—your promises of blessing are to be found in the Pauline Gospel (see Ephesians). They are not earthly in fulfillment, but heavenly, and are already secured to us by the clear declaration of God. See how the “yea is in Him (the Son of God, Jesus Christ).” That is what we agree to accept from the Father through His having accepted it first; and “in Him [is] the amen,” which

There is your exclusion from all the promises of God in the Old Testament to Israel and the physical progeny of Abraham—your promises of blessing are to be found in the Pauline Gospel (see Ephesians). They are not earthly in fulfillment, but heavenly, and are already secured to us by the clear declaration of God.

is to say, ‘I believe it’ putting our seal of approval and commitment on it! This is important, for it is by means of us that this Gospel is preached to a lost world of men for the glory of God.

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, He who has been preached by us among you (by me and Silvanus and Timotheus), did not become yea and nay, but yea is in him, or whatever promises of **God** there are, in him is the yea, and in him the amen, for glory to **God** by us. 2 Corinthians 1:19-20

The Great Promises of God for All Saints

1. The Promise of Pardon to the Sinful Soul. This promise was first made to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15, as the promise of a Redeemer to come through the line of man. He would resolve the issue of sin between man and God, and the result is the reconciliation of man to God. God said that “I will love you freely” in Hosea 14:4. “You will cast all their sins into the bottom of the sea,” Micah 7:19; “their sins and iniquities I will remember no more” Hebrews 10:17. Note that regardless of the Age (dispensation) God’s dealing with sin is to remove it. What is the essential difference is that in the Age of Grace, the believer ‘*dies to sin.*’
2. The Promise of Holiness, of an inner separation from serving sin, and of divine power and purity in the inner man. This is realized in the *new creation* through union with Christ in His death to sin, and ours as we are joined to Him, Romans 6. This is the result of our justification with Christ. Practical Holiness comes as the result of our sanctification, being resurrected by the Father in Christ to walk in newness of life. “These things I write unto you, that you sin not,” 1 John 2:1; “Whosoever abides

in Him sins not," 1 John 3:6, and "let not sin reign in your mortal body" Romans 6:12. Paul put it this way in his first letter to the Corinthians; "Christ is made unto us sanctification," 1 Corinthians 1:30; to the Colossians, he said, "You are filled full in Him," Colossians 2:10, and to the Ephesians he said, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts, by faith; that you may know the love of Christ; which passes knowledge," Ephesians 3:17, 19.

3. The Promise of a New Heaven and a New Earth. Here we see the two people of God, one earthly, where all the promises of earthly reign and blessings will be given to the Saints who accepted God in faith; one, heavenly, the Bride of the Only Begotten Son of God, the ascended Jesus, to whom the Church of the New Testament is joined forever!

There is one great event where the saints of all ages are gathered in heaven, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. There all see the Son take His rightful place over all things in Heaven and on Earth. The celebration lasts for a thousand years, Satan is bound and the earth's curse is lifted.

The Father establishes, anoints, seals

(1:21-22) Now, to ensure that they thoroughly understand the principle he has just laid out for them, here is the condensed version—"Now he that establishes us with you in Christ," is God the Father. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul says that we were "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4). After that, the Father "has anointed us" by electing us to His service, just as He elected and set apart the Aaronic priests (see Notes on Leviticus). His establishing us and anointing us are both earthly provisions for our lives of service to Him, the Only Begotten Son of God. But, He did not stop there, for He "also has sealed us," which is laying His claim on us in time for all eternity. "Sealed us" *sphragisamenos hēmas* was used for setting a seal on a document to prevent opening (Robertson).² He has declared us as His own children now and marked us as His own; He is not waiting until we die, or until Christ returns to take us to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb as the Bride. In the limitations of our human mind there is not the capacity to understand this to the extent that we can fellowship with the Father in the realm of the spirit; so, He went further still and gave us a down-payment, "the earnest of the Spirit" to "reside in our [inner man] hearts" until He calls us home.

² Word Pictures in the Greek New Testament

Now he that establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, is **God**, who also has sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22

(1:23-24) "I call God to witness" is Paul's appeal to heaven for a witness on earth to the truth of his commitment. "To spare you" means to hold them back from any suffering or difficulty by his ministry. His desire is that they be "fellow-workmen" of "joy," (1 Corinthians 3:8) rather than pain; for it is "by faith that [they] stand" in Christ. Remember that when we gather it is not primarily to off-load our problems, but to share our joy in God's provision for us individually.

But I call **God** to witness upon my soul that to spare you I have not yet come to Corinth. Not that we rule over your faith, but are fellow-workmen of your joy; for by faith you stand. 2 Corinthians 1:23-24

Chapter 2

Share your joy; bear your grief

(2:1-3) In Acts 18 Paul mentions that he had come to Corinth with great joy; here he says that he has decided "not to come back ("again" KJV) to you in grief ("sorrow" KJV). "For if I grieve you" is first class and establishes the paradox between Paul and those to whom he is writing—he is the cause of their grief and they are the source of his being made glad. "I have written this very letter" may well refer to a lost letter or to that of 1 Corinthians 5, or to this present letter, which he has written instead of coming to see them personally. The purpose of this letter then would be "that coming I may not have grief from those from whom I ought to have joy," which is his expectation. Further he is "trusting in you all that my joy is that of you all."

But I have judged this with myself, not to come back to you in grief. For if I grieve you, who also is it that gladdens me, if not he that is grieved through me? And I have written this very letter to you that coming I may not have grief from those from whom I ought to have joy; trusting in you all that my joy is that of you all. 2 Corinthians 2:1-3

(2:4-7) "For out of much tribulation" *sunochēs* ('anguish' KJV, 'to hold together') and "distress of heart" (lit. 'contraction of heart'), "I wrote to you with many tears." Remember Philippians 3:18 where he wrote with weeping (*klaion*). Then he points out that any one's grief is grief in part to all. His rebuke to such a one

is that, on behalf of the many, they “should rather show grace and encourage” one another so that no one “should be swallowed up with excessive grief.” This is in concert with Galatians 6; “let each bear his own *cargo*” but “you bear one another’s oppressive *overload*.”

For out of much tribulation and distress of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not that you may be grieved, but that you may know the love that I have very abundantly towards you. But if any one has grieved, he has grieved, not me, but in part (that I may not overcharge you) all of you. Sufficient to such a one is this rebuke which has been inflicted by the many; so that on the contrary you should rather show grace and encourage, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with excessive grief. 2 Corinthians 2:4-7

(2:8-9) By so doing, assure your brother of your love for him. This is the test of their obedience and the object of this letter to the believers in Corinth.

Wherefore I exhort you to assure him of your love. For to this end also I have written, that I might know, by putting you to the test, if as to everything you are obedient. 2 Corinthians 2:8-9

Paul’s confidence in their judgment

(2:10-11) Here is a good example of the oneness of mind that believers share when they walk in the Spirit of God—“But to whom you forgive anything, I also [forgive].” Then he expands the idea by saying to them; “what I have forgiven, if (first class, ‘since,’ or in this case, ‘what’) I have forgiven anything, it is for your sakes in the presence of Christ (or in the eye of).” In other words, his forgiveness is given as if he is standing right before the Lord Jesus and acting in concert with His judgment. “That” introduces a purpose, “we might not have Satan get an advantage against us.” You see the principle; if we fail to walk in the light of Christ’s presence, then we are vulnerable to the wiles and deception of Satan and he can influence us through the wedges that we allow in our Christian life.

But to whom you forgive anything, I also; for I also, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sakes in the person of Christ; that we might not have Satan get an advantage against us, for we are not ignorant of his thoughts. 2 Corinthians 2:10-11

(2:12-13) Paul is traveling from Ephesus to Macedonia (Acts 20:1) and makes this stop in Troas (though it is not mentioned by Luke here in Acts). His purpose for the stop is “for the publication of the gospel of Christ.” However, he is uneasy, saying that he “had no rest in my spirit at not finding Titus” in Troas, and the Lord had opened a door for ministry in Macedonia; so he takes his leave of them and continues his journey. The point is not that he is disappointed in Titus, but that he is sensitive to the leading of the Spirit to get on with the business in Macedonia.

Now when I came to Troas for the publication of the glad tidings of the Christ, a door also being opened to me in [the] Lord, I had no rest in my spirit at not finding Titus my brother; but bidding them adieu, I came away to Macedonia. 2 Corinthians 2:12-13

The Glory of the Christian Ministry (2:14-6:10)

(2:14-17) The apostle’s thanks are, as always, directly to God the Father in recognizing that it is the Father “who always leads us in victory *triambeuonti* in the Christ.” Use of the article before “Christ” calls attention to the ascended Jesus as the honored One of the procession. “Makes manifest” is ‘reveals’ and the “odor of His knowledge” calls to mind the savor of the oil of anointing in the tabernacle and temple, which signified His presence among men. Then he goes on to point out that we are the anointing oil, the sweet odor signifying to the world the presence of Christ among men rising to the Father and bringing us ever to the mind of the Father as the Body of His Only Begotten Son yet on earth. To those who perish as lost and unbelievers, this is the odor of burial spices; but to those who are alive to God in Christ, this is the odor of life and union with God. “Who among us is sufficient for these things” the blessings of God? None, save the Son, our Savior, in Whom we are kept safe, as in the ark of Noah, or in Abraham’s bosom as for the OT Saints, or in the Body of Christ, as for believers in this dispensation from Pentecost to the Second Coming of Christ for His Bride.

In Leviticus 10:15ff; “And the priest who is the highest among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured, and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor tear his clothes, nor shall he approach any dead person, nor defile himself even for his father or his mother; nor shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is on him; I am the Lord.”

But thanks [be] to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ, and makes manifest the odor of his knowledge through us in every place. For we are a sweet odor of Christ to God, in the saved and in those that perish: to the one an odor from death unto death, but to the others an odor from life unto life; and who is sufficient for these things? For we do not, as the many, make a trade of the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, before God, we speak in Christ. 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

Chapter 3

The New Covenant of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:1-18) Moule

(3:1-3) Paul poses a question to them—‘Do we need letters of recommendation *sustatikon epistolōn* between us?’ No, because they, like all true Believers, are a “letter” from God, “written in our hearts.” Look, says Paul, “you are my letter” *hē epistolē hēmōn humeis este* to be “read *ginōskomenē kai anaginōskomenē* (lit. ‘known and read’) of all men,” just as the people you serve in Christ are your letter to all men. Further, it is “revealed to be Christ’s own letter” *epistolē Christou* to mankind, “ministered (tended) by us, not written with ink *ou melani* (*melas* ‘black’), but with the Spirit of the living God; (and) not written on stone tables,” (or paper), “but on fleshly tables of the heart.” When we share with others or tend their needs, this is Christ’s own message to the world and is simply to be administered and delivered by us that they might see the love of Christ in us.

Do we begin again to commend ourselves; or do we need, as some, commendatory letters to you, or commendatory from you? You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read of all men, being manifested to be Christ's epistle ministered by us, written, not with ink, but the Spirit of the living God; not on stone tables, but on fleshy tables of the heart.
2 Corinthians 3:1-3

(3:4-6) Now Paul draws a line between the old covenant of Law and the new covenant of Grace. Our confidence today comes “through Christ” *dia tou Christou* (lit. ‘through the Christ’), the article pointing to Jesus as the source of our confidence. So, our confidence as Christians to minister this letter of Christ to the world is based on Christ’s relationship as the Only Begotten Son to God the Father; and it is the Father “who has made us competent” to do the things required. Our assignment is “as ministers of the new covenant,” (which is) “not” (one) “of letter, but” (one) “of spirit.” [He has clearly defined the new](#)

covenant as being distinctly different from the old covenant. One was to be obeyed to the letter of the Law by which it was governed. This one is to be obeyed according to its revelation on the tables of the hearts of those who are now found to be in Christ and joined to God through union. It is through union that we gain the life of Christ; while the letter of the Law defined the rule of death, which Christ endured on the Cross.

And such confidence have we through the Christ towards God: not that we are competent of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our competency [is] of God; who has also made us competent, [as] ministers of the new covenant; not of letter, but of spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit quickens. 2 Corinthians 3:4-6

(3:7-11) Note that the “ministry of death” *tou thanatou* (subjective genitive, lit. ‘marked by death in its outcome’) was defined “in letters, engraved in stones,” those very stones which God gave to Moses on the mount. It was signified as from God by the reflected “glory” of God on the face of Moses, which the Israelites could not look upon. It faded from his face and they would not see it again until it filled the Holy of Holies with God’s presence. Before the Kinsman Redeemer came to atone for the sins of Israel and purchase their freedom from Law with His own blood, that glory had departed from the temple, never to return—it was completely “annulled.” Now, says Paul, that glory, which attested to the validity of the Law as being from God, and which faded, signifying the end of the Law, is the very substance on which the new covenant “subsists.” While the old was introduced with God’s glory, the new is bathed in God’s glory, soaked in glory, and sustained in glory. Why? Because union with God in Christ means that every thought, every action, every step and every intention that you have is in the very presence of God! In Romans Paul asked; “Who can separate us from the love of God?” And, then he lists those things that could not (). How is this possible? It is because our life now flows from the ascended Jesus at the right hand of the Father, where God exists in unapproachable light, the Shekinah Glory in its heavenly setting.

(But if the ministry of death, in letters, graven in stones, began with glory, so that the children of Israel could not fix their eyes on the face of Moses, on account of the glory of his face, a glory that is annulled; how shall not rather the ministry of the Spirit subsist in glory? For if the ministry of condemnation is glory, much rather the ministry of righteousness abounds in glory. For also that which was glorified is not glorified in

this respect, on account of the surpassing glory. For if that annulled was introduced with glory, much rather that which abides subsists in glory.
2 Corinthians 3:7-11

(3:12-16) The flow of life from our ascended Savior is the basis of our hope; so how can we not “use much boldness” in our ministry of Christ’s epistle to the world, His masterpiece, the Body of Christ, His church on earth. Look at the example of the children of Israel, who are to this day reading that old covenant without understanding because their eyes are veiled. It will only be taken away when they “turn to the Lord” and seek His forgiveness.

Having therefore such hope, we use much boldness: and not according as Moses put a veil on his own face, so that the children of Israel should not fix their eyes on the end of that annulled. But their thoughts have been darkened, for unto this day the same veil remains in reading the old covenant, not yet removed, which in Christ is annulled. But unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil lies upon their heart. But when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away.) 2 Corinthians 3:12-16

(3:17-18) “Lord” *Kurios* and “Spirit” *pneuma* are both preceded by the definite article, calling attention to their being, so it emphasizes that they exist in separate persons; but the statement demonstrates their perfect unity. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” brings us to the heart of the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant, for we are at liberty from the Law, which governed the old covenant. Our faces are not veiled as we are “looking on (*present tense* ‘keep on looking on’)

the glory of the Lord,” and we are being “transformed” *metamorphoumeta* (*present passive* an ongoing process that is being done to us) “according to the same image” is into the likeness of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:48) “from glory to glory” is the picture of mirror images. We shine as Christ shines. This brings us back to the original creation of man in the image of God; as Christ was clothed with light (Psalm 104) so too was Adam and Eve clothed with light. When they sinned the light was gone and they discovered nakedness; thus the Lord asked them, “who told you that you were naked?” Now, joined to Christ through union, we are being transformed daily into the very image of Him and reflect His

“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” brings us to the heart of the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant, for we are at liberty from the Law, which governed the old covenant.

glory to the world in which we live, and it's all being done to us by the indwelling Holy Spirit who is producing in us the character of the Lord Jesus.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, but where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

Chapter 4

Transformation

From Adam to Christ

The Indwelling Holy Spirit Producing the Character of Christ in Us (2 Corinthians 4:1-15) Moule

(4:1-4) "Therefore" refers back to our being "*transformed*" in the previous verse. Because we are being changed into the very image of Christ, we are "having this ministry" in the on-going present of our experiences. This is not something that maybe we have, or maybe we don't as yet—oh no! Remember the child's warning that '*here I come, ready or not?*' Well, this is the same sense; because we are bearing the name and image of our ascended Jesus (and we live and walk in the sphere of His "mercy shown us") we have had this ministry given to us, "*ready or not.*" So, in His strength and provision our response is that "we faint not" *ouk egkakoumen* (present active indicative), it is always the truth, it is a command that is actionable). "But we have rejected" is a timeless aorist tense (Robertson) a once for all decision. "Shame, deceit, and falsifying the word of God" are the three things that Paul specifically lists as being rejected. "But" in contrast to those things denounced, the ministry is supported "by manifestation (revelation) of the truth" by which we are to be "commending ourselves to every conscience of men before God." This is the duty of the Christian, to teach (reveal) the truth of God's Word before the conscience of all men. It is not to convince them of the Gospel, but to set before them the truth of it. The convincing part is the work of the Spirit. Our lives are to be free of the shame that comes of "hidden things . . . walking in deceit . . . or teaching the Word of God in error." Think back over the qualifications for a man who would be an Elder or a Pastor; first, he must be *blameless*.

"If" (first class condition) "since our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in those that are lost," because their "thoughts" have been "blinded" by the "god of this world." This is the condition of unbelievers without Christ in this world. Look

at the contrast here; what we offer is “the radiance of the gospel of the glory of the Christ, who is the image of God the Father,” in contrast with the darkness of unbelief without hope. The light of God’s presence simply does not reach them.

Therefore, having this ministry, as we have had mercy shown us, we faint not. But we have rejected the hidden things of shame, not walking in deceit, nor falsifying the word of God, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every conscience of men before God. But if also our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in those that are lost; in whom the god of this world has blinded the thoughts of the unbelieving, so that the radiance of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine forth for them. 2 Corinthians 4:1-4

(4:5-6) Though the ministry of the message of the Gospel is committed to us, it is not about us but about what Christ did and is doing now for and through His Church, of which we are members. The metaphor that continues here calls to mind the creation in Genesis, where God called light into the darkness that prevailed on the face of the earth. It is He who has caused light of understanding to shine in our hearts (inner man), “knowledge of the glory of God *that resides* in [the] face of [Jesus] Christ.”

For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus Lord, and ourselves your bondmen for Jesus' sake. Because [it is] the God who spoke that out of darkness light should shine who has shone in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in [the] face of [Jesus] Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:5-6

(4:7-12) “This treasure” refers to the authority given us by God to present the knowledge of the glory of God (v. 6). But, we hold this authority in the most unlikely “earthen vessels.” Paul notes that the purpose of this is that there be no misunderstanding that the “power” (*dunamis* from which we get dynamite) “may be of God, and not from us” who are in “every way afflicted.” That warning is specifically to those who would preach the Word of God, in order that they never slip into the error of claiming special powers or gifts as coming from them instead of directly from the Father. “Afflicted” is ‘*pressed down*’ as grapes are pressed, but not “straitened” is ‘*wrung out*.’ “Seeing no apparent issue” is ‘*hemmed in*’ but “not entirely shut up” is ‘*not walled off*.’ “Persecuted” is ‘*physically abused*,’ but “not abandoned” is ‘*never isolated from God*,’ and “cast down” *kataballomenoi* as if overtaken (Robertson), brings to mind the overload of sin in Galatians 6 that is to be borne by a brother coming alongside. “But never

destroyed" *appolumenoi* is 'obliterated,' our eternal security rests in this; that our soul and spirit can never be taken away by the enemy. We may show in our frail bodies the death of our Savior, but His ascended life is also revealed manifested there also; for the reality is that we are "always" being "delivered unto death." But, this is not about us; it is about ("on account of") Jesus, in order that his life may be revealed in our "mortal flesh." This entire passage is referring to the ascended life of our Savior, not the walk to the Cross, but the walk on this side of the ascension! So Paul notes that while physical death is working in us *ho thanatos en hēmin ενεργηται*, middle voice (it is something that we are doing to ourselves) present tense (it is an on-going action) as believers, spiritual life is growing in those to whom we minister this Gospel with which we have been entrusted. How can we lose confidence when we see how much God trusts us and supports us in our walk?

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassingness of the power may be of God, and not from us: every way afflicted, but not straitened; seeing no apparent issue, but our way not entirely shut up; persecuted, but not abandoned; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body; for we who live are always delivered unto death on account of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh; so that death works in us, but life in you.
2 Corinthians 4:7-12

The work of the Father in Jesus and in us

(4:13-14) "According to what is written" refers back to Psalm 95:1; "we also believe" as did the Psalmist, and because of belief, he has spoken and we also speak. The glue that holds us together in the Body of Christ is twofold, union with Christ, and a common belief. Content of our doctrinal understanding is everything when it comes to strength in our common fellowship. The answer to the question, 'who raised Jesus from the grave?' is given right here—"knowing that He who has raised the Lord Jesus shall raise us also with Jesus" speaks directly of the Father. As the Son of God, He had the authority to lay His life down or to take it up again; but, as the Last Adam He was entirely dependent on the Father, just as are we.

And having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, I have believed, therefore have I spoken; we also believe, therefore also we

speaking; knowing that he who has raised the Lord Jesus shall raise us also with Jesus, and shall present us with you. 2 Corinthians 4:13-14

(4:15) In this Age of Grace all things are for the sake of the assembly of God, His Church (see Notes on Ephesians 2:10). "Grace abounding" is grace multiplied "through the many," who are the many sons being brought to glory, of which the ascended Jesus was the first (see Notes on Hebrews 2:10).

For all things are for your sakes, that the grace abounding through the many may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.
2 Corinthians 4:15

The Prospect of His Presence
From Death to Rapture to Glory
(2 Corinthians 4:16-5:8) Moule

(4:16-18) "Wherefore we faint not" is repeated from verse 1 for emphasis. He continues the comparison, here between the "outward man" that is being consumed by physical death and the "inward man" that is being "renewed day by day." Note the comparisons here—(1) Outward=death and Inward=life; (2) Momentary=affliction and Eternal=glory; (3) Light=affliction and Weight=glory. In this process we are not looking at the things that are seen, but at the things that cannot be seen; for "what is visible is very temporal," while that which cannot be seen is "eternal."

Wherefore we faint not; but if indeed our outward man is consumed, yet the inward is renewed day by day. For our momentary and light affliction works for us in surpassing measure an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen [are] for a time, but those that are not seen eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Earthly patterns of heavenly realities

Chapter 5

(5:1-3) Here is a familiar structure: "know" is from *epignosis*, and refers to knowledge gained through experience; a tried and tested truth. Our experience with God tells us that "if our earthly tabernacle house is destroyed," and there is little doubt that it will be. "If" is *ean*, and it introduces a third class conditional

clause of supposition. But it's followed by a declarative statement; "we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." It's an equation of contrasts—on the one hand we have a house, our earthly tabernacle (tent) that is subject to decay or dissolution. On the other hand, we have an "eternal" house that is not subject to either decay or dissolution.

For we know that if our earthly tabernacle house is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this we groan, ardently desiring to have put on our house, which is from heaven; if indeed being also clothed we shall not be found naked. 2 Corinthians 5:1-3

(5:4) Paul is saying that he has no intention or thoughts of ever becoming a disembodied spirit, but the inhabitant of clothed in his heavenly house and "swallowed up by life" in that blessed state.

For indeed we who are in the tabernacle groan, being burdened; while yet we do not wish to be unclothed, but clothed, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 2 Corinthians 5:4

A walk by means of Faith yields confidence

(5:5-8) Note that we have been "wrought . . . for this very thing," i.e. *to be an eternal object of blessing to our heavenly Father*; and in testimony to that fact, He has "given to us the Spirit" as a "down-payment" (earnest) of what He intends for us. The following is inserted from Notes on Ephesians to demonstrate once again the solid character of Paul's Epistles in preparing the young Church for the onslaught of the enemy on its members' faith and doctrine—

In Ephesians 3 Paul states again God's eternal purpose for the Body of Christ:

(3:10, 11) The intention of God expressed in His will through the Church is here stated for us.

- * **"That"** introduces us to a purpose clause.
- * **"Now"** gives us the time frame of reference.
- * **"Manifold"** is multi-faceted, as a cut gem.
- * **"Rulers and authorities"** are classes of angelic beings that have to do with man and his world.

- * **“Heavenly realms”** tells us that we are here for all of creation, in heaven and on earth, to observe, in order that they might know more of God.
- * **“According to”** is a standard or norm.
- * **“His eternal purpose”** states that this position of the Church is an expression of His eternal will.

The focus is on the Father. This means that the purpose for which God has called out the Church is that through it He might show to all the angelic realms, the full spectrum of His wisdom and character. It is important to note that there is no redemption for the angelic segment of creation who chose to follow Satan and fell from grace. Salvation is reserved to man, for whom Christ died.

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. Ephesians 3:10, 11

(3:12) Now, the focus shifts and is on the Son. It is **“in Him and through faith in Him”** that we have the freedom from sin and the confidence in our redemption to **“approach God (the Father).”** Would the Son of God approach His Father with thanksgiving and petitions? Absolutely! So, too, may we approach our Father with thanksgiving for His provision and petition for that which we most need in order to live victorious lives in Christ.

In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. Ephesians 3:12

.....

No wonder we are “pleased rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord.” But while still here, “we are always confident” and our walk is “by faith, not by sight.”

Now he that has wrought us for this very thing is God, who also has given to us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, and know that while present in the body we are absent from the Lord, (for we walk by faith, not by sight;) we are confident, I say, and pleased rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:5-8

The Judgment Seat of Christ
(2 Corinthians 5:9-10) Moule

(5:9-10) “Zealous” *philotimoumetha* (‘we make it our objective’) “whether present or absent” is saying that he acts here just as if he were face-to-face with the Lord.

The reason is clear; “for we must all be manifested (‘revealed’)” at the bema-seat of Christ.

Wherefore also we are zealous, whether present or absent, to be agreeable to him. For we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of the Christ that each may receive the things done in the body, according to those he has done, whether it be good or evil. 2 Corinthians 5:9-10

The Atonement
Its Mystery of Mercy
(2 Corinthians 5:11-21)

(5:11-13) ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom’ (Proverbs 1:7) is the background for Paul’s statement here. “Knowing therefore the terror (fear) of the Lord we persuade (present active; we keep on trying) men.”

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men, but have been manifested to God, and I hope also that we have been manifested in your consciences. For we do not again commend ourselves to you, but we are giving to you occasion of boast in our behalf, that you may have such with those boasting in countenance, and not in heart. For whether we are beside ourselves, it is to God; or are sober, it is for you.
2 Corinthians 5:11-13

(5:14-16) “For the love *agapē* (love that is independent of response) of Christ constrains us.” “Constrains us” *sunechei hēmas* (is passive, to be held together). Paul is saying that it is the love of Christ that holds him to his task of ministering the Gospel of Reconciliation to those around him. “Having judged this” says that he has already come to a conclusion regarding what the Cross means to men; “that one died for all.” That statement alone is enough to convince me that Christ did not die only for the elect, but paid the price for every sin ever committed and for the taking away of Sin itself. ‘This is the central tenet in Paul’s theology and Christology’ (Robertson). If He died for all, “then all have died (to sin and to self); and He died for all in order that they who live should no longer live to themselves, but to Him who died for them and has been raised.” Here is a gem from Robertson—“one died *for* all” *heis huper pantōn apethanen*, the small preposition, *for* (*huper* ‘over’) is used in the sense of substitution, as in John 11:50 and Galatians 3:13; one died that the rest should not have to die.

Now do not miss this all-important point—Christ died on our behalf “so that we henceforth know no one according to flesh.” Our vision and appraisal of all men from the moment we are saved is of their relationship to Christ, not their standing before men. That is our *spiritual* vision, to see with the eyes of our spirit being led by the Holy Spirit. This was clearly laid out in his previous letter to them (see 1 Corinthians 2:14). Further, this principle is also applied to Christ! Paul says that even those who actually knew Christ in the flesh before His resurrection, *no longer know Him in that manner*. They now know Him as their ascended Savior! Stop attempting to duplicate His life in His approach to the Cross! Live His life as the *ascended* Man, the Savior! Read on and see that life become a reality in ours.

For the love of the Christ constrains us, having judged this: that one died for all, then all have died; and he died for all, that they who live should no longer live to themselves, but to him who died for them and has been raised. So that **we** henceforth know no one according to flesh; but if even we have known Christ according to flesh, yet now we know him thus no longer.
2 Corinthians 5:14-16

but if even we have known Christ according to flesh, yet now we know him thus no longer.

This is an essential truth that every Believer must grasp if they would find the finished work of the Savior in which they are to walk in their own life and witness before the Father! WWJD “What Would Jesus Do?” should not bring to mind the Man in the white robe on the dusty roads of Galilee; but the ascended Man, radiant in glory, at the Father’s side preparing to receive His Bride!

The Ministry of Reconciliation

(5:17-19) “So if (first class) any one be in Christ, there is a new creation *kainē ktisis*.” “The old things” which “have passed away” include the view of Christ in His pre-Cross position as Messiah and Israel’s Kinsman Redeemer. That is going to be difficult for many to take in, for they have been taught all their lives, in evangelical churches that Jesus came as *their* Messiah and Redeemer. He did redeem all from the power of Sin and sins, but He came to the Body of Christ as the ascended One to whom she, His Church, is betrothed, His Bride!

Never let anyone convince you to accept

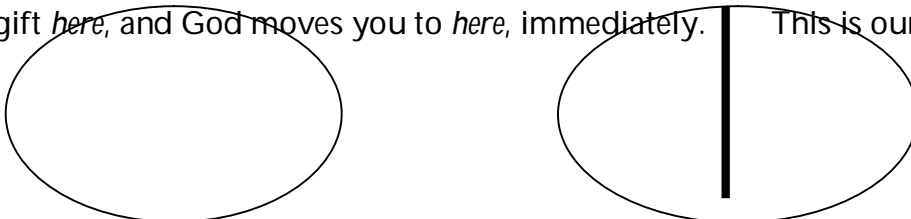
*a lesser relationship to your Savior
than that which He died and ascended
to secure for you with the Father!*

"Behold all things have become new" refers specifically to that new relationship to God in Christ that is the exclusive position of the Church through union with the ascended Man, Jesus. This is the basis for our freedom from the Law that so burdened Israel. "All things" now "are of the God who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." The Father, "who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ" now is the source of "all things" pertaining to us and our life on earth and our eternal destiny in heaven. How little we hear of that from today's pulpits. It is the Father in heaven who has "given to us the ministry of that reconciliation." The way that he did that is clear; God the Father, in perfect union with His Only Begotten Son, "was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning to them their offences; and putting in us the word of that reconciliation." There is no more important truth for us to teach and preach in this world than that one. No man dies and goes to eternal hell because of sin; man dies and is lost forever for one reason only, the rejection of the price that was paid on the Cross by the Lamb of God. Accept Him and His death for you and you are eternally saved as a child of God the Father.

So if any one be in Christ, there is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold all things have become new: and all things are of the God who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and given to us the ministry of that reconciliation: how that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not reckoning to them their offences; and putting in us the word of that reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:17-19

(5:20) Here is the strange position that Believers find ourselves in today. We are in possession of this most wonderful news that pertains to all of creation and mankind in particular. We are in the world representing *their* King, and in our hands is His gift to all creation; it is creation *in its entirety that has been reconciled* to God in Christ. Here is the wonder of this gift we bring—it is a fount of living water, of that which quenches every thirst one can imagine. Its stream is a transforming place of baptism into peace that surpasses every understanding that man can achieve.

It heals every wound, cures all disease, and annuls death itself. You can accept this gift *here*, and God moves you to *here*, immediately. This is our new



In time —→ you
 Sin, conflict, anxiety

In ————— Eternity
 PEACE
 ↘ you

position in Christ to which Paul refers so often in his epistles. Ephesians, in particular, is devoted to this concept.

Being *reconciled* to God means that there is nothing that mars that perfect relationship between Him and the man or woman who accepts the gift of life eternal that He offers, and which is paid for totally by the sacrifice of the Son, Jesus the Man, now ascended! Why is this so important? It is because this is the very heart of the message of reconciliation that has been committed to us, and *is* the Gospel from Pentecost and Romans 11 through the Pauline Epistles.

Be reconciled to God!

That is the mission and cry of the Body of Christ to the world of men.

We are ambassadors therefore for Christ, God as it were beseeching by us, we entreat for Christ, Be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:20

(5:21) This next verse is one of the most important statements in all Scripture. Let's analyze it carefully and thoroughly.

He who knew not sin—How did it happen that Christ came into this world as a man, yet without sin; and then remained sinless until His death? First, look at the *source* of man's sin, Adam. It was not Adam and Eve, but Adam who's act of disobedience resulted in the Sin Nature finding a stronghold within mankind! Why is that so? It is because God gave Adam the commandment not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Regarding Eve, a good defense attorney would say; "she got the information through hearsay." Adam said that God had said, etc. So, a good case can be made that Eve disobeyed Adam *directly* and God *indirectly*—this is what Paul refers to when he says that Eve was "deceived" (). Think about the consequences here. How important is order and respect for order and "Honor your father and mother?" Eve's disrespecting Adam's instructions from God cost them (1) Innocence; then, (2) Spiritual Death; then, (3) Physical Death; then, (4) Expulsion from Eden; then, (5) Work; then, (6) Parenthood; (7) then, the need for Redemption; then, (8) Atonement; then, loss of God's shared glory—all because Adam was enticed by his "helpmeet" to directly

disobey God's commandment, and that without deception playing any part. His was willful disobedience. Thus every child of Adam was born with the Adamic Nature committed to disobedience and sin and knowledgeable of the difference, compliments of the fruit of the forbidden tree. The fact that Jesus the Christ was born of a woman, but conceived by the Holy Spirit, meant that He was delivered into mankind without the Sin nature that is passed from Adam to all of his progeny.

Next, Jesus grew up as a youth "in favor with God and man." This meant that He committed no *acts of sin* by His behavior. His life was one of innocence and perfection in terms of righteousness

Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in him. 2 Corinthians 5:21

Chapter 6

Paul's parenthetical panorama of the Christian's life and ministry

The Divine Inhabitation
A Stimulant to Present Holiness
The Goal of Our Hope
(2 Corinthians 6:1-7:1) Moule

(6:1-10) Here is Paul's recap of what life in Christ has been like for him, and is likely to be our experience also. When you consider the history of Christendom, including that of true believers during the middle and dark ages, these are certainly true.

"Fellow-workmen" are those working together with God's instructions to us to bring the ministry of reconciliation to the lost. "In vain" *eis kenon* is 'into emptiness,' speaking of the rejection of our message by those to whom we minister, and I have to say, with much sadness, that this includes many within the Church who do not understand the Christian's service at all. In verse 2 Paul borrows a phrase from Isaiah 49:8 '*Behold, now is the acceptable time*' for our Pauline message. Remembering his advice from 1 Thessalonians 4:11, that we are to 'make it our ambition to live quiet lives, tend to our own business, and work with our own hands, so as to live at peace with all men,' here he reminds us that we should give "no manner of offence in anything, in order that the ministry be not blamed." I love this consistency in the Pauline Epistles. Also, we are to live among men in concert with the work of the Holy Spirit, "in

everything commending ourselves as God's ministers," not building up reputations for ourselves, but lifting up our ascended Savior as our own and God the Father as our source of all things. What follows is a litany of the world's responses to the Christian ministry of reconciliation: "in much endurance *hupomonē* (to bear up under), in afflictions *thlipsis* (pressure), in necessities *anankais* ((distress, pain), in straits *stenochōreō* (to be pressed for room), in stripes *plēgais* (wounds like a plague), in prisons, in riots *ἁkatastasiais* (politically unstable surroundings), in labors, in watching *agrupniais* (periods of sleeplessness), in fasting, in pureness, in knowledge *gnōsei* (doctrine), in longsuffering *makrothumia* (*macros* long; *thumos* temper), in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned *agapēi anupokritōi* (love without measure or qualification), in the word of truth, in the power of God." Each of the items just listed are preceded by the preposition *en* (in). The next listing has each item preceded by *dia* (by, or through); and the third with *hōs* (as). "Through" *dia*, "the arms of righteousness" should be connected to the 'weapons of righteousness' in Romans 6:13 for they were *offensive* weapons in the right hand and *defensive* weapons in the left hand, and that is what is seen here as the metaphor continues, "on the right hand and left." "Through *dia* glory *doxēs* (from which we get 'doxology') and dishonor *atimias*; "through *dia* evil *dus-phēmias* report and good *eu-phēmias* report (note the prefixes in each case). Now the third list begins; "as *hōs* deceivers *planoi* (vagabonds or imposters), and [yet] true *alētheis*; as *hōs* unknown *agnooumenoi* (obscure, without proper credentials), and [yet] well known *epiginōskomenoi* (known by your experience with them); as *hōs* dying, and *kai* (and yet) behold, we live; as *hōs* disciplined, and not put to death; as *hōs* grieved, but always rejoicing; as *hōs* poor, but enriching many; as *hōs* having nothing, and *kai* (and yet) possessing all things." This is the conclusion of Paul's parenthetical panorama of the paradox called the life and ministry of the Christian.

But as fellow-workmen, we also beseech that you receive not the grace of God in vain: (for he says, I have listened to you in an accepted time, and I have helped you in a day of salvation: behold, now [is the] well-accepted time; behold, now [the] day of salvation:) giving no manner of offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed; but in everything commending ourselves as God's ministers, in much endurance, in afflictions, in necessities, in straits, in stripes, in prisons, in riots, in labors, in watching, in fasting, in pureness, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; through the arms of righteousness on the right hand and left, through glory and dishonor, through evil report and good report: as deceivers, and

true; as unknown, and well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as disciplined, and not put to death; as grieved, but always rejoicing; as poor, but enriching many; as having nothing, and possessing all things.

2 Corinthians 6:1-10

(6:11-16) "Our mouth stands open" and "our heart is broadened," (Matthew 12:34 'from out of an abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks'). "Straitened" is 'to tighten up; to be anxious;' thus, "You are not a cause of anxiety in my heart, but you may have been caused to be anxious in your affections for me by some of the things that I have faced; but, for a response in answer (I speak as to children) let your heart also expand itself, to be strengthened, as has mine." Now look at the setting this next gem is set in—"Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers" is cited in all kinds of situations, marriage, business, property ownership, etc.; but the setting is this reference to the cause of anxiety in your life over circumstances. Look at all the things that Paul has just reviewed as common in the life of a Christian, and look at his advice not to let anxiety creep in, regarding things you or another believer might face. Why? It is because our heavenly Father is keeping each one of us in His own special way. He never loses sight of us or our circumstances. This is something the unbeliever will never understand or be able to adopt in his/her life. "Be not" is a present imperative, a command to stop joining them in their anxious state, because they cannot join you in your life of faith and trust in God. To join with them in worry and hand-wringing would be tantamount to some kind of union of righteousness with lawlessness, as impossible as light and darkness existing in the same space and time. "Has Christ ever agreed with Belial" (a Hebrew word for 'worthlessness' that is applied to Satan). In his first letter to them, 1 Corinthians 10:14-22, he has already given them instruction regarding the temple of God, which they are; then he cites several Old Testament passages where God spoke to Israel. From Leviticus 26:11f; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 20:34; 37:27; and 2 Samuel 7:8, 14, comes the phrases; "I will dwell among them, and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be to me a people." But, there is one exception, for "I will dwell in (among) them" *enoikēsō en autois* is not in any of them (Plummer). That statement is literally true only of the Believer on this side of Pentecost in the Church Age.

Our mouth is opened to you, Corinthians, our heart is expanded. You are not straitened in us, but you are straitened in your affections; but for an answering recompense, (I speak as to children,) let your heart also expand itself. Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers; for what participation is there between righteousness and lawlessness? or what

fellowship of light with darkness? and what consent of Christ with Beliar, or what part for a believer along with an unbeliever? and what agreement of God's temple with idols? for you are the living God's temple; according as God has said, I will dwell among them, and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be to me a people.

2 Corinthians 6:11-16

(6:17) "Wherefore" says that on the basis of the foregoing you are to "come out" of the world system of the unbelievers, "and be separated" unto God, whose you are! Don't adopt their ways; "stop touching what is unclean" is literally the command. The result is that God will "receive you" as a father does receive his own "sons and daughters."

Wherefore come out from the midst of them, and be separated, says the Lord, and touch not what is unclean, and I will receive you; and I will be to you for a Father, and you shall be to me for sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. 2 Corinthians 6:17-18

Chapter 7

(7:1) So many "promises" *eppagelias* (see 2 Peter 2:4; Hebrews 11:39f) were made to Israel and never realized by that chosen nation, but have come true in the New Testament Church through the Believer becoming the living temple of God in this age. As a Jew, Paul is particularly sensitive to these truths blossoming in the Body of Christ. So, he brings them face to face with a higher calling with "let us purify ourselves" *katharisōmen heautous* by separating "from every pollution of flesh and spirit." In other words, don't let the Old Adamic Nature within your flesh contaminate your human spirit (which is in you through regeneration) by feeding your mind on worldly principles rather than on the Word of God. This is separation, not in the physical sense, but in the spiritual sense of thinking according to godly principles, for "holiness" is being totally set apart in mind, body, soul, and spirit, a condition in which we are to become experts and living examples.

Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us purify ourselves from every pollution of flesh and spirit; perfecting holiness in God's fear.

2 Corinthians 7:1

Recent Circumstances
Trial and Sorrow in the Mission

(2 Corinthians 7:2-16) Moule

(7:2-3) "Receive us" *chōrēsate hēmas* is more literally 'make a space for us' speaking of their hearts. In saying that "we have made gain *oudenā epleonektēsamen* (to take advantage) of no man," he is answering a charge made against him in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 4:6). It is a request for intimacy with them, because he has already made his commitment to them, "you are in our hearts, to die together, and live together," or 'for the dying or living together.'

Receive us: we have injured no one, we have ruined no one; we have made gain of no one. I do not speak for condemnation, for I have already said that you are in our hearts, to die together, and live together.

2 Corinthians 7:2-3

(7:4-7) Two things come out of these verses; one, is the fact that afflictions of all kinds do not cancel out the Believer's joy; in fact, as Paul says, it can "over-abound." Two, is that the source of our encouragement is God the Father. In this case He encourages Paul by sending Titus with the good news of the Church in Corinth and their support of Paul and his ministry.

Great is my boldness towards you, great my exulting in respect of you; I am filled with encouragement; I over-abound in joy under all our affliction. For indeed, when we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but [we were] afflicted in every way; without combats, within fears. But he who encourages those that are [brought] low, [even] God, encouraged us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but also through the encouragement with which he was encouraged as to you; relating to us your ardent desire, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I the more rejoiced. 2 Corinthians 7:4-7

(7:8-9) As an effective leader he knows that stern, even harsh, critique is often hurtful for those who need it, but he realizes that it is "only for a time," and if it works "repentance" then it has done its good work. If you watch much television you can easily get the idea that critique is supposed to be hurtful; no, critique is supposed to change behavior in a positive way. One of the biggest mistakes a leader can make is to contaminate his/her criticism with praise; you know instinctively what I mean by that. You start your review by mentioning the 'good things' a person has done (so as to not deflate their self-image) and save the critique of things done in error until last. Well, after the first review

your charge is simply waiting for the other shoe to drop, so to speak. Whatever benefit your praise was to deliver is lost in anticipation of the review of errors that is sure to come. Paul does not do this—look back at 6:11 and see how he dives right in on the things that they need to address. Here, also, he states plainly that “Since (first class ‘if’) I grieved you in the [first] letter, I do not regret it . . . for you have been grieved to repentance.”

For if also I grieved you in the letter, I do not regret it, if even I have regretted it; for I see that that letter, if even it were only for a time, grieved you. Now I rejoice, not that you have been grieved, but that you have been grieved to repentance; for you have been grieved according to God, that in nothing you might be injured by us. 2 Corinthians 7:8-9

(7:10-12) In Paul’s letter to the Hebrews it was the works of the Law that worked repentance (Hebrews 7). Here, it is “grief according to God” that “works repentance to salvation.” The way of grace is that a man is brought face to face with his deeds in the flesh and there finds shame in the eyes of God. To ‘repent’ is to change one’s mind regarding something, and in this case, it is the presence of sin in his/her life and the deeds of the flesh, which are empty. You see that “the grief of the world works death” and that is spiritual death, for feeling sorry for something done is not effective, it is true repentance that changes one’s mind and heart regarding displeasing God. The result is “much diligence” regarding your walk is “formed [wrought] in you.” The motivation to walk according to God’s dictates is produced within you by the Holy Spirit in residence. So, instead of the “excusing of yourselves,” there is “indignation . . . fear . . . ardent desire . . . zeal . . . and vengeance,” which is the desire to correct a wrong done to another.

For grief according to God works repentance to salvation, never to be regretted; but the grief of the world works death. For, behold, this same thing, your being grieved according to God, how much diligence it wrought in you, but what excusing of yourselves, but what indignation, but what fear, but what ardent desire, but what zeal, but what vengeance: in every way you have proved yourselves to be pure in the matter. So then, if also I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of him that injured, nor for the sake of him that was injured, but for the sake of our diligent zeal for you being manifested to you before God. 2 Corinthians 7:10-12

(7:13-16) Paul says that the growth and zeal found through fellowship with other Believers is a great source of encouragement to him. And, it is infectious, as the

“joy of Titus” in having “his spirit . . . refreshed” by those in Corinth has magnified his own encouragement. As I read this I am thinking of the very short time we have to socialize and share with one another here each week. Those minutes around the coffee are precious, because it is often the only contact we have with those we love the most, and with whom we are growing in the Word.

For this reason we have been encouraged; and we the rather rejoiced in our encouragement more abundantly by reason of the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. Because if I boasted to him anything about you, I have not been put to shame; but as we have spoken to you all things in truth, so also our boasting to Titus has been the truth; and his affections are more abundantly towards you, calling to mind the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. I rejoice that in everything I am confident as to you.
2 Corinthians 7:13-16

The Ministry of Giving Examples and Principles of Giving Chapter 8 and 9

Chapter 8

(8:1-4) Though the “assemblies of Macedonia” are extremely poor, they have found great joy in being able to give to the ministry of relief for the saints in Jerusalem, and begged Paul to allow them to give to the offering being taken for that purpose. “Fellowship” *koinonia* speaks of the warm love that they feel for those Believers who are undergoing such persecution. To know Christ, is to know in a very real way your spiritual family in particular.

But we make known to you, brethren, the grace of God bestowed in the assemblies of Macedonia; that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty has abounded to the riches of their free-hearted liberality. For according to their power, I bear witness, and beyond their power, they were willing of their own accord, begging of us with much entreaty to give effect to the grace and fellowship of the service which was to be rendered to the saints. 2 Corinthians 8:1-4

(8:5-7) Their giving in Macedonia was not even what was expected, but it far exceeded any expectation. They began their giving by presenting themselves first to the Lord and to us” then they brought their gifts. So, they asked Titus to

do the same thing in Corinth, to give the believers there the opportunity to follow the pattern of the Macedonian church. What a witness from the newer body in Macedonia to the older body in Corinth. Christian liberty at work!

And not according as we hoped, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and to us by God's will. So that we begged Titus that, according as he had before begun, so he would also complete as to you this grace also; but even as you abound in every way, in faith, and word, and knowledge, and all diligence, and in love from you to us, that you may abound in this grace also. 2 Corinthians 8:5-7

The Christian Concept of Equality

(8:8-14) Here are some guidelines for your giving. The Corinthians had stated their desire to give to the ministry of Paul a year previously. So he says, "I do not speak commanding (*epitigē*, to command) [you to give], but through the enthusiasm [zeal] of others, and to prove the genuineness of your love" [for those ministered to by your contributions]. *Kai to tēs humeteras agapēs gnēsion* says that their giving is a test of their love (*agape*, the quality of their love) and its source (*gnēsion* from which we get genesis or beginning). "You know" *ginōskete* (they have been taught) that the Lord Jesus Christ "was rich" *plusios ōn* (to be) and that He willingly "became" (aorist indicative, He acted in a point in time on His own accord) "poor" *epitōcheusen*. This means so much more than that He eschewed money, for He 'emptied Himself of all His prerogatives as deity and assumed the limitations of humanity' (the doctrine of kenosis) that we all deal with every moment. Paul now says that he is giving them his opinion *gnōmēn*, that they were quick to pledge a contribution a year ago, and began to plan and to collect what they had pledged at that time, and now they should "finish their collection out of what they have" on hand. This is the exact opposite of 'seed-faith' giving as practiced and taught by so many media preachers today. In 1 Corinthians 16:2 Paul has already told them; "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." They should have already done that so that whatever amount they could contribute is already there. This is true grace giving; we do not give, to get; but we give because God has already given to us. Paul states it this way; "For if the readiness is there, a man is accepted according to what he may have, not according to what he has not." You do not put yourself in distress in order to put others at ease; "but of equality, in the present time [you give out of] your abundance for their lack (needs)."

I do not speak as commanding it, but through the zeal of others, and proving the genuineness of your love. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that for your sakes he, being rich, became poor, in order that you by His poverty might be enriched. And I give my opinion in this, for this is profitable for you who began before, not only to do, but also to be willing, a year ago. But now also complete the doing of it; so that as there was the readiness to be willing, so also to complete out of what you have. For if the readiness be there, a man is accepted according to what he may have, not according to what he has not. For [it is] not in order that there may be ease for others, and for you distress, but [on the principle] of equality; in the present time your abundance for their lack, that their abundance may be for your lack, so that there should be equality.

2 Corinthians 8:8-14

(8:15-21) "He who gathered much had no excess, and he who gathered little was nothing short" (from Exodus 16:16 regarding the harvest of manna). God, who provided for Israel in the wilderness, has also provided by the "same diligent zeal" for the Corinthians "in the heart of Titus" their messenger to Paul. "Thanks be to God," *tōi didonti* (present active participle) "who is continually giving" so that the zeal of Titus is continually being refueled by God. "For he (Titus) received indeed the entreaty (request), but being full of zeal (*from God*) he went of his own accord to you; but we have sent with him the brother (probably Luke, who may, in fact, be the brother of Titus) whose praise is in the glad tidings *euangelio* (the gospel) through all the assemblies *ekklesiōn*. In addition, this brother was "chosen (by vote) by the churches" not by Paul, as his "fellow-traveler" (traveling companion), which he felt the need to explain, lest "any one should blame us" for having the assistance ("abundance") that he oversees.

According as it is written, He who gathered much had no excess, and he who gathered little was nothing short. But thanks be to God, who gives the same diligent zeal for you in the heart of Titus. For he received indeed the entreaty, but, being full of zeal, he went of his own accord to you; but we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the glad tidings through all the assemblies; and not only so, but is also chosen by the assemblies as our fellow-traveler with this grace, ministered by us to the glory of the Lord himself, and a witness of our readiness; avoiding this, that any one should blame us in this abundance, which is administered by us; for we provide for things honest, not only before [the] Lord, but also before men. 2 Corinthians 8:15-21

(8:22-24) "Our brother" could refer to Tychicus or Appolos, there is no way to know for sure. Titus is called his "companion" *kionōnos emos* and "fellow-worker" *sunergos*, both terms of endearment and trust. This small band has been deputized as "messengers of assemblies" *apostoloi ekklesiōn*, ones sent with a message and authorized to handle the funds being gathered.

And we have sent with them our brother whom we have often proved to be of diligent zeal in many things, and now more diligently zealous through the great confidence [he has] as to you. Whether as regards Titus, he is my companion and fellow-laborer in your behalf; or our brethren, they are deputed messengers of assemblies, Christ's glory. Show therefore to them, before the assemblies, the proof of your love, and of our boasting about you. 2 Corinthians 8:22-24

Chapter 9

(9:1-4) Paul says that it is totally unnecessary (superfluous) for him to write to them concerning the offering they are preparing for the saints in Macedonia, but he writes in any case. He knows that they are ready and have been making ready for over a year. Their zeal in this has been the subject of messages given to those in Macedonia who have really been oppressed severely by the Romans. However, like any good leader, he is hedging his bets on them by warning them that there might be some Macedonians in the company sent to them to receive their pledged assistance, and he doesn't want them embarrassed in case they are not fully prepared. There is always the possibility of a gap between intentions and performance.

For concerning the ministration, which is for the saints, it is superfluous my writing to you. For I know your readiness, which I boast of as respects you to Macedonians, that Achaia is prepared since a year ago, and the zeal reported of you has stimulated the mass of the brethren. But I have sent the brethren, in order that our boasting about you may not be made void in this respect, in order that, as I have said, you may be prepared; lest haply, if Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we, that we say not you, may be put to shame in this confidence.
2 Corinthians 9:1-4

(9:5-7) He was personally concerned that some of the Corinthian believers had really become negligent in bringing in their pledges, so he "thought it necessary

to beg *parakalésia* the brethren [being sent] to come to you, and complete (make sure that you finished your collection) the pledges you made as promised (fore-announced).” He did not want anyone there stationing ushers at the doors and passing the plate around one more time. “But this is true, he that sows sparingly (giving less than he/she could comfortably give) shall also reap sparingly; and he that sows in the spirit of blessing shall reap also in blessing.” Note that there is no promise of a monetary return for your giving, but a return in blessing. “Each should give according as he has purposed in his heart; not grievingly *mē ek lupēs* (grudgingly, like a trip to the dentist), or of necessity *ē ex anagkēs* (because you have to, or need to keep up with your peers); for God loves *agapāi* a cheerful *hilaron* (from which we get hilarious) giver.

I thought it necessary therefore to beg the brethren that they would come to you, and complete beforehand your fore-announced blessing, that this may be ready thus as blessing, and not as got out of you. But this is true, he that sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that sows in the spirit of blessing shall reap also in blessing: each according as he is purposed in his heart; not grievingly, or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:5-7

(9:8-11) “But” introduces the contrast between the one who gives grudgingly or sparingly and God’s ability to bless without measure. If we are depending on God, then we should be able to turn loose of what we have to those in need, without concern that we will not have what we need at some future date. Now that applies to books as well as money, and you who know how I treasure my library will understand; I now make it a practice to put those treasures in the hands of a true seeker without regret when they do not find their way back (which is often); it is a painful test of my willingness to follow this command. God knows where the need is and the books are His after all. Note Paul’s use of the Greek “all” *panti* in three ways here—“that, having in every way *en panti*, always *pantote*, all-sufficiency *pāsan autarkeian*.” My experience is that I “abound to every good work” when my heart is pliable and my mind is ready to listen when He leads. As that happens, we can then see with clarity that “He has scattered abroad . . . given to the poor . . . supplies *epichorēgōn* (from *chorēgos* used of a leader of a chorus who supplies it at his own expense) seed to the sower and bread for eating, and that His righteousness remains forever,” we should be doing the same. Does this bring to mind that the Church is God’s masterpiece (Ephesians 2:10), His *poema* (from which we get poem) to all creation (see Notes on Ephesians). For that, which the Father considers His treasure, He makes “abundant your sowing,” and increases “the fruits of your righteousness,”

which is the righteousness of Christ. If your generosity ('liberality') is not with abandon ('free-hearted'), and it is not accompanied by "thanksgiving to God," then you know that you have yet more growth ahead of you.

But God is able to make every gracious gift abound towards you, that, having in every way always all-sufficiency, you may abound to every good work: according as it is written, He has scattered abroad, he has given to the poor, his righteousness remains for ever. Now he that supplies seed to the sower and bread for eating shall supply and make abundant your sowing, and increase the fruits of your righteousness: enriched in every way unto all free-hearted liberality, which works through us thanksgiving to God. 2 Corinthians 9:8-11

"It is important for us to realize that the church is not a project for believers to complete, but it continues as a work solely of God."

(9:12-15) "Service" *leitourgias* is a word that means to work in service to the people in general. In this context, it speaks of the Believer's service to God performed on behalf of the people to whom you minister the Gospel. In this specific case, the service is the collection of an offering for the relief of the saints in Jerusalem. "Filling up" is present tense, they continue to add to what others in Macedonia have given and it is "abounding by many thanksgivings to God." "Ministration" is not 'administration,' or management, but participation in the service of giving because they are being ("obedient" KJV) ("subjection" Darby) "to the Gospel of the Christ." This should remind us that the Gospel is founded on the obedience of Christ to His Father and our Father (Hebrews 5:8), and that we share in the fellowship of His suffering (Philippians 3:7ff).

Because the ministration of this service is not only filling up the measure of what is lacking to the saints, but also abounding by many thanksgivings to God; they glorifying God through the proof of this ministration, by reason of your subjection, by profession, to the glad tidings of the Christ, and your free-hearted liberality in communicating towards them and towards all; and in their supplication for you, full of ardent desire for you, on account of the exceeding grace of God [which is] upon you. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable free gift.
2 Corinthians 9:12-15

Apostolic Authority
Defense and Marks of Apostleship
Chapters 10 through 13

Chapter 10

(10:1-3) “But I, Paul, entreat *parakalō* (*para* ‘alongside’ with ‘advise, plead’) you with the meekness *praütētos* and gentleness *epieikeia* of the Christ. Jesus claimed meekness for Himself (Matthew 11:29), and Paul is attempting to walk among them as the Lord Himself walked among those to whom He came as Messiah. Paul says that “when present I am *mean* (“lowly”) among you, but when absent I am bold *apōn tharrō* towards you.” “But” (in contrast to his previous pleading advice as one of them, now he does “beseech” *deomai* (to beg) that his boldness and confidence is not mistaken by them, because it is specific in answer to those who accuse him of “walking according to flesh,” to have personal motives of gain by their actions. The truth is that you cannot “war” *strateuometha* (to lead an army) “according to flesh” *kata sarka* (‘according to the standards of flesh’), if you are “walking in flesh” (*en sarki* ‘in the sphere of’).

But I myself, Paul, entreat you by the meekness and gentleness of the Christ, who, as to appearance, [when present] [am] *mean* among you, but absent am bold towards you; but I beseech that present I may not be bold with the confidence with which I think to be daring towards some who think of us as walking according to flesh. For walking in flesh, we do not war according to flesh. 2 Corinthians 10:1-3

(10:4-7) Our weapons of warfare are not fleshly, but are “powerful according to God *dunata* (‘explosive’) *tōi theōi* (‘in God’s eyes’) to the overthrow of strongholds.” This language is all borrowed from military terms; “overthrow” is to ‘cast down’ or to ‘tear down’ and “strongholds” is from a word for fortifications built to hold fast against assault. Those strongholds consist of imaginations and “reasonings” *logismous*, which are used to build high and exalted *hupsoma epairomenon* positions of logic and thoughts. This is exactly the process by which humanism attacks Scripture and any idea of trust and faith in a personal God. So, Paul says that we need to consider the tools of our warfare (the armor of God from Ephesians) and always be “leading captive every thought into the obedience of the Christ.” That’s exactly what He said that Jesus did in Hebrews 6 in obedience to His Father. See here that he is saying to us; if we concentrate on our obedience to being our thoughts into captivity to what God is teaching us and doing in us, we will be upholding our end of the

battle and He will take care of the enemy and his strongholds. Our task is obedience; His job is the battle!

For the arms of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful according to God to the overthrow of strongholds; overthrowing reasonings and every high thing that lifts itself up against the knowledge of God, and leading captive every thought into the obedience of the Christ; and having in readiness to avenge all disobedience when your obedience shall have been fulfilled. 2 Corinthians 10:4-7

(10:7) “You look” *blepete* is not a question. “At what concerns appearance” *kata prosōpon* (lit. ‘what is before your face’). Look at the facts under the surface of appearance—“If” (third class supposition) “any one has confidence within himself that he is Christ’s, let him think through this again within himself (his own mind) that just as he is Christ’s, so also are we.” When a question arises about a brother’s behavior or motives, go back to ‘Being a Christian 101” and consider carefully with the thought in mind that both you and the party being questioned are both owned by Christ and are God’s property. That means more care taken in how we deal with God’s property and assets.

Do you look at what concerns appearance? If any one has confidence in himself that he is of Christ, let him think this again in himself that even as he is of Christ, so also are we.

(10:8-10) “If” (third class supposition) “I should boast somewhat more abundantly” (compared to his accusers who are also ministers of Christ) “of our authority, which [authority] the Lord has given [to us] for [the purpose of] building [you] up and not for your overthrowing.” This simply underscores the purpose of God’s giving gifts of service to Believers; they are for the edifying of the members of His called out assembly! Gifts of service, especially leadership and administration, are not for the purpose of managing the lives of the sheep, but are for the maturing, the nurturing in the Word, for the equipping of the Body of Christ to do the work of (privilege of offering) the ministry of reconciliation to all those around us. “I shall not be put to shame” as if I were an imposter, or a felon, or an arrogant boaster; in order “that I may not seem as (appear) if I was frightening (terrifying) you by my letters.” “He says” refers to the leader who is questioning Paul’s authority and motives; the quote is; “because his (Paul’s) letters are weighty and strong, but his presence in the body weak and his speech naught (to be treated as of no account). This man is

deriding Paul because he is no commanding figure of a man physically, and his speech does not command attention.

For if I should boast even somewhat more abundantly of our authority, which the Lord has given [to us] for building up and not for your overthrowing, I shall not be put to shame; that I may not seem as if I was frightening you by letters: because his letters, he says, [are] weighty and strong, but his presence in the body weak, and his speech naught.
2 Corinthians 10:8-10

(10:11-13) "Such as we are" *hoioi esmen* is a qualitative word; 'what we are in letters when absent and what we do when present is exactly the same.' We will not put ourselves in the same boat or compare ourselves to those Judaizers who are patting themselves on the back for meeting the standards that they have set among themselves, for that is not even intelligent. "Measure" *kanna* is the rod by which one measures, from which we get 'canon.' "The God of measure" says that it is God who sets the standard by which we live and minister to one another. If we know the Word, then we need no other guide. We never want to become like those Israelites who felt it necessary to build a fence around the Law to protect themselves from breaking it. Soon, they were enslaved to their fence and not governed by the Law that God had given them.

Let such a one think this that such as we are in word by letters when absent, such also present in deed. For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves; but these, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are not intelligent. Now we will not boast out of measure, but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach to you also. 2 Corinthians 10:11-13

(10:14-18) "For I stretch not myself beyond due bounds (as though I reached you not)" (Conybeare, 1864), ("For we have come [even as far as] to you also in the glad tidings (gospel) of the Christ.") The implication here is that they were the first to bring the Gospel to Corinth (Acts 18:1-18). I am "not boasting out of measure ('excessively') in other people's labors" (as was the practice of the Judaizers), "but [I am] having hope [that as] your faith is increasing, I will be honored ('magnified' *megalunthēnai* 'to make great') among you, consistent with ('according to our rule') my appointment [as an Apostle.] "But he that boasts, let him boast in the Lord" (is from Proverbs 27:2).

For we do not, as not reaching to you, overstretch ourselves, (for we have come to you also in the glad tidings of the Christ;) not boasting out of measure in other people's labors, but having hope, your faith increasing, to be enlarged amongst you, according to our rule, yet more abundantly to announce the glad tidings to that which is beyond you, not to be boasting in another's rule of things made ready to hand. But he that boasts, let him boast in the Lord. For not he that commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends. 2 Corinthians 10:14-18

Chapter 11

(11:1-3) Paul says here; 'Please indulge me in a little foolishness, but do carefully pay attention.' "I am jealous of you with a jealousy from God; for I have espoused *hērmōsamēn* ('to join together') you unto one man *andri* (husband), to present a chaste virgin to the Christ." The Church is presented to a man, Jesus, her husband who is "the Christ" our Savior. The serpent *ophis* deceived *exēpatēsen* Eve. This is Paul's only reference to the serpent in Eden; but it does establish a very important point, which is that Adam was not deceived by Satan as was Eve. His decision to disobey the command of God was willful and deliberate, and is the basis on which our Old Sin Nature comes to us through our human father.

Would that ye would bear with me [in] a little folly; but indeed bear with me. For I am jealous as to you with a jealousy [which is] of God; for I have espoused you unto one man, to present [you] a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craft, [so] your thoughts should be corrupted from simplicity as to the Christ.
2 Corinthians 11:1-3

(11:4-7) Now here the scheme of Satan becomes clearer, "for if indeed he that comes preaches another *allon* ('another of the same kind') Jesus, whom we have not preached, or you get a different *heteron* ('another of the same kind') Spirit, which you have not accepted, or a different *heteron* gospel, which you have not received, you do well to bear with (*lit 'hold yourselves back from'*)-(Robertson) him." Their Jesus, their Spirit, and their Gospel are all going to sound the same as the real Jesus, the real Holy Spirit and the genuine Gospel of grace; but they will lack the essential character and are preached for different motives than that of Grace and service to God. Content is everything!

Paul's humility now is not feigned, but more as a parody, when he says that he lacks nothing when compared to the 'super apostles,' referring to the Judaizers among them. Though he is "simple in speech," he is not behind "in knowledge" and he always concentrates on "making the truth manifest (clearly revealed) in all things" as he preaches the Gospel. "Was it a sin" he asks, "for me to humble myself (through making tents to support himself) in order that you might be lifted up, because I preached to you for free the Gospel of God?"

For if indeed he that comes preaches another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or you get a different Spirit, which you have not got, or a different glad tidings, which ye have not received, ye might well bear with it. For I reckon that in nothing I am behind those who are in surpassing degree apostles. But if I am a simple person in speech, yet not in knowledge, but in everything making the truth manifest in all things to you. Have I committed sin, abasing myself in order that you might be exalted, because I gratuitously announced to you the glad tidings of God?
2 Corinthians 4-7

(11:8-13) "I robbed *esulēsa* (to take arms from a fallen foe, to despoil) other assemblies, receiving hire (taking wages) for [my] ministry to you." "Lazily burden *katenarkēsa* (become numb, narcolepsy) anyone." Paul is determined to keep his ministry of the Gospel free of any accusation that he is in it for the money, which he says is going to continue throughout the regions of Achaia. Those accusers are "false apostles, deceitful workers" and are "transforming themselves into apostles of Christ." They primary scheme of Satan in this age is to counterfeit the real Assembly of God with churches that are devoid of truth and offer another gospel, but one that sounds real, because it offers solutions to today's problems today! What too many pulpits are offering today are the gospels of self-improvement, better living through human engineering, and barn-building techniques that would make Nehemiah blush.

I spoiled other assemblies, receiving hire for ministry towards you. And being present with you and lacking, I did not lazily burden any one, (for the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied what I lacked,) and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will keep myself. The truth of Christ is in me that this boasting shall not be stopped as to me in the regions of Achaia. Why? because I do not love you? God knows. But what I do, I will also do, that I may cut off the opportunity of those wishing for an opportunity, that wherein they boast they may be

found even as we. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers,
transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 2 Corinthians 11:8-13

(11:14-15) This should not surprise us, “for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.” He does not appear to us today as the hideous lizard from the pit of hell, enveloped in an odious cloud and breathing fire. He is the most polished, well-mannered, erudite, harbinger of peace, wealth, and happiness that you could ever conjure up. He has the solutions to every problem; can bring in a period of peace between the nations; he leads in the discovery of cures to the world’s most feared threats to our health, and he can make you to be the most powerful, seductive, loved man or woman that you could ever imagine. He is like a puppy with the bite of an alligator and a kitten with the attitude of a shark. He is an angel of light that brings you into the deepest darkness; and he does it all from pulpits in the most beautiful places we erect. But, his end, and that of his minions, “shall be according to their works.”

And [it is] not wonderful, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. 2 Corinthians 11:14-15

(11:16-23) “Let not any one think *doxēi* (from which we get doxology or praise), me to be a fool *aphrona* (lit. ‘foolish’); but if (third class supposition) otherwise, then receive me even as a fool, (in order) that I also may boast [of] myself a little.” Paul is a man after all, for in 10:1 he asks them to consider following him as an example of following after (in the meekness and gentleness of) Christ. Now, he admits to them that what he is going to say next is not the behavior that you would expect of the Lord, but of a man. “What I speak I do not speak according to [the] Lord *kata Kurion*, but as in folly *kata sarka* (lit. ‘in flesh,’ in keeping with considering him ‘foolish’), in this confidence of boasting” [as something a man only would do. With extreme sarcasm he says; “for you bear *anesthe gar* (tolerate) fools readily, being wise.” Then he ties the verb to each of the conditions that they readily accept without protest; “you tolerate enslavement (tyranny); you tolerate if any one devours you (extortion); you tolerate if any one gets your money (through craftiness, a con-game); you tolerate any one exalting himself (and dishonoring you); you even tolerate someone beating you in the face; you tolerate the insult (of a slap in the face).” “I speak as to dishonor (out of great consideration), as though we had been weak; but wherein any one (of them) is daring, I [now am going to] speak in folly *aphrosyne* (foolishly), I also am daring.” Now he lists his qualifications to

speak to them as an apostle and his pedigree as a Jew—"Are they Hebrews? I also." Without question he is a descendant of Jacob. Are they Israelites? I also." Yes he is, because he is from Dan, one of the tribes of the Northern kingdom, which was charged with the responsibility to remain true to God and temple worship. "Are they seed of Abraham? I also;" and he refers to two senses; one as a direct descendant of Abraham, and two, as a spiritual descendant of Abraham, a member of 'spiritual Israel' (Galatians 6) those who are in the Body of Christ by means of faith. "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as being beside myself *paraphronōn* 'out of my wits') I above measure ('more than they') [so]; in labors exceedingly abundant *perrisosterōs*, in stripes to excess, in prisons exceedingly abundant *perrisosterōs*, (Robertson lists 5 imprisonments, Clements of Rome lists 7); in deaths oft" (see 1:9ff; 4:11).

Again I say, Let not any one think me to be a fool; but if otherwise, receive me then even as a fool, that *I* also may boast myself some little. What I speak I do not speak according to [the] Lord, but as in folly, in this confidence of boasting. Since many boast according to flesh, I also will boast. For you bear fools readily, being wise. For you bear if any one bring you into bondage, if any one devour [you], if any one get [your money], if any one exalt himself, if any one beat you on the face. I speak as to dishonor, as though we had been weak; but wherein any one is daring, (I speak in folly,) I also am daring. Are they Hebrews? I also. Are they Israelites? I also. Are they seed of Abraham? I also. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as being beside myself) I above measure [so]; in labors exceedingly abundant, in stripes to excess, in prisons exceedingly abundant, in deaths oft. 2 Corinthians 11:16-23

(11:24-31) "From the Jews five times have I received forty [stripes], save one" (neither Acts nor the Epistles mention these Jewish floggings). Thrice have I been scourged *errabdisthēn* (to beat with a rod *rabdos*), once *hapax* (once for all, with the expectation of death at Lystra; see Acts 14:5-19) I have been stoned *elithasthēn*, three times I have suffered shipwreck *enauḡēsa* (*naus* ship, *agnumi* to break), the shipwreck of Acts 27 occurred much later (Robertson), a night and day I passed in the deep *en tōi buthōi pepoiēka* (*buthos*, old word for depth of the water) he was apparently lost at sea in one of the three shipwrecks mentioned, but of which we have no records: in journeys (as a wayfarer on foot, a hobo) often, in perils *kindunois* of rivers (flash floods of Asia Minor), in perils of robbers *lēistōn* (pirates as opposed to thieves), in perils from my own race (see Acts 9:23, 29; 13:50; 14:5; 17:5, 13; 18:12; 23:12; 24:27), in perils from the nations (Gentiles), in perils in the city, in perils in the desert, in perils on the sea, in

perils among false brethren *pseudadelphoi*; in labor and toil *kopōi kai mockthōi* severe work (see 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8), in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold *en psuchēi* (old word, to cool by blowing; Robertson) and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, the crowd [of cares] pressing on me daily, the burden *merimna* (anxiety, and/or distractions) of all the assemblies." As the Apostle to the Gentiles, he founded most of these churches and his shepherd's heart is tweaked constantly on their behalf. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is stumbled, and I burn *puroumai* ('to inflame' from *pur*, fire;) not? That great shepherd's heart is 'set on fire' every time a brother stumbles. Is this the way that you react on learning of a brother or sister falling into a snare of the Evil One, or entangled by the flesh? If it is needful to boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus knows--he who is blessed for ever--that I do not lie.

From the Jews five times have I received forty [stripes], save one. Thrice have I been scourged, once I have been stoned, three times I have suffered shipwreck, a night and day I passed in the deep: in journeys often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own race, in perils from the nations, in perils in the city, in perils in the desert, in perils on the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and toil, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, the crowd [of cares] pressing on me daily, the burden of all the assemblies. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is stumbled, and I burn not? If it is needful to boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus knows -- he who is blessed for ever -- that I do not lie. 2 Corinthians 11:24-31

(11:32-33) "In Damascus the Governor *ethnarchēs* (from *ethnos*, a people and *archē*) of Aretas the king kept the city in a lock down, because he wished to take me prisoner; so through a window I was let down by the wall in a basket, and escaped his hands." In Acts 9:24 it says that the Jews kept watch to seize Paul, and that they were cooperating with the guards that Aretas had placed there at their request. What a picture this gives us, for Damascus was an ancient city in which **Saul the persecutor** of despised Christians started his mean work. Now, here he is in the same place, **Paul the Apostle** of the Gospel of God, being lowered through the wall "in a basket *sarganēi* (old word for 'rope basket')" like so much bread broken by Christ to feed the thousands gathered to hear the Word of God. From **vaunted conqueror** to **humiliated servant**, all on the same real estate!

Paul had become the broken bread of life
to the Gentile assemblies,
passed to us by God's own hand
and in His own time!

Paul was not simply another Apostle, one to replace the fallen Judas; Paul was specifically chosen by God for His mission to the Gentile assemblies. Once you see this and understand the implications, then you can never again read Scripture without giving special place to the message given to us through the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul! Is all of Scripture profitable to us? It absolutely is! But, is all of Scripture written to instruct us as to our relationship to the ascended Lord Jesus and how we are to live in light of that relationship? Absolutely not! Most of our Holy Bible was written to a people of God destined for an eternity on the New Earth. The Bride of Christ, the New Testament Church from Pentecost to the coming of the Lord Jesus for His betrothed, is destined for an eternity in the House of God the Father, in union with the Only Begotten Son of God forever! See the paper by W. J. Hocking, The Grand Difference, at the end of this commentary!

In Damascus the ethnarch of Aretas the king kept the city of the
Damascenes shut up, wishing to take me; and through a window in a
basket I was let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.
2 Corinthians 11:32-33

Chapter 12

(12:1-7) The KJV has "I must needs glory" *kauchasthai dei* he must continue with the attention to his career and ministry, though he acknowledges that it is not expedient *en sumpheron* "not of profit." "I will come to visions *optasias* (that which is seen) and revelations *apokalypseis* ('unveil or uncover') of the Lord." Instead of speaking directly of his own experience, Paul speaks as if it is someone else that he is describing; "I know *oida* a man in Christ, fourteen years ago," (probably in Tarsus), "(whether in the body I know not *ouk oida*, or out of the body I know not, God knows *Theos oiden*).". Though some Jews taught that there were twelve levels of heaven, there is no reason to infer that Paul is speaking of anything other than the highest heaven in which God dwells. When he follows that with "caught up into paradise" *eis paradeison*, this reminds us that paradise (Abraham's Bosom) was emptied at Christ's resurrection and that those captive

in Abraham's Bosom were taken captive by Christ and ascended with Him; He to glory, and they to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, as guests of the Groom. In the third heaven, or Paradise, Paul "heard unspeakable things *arrēta rēmata* ('unspeakable;' words too sacred to be spoken³) said, which it is not allowed *ouk exon* (not lawful) to man to utter." Now mark this carefully; when Paul was in this ecstatic state, and he was really taken into the presence of God in heaven, what he heard was unspeakable things that he was not allowed to utter by any means. God would not speak those things through any man, not even His chosen Apostle to the Church! What He did say to the Church He said in wonderfully crafted letters, dictated to the hearts of His anointed Apostles and sent to the Churches to be circulated for the edification of the Body of Christ. There is no Scriptural basis for further 'revelation,' simply 'clarification' of what He has already given us through study and growth as we walk in communion with the Spirit of God within us.

Paul now speaks of himself as a third party that he is observing in his vision; he will boast of this man, but not of himself, because he sees the man lifted up to heaven as somehow qualified to hear what God has to say, but of himself in the flesh as a weaker vessel with "weaknesses." "For if (third class supposition) I shall desire to boast, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth." The believer's strongest position in any situation is the ground of truth. Paul here is speaking of the man caught up to heaven, as if they were not the same person (Robertson), which makes this a bit hard to follow. "But I forbear *pheidomai* (to restrain oneself), lest anyone should think more of me than what he sees me to be, or whatever he may hear of me." He doesn't want his reputation built up by what they might hear or imagine that he has gone through in any special way. In other words, he is not going to pad his resume. In addition, he was "given a thorn *for* the flesh" *skolops tēi sarki*, not *in* the flesh. In focusing on the fact that Paul had some affliction in his body, we miss the point that the thorn was given to remind him that within him the Adamic Nature was ever at work. Once we take this in, our own physical ailments become tools that God can use to shape us into the people He desires us to be, rather than burdens that the enemy puts in our way to hamper our growth and worship. This is a tremendous change in our mind-set and ability to keep our faith focused on our Father, who is the source of our provision and the object of our worship and love.

Well, it is not of profit to me to boast, for I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago,

³ Moulton and Milligan

(whether in the body I know not, or out of the body I know not, God knows;) such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man, (whether in the body or out of the body I know not, God knows;) that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable things said, which it is not allowed to man to utter. Of such a one I will boast, but of myself I will not boast, unless in my weaknesses. For if I shall desire to boast, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth; but I forbear, lest any one should think as to me above what he sees me to be, or whatever he may hear of me. And that I might not be exalted by the exceeding greatness of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn for the flesh, a messenger of Satan that he might buffet me, that I might not be exalted. 2 Corinthians 12:1-7

(12:8-11) After going to the Lord three times to have this thorn removed, God's answer was; "My grace suffices *arkei* (wards off danger) you; for my power *dunamis* is perfected *teleitai* (is finished in you) in [your] weakness." The most logical statement that any believer could make at this point is; "Most gladly therefore will I rather boast in my weaknesses, [in order] that the power of the Christ may dwell upon me." He realizes, as should we all, that "when I am weak, then I am powerful," for it is not our power, but His that is driving our lives.

For this I thrice besought the Lord that it might depart from me. And he said to me, My grace suffices you; for my power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather boast in my weaknesses, that the power of the Christ may dwell upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in straits, for Christ: for when I am weak, then I am powerful. I have become a fool; you have compelled me; for I ought to have been commended by you; for I have been nothing behind those who were in surpassing degree apostles, if also I am nothing. 2 Corinthians 12:8-11

The Signs of the Apostle

There is a great and lingering debate within Christendom about the 'sign' gifts and their use and purpose in the Church. Some entire denominations are founded on the belief that all of the gifts that were evident in the first century Church are still in use by believers and evident in the Church today. Some even insist that the gift of tongues is a requisite confirmation that the believer has been 'baptized by the Holy Spirit' and has received the full measure of grace that God

intends for one of His own. Paul's comment here is but one small piece of the information we gather from the Epistles bearing on this very important question. The "signs indeed of the apostle" is a statement verifying that at least some of the gifts of service were for the purpose of confirming to people at-large in the world the appointment by God of certain men as Apostles. The gifts were intended to be his *certificate of authority*, available for instant verification by anyone who questioned their position. These men were all also eyewitnesses to the resurrected Christ. They had been personally taught by Him prior to the crucifixion and knew Him resurrected as a Man. With the exception of Paul, they were charged with the responsibility to take the Gospel to Israel, and then to the world, wherever they happened to be. When you look at the '**Great Commission**' in **Matthew 28:19** the first word you come to is "Going" *poreuthéntes* (**having therefore gone; you have already begun your journey**) "therefore, you disciple *mathateúrsate* (**you are to be discipleing**) all *panta* (the entire spectrum of) the *ta* nations *ethna* (Gentiles, people groups other than Jewish)." The force of this passage is clearly this; the command was not to "GO," but to "**be discipleing ones**" as they are going throughout the world, wherever God sends them. Remember that in Acts 2 there were Jews, devout men, from "every nation (*ethnous*) under heaven." When those Jews, who spoke the languages of the nations from which they came, (many having been born in those Gentile countries), heard the Gospel preached by the 120 Galileans fresh from the upper room (see Acts 2:1ff) experience with the Holy Spirit's indwelling, they became the first converts in need of discipleing, of being taught freedom from the Law and living under grace. The Epistles of James and First and Second Peter were the first recorded letters to these devout Jews back in their original countries. What did James say? He told them that their *new faith* could not be satisfied with the *old works* of the Law; they needed *new works* to make their *new faith* a living testimony of God's grace, for **new faith without new works is dead and non-productive!** The very new issue of Apostles as emissaries of the just born Church was considered; the need for men to go to these countries and teach them the principles that grew out of union with Christ. Would the discipleing of those who had accepted the Lord Jesus as Savior in Jerusalem complete and fulfill the 'Great Commission,' or did the return home of the 'devout Jews' who were now Christians and told of their conversion to their families and neighbors in "every nation under heaven" mark the first wave of fulfillment? It is my solid belief and conviction that *ethnous* (every nation) was reached with the Gospel by God's own hand on Pentecost day two, when that reeling crowd asked "**How hear we each in his own dialect, the Galileans speaking in our own language the great deeds of God?**" The work of Evangelization was begun in marvelous and spectacular fashion, thus satisfying the command, "having therefore gone;"

now comes the hard part, “**be discipleing ones, baptizing them** in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them** to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Please note that *evangelizing them* was not on the list. That was taken care of by the devout Jews that were in Jerusalem for the Feast and who returned to the scattered nations. Now the work of gifted men is required; men who had the authority and ability to teach the Gospel of Grace and freedom from the Law and its practices that these ‘devout’ Jews had followed all their lives! These were special men, and special gifts to authenticate their mission were called for! So the gifts they were given were suited to their purpose and to the character of their special mission, shedding the first shards of ‘old walk’ in their charges, as the boiler-plate of the Law was dislodged from their lives and their ‘new walk’ in Christ began.

(12:12-14) What were the “signs *sēmēia* indeed of the (the definite article here indicates a specific apostle, Paul) apostle” that “were wrought among you in all endurance?” There were three categories of authenticating works revealed to these believers at Corinth by Paul; “signs *sēmēíois*, and wonders *terata*, and powers *dunameis* (miracles).” Signs are intended to appeal to the understanding, wonders appeal to the imagination, and powers indicate a supernatural source (Vine). They have seen all three and thus should have no doubt as to his authority and appointment by God as His messenger to them with the Gospel of Grace. So he asks; “what is it that you don’t have that other assemblies do have, and is it because I have been lazy and a burden on you?” Please (sarcastically) “forgive me this injury.” “Behold (you watch), this [is the] third time I am ready to come to you,” and I will not be a financial burden to you, “for I do not seek yours, but you *ou ta humōn, alla humas*.”

The signs indeed of the apostle were wrought among you in all endurance, signs, and wonders, and works of power. For in what is it that you have been inferior to the other assemblies, unless that I myself have not been in laziness a charge upon you? Forgive me this injury. Behold, this third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be in laziness a charge; for I do not seek yours, but you; for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. 2 Corinthians 12:12-14

(12:15-18) “Spend and be utterly spent” are future tense, active voice commitments that he is making to them, because he loves them. If this process means that he is “less loved,” then “so be it.” But, he “did not [become to them a financial] burden,” rather by “being crafty” he “took them by guile *dolōi* (fish bait).” This last statement is in answer to the charge being made against them by

those who oppose their ministry; so Paul is speaking with irony (Robertson, and Moffatt). Then he reminds them that what is true of him is also true of those he has sent to them, Titus and those with him to receive the collection there and what has come from Macedonia.

Now I shall most gladly spend and be utterly spent for your souls, if even in abundantly loving you I should be less loved. But be it so. I did not burden you, but being crafty I took you by guile. Did I make gain of you by any of those whom I have sent to you? I begged Titus, and sent the brother with him: did Titus at all make gain of you? Have we not walked in the same spirit? [have we] not in the same steps? 1 Corinthians 12:15-18

(12:19-21) "For a long time you have been thinking" (Robertson), "that we come to you with excuses;" but "we speak before God in Christ; and everything we say, beloved, is for your building up (edification)." "Fear" *phoboumai* (phobia, a lingering doubt) that when I come I will find you not to my liking, and I would be found by you not to your liking; "lest there might [continue to] be back-biting, jealousies, angers, contentions, evil-speaking, whisperings (like a snake charmer), puffing up, disturbances;" an entire list of those things that he has heard was going on in the Corinthian body. His fear is that God will disabuse him of all his good thoughts of them when he comes and bring him to grief over their sins. As we learned in 1 Corinthians 5 the moving force of discipline in the body is the mourning of leadership over the sins of the people being corrected.

You have long been supposing that we excuse ourselves to you: we speak before God in Christ; and all things, beloved, for your building up. For I fear lest perhaps coming I find you not such as I wish, and that I be found by you such as you do not wish: lest there might be strife, jealousies, angers, contentions, evil speaking, whisperings, puffing up, disturbances; lest my God should humble me as to you when I come again, and that I shall grieve over many of those who have sinned before, and have not repented as to the uncleanness and fornication and licentiousness which they have practiced. 2 Corinthians 12:19-21

Chapter 13

(13:1-2) Paul speaks of his upcoming third visit to Corinth, to be preceded by this letter, delivered by Titus and friends. When he arrives, he says that every question that has been raised about his behavior and his authority will be "established, in the mouth of two or three witnesses," a practice that has been

adopted by Elder-led assemblies world-wide with regard to any question of leadership's qualification and/or behavior towards the flock. He has told them in previous visits and in his first letters to them the doctrinal answers to their questions, and he is speaking "now absent" as he did when "present the second time" with them—"if I come again I will not spare" either words, feelings, or reputations of those who accuse and will not be stopped. Here's the lesson to leaders—if you cannot lead with the authority of Scripture clearly behind you, and with absolute confidence in your foundation in the Word, then walk carefully and take on that responsibility with fear and trembling. 'If a man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work,' but, it is *work*!

This third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every matter be established. I have declared beforehand, and I say beforehand as present the second time, and now absent, to those that have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare.

2 Corinthians 13:1-2

(13:3-6) "Since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me" tells us that there are still those who do not trust Him. It is those who he "will not spare" when he arrives. With reference to "Christ speaking in me, (who is not weak towards you, but is powerful among you," he draws their attention to self-examination, rather than in criticizing others, including him. He admits to personal weakness with "for indeed we are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by God's power towards you;" so strong is his sense of union with God in Christ. Our first obligation as Christians is to examine ourselves in order to find within us the power of God at work transforming us into the very character of Christ. So, "if you are in the faith; prove your own selves," just as Paul has done so to confirm to himself the power of Christ in him. Don't miss this interesting point, "for if indeed He has been crucified in weakness" refers to the willingness of Jesus to take on the limitations of flesh as our Savior; "yet He lives by God's power," for it was the Father who took His Only Begotten Son out of death and the grave to resurrection life. And it is the power of God that keeps *us* in the ascended life of the Son.

Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, (who is not weak towards you, but is powerful among you, for if indeed he has been crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power; for indeed **we** are weak in him, but we shall live with him by God's power towards you,) examine your own selves if you are in the faith; prove your own selves: do you not

recognize yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you, unless indeed you are reprobates? Now I hope that ye will know that we are not reprobates.
2 Corinthians 13:3-6

(13:7-9)

But we pray to God that ye may do nothing evil; not that we may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, and we be as reprobates. For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. For we rejoice when we may be weak and you may be powerful. But this also we pray for, your perfecting.

(13:10-11) He is writing these things while absent to give them an opportunity to digest it and change their way of thinking. That way, he will not have to be as severe in his critique of them as he might otherwise be on arriving. He has thoroughly established his authority as an Apostle, "which the Lord has given" for the purpose of "building up" (edifying), not for "overthrowing" (bring down). Here again is the primary purpose of the Body as gathered, the personal growth of the individual saints.

On this account I write these things being absent, that being present I may not use severity according to the authority which the Lord has given me for building up, and not for overthrowing. For the rest, brethren, rejoice; be perfected; be encouraged; be of one mind; be at peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. 2 Corinthians 13:10-11

(13:12-14) "Salute one another with a holy kiss." In Jewish synagogues, where the men and women were separated, men kissed men and women, women; but in Christian assemblies this separation was not there and the custom was extended to all. This was abandoned because of pressure by the pagans that the practice was engaged in with too much enthusiasm. In 1250 Archbishop Walter of York in England introduced a "pax-board," which was first kissed by the clergy and then passed around to all those present for their personal 'bussing.'

Paul ends this most remarkable letter with a commendation to the three Persons of the Trinity; "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . the love of God [the Father], and the communion of the Holy Spirit, is with you all."

Salute one another with a holy kiss. All the saints salute you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, is with you all. 2 Corinthians 13:12-14

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

GOD THE FATHER

NAMES

**THE FATHER OF MERCIES
AND
THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT**

GOD THE FATHER EXPRESSED
HIS WILL IN ETERNITY PAST,
AND APART FROM HIM STOOD
GOD THE SON, THE SECOND
PERSON OF THE DIVINE
TRINITY, AS THE SON OF GOD

GOD THE SON

NAMES



His Title regarding all Creation
in Heaven and Earth

**THE LORD OF MERCIES
AND
THE LORD OF ALL COMFORT**



THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD

NAMES



His Title regarding Earth and
Redemption

**CHRISTUS CONSOLATOR
KINSMAN REDEEMER
THE LAMB OF GOD
KING OF KINGS, LORD OF LORDS
THE LAST ADAM
SAVIOR OF ALL MANKIND**



“For He is our Peace!”



JESUS



His name regarding the Elect of
all ages

**THE ASCENDED MAN
TO WHOM WE ARE JOINED**



“For me to live is Christ!”



THE BODY OF CHRIST



His continued presence on Earth

**THE BRIDE
THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**



“Husbands, love your wives as
Christ loved the Church
and gave Himself for her!”